

in the coming years to spread prosperity and freedom and peace.

And so tonight, Mr. Prime Minister, as we celebrate the friendship of our two nations, I offer a toast to you, to your gracious wife, and to the great people of India.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:07 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gursharan Kaur, wife of Prime Minister Singh. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Prime Minister Singh.

Videotaped Remarks to the African Growth and Opportunity Act Forum

June 30, 2005

On behalf of America, I send greetings to the people of all the African nations represented at the AGOA Forum. I am grateful to all of you who have traveled far to discuss our shared vision for an Africa that is home to democracy, prosperity, and opportunity.

This is a hopeful moment in the history of Africa. The governments of many African nations are being transformed. Many African economies are vibrant and growing. In Sub-Saharan Africa as a whole, economic growth is now at its highest level in 8 years.

An important part of Africa's rising prosperity is the African Growth and Opportunity Act or AGOA. This wise legislation is reducing barriers to trade, increasing exports, creating jobs, and expanding opportunity for Africans and Americans alike.

AGOA is getting results. Political reforms in Africa have inspired confidence among American investors. Last year, U.S. exports to Sub-Saharan Africa increased 25 percent, and America's imports from AGOA countries rose 88 percent. The success of AGOA is proving that open trade and international investment are the surest and fastest ways for Africa to make progress. So last year, I was proud to sign a law extending the benefits of this vital program.

Over the next several days, you will discuss further ways to expand and diversify trade so we can sustain economic growth. I am confident that your efforts will lead to greater interest and investment in AGOA nations. You will also be offered practical information

about meeting U.S. export requirements and entering U.S. markets. As part of America's long-term commitment to increased trade with Africa, I intend to launch the African Global Competitiveness Initiative, which will give a record number of entrepreneurs access to the information and advice they need to succeed in business and foreign trade.

I appreciate the good work you are doing, and I look forward to our continued partnership on AGOA. Africa is a continent of promise and talent and opportunity, and together we will help the people of Africa realize the bright future they deserve.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's remarks were videotaped on June 30 at 4:10 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later transmission to the forum meeting in Dakar, Senegal. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 19. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the District of Columbia's Fiscal Year 2006 Budget Request Act

July 18, 2005

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to my constitutional authority and consistent with section 446 of The District of Columbia Self-Governmental Reorganizational Act as amended in 1989, I am transmitting the District of Columbia's Fiscal Year 2006 Budget Request Act.

The proposed FY 2006 Budget Request Act reflects the major programmatic objectives of the Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia. For FY 2006, the District estimates total revenues and expenditures of \$7.35 billion.

George W. Bush

The White House,
July 18, 2005.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 19.

**The President's News Conference
With Prime Minister John Howard of
Australia**

July 19, 2005

President Bush. Thank you all. Laura and I are honored to welcome Prime Minister John Howard and Janette back to the White House. We're really glad you're here. We're looking forward to having, this time, a true family lunch, upstairs. It's a chance to—for two old friends, friends who happen to be old—[laughter]—to visit and to talk and to strategize and to think aloud about how to work together.

I got to tell you, I admire John Howard a lot. He's a man of conviction. He's got backbone. He's not afraid to make the hard decision. He's not afraid to lead, and we're really thrilled you're here. Plus, he married well. [Laughter]

I appreciate a man of vision. I am looking forward to working with him in his fourth term in office, for the betterment of our own people and for the betterment of the world.

Australia and the United States share a commitment to freedom. We understand we compete against an ideology of hatred, an ideology that murders the innocent in order to achieve objectives. We know we must be steadfast and strong when it comes to bringing to justice those who would kill innocent life, like those who got killed in New York City and Washington, DC, and Bali and London and other places around the world. But we also understand that to defeat an ideology, you've got to have a better ideology, and we do, one based upon human rights and human dignity, minority rights, and freedom.

And the thing I appreciate about John Howard is he understands that. I appreciate the commitment of the Australian Government to help in the democracy movements in both Iraq and Afghanistan. We had a good talk today about the way forward in Iraq. I assured him that our position is one that says, "As the Iraqis stand up, America stands down." In other words, we're going to help Iraqis to defend themselves and, at the same time, promote a political process that will lead to a constitution—a validation of the constitution and permanent elections. We

talked as well about Afghanistan and how important it is for a country like Afghanistan to show the world what is possible when it comes to democratic institutions and freedom.

I appreciated the Prime Minister's strong advice about Malaysia and Indonesia, two really important countries. And John Howard has got a lot of experience with the leaders in those countries as well as the political process in the countries. And it's always good to visit with a friend about how he sees the world.

We talked about China and North Korea. I told him that we're committed to solving the North Korean nuclear issue in a diplomatic way and that we're pleased that the six-party talks has become renewed and that we're sincere about working with China and South Korea and Japan and Russia to bring some common sense to the leader of North Korea.

We talked about the benefits of the free trade agreement we signed: Our economies are strong and that trade will help our economies stay strong and that free trade and fair trade is important for the working people in both our countries and that we're dedicated to making sure the next round of the WTO goes forward.

All in all, we had a really good discussion, the kind of discussion you'd expect from friends. And we're looking forward to continuing it over lunch.

John, welcome.

Prime Minister Howard. Thank you very much, George. And I say to you, Mr. President, and to your wife, Laura, thank you very much for the great hospitality that you've extended to Janette and to me.

This is not only a close relationship between Australia and the United States but it is a shared commitment by two peoples who have so much history and so much in the way of common values as a basis for the relationship.

Australia and the United States have never been closer than they are at the present time. But the reason that we are so close is that we are engaged together in quite a struggle against some forces and elements of evil around the world that threaten not only the