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Proclamation 7981—To Modify Duty Free Treatment Under the Generalized System of Preferences

February 22, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

1. Section 502 of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the "1974 Act") (19 U.S.C. 2462), authorizes the President to designate countries as beneficiary developing countries, and to designate any beneficiary developing country as a least-developed beneficiary developing country, for purposes of the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program.

2. Pursuant to section 502 of the 1974 Act, and taking into account the factors set forth in section 502(c) (19 U.S.C. 2462(c)), I have determined that the suspension pursuant to Proclamation 6123 of April 26, 1990, of preferential treatment for Liberia as a beneficiary developing country under the GSP should be ended.

3. Pursuant to section 502 of the 1974 Act, and having considered the factors set forth in sections 501 (19 U.S.C. 2461) and 502(c), I have also determined that Liberia should be designated as a least-developed beneficiary developing country for purposes of the GSP.

4. Section 604 of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2483), as amended, authorizes the President to embody in the Harmonized Tariff Schedule (HTS) of the United States the substance of relevant provisions of that Act, or other acts affecting import treatment, and of actions taken thereunder.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, acting under the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including title V and section 604 of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2461–67, 2483), do proclaim that:

(1) In order to reflect in the HTS the restoration of preferential treatment for Liberia as a beneficiary developing country under the GSP, general note 4(a) is modified by adding in alphabetical order "Liberia" to the list entitled "Independent Countries."

(2) In order to reflect in the HTS the designation of Liberia as a least-developed beneficiary developing country under the GSP, general note 4(b)(i) is modified by adding in alphabetical order "Liberia."

(3) The modifications to the HTS made by paragraph 1 of this proclamation shall be effective with respect to articles entered, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, on or after 15 days after the date of this proclamation.

(4) The modifications to the HTS made by paragraph 2 of this proclamation shall be effective with respect to articles entered, or withdrawn from warehouse for consumption, on or after 60 days after the date of this proclamation.

(5) Any provisions of previous proclamations and Executive Orders that are inconsistent with the actions taken in this proclamation are superseded to the extent of such inconsistency.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-second day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., February 23, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on February 24.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Extending Generalized System of Preferences Benefits to Liberia

February 22, 2006

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

I am writing to inform you of my intent to add Liberia to the list of beneficiary developing countries and to the list of least-developed beneficiary developing countries under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP). I have carefully considered the criteria identified in sections 501 and 502 of

the Trade Act of 1974, as amended. In light of these criteria, I have determined that it is appropriate to end the suspension of Liberia as a GSP beneficiary developing country and to extend least-developed beneficiary developing country benefits to Liberia.

This notice is submitted in accordance with section 502(f) of the Trade Act of 1974.

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.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report Relating to the Interdiction of Aircraft Engaged in Illicit Drug Trafficking

February 22, 2006

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

Consistent with the authorities relating to official immunity in the interdiction of aircraft engaged in illicit drug trafficking (Public Law 107–108, 22 U.S.C. 2291–4), and in order to keep the Congress fully informed, I am providing a report prepared by my Administration. This report addresses the matter of assistance for interdiction of aircraft engaged in illicit drug trafficking.

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.

Interview With Indian Journalists

February 22, 2006

The President. Quick statement. I'll be glad to answer questions. I am really looking forward to my trip. It's the first trip to India for me and my wife. We had a great dinner here with the Prime Minister. I found him to be a very decent, honorable person with whom we established warm relations. And he—I just can't tell you how—what a kind person he was and, at the same time, represented his great country's interests very well.

I do want to make something clear in the speech I gave today. I said that—as to the Kashmir interest—issue, America supports a solution that is acceptable to all sides. As you might recall in my remarks, I said, "to both sides." I would like the record to be so that the world hears me say, "all sides." I fully understand that the deal has to be acceptable to the Indians, Paks, as well as the citizens of Kashmir.

Okay?

India-U.S. Relations

Q. Yes. Mr. President, how and why has India come front and center to U.S. strategic thinking now after being on the margins for so many years?

The President. Well, as you know, there was a history, particularly during the cold war, that made it difficult for our countries to establish a close relationship. However, things change in the world. And as the post-cold war thaw developed, as—attitudes began to shift.

Secondly, the Indian economy, as a result of more transparency and openness and trade, began to change. And as the Indian economy changed, it changed the commercial relationship between the United States and India.

Thirdly, there are some common threats that make it in our interests to work together—namely terrorism. As I said in my speech today, the United States has been attacked, but India certainly understands what it means to have suffering as a result of terrorist activities. And so there's common interests that have helped to change the relationship. And I intend to seize those interests, as does the Prime Minister, in order to foster what we've called a strategic relationship.

And in my speech today, I made it clear to the American people that this relationship is in our interests, and I described the various ways it was in our interests. I think the evolution of the relationship goes to show that the world is—changes, and it's never static. And so thank you for the question.