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NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:51 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, President Bush referred to Kateryna Yushchenko, wife of President Yushchenko; and Hajim al-Hasani, Speaker, Iraqi Transitional National Assembly. President Yushchenko spoke in Ukrainian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and President Viktor Yushchenko

April 4, 2005

A New Century Agenda for the Ukrainian-American Strategic Partnership

Today, the United States and Ukraine affirm a new era of strategic partnership between our nations and friendship between our peoples. We commit our nations to working together to advance freedom and security grounded in democratic principles and institutions, which form the foundation of our relationship.

We salute the people of Ukraine who claimed their right to elect freely their leadership. Their brave stand was a victory for democracy inspiring those throughout the world who yearn for freedom and dignity in the face of tyranny, isolation and oppression. The territorial integrity, security, and political and economic transformation of Ukraine are essential to building a Europe whole, free and at peace. We will work together to strengthen democratic institutions in Ukraine and to advance freedom in Europe, its neighborhood and beyond.

We will work to defeat terrorism wherever it occurs and to advance economic development, democratic reforms and peaceful settlement of regional disputes. We are grateful to the men and women of those nations who have served and sacrificed for Iraqi freedom. Today, we pledge ourselves anew to assist the Iraqi people to secure liberty, peace and prosperity, and we join our efforts to assist Iraq in its economic reconstruction. Fear and resentment, the breeding ground of terrorism, must be replaced with freedom and hope.

We also commit to work together to back reform, democracy, tolerance and respect for all communities, and peaceful resolution of conflicts in Georgia and Moldova, and to support the advance of freedom in countries such as Belarus and Cuba. Citizens in our open societies value the freedom to practice their faiths, and we are committed to promoting religious tolerance globally.

As Ukraine undertakes far-reaching reform at home, it can count on the United States for support. We applaud Ukraine's commitment to curb corruption, promote the rule of law and improve the business climate. Progress on reforms will allow Ukraine to realize its aspirations to move closer to, and ultimately join European, Euro-Atlantic and international institutions.

We will further integrate Ukraine into the world economy and promote investment and trade between our two countries. As a first step, the Ukrainian Government seeks expeditious U.S. recognition as a market economy. We agree to continue our close cooperation to ensure a process that recognizes the evolution of Ukraine's economy.

We are committed to working together to achieve Ukraine's accession to the World Trade Organization (WTO). For its part, the Ukrainian Government will seek to secure, on an urgent basis, approval of legislation and enact regulations that will facilitate accession and contribute to lasting economic reform, including in agriculture, manufacturing, services and the protection and enforcement of intellectual property rights. The United States and Ukraine are committed to working together to complete our bilateral negotiations for Ukraine's accession to the WTO in 2005. We will also cooperate on the outstanding multilateral work that must be concluded for Ukraine's WTO accession. We also support immediately ending application of Jackson-Vanik to Ukraine.

The United States supports Ukraine's NATO aspirations and is prepared to help Ukraine achieve its goals by providing assistance with challenging reforms. The United States supports an offer of an Intensified Dialogue on membership issues with Ukraine at the meeting of Alliance Foreign Ministers in Vilnius, Lithuania later this month. Our cooperation will also deepen through the U.S.-led, largest-ever NATO

trust fund to destroy obsolete and excess weaponry.

We are initiating an energy dialogue to cooperate in the restructuring and reform of Ukraine's energy sector to encourage investment, diversify Ukraine's energy supplies, reduce its energy dependence, bolster commercial competition in Eurasian energy sectors and promote nuclear safety. To advance this dialogue, we are establishing an Energy consultative mechanism between our Energy Ministries. United States Secretary of Energy Bodman will travel to Ukraine in the near future to initiate the consultative mechanism and to promote our energy and nonproliferation cooperation.

Building on our cooperation through the G–8 Global Partnership, the Cooperative Threat Reduction Program and the Proliferation Security Initiative, we pledge to begin a new chapter in the fight against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their means of delivery. We will deepen our cooperation on nonproliferation, export controls, border security and law enforcement to deter, detect, interdict, investigate and prosecute illicit trafficking of these weapons and related materials; enhance the security of nuclear and radiological sources; and dispose of spent nuclear fuel. We also agree on the importance of addressing the growing threat posed by the proliferation of ballistic missiles. In this regard, we will explore how we can work together on missile defense, including beginning negotiations on a framework to facilitate such cooperation and closer industry-to-industry collaboration.

The security and stability of nations increasingly depends on the health, well-being and prosperity of their citizens. We therefore commit to cooperate on a broad agenda of social and humanitarian issues, including halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and TB; fighting the scourge of organized crime, trafficking in persons and child pornography; and completing the Chornobyl Shelter Implementation Plan. To help complete the Chornobyl Shelter, the United States will provide an additional $45 million to the Shelter Fund. Ukraine will also provide an additional financial contribution and facilitate prompt completion of the Shelter. U.S. assistance to Ukraine will particularly focus on solidifying democratic advances through anticorruption and rule of law programs, media and NGO development, nonpartisan party and election monitor training and other steps to improve electoral institutions and practices.

We also support a bold expansion of contact between our societies. To this end, Ukraine will eliminate visa requirements for Americans, and the United States will reduce visa fees for Ukrainians. We aim to enhance citizen exchanges, training opportunities and cooperation between business communities of both countries.

We commit our two nations to stand together as global partners for freedom, security and prosperity in the 21st century.

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

Remarks on Presenting Posthumously the Congressional Medal of Honor to Sergeant First Class Paul Ray Smith

April 4, 2005

Good afternoon, and welcome to the White House. Today is a special occasion: We are here to pay tribute to a soldier whose service illustrates the highest ideals of leadership and love of our country.

Sergeant First Class Paul Ray Smith of Florida gave his life for these ideals in a deadly battle outside Baghdad. It is my great privilege to recognize his extraordinary sacrifice by awarding Sergeant Smith the Medal of Honor.

I appreciate Secretary Don Rumsfeld joining us today; Secretary Jim Nicholson of the Department of Veterans Affairs; Senator Carl Levin, Senator Bill Nelson, Senator Mel Martinez, Senator Johnny Isakson, and Congressman Ike Skelton. Thank you all for joining us.

I appreciate Secretary Francis Harvey, Secretary of the Army; General Dick Myers, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; General Pete Pace, Vice Chairman; General Pete Schoomaker, Chief of the Army.

I want to thank the Medal of Honor recipients who have joined us today: John Baker,