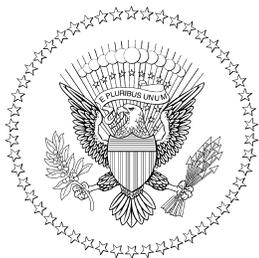


Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, December 13, 2004
Volume 40—Number 50
Pages 2909–2937

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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, December 10, 2004

Remarks Following Discussions With President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan and an Exchange With Reporters

December 4, 2004

President Bush. It's my honor to welcome a friend, a leader, President Musharraf of Pakistan. He is a person with whom I've worked very closely over the past 4 years, a person with whom I look forward to working closely over the next 4 years. And we had a really good discussion.

We discussed international politics. I assured President Musharraf that there is an opportunity at hand to work toward the development of a Palestinian state and peace in the Middle East. I told him that this will be a priority of my administration. The goal is two states living side by side in peace and security.

We spent time talking about our bilateral relations. We reviewed the relationship between India and Pakistan. He has showed great courage in that relationship, leading toward what we hope will be a peaceful solution of what has been a historically difficult problem.

We talked about our own bilateral relations. The President and I are absolutely committed to fighting off the terrorists who would destroy life in Pakistan or the United States or anywhere else. And I appreciate very much your clear vision of the need for people of good will and hope to prevail over those who are willing to inflict death in order to achieve an ideology that is—the predominance of an ideology that is just backward and dark in its view.

I—we talked about commerce between our countries. The President is very concerned about whether or not Pakistan goods are being treated equally, as fairly as other goods coming into the United States. I listened very carefully to what he had to say.

He had some constructive ideas as to how to deal with that situation.

Having brought up his economy, however, I reminded him that he's doing quite a good job of making sure that the economy grows in Pakistan so that people have got a chance to realize their dreams. And I congratulate you on the good stewardship of the Pakistan economy.

All in all, our relationships are good; they're strong; and they will remain that way. And I'm honored you're here.

President Musharraf. Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I don't have much to add to what the President has already said. We had a very wholesome interaction. And all that I would like to say, that I've come here basically to congratulate the President very sincerely, with all my sincerity, for having won the elections. And he does me an honor by receiving me on a Saturday. [*Laughter*]

And therefore, the other issues that we discussed were incidental and all the important issues—the most important issue, a resolution of the Palestinian dispute, in the interest of peace in the whole world, and I would repeat whatever the President has already said: Enhancement of our bilateral relations, enhancement of our commercial ties with the United States.

I'm grateful for the extreme understanding that the President has shown towards the concerns of Pakistan.

Thank you.

President Bush. Welcome. Welcome.

We'll answer a question from the American side, and the Pakistani side, and the American side, and Pakistani side. And that will be it, in the spirit of Saturday morning meetings. And so the first person that will be asking the question will be Mr. Mark Knoller [CBS Radio].

Homeland Security

Q. Thank you. Mr. President, what do you make of the warning sounded yesterday by Tommy Thompson that the American food supply may be at risk to terrorist attack?

President Bush. Tommy was commenting on the fact that we're a large company—country, with all kinds of avenues where somebody can inflict harm. And we're doing everything we can to protect the American people. I picked a good man to head the Homeland Security Department in Bernie Kerik. I hope the Senate confirms him quickly so he can get to work. There's a lot of work to be done. We've made a lot of progress in protecting our country, and there's more work to be done. And this administration is committed to doing it.

Q. Mr. President—

President Bush. Do you want to call on somebody?

President Musharraf. I know that—I know that you're trying your best to address the issue of terrorism all over the world, and obviously, the most important part is to protect your own, the United States, from terrorism.

President Bush. Actually, I wasn't asking you necessarily to answer the question; I was asking you to call on somebody from the Pakistani press, I'm sorry. [Laughter] You don't have to answer every question they ask me. I would advise you not answering those questions. [Laughter]

Pakistan-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, the public perception in Pakistan is that Pakistan is doing much more, deeper cooperation, and doing more favors to the United States than Pakistan is getting anything in return. What is your comment, and what is the room for Pak-U.S. relations during your next term?

President Bush. Well, first of all, I don't view relations as, one, that there's a scorecard that says, "You know, well, if we all fight terror together, therefore, somebody owes somebody something." This is a world in which cooperation is essential, and mutual cooperation is really essential between Pakistan and the United States.

Obviously, there's ways to strengthen our bilateral relations. The President and I are

constantly discussing ways to do so. After all, he is the strongest advocate for the Pakistan people I have ever met. His duty is to represent Pakistan, and so, therefore, we talk about ways to enhance trade. Trade between the United States and Pakistan is good. It can be better, and we discussed ways to enhance that.

But our cooperation has been very strong. But let me just say something. Friends don't sit there and have a scorecard that says, "Well, he did this," or "He did that, and therefore, somebody is—there's a deficit." Our relationship is much bigger than that. Our relationship is one where we work closely together for the common good of our own people and for the common good of the world.

Jennifer [Jennifer Loven, Associated Press].

President Musharraf's Role in the War on Terror

Q. Thank you, sir. You've talked repeatedly about how pleased you've been with President Musharraf's cooperation in the arrest of Al Qaida suspects. But are you not disappointed that his army has somewhat downgraded the search for Usama bin Laden?

President Bush. Quite the contrary. His army has been incredibly active and very brave in southern Waziristan, flushing out an enemy that had thought they had found safe haven. His army has suffered casualty, and for that, we want to thank their loved ones for the sacrifice that their family has made.

The President has been a determined leader to bring to justice not only people like Usama bin Laden but to bring to justice those who would inflict harm and pain on his own people. Remember, this is a man whose life had been threatened by and still is threatened by Al Qaida leadership. He's the person who survived two direct assassination attempts. And there is nobody more dedicated than—in the protection of his own people than President Musharraf.

And I am very pleased with his efforts and his focused efforts, and our discussions today were to determine how best we can help the President achieve his objective and—which

is not only protect himself but protect his country.

Pakistan-U.S. Relations/Pakistan's Role in the Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, it's determined that you have a long vision, long-term vision between Pakistan and the United States. How would you define it, and how do you see it in the days to come?

President Bush. I think the long-term vision is one that is a relationship which is very mature in this sense: that there is a commercial relationship which is fair and balanced, mutually beneficial to both people; a defense relationship which is one in which there is close collaboration and complementary efforts based upon the true threats of the 21st century; and thirdly, there's a relationship in which I can call upon my friend to help deal with international issues such as the development of a Palestinian state, one in which the aspirations of the Palestinian people are met and listened to because democracy has taken hold.

One of the interesting lessons that the world can look at is Pakistan. You see, there are some in the world who do not believe that a Muslim society can self-govern. Some believe that the only solution for government in parts of the world is for there to be tyranny or despotism. I don't believe that. The Pakistan people have proven that those cynics are wrong. And where President Musharraf can help in world peace is to help remind people what is possible. And the solution in the Middle East is for there to be a world effort to help the Palestinians develop a state that is truly free, one that's got an independent judiciary, one that's got a civil society, one that's got the capacity to fight off the terrorists, one that allows for dissent, one in which people can vote. And President Musharraf can play a big role in helping achieve that objective.

None of us can convince the Palestinians to say—or make the Palestinians adhere to this point of view, but we can help convince them. And that's precisely what I intend to do. And as a Palestinian state evolves there will be much more confidence, and when that happens, peace is more likely to happen.

And I look forward to working with this world leader on that important issue.

Thank you all for taking time out of your weekend. I know it's been a disappointment for you to have to work on Saturday, but—*[laughter]*—the press. But nevertheless—

President Musharraf. Because of me. *[Laughter]*

President Bush. —the President and I are thrilled you're here.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:50 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization.

The President's Radio Address

December 4, 2004

Good morning. Since the attacks of September the 11th, 2001, American military forces, intelligence officers, and law enforcement officials have defended our country with skill and honor and have taken the fight to terrorists abroad. Here at home, we have created the Department of Homeland Security, strengthened our defenses, and improved the collection and analysis of vital intelligence. Yet we must do more.

To protect America, our country needs the best possible intelligence. The recommendations of the 9/11 Commission chart a clear, sensible path toward needed reforms to our Government's intelligence capabilities. I strongly support most of those recommendations, and my administration is already implementing the vast majority of those that can be enacted without a vote of Congress. In August, I established the National Counterterrorism Center, where all the available intelligence on terrorist threats is brought together in one place. Just last month, I issued two directives instructing the FBI and CIA to hire new personnel and to press forward with the transformation of these agencies to meet the threats of our time.

But other key changes require new laws. For the past few months, I have been working with the Congress to produce an intelligence reform bill that will make America more secure. Congress made good progress toward a strong new law. Provisions have

been included to strengthen our ability to arrest those who aid and train terrorists, to hold dangerous terrorists who are awaiting trial, and to prosecute those who seek to acquire weapons of mass destruction.

The most important provisions of any new bill must create a strong, focused new management structure for our intelligence services and break down the remaining walls that prevent the timely sharing of vital threat information among Federal agencies and with relevant State, local, and private sector personnel. Our intelligence efforts need a Director of National Intelligence who will oversee all of the foreign and domestic activities of the intelligence community. The legislation I support preserves the existing chain of command and leaves America's 15 intelligence agencies, organizations, and offices in their current Departments. Yet the Director of National Intelligence will oversee all of America's intelligence efforts to help ensure that our Government can find and stop terrorists before they strike. To be effective, this position must have full budget authority over our intelligence agencies. The many elements of our intelligence community must function seamlessly, with an overriding mission to protect America from attack by terrorists or outlaw regimes.

I will continue to work with the Congress to reach an agreement on this intelligence bill. I urge Members of Congress to act next week so I can sign these needed reforms into law.

We have made great progress against the terrorists who seek to harm our Nation. We are safer, but we are not yet safe. The enemy is still plotting, and America must respond with urgency. We must do everything necessary to confront and defeat the terrorist threat, and that includes intelligence reform. By remaining focused and determined in these efforts, we will strengthen the safety of our citizens and defend our Nation from harm.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on December 3 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 4. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 3 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his

remarks, the President referred to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission). The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on Signing the Miscellaneous Trade and Technical Corrections Act of 2004

December 3, 2004

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 1047, the "Miscellaneous Trade and Technical Corrections Act of 2004." The Act modifies temporarily certain rates of duty under the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States and makes other amendments to U.S. trade laws.

The executive branch shall construe section 1560(b) of the Act, relating to interaction between the Bureau of Customs and Border Protection of the Department of Homeland Security and the Government of Canada, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to conduct the Nation's foreign affairs and to supervise the unitary executive branch.

As is consistent with the Appointments Clause of the Constitution, the executive branch shall construe section 401(I) of the Tariff Act of 1930, as amended by subsection 1561(a) of the Act, not to authorize the exercise of significant U.S. Governmental authority by foreign law enforcement officers.

Section 629(e) of the Tariff Act of 1930, as enacted by section 1561(b) of the Act, provides that any foreign customs or agriculture inspection official stationed in the United States under section 629(e) may exercise such functions, perform such duties, and enjoy such privileges and immunities as U.S. officials may be authorized to perform or are afforded in that foreign country by treaty, agreement, or law. The executive branch shall construe section 629(e) to authorize the executive branch to allow the specified foreign government officials to perform functions of such foreign government inside the United States on the same basis as the specified U.S. Government officials may perform their U.S. Government functions in that foreign country and, as is consistent with the Appointments Clause of the Constitution,

shall not construe the provision to authorize the exercise of significant U.S. Governmental authority by foreign officials.

The executive branch shall construe the repeal, in section 1561(c) of the Act, of section 127 of the Treasury and General Government Appropriations Act, 2003, as contained in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2003 (Public Law 108–7), as repealing the amendments that were made to title 19 of the United States Code by section 127. Such a construction of section 1561(c) is consistent with the text and structure of amendments to title 19 made by section 1561.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 3, 2004.

NOTE: H.R. 1047, approved December 3, was assigned Public Law No. 108–429. This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 6. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Ghazi al-Ujayl al-Yawr of the Iraqi Interim Government and an Exchange With Reporters

December 6, 2004

President Bush. Mr. President, welcome to the Oval Office. Last time we met was in Georgia, and now you're here in Washington, DC. I'm really honored you're here.

First, I want to thank you for your courage and your vision for a united and free Iraq. The President and I just had a great conversation about the future of Iraq. He can speak for himself, but I came away that I'm talking to a man who has got great confidence in the Iraqi people's capacity to self-govern and a great belief in the fact that it's going to happen.

We talked about a variety of issues. We talked about how the United States can continue to stand with those who believe in democracy. We talked about the security situation. We talked about the election process. And I assured the President that my comments about the need to have elections was real and genuine. I believe it's necessary for the Iraqi people to vote on January the 30th

because it provides an opportunity for people to participate in democracy. It'll send the clear message to the few people in Iraq that are trying to stop the march toward democracy that they cannot stop elections. It will give the Iraqi people a chance to become invested in the future of that vital country.

And the President can speak for himself on the subject, but he was very reassuring to me, as he was yesterday in his comments to the American people.

All in all, Mr. President, I am really proud you're here. I look forward to working with you.

President al-Yawr. Thank you.

President Bush. And I look forward to achieving the common objective, which is an Iraq that is free and peaceful.

President al-Yawr. Thank you very much, sir. I've been honored this morning to meet the President of the United States—after all, we in Iraq are in debt for the United States for—and the courageous leadership of President Bush of liberating Iraq from a dynasty, a villain. Right now we are faced with the armies of darkness who are—who have no objective but to undermine the political process and incite civil war in Iraq. But I want to assure the whole world that this will never, ever happen, that we in Iraq are committed to move along. After all these sacrifices, there is no way on Earth that we will let it go in vain.

This is very important. Victory is not only possible; it's a fact. We can see it. It's there. We are committed. We see that we have all the reasons to prevail. We see that our enemy is an enemy that has only a short time because they have no roots in the Iraqi society, they have no ideology that they can sell to Iraq or the whole world.

There is unfairness by calling them Sunni insurgents—these are not Sunni. These are a mix of people who have one thing in common, hatred to the Iraqi society and hatred to democracy, people who are trying to stop us from having our first elections. We in Iraq, the whole Iraqi society are willing to participate in elections. Nobody in Iraq wants to boycott the elections, except for some politicians. But I'm talking about the mass public of Iraq. They all are very anxious to go and cast their votes and practice, for the first time

in 45 years, their right and duty of voting for whoever they feel confidence in.

This is very important. I just came here to tell the President of the United States and the American public that we in Iraq are very appreciative for all the sacrifices, that this is a job that we see has honor and even a duty that we have to make everybody free. In Iraq, these people are trying to kidnap people in streets and sell them from one gang to another. This is slavery, and shame on anybody who can condone to slavery. We are going to face them. We are determined. And God bless you, sir.

President Bush. Thank you very much. Good job.

President al-Yawr. Thank you.

President Bush. We'll answer a couple of questions in the spirit of democracy.

Attack on U.S. Consulate in Jeddah/ Upcoming Iraqi Elections

Q. Mr. President, who do you think was behind today's attacks in Saudi Arabia, and what do you think was their motive? And on Iraq, if I could ask a little bit more, how can Iraqis feel secure about going to the polls on January 30th when there is so much violence and bloodshed?

President Bush. First, on the incident in Saudi Arabia, I want to thank the Saudi Government for responding as quickly as they did. We send our heartfelt condolences to the Saudi National Guard that died in the defense of our consulate. I want to thank the marines who are doing their job so splendidly. We will find out more about who caused the attacks. As I understand it, several of the attackers died, but several were captured by the Saudi Government, and I'm confident they will share the information with us.

The attacks in Saudi Arabia remind us that the terrorists are still on the move. They're interested in affecting the will of free countries. They want us to leave Saudi Arabia. They want us to leave Iraq. They want us to grow timid and weary in the face of their willingness to kill randomly and kill innocent people. And that's why these elections in Iraq are very important.

You remember all the dire threats prior to the elections in Afghanistan. People said,

"If you vote in Afghanistan, you'll be killed." But the desire of people to vote overwhelmed the capacity of the terrorists. And this is the same message we're getting here in Iraq, that people who are willing to blow up people by the use of car bombs will do anything they can to stop democracy. And there is a reason why, because a free society in Iraq will be a major defeat for the terrorists.

And I think that the capacity of these killers to stop an election would send a wrong signal to the world and send a wrong signal to the Iraqi people, themselves. And the President has said that people want to vote, and I believe they ought to have a chance to vote. And we'll do everything we can, working with the Iraqis, to make the election sites as secure as possible. That's why the commanders on the ground have asked for additional troops, to help with the election process. And I granted them that request, Mr. President. And our commanders, working with Ambassador Negroponte and the Iraqi security forces, believe they can do a lot to make these polling places secure. You can never guarantee 100 percent security.

But Iraqi people have a chance to say to the world, "We choose democracy over terrorism." And that's going to be defining moment in that country.

Are you Al Jazeera?

Q. Al Arabiyya.

President Bush. I mean, Al Arabiyya. Welcome.

Q. Mr. President, I know that the democracy is your major concern in Iraq and in the Middle East. Despite all difficulties, security difficulties we see in Iraq, are you confident that this election will produce a true democracy in Iraq and then will help your project in the Middle East?

President Bush. Yes. I appreciate that question. I am confident that when peoples are allowed to vote and express their will, peaceful societies emerge. And I'm confident that the process that has been set up by the international community to allow the people of Iraq to express their will is a major step in democracy in the greater Middle East. I believe the Iraqi people have got the capacity

and the desire to self-govern. And these elections will be a very important moment in the advance of democracy.

The American people must understand that democracy just doesn't happen overnight. It is a process. It is an evolution. After all, look at our own history. We had great principles enunciated in our Declarations of Independence and our Constitution, yet we had slavery for a hundred years. It takes a while for democracy to take hold. And this is a major first step in a society which enables people to express their beliefs and their opinions.

I also believe that success in Iraq will breed success elsewhere. I believe it is very possible for there to be a Palestinian state with the institutions of democracy in place that will allow for leadership to emerge that listens to the demands of the Palestinian people. And when such a state takes place, it will make peace much more possible with the Israelis. And so in a second term, not only will I work with our Iraqi friends to help them achieve democracy that the President has just said is the overwhelming desire of most people, but I'll also spend time and efforts to help the Palestinian people grow their own state and own democracy so we can achieve peace.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Intelligence Reform Legislation

Q. Senator Warner has raised some concerns about the chain of command issue in the intelligence reform bill. Is this bill going to have to wait until next year?

President Bush. I certainly hope the bill gets to my desk soon. I believe we have addressed the concerns of, by far, the majority of Members of both the House and the Senate. As we speak, we're working with the key Members to address concerns. I call upon the Congress to pass the intelligence bill. It is a good piece of legislation. It is a necessary piece of legislation. It's a piece of legislation that is important for the security of our country.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:35 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Ambassador to Iraq John D. Negroponte.

Remarks Following Discussions With King Abdullah II of Jordan

December 6, 2004

President Bush. Your Majesty, welcome back to the Oval Office. It is my honor to receive you here again. And every time you come, I enjoy our conversations, and I'm impressed by the progress that your good country is making.

Today we had a chance to talk about the Jordanian economy and the growth of the economy. And the amount of trade between our countries is growing, which is to the benefit of the Jordanian people as well as to the American people. And I appreciate your leadership.

We also talked about, of course, Iraq. I expressed my strong belief that the Iraqi elections must go forward on time. And I appreciate His Majesty listening to my beliefs. And I assured His Majesty that the United States and my Government will be involved with Middle Eastern peace and that I believe that two states living side by side in peace, a Palestinian state and an Israeli state, is necessary for there to be peace and that we have a moment, a window of opportunity, and I intend to work very closely with His Majesty to seize that moment for the good of the Palestinian people and for the good of the Israelis, so that we can achieve peace that I know is on your mind.

So welcome, sir. I'm really glad to have you back.

King Abdullah. Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President. We're delighted to be back here and to thank you, Mr. President, for, really, the outstanding support that you are giving our part of the world, and the President's dedication to bring hope and peace, hopefully, to Israelis and Palestinians. I know that you have been committed in the past 4 years in identifying a future for the Israelis and the Palestinians and the Israelis and the Arabs. And again, the President today brought home to me how important that is. And I'm very delighted with that strong stand that you've always taken for a better Middle East.

As you mentioned, sir, we talked about the future of Iraq, and we work very closely together to bring a transition in Iraq as quickly

as possible and a future for the Iraqi people. And I tremendously appreciate the effort that you've given all of us and your vision for a better world for all of us in our part of the world.

Thank you.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Welcome. Appreciate you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Proclamation 7852—National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day, 2004

December 6, 2004

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On a quiet Sunday morning, December 7, 1941, more than 2,400 Americans were killed in the attack on Pearl Harbor. On that day, life changed in America, and the course of history was altered forever.

Our citizens reacted to the attack with firm determination to defeat tyranny and secure our Nation. This enterprise required the commitment and effort of our entire country. At the height of the conflict, the United States had ships on every ocean and troops on five continents. In all, more than 16 million Americans wore the uniform of our Nation. They came from all walks of life. They served honorably and fought fiercely. At home, millions more contributed to the war effort, laboring for victory in our factories, on farms, and across America.

Today, we honor those who fought and died at Pearl Harbor, and we pay special tribute to the veterans of World War II. These heroes hold a cherished place in our history. Through their courage, sacrifice, and selfless dedication, they saved our country and preserved freedom. As we fight the war on terror, their patriotism continues to inspire a new generation of Americans who have been called to defend the blessings of liberty. Like those who have gone before them throughout our history, our troops fighting the war on terror are defending America from danger and liberating the oppressed.

The Congress, by Public Law 103–308, as amended, has designated December 7 of each year as “National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day.”

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim December 7, 2004, as National Pearl Harbor Remembrance Day. I encourage all Americans to observe this solemn occasion with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I urge all Federal agencies, interested organizations, groups, and individuals to fly the flag of the United States at half-staff this December 7 in honor of those who died as a result of their service at Pearl Harbor.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixth day of December, in the year of our Lord two thousand four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:21 a.m., December 8, 2004]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on December 9.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on the Proposed “Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004”

December 6, 2004

Dear Leaders and Conferees:

My most solemn duty is protecting the American people, and reforming and strengthening our Nation’s intelligence capabilities will help ensure the safety of our country. I call on Congress to pass an intelligence reform bill this week. An overarching principle for these needed reforms has been to create a strong Director of National Intelligence with full budget authority while preserving the chain of command within departments and agencies. We are very close to a significant achievement that will better protect our country for generations to come, and now is the time to finish the job for the good of our national security. Therefore, I want to reiterate my views on some issues of concern to Members.

When I met with the Congressional Bipartisan Leadership at the White House on September 8, 2004, I stated that the country needed a strong Director of National Intelligence with full budget authority. At the same time, I have stated that we need a bill that respects the chain of command within departments and agencies, including the Department of Defense, so as to ensure that all of the war-fighters' needs will be met. As Commander-in-Chief, it is ultimately my responsibility to ensure that both of these goals are realized, and they are captured in the attached formulation.

Accordingly, in developing implementing guidelines and regulations for this bill, it is my intention to ensure that the principles of unity of command and authority are fully protected. It remains essential to preserve in the heads of the executive departments the unity of authority over and accountability for the performance of those departments. In particular, as we continue to prosecute the global war on terrorism, the integrity of the military chain of command and the principle of battlefield unity of command must continue to be respected and in no way abrogated. These guidelines will also honor my commitment to provide the Director of National Intelligence full and meaningful budget authority over the National Intelligence Program. This is critical to make certain that the intelligence community is more effectively managed. The guidelines will also help ensure that the Director of National Intelligence has enhanced management authorities, including the ability to oversee and integrate all the foreign and domestic activities of the intelligence community, to achieve the unity of purpose needed to win the global war on terrorism.

With regard to other provisions in the legislation, I want to congratulate the Conference for adopting important and time-sensitive law enforcement provisions that:

- Strengthen current laws to make certain we can arrest those aiding terrorists, including those who have received military-style training in terror camps.
- Increase our ability to target terrorism financing.

- Ensure that dangerous terrorists are lawfully detained while awaiting trial.
- Help prevent attacks by shoulder-fired anti-aircraft missiles, known as MANPADs, and weapons of mass destruction by mandating appropriate penalties.
- Provide authority to help stop "lone wolf" terrorists.
- Expand our jurisdiction to prosecute those who seek weapons of mass destruction.
- It is imperative that Congress act this week to guarantee these vital tools become part of our arsenal immediately.

I also believe the Conference took an important step in strengthening our immigration laws by, among other items, increasing the number of border patrol agents and detention beds. There were other measures proposed that were not incorporated into the bill. My positions on these provisions were detailed in a letter from the Office of Management and Budget to Conferees on October 17, 2004. However, these omissions from the final bill should not prevent the Congress from passing this historic legislation now. I look forward to working with the Congress early in the next session to address these other issues, including improving our asylum laws and standards for issuing driver's licenses.

I appreciate all the work done to date by this Congress and the September 11th Commission. These are some of the most challenging, complicated, and important issues facing our government. The Leaders and Conferees deserve great credit for working together to protect the safety of the American people.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: The letter made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included an attachment listing guidelines to ensure the effective implementation within the executive branch of the authorities granted to the Director of National Intelligence. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Memorandum on Waiver of Restrictions on Assistance to Russia Under the Cooperative Threat Reduction Act of 1993 and Title V of the FREEDOM Support Act

December 6, 2004

Presidential Determination No. 2005-09

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Waiver of Restrictions on Assistance to Russia under the Cooperative Threat Reduction Act of 1993 and Title V of the FREEDOM Support Act

Consistent with the authority vested in me by section 1306 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2003 (Public Law 107-314), I hereby certify that waiving the restrictions contained in subsection (d) of section 1203 of the Cooperative Threat Reduction Act of 1993 (22 U.S.C. 5952), as amended, and the requirements contained in section 502 of the FREEDOM Support Act (22 U.S.C. 5852) during Fiscal Year 2005 with respect to the Russian Federation is important to the national security interests of the United States.

You are authorized and directed to transmit to the Congress this certification and the associated report (including its classified annex) that has been prepared by my Administration consistent with section 1306(b) of Public Law 107-314. You are further authorized and directed to arrange for the publication of this certification in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 13, 2004]

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 7, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 14.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Providing Notification of the Proposed Reimbursement of the District of Columbia for Costs of Public Safety Expenses

December 6, 2004

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

In accordance with title I of the District of Columbia Appropriations Act, 2005, Public Law 108-335, I am notifying the Congress of the proposed use of \$10,288,548 provided in title I under the heading "Federal Payment for Emergency Planning and Security Costs in the District of Columbia." This will reimburse the District for the costs of public safety expenses related to security events and responses to terrorist threats.

The details of this action are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 7.

Remarks at Camp Pendleton, California

December 7, 2004

Thank you all. Thank you for the warm welcome. It was getting a little quiet back at the White House—[laughter]—so I decided to drop in on the Devil Dogs. Thank you for coming out to say hello. I've been looking forward to this for quite a while. It's a pleasure to be with so many squared-away, gung-ho United States Marines.

I'm here to thank you for serving our country in a time when we need you. In a season where Americans stop to count their blessings, I want you to know one of America's greatest blessings is the men and women who wear our Nation's uniform. And many of you are blessed by having a husband or wife or a son and daughter who stand with you during this time of sacrifice. Our Nation is blessed because of our military families. Your

fellow citizens are proud of you, and so is your Commander in Chief.

I appreciate Secretary of the Navy Gordon England for joining us today. I want to thank Major General Tim Donovan for his leadership. I want to thank Brigadier General James Williams for being here as well. I want to thank all the State and local officials. I want to thank the military families. But most of all, I want to thank the United States Marine Corps.

Last month, marines across the world broke out their dress blues to celebrate the 229th birthday of the Corps. But the men and women of Camp Pendleton's 1st Marine Expeditionary Force marked the occasion a little differently, by fighting the enemies in Iraq. As one Pendleton marine near the frontlines put it, "This is what we, as marines, do. It is where the American people expect us to be." The marines of Camp Pendleton are serving our Nation with valor and integrity.

This is the home of the 1st Marine Division, one of America's oldest and most decorated units. In Korea, the marines of the 1st Division were surrounded at the Chosin Reservoir by 10 divisions of Chinese troops. When Colonel Chesty Puller heard the news, he said, "They've got us right where we want them. We can shoot in every direction now." He wasn't bluffing.

The 1st Marine Division made it out, destroying seven enemy divisions and upholding the great tradition of the Corps. That courage, determination, and devotion to duty have made the United States Marines one of the most feared and respected fighting forces in the world. And in these dangerous times, when terrorists seek to harm our families and murder free citizens, Americans are thankful that the Marines are on the front-line, taking the fight to the enemy.

Since I took office almost 4 years ago, I have visited our troops around the world, and one of my first stops as the Commander in Chief was right here in Camp Pendleton. It was in the summer of 2001. I told you that day, because you're marines, you would be asked to perform our Nation's most difficult and dangerous missions. Since that day, you have performed every mission with honor and with courage and with commitment.

In the war on terror, you have fought enemies' freedom—freedom's enemies from the caves and mountains of Afghanistan to the deserts and cities of Iraq. Marines of Camp Pendleton's 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit were the first conventional forces to fight in Operation Enduring Freedom. They deployed hundreds of miles into a landlocked country to help seize the Kandahar Airport, hunted down the Taliban and Al Qaida fighters, and helped to liberate more than 28 million people from one of the world's most brutal regimes.

If any of you were in that 15th Marine Expeditionary Unit, I want you to hear what's happening today. Today the Vice President of the United States and the Secretary of Defense are in Kabul for the inauguration of Afghanistan's first democratically elected President. Afghanistan has been transformed from a haven for terrorists to a steadfast ally in the war on terror, and the American people are safer because of your courage.

When America led a coalition to enforce the demands of the free world and to end the regime of Saddam Hussein, the marines of Camp Pendleton made us proud once again. When the appointed hour came, the 1st Marine Division rolled across the border, pressing more than 500 miles over the Iraqi desert in less than one month. Backed by the 1st Force Service Support Group and the 3rd Marine Aircraft Wing, you helped liberate the Iraqi capital, pulled down the statues of the dictator, and pushed north to secure the homeland of Tikrit. You drove Saddam Hussein from his palace into a spider hole. And now he sits in an Iraqi prison awaiting justice. Because of your bravery, because of your skill, America and the world are a safer place.

In recent days, the 1st Marine Expeditionary Force has once again shown America's purpose and resolve, this time in Fallujah. Block by block, building by building, marines and soldiers and Iraqi security forces took that city back from the terrorists and the insurgents, and when the smoke is cleared, we saw once again the true nature of the enemy. We found bloodstained torture chambers where hostages had been executed. We found videos of beheadings and

brutal terrorist attacks. We found travel documents of foreign terrorists and equipment of forging Iraqi passports to make the foreign fighters appear to be Iraqi insurgents. We found more than 600 improvised explosive devices, including an ice cream truck that had been loaded with bombs for a terrorist attack.

In the battle for Fallujah, the terrorists hid weapons in the cemetery. They hid ammunition in private homes. They hid bombs in mosques, but they could not hide from the United States Marines.

We have dealt the enemy a severe blow. The terrorist Zarqawi has lost his main sanctuary in Iraq. The Ba'athist insurgents have lost one of their main bases of operation. We seized tons of weapons and shut down terrorist bombmaking factories, killed more than 2,000 enemy fighters, and captured thousands more. The enemies of freedom in Iraq have been wounded, but they're not yet defeated. They'll keep on fighting, and so will the Marine Corps.

Next month, Iraqis will vote in free and democratic elections. As election day approaches, we can expect further violence from the terrorists. You see, the terrorists understand what is at stake. They know they have no future in a free Iraq, because free people never choose their own enslavement. They know democracy will give Iraqis a stake in the future of their country. When Iraqis choose their leaders in free elections, it will destroy the myth that the terrorists are fighting a foreign occupation and make clear that what the terrorists are really fighting is the will of the Iraqi people.

The success of democracy in Iraq will also inspire others across the Middle East to defend their own freedom and to expose the terrorists for what they are, violent extremists on the fringe of society with no agenda for the future except tyranny and death.

So the terrorists will do all they can to delay and disrupt free elections in Iraq, and they will fail. As Iraqi President al-Yawr said in the Oval Office yesterday, the Iraqi people are anxious to go and cast their votes and practice, for the first time in 45 years, their right and duty of voting. Free elections will proceed as planned.

The United States has a vital interest in the success of a free Iraq. A free Iraq will be a major victory in the war on terror. Free nations do not export terror. Free nations listen to the hopes and aspirations of their people. Free nations are peaceful nations. And a free Iraq will make America more secure and the world a peaceful place.

America and our coalition have a strategy in place to aid the rise of a stable democracy in Iraq. To help the Iraqi Government provide security during the election period, we will increase U.S. troop strength by about 12,000 personnel for a total of 150,000 troops. As the election approaches, coalition forces will continue hunting the terrorists and the insurgents. We'll help the people of Fallujah and other cities to rebuild and to move forward. We'll continue training Iraqi security forces so the Iraqi people can eventually take responsibility for their own security.

Some Iraqi units have performed better than others, as you know. Some Iraqis have been intimidated enough by the insurgents to leave the service to their country. But a great many are standing firm. In Fallujah, Iraqis fought alongside our soldiers and marines with valor and determination. One American soldier who saw them up close in combat said, "They really excelled, kicking in the doors, clearing the houses, running out into fire to pick up wounded marines." The Iraqi security forces made up about 20 percent of the forces in Fallujah. They're killing the terrorists, blocking the escape routes, and saving American lives. These brave Iraqis are fighting for their freedom, and we are proud to stand by their side.

Our coalition is determined to help them succeed. We're working to develop a core of well-trained senior mid-level Iraqi officers. After all, Iraqi soldiers want to be led by Iraqis. NATO trainers are already in Iraq, and the Alliance will soon develop a new training center for the Iraqi security forces and a military academy outside of Baghdad. We will help the Iraqi Government build a force that no longer needs coalition support so they can defend their own Nation. And then American soldiers and marines can come home with the honor they have earned.

Our success in Iraq will make America safer for us and for future generations. As one Marine sergeant put it, "I never want my children to experience what we saw in New York, at the Pentagon, and in Pennsylvania." He said, "If we can eliminate the threat on foreign soil, I would rather do it there than have it come home to us." That's why we're on the offensive today in Fallujah and Mosul, Ramadi and north Babil. We're getting after the terrorists. We're disrupting their plans. We're holding the state sponsors of terror equally responsible for terrorist acts. We're working to prevent outlaw regimes from gaining weapons of mass murder and providing them to terrorists. We'll stay at these efforts with patience and resolve, and we will prevail.

A time of war is a time for sacrifice, especially for our military families. Being left behind when a loved one goes to war is one of the hardest jobs in the military. It is especially hard during the holidays. Families here at Camp Pendleton endure long separation. Carrying these burdens, you serve our country. America is grateful for your service.

Our Nation also honors the men and women who've been injured in the line of duty. I met some of these Americans. This Saturday, I'll be going to Bethesda to meet more. Many face a hard road ahead. They've inspired their comrades with their strength of will. General Sattler recently visited with some of the wounded in the Fallujah campaign. One marine was pretty beat up, but when he saw the general, he lifted his hand and said, "Sir, I've still got my trigger finger. I can get back out there." That is the spirit of the Corps. And America will show the same sense of duty. We will provide the best possible medical care for every American servicemember wounded in action.

And some of you have lost comrades and family members in the war on terror. Words can only go so far in capturing the grief and sense of loss for the families of those who have died, but you can know this: They gave their lives for a cause that is just. And as in other generations, their sacrifice will have spared millions from the lives of tyranny and sorrow. America prays for the families of the fallen, and we stand with the families of the

fallen, and their sacrifice will always be remembered.

In the last 4 years, I've seen and the world has seen the courage and the skill and the decency of the United States military. You are a great force for good in this world. The American people know it, and they are behind you. Your service and sacrifice has touched the hearts of our people and inspired millions to show their gratitude.

Last month, I met a 15-year-old from California named Shauna Fleming, who collected a million thank you letters for our military personnel. In Washington, DC, veterans—Vietnam vet Steve Cobb and his wife, Tanya, have been coming out regularly to Andrews Air Force Base to meet wounded servicemembers returning from Iraq and Afghanistan. Those two good folks welcome the troops home, and they offer whatever help they can provide. Steve earned four Purple Hearts and the Silver Star in Vietnam, but this is what he said. He said, "When I came home, there was nobody but demonstrators to meet our troops. I never wanted to see another generation of troops come home without being welcomed and appreciated."

In Massachusetts, a contractor named John Gonsalves says—heard about a soldier who had lost both legs in an RPG attack in Iraq. So he started Homes for Our Troops, a nonprofit dedicated to building and adapting homes for disabled veterans with special needs. John says, "The war on terror is something the American people should all be a part of, not just the people on the frontlines in Afghanistan and in Iraq." He says, "We have a responsibility to do more for our veterans who are out there fighting every day and putting their lives on the line."

Here at Camp Pendleton, a nurse named Karen Guenther saw the financial strain on the families of the injured sailors and marines. Many spent weeks, even months away from home, standing by their loved ones recovering at a military hospital. They struggle with the cost of food and lodging and travel and lost income. So she and other Marine spouses started the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund to raise money for those struggling military families. Since its founding here 6 months ago, it has grown into a national organization that has helped over 300 military

families across the United States, with more than \$400,000 in grants.

As a wife of a wounded marine recently put it, "There was no redtape. They just helped. Had it not been for the Injured Marine Semper Fi Fund, I would not have been able to pay my bills for the past 3 months or stay at my husband's bedside."

These examples represent the true strength of the country, the heart and souls of your fellow citizens, and they make America proud. Across our country, Americans are coming together to surround our deployed forces and wounded warriors with love and support. We should be doing more, so I want to speak to our fellow citizens who might be listening today. I urge every American to find some way to thank our military and to help out the military family down the street. The Department of Defense has set up a web site: AmericaSupportsYou.mil. If you're interested in finding out how you can help, go to AmericaSupportsYou.mil. You can go there to learn about efforts in your own community to say you support our troops. In this season of giving, let us stand with the men and women who stand up for America, our military.

Every man and woman who serves at Camp Pendleton and all who wear the Marine Corps uniform are part of a great history. The General mentioned, 63 years ago today, our Nation was attacked at Pearl Harbor. And soon, the United States Marines were storming beaches and engaging the enemy in distant lands. In places like Guadalcanal and Iwo Jima, our fathers and our grandfathers struggled and sacrificed to defend freedom. And today, in places like Fallujah and north Babil, this generation of Marines is fighting to extend freedom.

Today's war on terror will not end with a ceremony, a surrender ceremony on a deck of a battleship. But it will end with victory. Just as we defeated the threats of fascism and imperial communism in the 20th century, we will defeat the threat of global terrorism. And we will help the people of liberated countries to rebuild and to secure a future of freedom and peace.

I have confidence in our country, and I have faith in our cause. There's still important work ahead, yet the outcome is assured.

History moves toward freedom because the desire for freedom is written in every human heart. And the cause of freedom is in the best of hands. It's in the hands of people like the United States Marine Corps.

The United States Marines will fight, in the words of the Rifleman's Creed, "until victory is America's and there is no enemy."

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:34 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. Timothy E. Donovan, USMC, commanding general, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton; Brig. Gen. James L. Williams, USMC, acting commanding general, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Marine Corps Base Camp Pendleton; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; President Ghazi al-Ujayl al-Yawr of the Iraqi Interim Government; and Lt. Gen. John F. Sattler, commanding general, I Marine Expeditionary Force, Camp Fallujah, Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Message on the Observance of Hanukkah 2004

December 7, 2004

I send greetings to all those celebrating Hanukkah, the festival of lights.

On the 25th day of Kislev on the Hebrew calendar, Jews around the world commemorate the rededication of the Temple in Jerusalem more than 2,000 years ago. During this time of darkness, the Temple had been seized, and Judaism had been outlawed. Judah Maccabee and his followers fought for three years for their freedom and successfully recaptured Jerusalem and the Temple. Jewish tradition teaches that the Maccabees found only one small bottle of oil to be used for temple rituals, but that oil lasted eight days and nights. The miracle of this enduring light, remembered through the lighting of the Menorah, continues to symbolize the triumph of faith over tyranny.

The bravery of the Maccabees has provided inspiration through the ages. We must remain steadfast and courageous as we seek to spread peace and freedom throughout the world. This holiday season, we give thanks to God, and we remember the brave men

and women of our Armed Forces and their families. We also pray that all who live under oppression will see their day of freedom and that the light of faith will always shine through the darkness.

Laura joins me in wishing you a blessed and Happy Hanukkah.

George W. Bush

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

Message to the Senate Transmitting the 1995 Revision of the Radio Regulations, With Appendices

December 7, 2004

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the 1995 Revision of the Radio Regulations, with appendices, signed by the United States at Geneva on November 17, 1995 (the "1995 Revision"), together with declarations and reservations of the United States as contained in the Final Acts of the World Radiocommunication Conference (WRC-95). I transmit also, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State concerning these revisions.

The 1995 Revision, which was adopted at WRC-95, constitutes a revision of the International Telecommunication Union (ITU) Radio Regulations, to which the United States is a party. It provides for the simplification of the Radio Regulations, the introduction of new global mobile-satellite services, and new regulatory provisions both for non-geostationary satellites operating in the same frequency bands as geostationary satellites and for other new space services that share spectrum with the space research and terrestrial services.

Subject to the U.S. declarations and reservations mentioned above, I believe the United States should become a party to the 1995 Revision, which will facilitate the development of mobile-satellite and non-geostationary satellite orbit communication services by U.S. Government and industry. It is

my hope that the Senate will take early action on this matter and give its advice and consent to ratification.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 7, 2004.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 8.

Statement on Congressional Passage of the "Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004"

December 8, 2004

I commend the Congress for passing historic legislation that will better protect the American people and help defend against ongoing terrorist threats.

We already have taken numerous steps to improve our intelligence capabilities, and the "Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004" further strengthens intelligence gathering and operations. The legislation includes important reforms, such as creating a strong Director of National Intelligence with full budget authority to integrate and manage the foreign and domestic activities of the Intelligence Community. In addition, the law will further enhance the National Counterterrorism Center, established earlier this year and tasked with ensuring a unified effort across the Government for counterterrorism activities. It will also preserve the chain of command in our Cabinet departments and agencies and the military by respecting the clear lines of authority within the executive branch.

We remain a nation at war, and intelligence is our first line of defense against the terrorists who seek to do us harm. I am pleased the measure also contains many critical law enforcement tools that I have called for that will help make America more secure. I look forward to signing this landmark piece of legislation into law.

**Statement on the Resignation of
Anthony J. Principi as Secretary of
Veterans Affairs**

December 8, 2004

As a valuable member of my Cabinet, Tony Principi has served as a tireless advocate for 25 million veterans. He has insisted on results, and he has gotten results. Under Tony's leadership, we have honored our veterans for their service and sacrifice by increasing and improving health care services, working to eliminate the waiting list for medical care, and cutting the disability claims backlog. I appreciate his efforts to improve access to health care for low-income veterans and those with service-related disabilities. As we fight the war on terror, Tony has played a vital role in helping to streamline the transition from military to civilian status for our newest veterans.

I thank Tony for serving our veterans and our country with integrity and dignity. He is a good man and a good friend. I am grateful to Tony, Liz, and the entire Principi family.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also made available Secretary Principi's letter of resignation.

**Statement on Signing the
Consolidated Appropriations Act,
2005**

December 8, 2004

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 4818, the "Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005" (CAA). The CAA, consisting of eleven Divisions, consolidates into a single Act several appropriations bills that the Congress normally passes separately each year to fund the operations of the Federal Government, and also several bills that are not normally part of an appropriations bill.

Many provisions of the CAA are inconsistent with the constitutional authority of the President to conduct foreign affairs, command the Armed Forces, protect sensitive information, supervise the unitary executive branch, make appointments, and make recommendations to the Congress. Many other

provisions unconstitutionally condition execution of the laws by the executive branch upon approval by congressional committees.

The executive branch shall construe as advisory provisions of the CAA that purport to direct or burden the Executive's conduct of foreign relations or to limit the President's authority as Commander in Chief. Such provisions include: in the Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations Act, sections 406, 611, 609, 627, and the provision regarding voting in the United Nations Security Council under the heading "Contributions for International Peacekeeping Activities"; in the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act, sections 506, 514, 531, 547, 561, 562, 580, 585, 593, and the provisions entitled "Other Bilateral Economic Assistance, Economic Support Fund" and "Andean Counterdrug Initiative"; as well as in Division J ("Other Matters"), section 3(b)(3) of the 225th Anniversary of the American Revolution Commemoration Act.

The executive branch shall also construe the provisions of the CAA in a manner consistent with the President's authority to supervise the unitary executive branch, including the authority to direct which officers in the executive branch shall assist the President in faithfully executing the law. Such provisions include in the Transportation-Treasury Appropriations Act, sections 618 and 628, and language relating to review by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) of executive branch orders, activities, regulations, transcripts, and testimony, particularly language relating to OMB review of certain matters in reports to be submitted to the Congress through the Secretary of the Army.

The executive branch shall construe provisions in the CAA that purport to mandate or regulate submission of information to the Congress, other entities outside the executive branch, or the public, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to withhold information that could impair foreign relations, national security, the deliberative processes of the Executive, or the performance of the Executive's constitutional duties. Such provisions include: in the Agriculture Appropriations Act, section 717; in the Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations

Act, sections 407, 409, and provisions concerning a budget proposal under the heading “National Intellectual Property Law Enforcement Coordination Council”; in the Energy and Water Appropriations Act, sections 112, 113, and 503; in the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act, section 559; in the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Act, a provision under the heading “Department of Health and Human Services, Office of the Secretary”; in the Transportation-Treasury Appropriations Act, sections 522 and 618; in the VA-HUD Appropriations Act, section 210; and in Division J, section 16 of the L-1 Visa and H-1B Visa Reform Act.

The executive branch shall construe provisions of the CAA that purport to make consultation with the Congress a precondition to the execution of the law as calling for, but not mandating, such consultation, as is consistent with the Constitution’s provisions concerning the separate powers of the Congress to legislate and the President to execute the laws. Such provisions include: in the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act, sections 509, 512, 543, 569, 588, and provisions under the heading “International Disaster and Famine Assistance,” “Transition Initiatives,” “Andean Counterdrug Initiative,” and “Debt Restructuring”; and in the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, provisions under the heading “National Park Service, Historic Preservation Fund,” and “Administrative Provisions, Smithsonian Institution.”

The executive branch shall construe provisions that purport to require or regulate submission by executive branch officials of legislative recommendations to the Congress consistently with the President’s constitutional authority to recommend to the Congress such measures as he judges necessary and expedient. Such provisions include: in the Agriculture Appropriations Act, section 721; in the Commerce-Justice-State Appropriations Act, sections 628 and 902; in the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, section 102; in the Transportation-Treasury Appropriations Act, section 404; in the VA-HUD Appropriations Act, section 215; and in Division K, section 152 of the Small Business Reauthorization and Manufacturing Assistance Act of 2004.

In section 601 of the Energy and Water Appropriations Act, section 2 of the amended Tennessee Valley Authority Act shall be construed consistently with the President’s constitutional authority to make nominations and appoint officers. So that section 522 of the Transportation-Treasury Appropriations Act may be faithfully executed, the executive branch shall construe subsection (c), which provides that an agency privacy officer’s signature on a report to the agency inspector general shall constitute verification by the officer “that the agency is only using information in identifiable form as detailed in the report” to mean that the signature constitutes verification to the best of the officer’s knowledge after diligent inquiry.

The executive branch shall construe as calling solely for notification the provisions of the CAA that are inconsistent with the requirements of bicameral passage and presentment set forth in the Constitution, as construed by the Supreme Court of the United States in 1983 in *INS v. Chadha*. Such provisions include: in the Agriculture Appropriations Act, sections 705, 718, 736, and a provision under the heading “Food and Drug Administration, Salaries and Expenses”; in the Energy and Water Appropriations Act, section 303; in the Interior and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, sections 305, 313, 329, 332, 333, and provisions under the headings “United States Fish and Wildlife Service, Administrative Provisions,” “National Park Service, Construction,” “Department of the Interior, Departmental Management, Salaries and Expenses,” “Natural Resource Damage Assessment and Restoration, Administrative Provisions,” “Forest Service, Wildland Fire Management,” “Administrative Provisions, Forest Service,” “Indian Health Service, Indian Health Facilities,” “Administrative Provisions, Indian Health Service,” and “Administrative Provisions, Smithsonian Institution”; in the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Act, section 208 and a provision under the heading “Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation”; in the Transportation-Treasury Appropriations Act, sections 201, 211, 212, 217, 218, 403, 510, 511, 614, 623, and 642, and provisions under the headings “Department of Transportation, Office of the Secretary, Salaries and

Expenses,” “Department of Transportation, Office of the Secretary, Working Capital Fund,” “Federal Transit Administration, Administrative Expenses,” “Department of the Treasury, Departmental Offices, Salaries and Expenses,” “Internal Revenue Service, Business Systems Modernization,” “Office of Administration, Salaries and Expenses,” “High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas Program,” and “Real Property Activities, Federal Building Fund, Limitations on Availability of Revenue”; and in the VA-HUD Appropriations Act, section 111 and provisions under the headings “Department of Veterans Affairs, Departmental Administration, Construction, Minor Projects” and “National Aeronautics and Space Administration, Administrative Provisions.”

As is consistent with the principle of statutory construction of giving effect to each of two statutes addressing the same subject whenever they can co-exist, the executive branch shall construe the provision in the Energy and Water Appropriations Act under the heading “National Nuclear Security Administration, Weapons Activities” concerning transfer of funds from the Department of Defense to constitute an “express authorization of Congress” to which section 8063 of the Department of Defense Appropriations Act, 2005 (Public Law 108–287) refers.

A number of provisions in the CAA purport to allocate funds for specified projects and amounts set forth in the joint explanatory statement of managers that accompanied the CAA; to make changes in statements of managers that accompanied various appropriations bills reported from conferences in the past; or to direct compliance with a report of one committee of one House of Congress. The executive branch shall construe these provisions in a manner consistent with the bicameral passage and presentment requirements of the Constitution for the making of a law. Such provisions include in the Foreign Operations Appropriations Act, section 595; in the Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations Act, provisions under the headings “Innovation and Improvement,” “Rehabilitation Services and Disability Research,” “Higher Education,” and “Institute of Education Sciences”; in the Transportation-Treasury Appropriations Act, sections 125 and 173;

and in the VA-HUD Appropriations Act, provisions under the headings “Community Development Fund” and “Department of Housing and Urban Development, Management and Administration, Salaries and Expenses.”

Several provisions of CAA relate to race, ethnicity, or gender. The executive branch shall construe such provisions in a manner consistent with the requirements that the Federal Government afford equal protection of the laws under the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution.

Section 12 of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act authorizes overseas travel for members of the U.S. Capitol Police in support of travel by Senators. To ensure consistency with the President’s constitutional authority to conduct the Nation’s foreign affairs, the executive branch shall construe section 12 as authorizing travel for the limited purposes of advance, security, and protective functions in support of the official travel of Senators. The executive branch shall construe the term “intelligence gathering” in section 1007 of the Legislative Branch Appropriations Act, which relates to activities of the U.S. Capitol Police outside their geographic jurisdiction, as limited to collection of information for law enforcement and protective functions authorized by other laws relating to the U.S. Capitol Police, as any other construction would be inconsistent with the Constitution’s vesting of the executive power in the President.

The executive branch shall construe section 638 of the Transportation-Treasury Appropriations Act, relating to assignment of executive branch employees to perform functions in the legislative branch, in a manner consistent with the President’s constitutional authority to supervise the unitary executive branch and as Commander in Chief, and recognizing that the President cannot be compelled to give up the authority of his office as a condition of receiving the funds necessary to carrying out the duties of his office.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 8, 2004.

NOTE: H.R. 4818, approved December 8, was assigned Public Law No. 108–447.

Memorandum on Waiver of Restrictions on Providing Funds to the Palestinian Authority

December 8, 2004

Presidential Determination No. 2005–10

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Waiver of Restrictions on Providing Funds to the Palestinian Authority

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and laws of the United States, including section 552(b) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2004 (Div. D, Public Law 108–199) (the “Act”), as carried forward under Public Law 108–309, as amended, I hereby certify that it is important to the national security interests of the United States to waive the provisions of section 552(a) of the Act, as carried forward, in order to provide funds appropriated to carry out chapter 4 of part II of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961 to the Ministry of Finance of the Palestinian Authority for budget support.

You are authorized and directed to transmit this determination to the Congress, accompanied by a report in accordance with section 552(d) of the Act, and to publish the determination in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

Memorandum on Assignment of Functions Implementing the HELP Commission Act

December 8, 2004

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

Subject: Assignment of Functions Implementing the HELP Commission Act

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and laws of the United States, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code:

1. The functions of the President under subsection 637(k) of the Commerce, Justice and State, the Judiciary, and Related Agen-

cies Appropriations Act, 2004 (Division B, Public Law 108–199) (22 U.S.C. 2394b(k)) (the “Act”) are assigned to the Secretary of State (Secretary).

2. The Administrator of the United States Agency for International Development shall provide support to assist the Secretary in the performance of functions assigned by this memorandum, and the heads of executive departments and agencies with information concerning assistance programs shall furnish promptly to the Secretary, consistent with applicable law, such information as the Secretary may request to assist in fulfillment of these responsibilities for the preparation of the report to which subsection 637(k) refers.

3. The Secretary shall coordinate the receipt by departments and agencies of requests from the HELP Commission under section 637(e) of the Act for information and their responses to such requests. Such departments and agencies shall provide relevant information and responses promptly. The Secretary shall ensure that such responses occur in a manner consistent with the President’s constitutional authority to withhold information that could impair foreign relations, national security, the deliberative processes of the Executive, or the performance of the Executive’s constitutional duties.

4. Heads of executive departments and agencies shall assist the Secretary in the implementation of this memorandum.

5. The Secretary is authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

Letter to Congressional Leaders Concurring on the Designation of Funds for the African Union Security Force and Construction of a Mail Irradiation Facility in Washington, DC

December 8, 2004

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

I hereby concur with the Congress in the designation of two provisions totaling \$100

million provided in the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005 (H.R. 4818), as emergency requirements.

These funds are necessary to support the African Union security force in Darfur, as well as to construct a mail irradiation facility in Washington, D.C. Additional information is set forth in the attached letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

Memorandum on Delegation of Certain Reporting Authority

December 8, 2004

Memorandum for the Secretary of Agriculture

Subject: Delegation of Certain Reporting Authority

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby delegate to you the functions conferred upon the President by section 13 of Public Law 806, 80th Congress (15 U.S.C. 714k), to provide the specified report to the Congress.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 13, 2004]

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 9, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 14.

Memorandum on Delegation of Certain Reporting Authority

December 8, 2004

Memorandum for the Chairman of the Federal Labor Relations Authority

Subject: Delegation of Certain Reporting Authority

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby delegate to the member who has been designated by the President as Chairman the functions conferred upon the President by 5 U.S.C. 7104(e) to provide the specified report to the Congress.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 13, 2004]

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 9, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 14.

Memorandum on Delegation of Certain Reporting Authority

December 8, 2004

Memorandum for the Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Arts

Subject: Delegation of Certain Reporting Authority

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby delegate to you the functions conferred upon the President in the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 959(d)) to provide the specified report relating to the National Endowment for the Arts to the Congress.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 13, 2004]

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 9, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 14.

Memorandum on Delegation of Certain Reporting Authority

December 8, 2004

Memorandum for the Chairperson of the National Endowment for the Humanities

Subject: Delegation of Certain Reporting Authority

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby delegate to you the functions conferred upon the President in the National Foundation on the Arts and Humanities Act of 1965, as amended (20 U.S.C. 959(d)) to provide the specified report relating to the National Endowment for the Humanities to the Congress.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., December 13, 2004]

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 9, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 14.

Remarks on the Nomination of Jim Nicholson To Be Secretary of Veterans Affairs

December 9, 2004

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated. Good morning. I'm pleased to announce my nomination of Ambassador Jim Nicholson to the—to be the Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

Jim Nicholson is a patriot, a man of deep conviction who has answered his country's call many times. As a young man from Iowa, raised in modest circumstances, he became

a cadet at West Point in the late 1950s and went on to become an Army Ranger and paratrooper. As a Ranger, he fought in Vietnam, where he won multiple decorations for bravery in combat, including the Bronze Star and the Combat Infantry Badge. After 8 years on active duty, he joined the Army Reserves, where he served for 22 more years before retiring as a full colonel.

Throughout his career, Jim has shown the same honor, integrity, and commitment to service that defined his life as a military officer. He and his wife, Suzanne, have given back generously to their community and have been leaders in numerous volunteer causes in their home State of Colorado. He was a respected chairman of the Republican National Committee. And for the past 3 years, he has served as the United States Ambassador to the Vatican. Jim has worked with the Vatican to advance many vital foreign policy goals, including fighting poverty, hunger, AIDS, expanding religious liberty around the world, and ending the brutal practice of human trafficking.

I'm grateful to Jim for his superb work as our Ambassador, and I now have asked him to accept a new assignment, to serve his country and his fellow veterans.

As Secretary of Veterans Affairs, he will lead a department of more than 230,000 employees responsible for ensuring our Nation's—that our Nation's veterans receive the health care and other benefits our country has promised them. Twenty-five million Americans are military veterans who stepped forward to serve when the Nation needed them. The Nation owes them in return a VA that is dedicated to effective, prompt attention to their needs. That has been a commitment of my administration for the last 4 years, and it will remain a commitment for the next 4 years.

When confirmed by the Senate, Jim Nicholson will succeed Tony Principi, who has been a fine member of my Cabinet. Secretary Principi is a man who insists on results, and he has gotten results. Thanks to his leadership, veterans and their families have seen many improvements in VA services. They're receiving better care, and their claims are processed more quickly. Tony Principi has made it the Department's highest priority to

assist veterans with service-related disabilities, low incomes, and other special needs. He's also launched a program to help homeless veterans find permanent housing. In all his work as Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Tony Principi has shown himself to be an outstanding executive, a friend to his fellow veterans, and a goodhearted man. I'm proud of his service, and I wish him and Liz all the very best.

Jim Nicholson will build on Tony Principi's achievements in continuing to modernize the VA, especially the VA health care system. Jim has the judgment and the character and the management expertise to do this job well.

I thank him for agreeing to serve. I also thank Suzanne and other members of their family. I want to thank their son Nick and his wife, Charlotte; daughter, Katie, and son-in-law, Bo. I hope the Senate will confirm Jim Nicholson very soon. I look forward to welcoming him to my Cabinet.

Congratulations.

[At this point, Secretary-Designate Nicholson made brief remarks.]

The President. Good job, Jim. Thank you. Congratulations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:47 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary-Designate Nicholson.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Social Security Trustees and an Exchange With Reporters

December 9, 2004

The President. It's been my honor to welcome the Social Security trustees here to the Oval Office. We had a good discussion about the problems that face the Social Security system, and there is a recognition among the experts that we have a problem. And the problem is America is getting older and that there are fewer people to pay into the system to support a baby boomer generation which is about to retire.

Therefore, the question is, does this country have the will to address the problem. I think it must. I think we have a responsibility

to solve problems before they become acute. And therefore, I want to thank the trustees for their understanding and their work. I want to thank them for their recognition that this country must deal with this issue now. I look forward to working with the Members of Congress to do just that.

I had a meeting earlier on this week with Members of the United States House and Senate to discuss the importance of the Social Security issue. I fully recognize it's going to require a bipartisan effort to address this issue. I have articulated principles in the course of my campaign that I think are important. And it's very important for our—those who have retired to recognize that nothing is going to change when it comes to Social Security. And it's very important for those who are near retirement to understand nothing will change.

But for the sake of our younger workers, for the sake of younger Americans, we must be willing to address this problem. And I think it's vital to consider allowing younger workers, on a voluntary basis, to set aside some of their own payroll tax in personal accounts as part of a comprehensive solution to dealing with the Social Security issue.

So I want to thank the trustees for their hard work. I want to thank you for your understanding of the issue. And I appreciate your willingness to go out and help explain to the American people that the time is now, the time is ready for us to solve this problem.

I'll answer two questions. Scott [Scott Lindlaw, Associated Press].

Equipment for U.S. Troops

Q. Thanks, Mr. President. Secretary Rumsfeld heard some complaints from soldiers yesterday who said, among other things, they've got inadequate armor as they head into Iraq. Do you know how widespread this problem is, and what are we doing about it?

The President. First, I appreciate the fact that the Secretary went and visited our troops and took questions from the troops. I had the honor of visiting with our troops at Camp Pendleton on Tuesday. It's such an uplifting experience to be able to speak directly to the troops. And I had the honor of meeting with the families of the fallen as well.

The concerns expressed are being addressed, and that is we expect our troops to have the best possible equipment. And if I were a soldier overseas wanting to defend my country, I'd want to ask the Secretary of Defense the same question, and that is, "Are we getting the best we can get us?" And they deserve the best. And I have told many families I met with, "We're doing everything we possibly can to protect your loved ones in a mission which is vital and important." And that mission is to spread freedom and peace. And I want to thank all the troops who will be spending their Christmas season overseas, away from their families, for their sacrifice, and I want to thank the families once again for the sacrifices they have made as well.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Social Security Reform

Q. The transition to personal accounts may cost \$2 trillion. Can the country afford to borrow that much?

The President. I think what's really important in the discussions is to understand the size of the problem. And that is we are faced with a present value of unfunded liabilities of about \$11 trillion. What's important, Steve, is, before we begin any discussion, is to understand the scope of the problem. And that's why these trustees are vital in helping educate the American people and Congress as to the size of the problem. And I will not prejudge any solution. I think it's very important for the first step to be a common understanding of the size of the problem and then for Members of both parties, in both bodies, to come together, to come and listen to the options available.

We have got a member of what was called the Moynihan Commission with us. They studied this problem in detail. They made some suggestions about how to move forward in solving the problem. Much of my thinking has been colored by the work of the late Senator Moynihan and the other members of the Commission who took a lot of time to take a look at this problem and who came up with some creative suggestions.

And so I look forward to working with Congress to address this issue in a straight-forward manner.

Thank you all.

Payroll Taxes

Q. Are you against any withholding tax increase to pay for the transition, sir? Are you against—

The President. We will not raise payroll taxes to solve this problem.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:28 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the President's Commission to Strengthen Social Security.

Remarks on Lighting the Hanukkah Menorah

December 9, 2004

Welcome, everybody, to the White House. Hanukkah is a festive holiday that celebrates a great victory for freedom. We remember the liberation of Jerusalem and a miracle witnessed in the holy temple 2,000 years ago. For 8 days the oil burned, and the light of freedom still burns in Jewish homes and synagogues everywhere.

We are honored to celebrate the miracle of Hanukkah in the White House this evening. We have a beautiful menorah from the Boca Raton Synagogue in Boca Raton, Florida. Laura and I are grateful to have it here, and we thank Rabbi Kenneth Brander for making that possible.

I also thank the gentlemen from Kol Zimra, who will help us say the blessings over the candles and bless all of us with their music. Welcome.

The Talmud teaches that the menorah lights should perform no function other than to proclaim the miracle of a just and loving God. Every generation since Judah Maccabee has looked on these candles and recalled the sacrifices that are made for freedom. And in every generation, these lights have warmed the hearts of those not yet free.

Today, many Americans are sacrificing to bring freedom and hope to the oppressed. In this holiday season, we pray for the safety of our troops, for the success of the mission, and for their speedy return home.

And tonight we have asked the three eldest children of one of our Jewish chaplains, Army Chaplain Shmuel Felzenberg, now on duty

in Iraq, to do the honors of lighting the menorah. Will Menachem, Chaim, and Miriam Felzenberg are here to light the candles.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:30 p.m. in the Bookseller's Area in the East Wing at the White House.

Remarks on the Nomination of Samuel W. Bodman To Be Secretary of Energy

December 10, 2004

The President. Thank you. Good morning. Today I am announcing my nomination of Sam Bodman as Secretary of Energy. I am pleased to welcome Sam's wife, Diane, and all his family members—I emphasize “all”—for coming today. Welcome to the White House.

Sam Bodman is an experienced executive who has served in my administration as Deputy Secretary of Commerce and Deputy Secretary of the Treasury. During his varied and distinguished career in the private sector, Sam has been a professor at MIT, president of an investment firm, the chairman and CEO of an industrial company with operations worldwide. In academics, in business, and in Government, Sam Bodman has shown himself to be a problem-solver who knows how to set goals, and he knows how to reach them. He will bring to the Department of Energy a great talent for management and the precise thinking of an engineer. I thank him for agreeing to serve once again.

The Department of Energy has responsibilities that directly affect all Americans, from the security of nuclear facilities to reducing the risk of nuclear proliferation around the world to environmental cleanup to enhancing conservation and developing new sources of energy for the future. Every day, employees at the Department of Energy are working to protect the American people and to ensure that our country's homes and businesses have reliable, safe, and affordable supplies of energy.

During the last 4 years, the Department of Energy has been active and effective and has delivered important results for the American people. We've taken vital steps to up-

grade the Nation's energy infrastructure. We have begun an ambitious research program to develop a viable hydrogen-powered automobile. We have strengthened cooperation between the United States and foreign governments to safeguard nuclear materials and to fight proliferation.

For these achievements and more, the Nation is grateful to Secretary Spencer Abraham. As a United States Senator and a Cabinet Secretary, Spence has shown himself to be a man of integrity and wisdom. He's a good man, a superior public servant, and a friend, and I thank Spence for leading his Department so ably. And I wish him and Jane all the best.

During the next 4 years, we will continue to enhance our economic security and our national security through sound energy policy. We will pursue more energy close to home, in our own country and in our own hemisphere, so that we're less dependent on energy from unstable parts of the world. We will continue improving pipelines and gas terminals and powerlines, so that energy flow is reliable. We will develop and deploy the latest technology to provide a new generation of cleaner and more efficient energy sources. We will promote strong conservation measures.

In all these steps, we will bring greater certainty of costs and supply, and that certainty is essential to economic growth and job creation. And we will continue to work closely with Congress to produce comprehensive legislation that moves America toward greater energy independence. I'm optimistic about the task ahead, and I know Sam Bodman is the right man to lead this important and vital agency. So I urge the Senate to confirm his nomination without delay.

Congratulations, Sam.

[*At this point, Secretary-Designate Bodman made brief remarks.*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:44 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary-Designate Bodman.

Remarks at Fort Belvoir, Virginia

December 10, 2004

Listen, Laura and I are thrilled to be out here, and we want to thank you all for greeting us and thank you for giving us a chance to participate in this assemblyline of compassion.

First, I want to thank Elaine Rogers, who is the president of the USO of metropolitan Washington. Ned Powell—I appreciate Ned for being here as well. It turns out that my grandfather Prescott S. Bush was the first president and CEO of USO, so it's only fitting that I'm coming—working in the assemblyline. [Laughter] But I want to thank you for your leadership.

I want to thank Cheryl Hall. I want to thank Colonel T.W. Williams, the garrison commander of Ft. Belvoir. I want to thank Command Sergeant Major Andre Douglas. He reminded me that he and I spent Thanksgiving together last year in Baghdad. So it's great to see you again, Command Sergeant Major. I want to thank Mary Jo Myers, the wife of my friend General Richard Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs.

Most of all, I want to thank all the volunteers who are here. I want to thank your spirit.

So, Scott asked me what's—what are we doing? I said, "We're sending packages to our troops overseas, a package full of all different goodies, you know, a little gum, playing cards." But you can't ever thank the troops enough. This is one way of saying America appreciates your service to freedom and peace and our security. You can't put enough playing cards in there; you can't put enough sticks of gum.

But I hope our troops understand that with this package comes a lot of support and a lot of affection from not only a husband or a wife or a mom or a dad but, equally important, an average citizen who you never met, somebody who deeply appreciates your service, somebody who understands the mission, and somebody who stands solidly with you as you work to make the world a better place.

I know it's hard for our families—military families to be separated from a loved one during any time but, in particular, during the holiday season. And so we ask for God's

blessings, not only on our troops who are overseas, but we ask for the Lord's blessings on our family members.

This is—this whole operation here is cranking out a lot of care packages. So far, 480,000 soldiers overseas have received a care package. And with it, as I said, is a message of good will and hope. We're—this is an historic time we live in. The world is changing. And as it changes, as the world becomes more free, America becomes more secure and the peace we all long for becomes more real.

And so during these holiday seasons, we thank our blessings, and one of the greatest blessings of all is the United States military and their families. Thank you for having us. I look forward to coming by to thank each of you.

Our intention here is not to stop progress but to encourage progress. [Laughter] Thanks for your hard work. If any of our fellow citizens are interested to know how you can help, there's a web page set up at the Defense Department and/or at the USA Freedom Corps for ways to help the USO or any other organization that supports our United States military.

God bless you all, and thanks for letting us come by.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:08 p.m. in the USO Warehouse. In his remarks, he referred to Edward A. Powell, Jr., president and chief executive officer, United Service Organizations, Inc.; and Cheryl Laaker Hall, director, Operation USO Care Package. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Signing the Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004

December 10, 2004

Today, I have signed into law S. 2486, the "Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004." The Act modifies and extends housing, education, and other benefits for the Nation's veterans.

Section 3677(d)(2)(B) of title 38, United States Code, as enacted by section 108 of the Act, purports to require the Secretary of Veterans Affairs to make a recommendation

to the Congress on whether to continue a specified pilot project beyond its statutory expiration date, which would require enactment of legislation. Section 4332 of title 38, as amended by section 202 of the Act, purports to require officials in the executive branch to submit recommendations for legislative action in certain circumstances. The executive branch shall implement these provisions in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to supervise the unitary executive branch and to recommend for the consideration of the Congress such measures as the President judges necessary and expedient.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 10, 2004.

NOTE: S. 2486, approved December 10, was assigned Public Law No. 108-454.

**Digest of Other
White House Announcements**

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

December 4

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Philadelphia, PA, to attend the Army-Navy football game at Lincoln Financial Field. Before the game, he met with both teams in their locker rooms and participated in the opening coin toss. He watched the first half of the game from Army's side of the field and the second half from Navy's.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

December 5

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush attended the Kennedy Center Honors ceremony at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

December 6

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with President Abdoulaye Wade of Senegal. Later, on the State Floor, he and Mrs. Bush participated in the Children's Christmas Reception and Program.

Also in the afternoon, the President met with bipartisan Members of Congress to discuss Social Security.

The President announced his appointment of Gerald A. Reynolds and Ashley L. Taylor as members of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights.

The President announced his designation of Gerald A. Reynolds and Abigail Thernstrom as Chairperson and Vice Chairperson, respectively, of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, with the concurrence of a majority of the Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Kenneth Marcus as Staff Director of the U.S. Commission on Civil Rights, with the concurrence of a majority of the Commission.

December 7

In the morning, the President traveled to Miramar, CA. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had an intelligence briefing. Upon arrival, he met with Kathryn Ostapuk, whom he presented with the President's Volunteer Service Award.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Camp Pendleton, CA, where he presented the Presidential Unit Citation to the Combined Joint Special Operations Task Force SOUTH/Task Force K-BAR. Later, he had lunch with military personnel.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

December 8

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing and met with the National Security Council.

During the day, the President participated in separate holiday receptions with members of the Presidential Protective Detail and staff members of the White House and the Executive Office of the President.

December 9

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had telephone conversations with President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland and President Valdas Adamkus of Lithuania to discuss the situation in Ukraine.

In the afternoon, in an Oval Office ceremony, the President received diplomatic credentials from Ambassadors Federico Humbert de Arias of Panama, Francisco Tomas Duenas Leiva of Costa Rica, Jehangir Karamat of Pakistan, Mahamoud Adam Bechir of Chad, John Bruton of the European Commission, and Maris Riekstins of Latvia.

Later in the afternoon, in Room 476 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, the President met with rabbis and Jewish community leaders. Later, on the State Floor, he and Mrs. Bush participated in a holiday reception.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Europe in February 2005 for meetings with European leaders, beginning his consultations in Brussels, Belgium, on February 22, meeting with allied heads of state and Government at NATO. The President will also meet with the EU Presidency, the European Council, and the European Commission President.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jim Nicholson to be Secretary of Veterans Affairs.

December 10

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he participated in an interview with *People* magazine.

In the afternoon, the President dropped by a meeting of the National Security Council and participants of the U.S.-Russia Volunteer Initiative.

Later in the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Fort Belvoir, VA. Later, they returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will host Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy for a meeting and lunch on December 15.

The President announced his intention to nominate Samuel W. Bodman to be Secretary of Energy.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the President's Committee on the National Medal of Science: Bruce N. Ames; Randolph W. Bromery; Winfred M. Phillips; and Jean'ne Marie Shreeve (Chairperson).

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Helping to Enhance the Livelihood of People (HELP) Around the Globe Commission: Carol Craige Adelman; Mary K. Bush; Glenn Estess; C. Boyden Gray (Chairman); Carla Hills; and Walter H. Kansteiner.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted December 7

James William Carr,
of Arkansas, to be a member of the National Security Education Board for a term of 4 years, vice Manuel Trinidad Pacheco, term expired.

George M. Dennison,
of Montana, to be a member of the National Security Education Board for a term of 4 years, vice Bruce Sundlun, term expired.

Andrew J. McKenna, Jr.,
of Illinois, to be a member of the National Security Education Board for a term of 4 years, vice Robert N. Shamansky, term expired.

Harry Robinson, Jr.,
of Texas, to be a member of the National Museum Services Board for a term expiring December 6, 2008 (reappointment).

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released December 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Released December 7

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Trent Duffy

Released December 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 4818 and S. 2618

Released December 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing the President's upcoming visit to Europe

Released December 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary on the upcoming visit of Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2655, H.R. 4302, S. 437, S. 1466, S. 2192, S. 2486, S. 2873, and S. 3014

Statement by the Press Secretary on Bernard B. Kerik's withdrawing his name from consideration for Secretary of Homeland Security

Announcement: Securing Our Economic Future: White House Conference on the Economy, December 15–16, 2004

Acts Approved by the President

Approved December 3 *

H.R. 1047 / Public Law 108–429
Miscellaneous Trade and Technical Corrections Act of 2004

H.R. 1630 / Public Law 108–430
Petrified Forest National Park Expansion Act of 2004

H.R. 2912 / Public Law 108–431
To reaffirm the inherent sovereign rights of the Osage Tribe to determine its membership and form of government

H.J. Res. 110 / Public Law 108–432
Recognizing the 60th anniversary of the Battle of the Bulge during World War II

H.J. Res. 111 / Public Law 108–433
Appointing the day for the convening of the first session of the One Hundred Ninth Congress

H.J. Res. 115 / Public Law 108–434
Making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2005, and for other purposes

S. 150 / Public Law 108–435
Internet Tax Nondiscrimination Act

S. 434 / Public Law 108–436
Idaho Panhandle National Forest Improvement Act of 2004

S. 1146 / Public Law 108–437
Three Affiliated Tribes Health Facility Compensation Act

S. 1241 / Public Law 108–438
Kate Mullany National Historic Site Act

S. 1727 / Public Law 108–439
To authorize additional appropriations for the Reclamation Safety of Dams Act of 1978

S. 2214 / Public Law 108–440
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3150 Great Northern Avenue in Missoula, Montana, as the "Mike Mansfield Post Office"

* These Public Laws were not received in time for inclusion in the appropriate issue.

S. 2302 / Public Law 108–441
To improve access to physicians in medically underserved areas

S. 2640 / Public Law 108–442
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1050 North Hills Boulevard in Reno, Nevada, as the “Guardians of Freedom Memorial Post Office Building” and to authorize the installation of a plaque at such site, and for other purposes

S. 2693 / Public Law 108–443
To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 1475 Western Avenue, Suite 45, in Albany, New York, as the “Lieutenant John F. Finn Post Office”

S. 2965 / Public Law 108–444
To amend the Livestock Mandatory Price Reporting Act of 1999 to modify the termination date for mandatory price reporting

S. 2484 / Public Law 108–445
Department of Veterans Affairs Health Care Personnel Enhancement Act of 2004

H.R. 1350 / Public Law 108–446
Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004

S. 2042 / Private Law 108–5
For the relief of Rocco A. Trecoستا of Fort Lauderdale, Florida

Approved December 8

H.R. 4818 / Public Law 108–447
Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2005

S. 2618 / Public Law 108–448
To amend title XIX of the Social Security Act to extend medicare cost-sharing for the medicare part B premium for qualifying individuals through September 2005

Approved December 10

H.R. 2655 / Public Law 108–449
To amend and extend the Irish Peace Process Cultural and Training Program Act of 1998

H.R. 4302 / Public Law 108–450
District of Columbia Mental Health Civil Commitment Modernization Act of 2004

S. 437 / Public Law 108–451
Arizona Water Settlements Act

S. 1466 / Public Law 108–452
Alaska Land Transfer Acceleration Act

S. 2192 / Public Law 108–453
Cooperative Research and Technology Enhancement (CREATE) Act of 2004

S. 2486 / Public Law 108–454
Veterans Benefits Improvement Act of 2004

S. 2873 / Public Law 108–455
To extend the authority of the United States District Court for the Southern District of Iowa to hold court in Rock Island, Illinois

S. 3014 / Public Law 108–456
To reauthorize the Harmful Algal Bloom and Hypoxia Research and Control Act of 1998, and for other purposes