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here for Hamas to transform itself into a political party and work with the international community and the Israeli Government.

We also touched on the issue of the nuclear issue in—of Iran. And here again, I hope between now and the time the Atomic Agency issues its next report, there will be indications and steps from the Iranian side to indicate that negotiations are not dead and that both sides can come back to the table and find a way out of this crisis. We need to be able to resolve it, and I hope there will be no steps taken to escalate the situation.

Thank you very much.

President Bush. I appreciate you. Good job. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:06 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Rebecca Garang, Minister of Transportation, Roads, and Bridges, Government of Southern Sudan; and Ambassador John R. Bolton, U.S. Representative to the United Nations.

Remarks Honoring the 2005 World Series Champion Chicago White Sox

February 13, 2006

The President. Welcome. Thank you. Be seated. They may be playing basketball, but it's always baseball season here. [*Laughter*]

The last time the Chicago White Sox won the World Series was 1917. President Woodrow Wilson was living here. Reinsdorf, I don't know if you came here then or not. [*Laughter*] There were only eight teams in the American League, and the league leader hit a total of nine home runs. After 88 years of waiting, the White Sox have earned the right to be called world champs, and we're glad you're here.

First of all, I want to welcome Jerry Reinsdorf. Some of my most joyous times in my life have been during—as a baseball owner. Harold Baines may not have thought they were so joyous, since we never won much. [*Laughter*] And one of the reasons that I ended up in baseball with my partners is because of Jerry Reinsdorf's help, and I want to thank you for that now that we've got the team here. I know how much you love the game, and I know how much you love the Chicago White Sox. And so it had to be a thrilling moment for you and Eddie and the owners that were patient for all those years you didn't win. And so I congratulate you from the bottom of my heart, and thank you for your friendship. It's great to see you.

I appreciate Ken Williams, a man who obviously knows what he's doing who is—was able to put a team together. It's easy to put stars on the field. The hard thing about baseball is to put people who can play together, and I congratulate you for being a great general manager.

I welcome Ed Farmer and the broadcasting team. Eddie, good to see you again. Thanks. I can see they all remember you—at least one person does. [*Laughter*]

It's good to be here with Bob DuPuy of baseball. I thought you're here to sign the lease, you know, but it's—[*laughter*]—another subject.

I do want to thank the members of my Cabinet who are here. It's great to see you all. I thought you all told me you were Red Sox fans. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Senator Durbin and Senator Obama from the great State of Illinois, and Don Manzullo and Roy LaHood—Ray LaHood. Thank you all for coming.

I—my question to most of these folks was like, "Were you White Sox fans at the beginning of the season?" [*Laughter*]

Audience member. Yes, he puts us on the spot.

The President. Yes, he did. No, I'm not putting you on the spot. But I know one person—elected official who was a White Sox fan at the beginning of the season. As a matter of fact, he was a White Sox fan at the beginning of his life. He's been forever a White Sox fan. He is a great mayor of a great city, and that's the mayor, his honor, Dick Daley. Thanks for coming.

Roland Hemond, good to see you, Roland. Thank you. Just showing off my baseball knowledge. Anybody that knows—[*laughter*]—knows Roland Hemond knows something about baseball. And it's good to see Harold Baines and the other coaches.

I understand Ozzie is on vacation, which I fully understand. If he's a Caribbean guy, taking a look at the weather forecast up here yesterday would have made me not want to

come as well. [*Laughter*] But I want to congratulate Ozzie Guillen, as well as the team and the staff, the coaching staff, and the managers, and all those who worked hard to make these guys ready to play. And I want to congratulate Ozzie on being a great manager, manager of the year, as well as becoming a United States citizen earlier this year. We're proud to have him as an American citizen.

I don't want to bring up the Sosa trade, so I won't—[*laughter*].

Audience member. Please don't.

The President. I won't. [*Laughter*] But it's great to see you. Harold Baines is one class act. I mean, that guy can not only hit, but he brought a lot of class into the clubhouse, and I'm really proud to see you here, Harold. Congratulations to you and the buddies you're working with.

And to the players, congratulations. We're really proud to have you here at the White House. It means a lot for baseball fans, White Sox fans, all across the country that you would take time to come and be honored here at the White House, and it's my great honor to honor you. It's a big deal to have you here.

The amazing thing about this team is you went wire to wire, which is really hard to do. You win one-nothing on opening day, and like, they're in your rearview mirror for the rest of the season. It takes a lot to win 99 games and to remain in the lead and not falter. And it says something about the character of the team that you put together and the character of the players.

I got a firsthand report from the World Series from two people I love dearly who had actually front-row seats, and that would be my mother and father. [*Laughter*] I'm not going to tell you who they were rooting for, but it didn't have much effect on the outcome of the series, I'll put it to you that way. [*Laughter*]

I was impressed as a baseball guy—at least somebody who follows it still, closely—that you had four complete games in a row in the playoffs. That's a good strategy, Jerry, to keep the bullpen—[*laughter*]—keep the bullpen fresh. [*Laughter*]

You know, there was great players, but nobody off the chart, if you know what I mean, which means you competed as a team. Jermaine Dye had an interesting quote that I think is worth sharing with people who are paying attention at this moment. He said, "From the start of spring training, everybody was hungry." He didn't say one player was hungry or a guy going into arbitration was hungry or a free agent for next year was hungry. He said everybody was hungry. They're—everybody wanted to go out there and win together. Everybody was pulling on the same rope. That's why you're the world champs. Everybody was pulling on the same rope. And that's what we're here to honor, a great championship team.

I congratulate Jermaine for being the MVP of the World Series. I congratulate Paul for being the MVP of the American League Championship Series. It must be a pretty cool feeling to hit a grand slam in the World Series. I didn't get one in Little League, much less the World Series. [*Laughter*] And you had a grand slam; you caught the last out of the season; and you witnessed the birth of your child all in the same month. Man, what a special month. The Lord has blessed you. That's why you're called Mr. "Soxtober." [*Laughter*]

I know the effect you had on White Sox fans, and it must have been electrifying. One women in her 90s said, "I've been a Sox fan all my life; I never thought I'd live to see the day." Think about that—think about the joy that you all put in the hearts of this 90-year-old person, and probably some young ones, too, that were pulling for the White Sox.

The people of Chicago turned out en masse not only because you were baseball champs but because you have brought some character to the city. I want to applaud the organization for supporting inner-city Little League. I think it's really important for this great State of baseball to reach out to people of all walks of life to make sure that the sport is inclusive. The best way to do it is to convince little kids how to—the beauty of playing baseball.

I appreciate the baseball fields you're building in Chicago, kind of little centers of hope, little diamonds of joy for people to come and be able to play the greatest game ever invented. I appreciate the Chicago White Sox Charities, your support of cancer

research and cancer treatment in the metropolitan area. Most of all, I appreciate the fact that these players understand they're setting examples for young boys and girls all across Chicago, as well as the country. You're setting the example that serving something greater than yourself is important in life; coming together as a team is a heck of a lot more important and satisfying than worrying about your own batting average or your own ERA.

And so here we are in the White House, Jerry, honoring the great Chicago White Sox. I'm proud to be with you. God bless your championship and God continue to bless the country.

Paul Konerko. Mr. President, on behalf of our organization and all the fans on the South Side and all over the world, we want to present you with this jersey and jacket.

The President. I thought you were going to give me a loan. [*Laughter*]

Jermaine Dye. And also, we know deep down you probably wish this was a Houston Astros jacket. [*Laughter*]

The President. Now wait a minute——

Mr. Dye. Hopefully this will do.

Mr. Konerko. Thanks for having us here today.

The President. Actually it was a Texas Rangers jacket. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Jerry Reinsdorf, chairman, Harold Baines, bench coach, Eddie Einhorn, vice chairman, Ken Williams, general manager, Ed Farmer, radio broadcaster, Roland Hemond, executive adviser to the general manager, Ozzie Guillen, manager, Jermaine Dye, outfielder, and Paul Konerko, first baseman, Chicago White Sox; Robert A. DuPuy, president and chief operating officer, Major League Baseball; Mayor Richard B. Daley of Chicago, IL; and Sammy Sosa, outfielder, Baltimore Orioles.

Remarks Honoring the University of Texas at Austin 2005 NCAA Football Champions

February 14, 2006

The President. Please be seated, except for you guys up there. [*Laughter*] Welcome to the White House. January 4, 2006, is a day that a lot of Texas fans will never forget. I called one of those Texas fans, who shall remain anonymous. I said, "How was it?" He said, "That game was the greatest day in my life." [*Laughter*] I said, "Well, how about your wedding?" [*Laughter*] He said, "Yes, that too." [*Laughter*]

I want to welcome Mack and Sally Brown here. Congratulations, Coach, for doing something that—leading this group of great athletes to a victory that made a lot of Texans proud. I know you made a person you admire proud, and a fellow who I wish were here today, but he's not, and that's Coach Darrell Royal. We send Coach Royal our—we send him our very best, and you're following in his footsteps. You know, you've learned something about the press, in all due respect to those that are here—[*laughter*]—they tend to underestimate people sometimes—[*laughter*]—because I remember they started calling you "Mr. February." Well, today, Mack, you're giving February—the title "Mr. February" a whole new meaning. This February you brought the national champs to the White House.

As you can see, you've brought out a lot of folks here to the South Lawn. We've never had quite a celebration this big here, and it's because there's a lot of Texas fans living here in Washington. But we've got some of the university officials with us. Mr. President, Bill Powers, it's good to see you, sir. I appreciate you coming, and your wife, Kim. It's good to see Mark Yudof and Judy, as well as Samara. Good to see you all again. I see the members of the board of regents, James Huffines and Rita Clements, and other members of the board. Thank you for being here. DeLoss Dodds, I appreciate you doing a fine—there he is. Hi, DeLoss. Yes, sir.

I want to congratulate the coaching staff. One of the members of the staff has had an influence on my life. I might ask him to come up here—Mad Dog. My body is what it is today because of Mad Dog. [*Laughter*] I appreciate you. He told me once—he said, "If you ever make it to Washington, I promise you, Mr. President-to-be, I'm coming up there with a team of champions." And he did. Congratulations. I didn't know you owned a suit. [*Laughter*]

Jeff Madden. I had to get one made.