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the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent to the *Federal Register* for publication the enclosed notice stating that the national emergency blocking the property of persons undermining democratic processes or institutions in Zimbabwe is to continue in effect beyond March 6, 2006. The most recent notice continuing this emergency was published in the *Federal Register* on March 4, 2005 (70 *FR* 10859).

The crisis constituted by the actions and policies of certain members of the Government of Zimbabwe and other persons to undermine Zimbabwe's democratic processes or institutions has not been resolved. These actions and policies pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the foreign policy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue this national emergency and to maintain in force the sanctions to respond to this threat.

George W. Bush

The White House,
February 27, 2006.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 28.

Remarks Following a Discussion With Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy and an Exchange With Reporters

February 28, 2006

President Bush. We'll have some opening statements. I will answer two questions from the U.S. side. The Prime Minister will answer two questions from the Italian side.

I welcome my friend to the Oval Office. Every time I meet with the Prime Minister my spirits are raised because he is such a positive, optimistic person. The Prime Minister is a strong leader. He's a man of his word. He has brought stability to the Italian Government. Obviously, it's important for an American President to be able to work with somebody in a consistent manner, and I appreciate the stability that the Prime Minister has brought to our close ally and friend.

We had a lot of discussion on important issues. We discussed the war on terror, and I thanked the Prime Minister for his strong leadership. We discussed the NATO role in Afghanistan. We discussed Iraq and the need for strong allies to continue to support the democracy movement there. I sought the Prime Minister's opinions on Iran. It was a very constructive dialog.

And finally, I want to thank the people of Italy for hosting the Winter Olympics. You did a wonderful job. I know firsthand how good a job you did because my wife reported back. She loved her experience. And so congratulations to the Government and the people of Italy for hosting these magnificent games. And welcome.

Prime Minister Berlusconi. Thank you very much, Mr. President, for your words of appreciation which gave me a lot of satisfaction. On my behalf, I have to say that coming here and meeting the leader of a friendly country is the reason for me to go along the path that we decided to follow. It makes me firm in that.

The consensus and agreements which we always have stems from the fact that we share the same values. We both believe the problem affecting the world—is to spread democracy. Because only through democracy there can be freedom, and only through freedom can human beings give the best of themselves.

Therefore, I think we can say that we're lucky because the biggest democracy of the world has such a leader who sees problems affecting the world so clearly and proceeds and follows so firmly in this direction. President Bush and the American people have found a firm and sound ally in my Government.

After 9/11, we both decided to carry out military operations in Afghanistan. And I think we both gave strong support in the reconstruction of Iraq and in the construction of democracy in that country. And we express our appreciation and we're very close to the

American people because of the many victims that terrorism has caused. I want to reassure President Bush and his people that when an American soldier dies for the cause of democracy and freedom in that country, we feel that and consider that as a loss for ourselves. But we will continue along this path because we are convinced, as President Bush has said, that only if all democratic states join together we can bring democracy and peace all over the world.

President Bush. Welcome. Tom [Tom Raum, Associated Press].

Iraq

Q. Mr. President, there was some more sectarian violence today in Iraq. There have been hundreds, maybe thousands, killed since the bombing of the mosque. Do you fear an all-out civil war? And will the events of Iraq of the last few days affect prospects for a U.S. drawdown?

And to the Prime Minister, do you still want to withdraw Italian troops by the end of the year?

President Bush. The United States strongly condemns the bombing of holy sites. We believe people should be allowed to worship freely. Obviously, there are some who are trying to sow the seeds of sectarian violence. They destroy in order to create chaos, and now the people of Iraq and their leaders must make a choice. The choice is chaos or unity. The choice is a free society or a society dictated by the—by evil people who will kill innocents.

This weekend, I spoke to seven of the Iraqi leaders. They understood the seriousness of the moment. They have made their choice, which is to work toward a unity government. The Iraqi people made their choice. Last December, 11 million people, in defiance of the terrorists and the killers, went to the polls and said, we want to be free.

Prime Minister Berlusconi. We have announced a plan to progressively withdraw our troops, which should be completed—we have to be completed by the end of this year. And this plan has been agreed upon also together with our allies and with the Iraqi Government. Because this what is going to be possible—why this will be possible.

President Bush. Yes.

Prime Minister Berlusconi. Why is this going to be possible? Because we have, all together with our allies, trained the Iraqi troops and the Iraqi soldiers and the law enforcement so that the Iraqi Government itself will be able to guarantee the security of its people through their own forces.

So as far as the province which is under our control is concerned, we have 3,000 soldiers there, troops which will be withdrawn by the end of this year. But we have trained 10,000 law enforcement people who can guarantee the respect of peace.

Questions, Italian.

Italy-U.S. Relations

[*The reporter spoke in Italian, and the question was translated by an interpreter.*]

Q. The first question is to President Bush. Should the center left win in Italy, since they have different views from President Berlusconi, will the relations between the United States and Italy continue to be as they are? Will they be proved worse? And then with a question to Prime Minister Berlusconi, Prodi has just declared that President Bush has just organized for President—for Prime Minister Berlusconi a farewell party?

Prime Minister Berlusconi. You have a possibility to answer no comment.

President Bush. That's right, yes. [*Laughter*] No, look, it's—obviously, there's an election. There must be an election, so the question is about pure politics. I have—my relationship is not a political relationship with this man; it's a strategic relationship. And this strategic relationship is important for both our peoples, and it's important to help lay the foundations for peace. Okay? [*Laughter*]

Caren [Caren Bohan, Reuters].

Dubai Ports World/Homeland Security

Q. Mr. President, since you're the final arbiter of the Dubai Ports deal, are you still inclined to approve it? And do you stand by your veto threat?

President Bush. My position hasn't changed to my message to the Congress. And I appreciate the fact that the companies concerned have asked the Congress for a review of all the security implications.

Let me just make something clear to the American people: If there was any doubt in my mind or people in my administration's mind that our ports would be less secure and the American people endangered, this deal wouldn't go forward. And I can understand people's consternation because the first thing they heard was that a foreign company would be in charge of our port security, when in fact, the Coast Guard and Customs are in charge of our port security. Our duty is to protect America, and we will protect America.

On the other hand, this company is buying a British company that manages the ports. And by the way, there are a lot of foreign companies managing U.S. ports. And so my question to the Members of Congress as they review this matter is, one, please look at the facts. And two, what kind of signal does it send throughout the world if it's okay for a British company to manage the ports, but not a company that has been secure—been cleared for security purposes, from the Arab world? So I look forward to a good, consistent review. You don't need to interpret. That's a U.S. question.

One at a time.

Italy-U.S. Relations

[*The reporter spoke in Italian, and the question was translated by an interpreter.*]

Q. Just a few minutes ago, President Bush praised stability. I would like to know from both of you what role did stability play in your personal relationship and in the relationship between the two countries?

President Bush. Well, first of all, a personal relationship is based upon mutual trust. And I have found Silvio to be a person of his word. Look, sometimes we don't agree, but at least you know where he stands. He is—and that matters, by the way, for a person to keep his word. In politics, people always try to look the easy—find the easy path. I like somebody who makes up his mind based upon principle.

And obviously there's a practical reason why it's important to have stability. Because if a government is changing every year, it requires a person in my position to constantly have to reacquaint yourself. And that's what I meant by stability. It's much easier to make common policy when you're dealing with a person from one year to the next.

Prime Minister Berlusconi. As far as I'm concerned, I can only add that we brought into politics the values which pertain to the world of work and business, and the world of sport. Because in politics, people changing frequently their minds and positions are considered to be professional. [*Laughter*] While on the contrary in the world of business or the world of sports, a person who changes constantly his position and never keeps his promises is cornered or even set outside.

President Bush. Thank you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:43 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A reporter referred to Romano Prodi, candidate for Prime Minister of Italy. Prime Minister Berlusconi spoke partly in Italian, and those portions of his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Proclamation 7986—Save Your Vision Week, 2006

February 28, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Many Americans suffer from diseases and disorders of the eye that can affect their vision and quality of life. During Save Your Vision Week, we highlight how basic eye care and protection can help citizens maintain and enjoy healthy eyesight.

An important part of ensuring physical well-being includes making healthy choices and adopting habits that can prevent disease and injury. Many of the problems that lead to blindness each year can be avoided with simple steps to protect the eyes, such as wearing sunglasses and using protective eyewear while working in hazardous environments or participating in sports.

Because the first noticeable symptom of many eye diseases is often vision loss, early detection is vital. As a result of the Medicare Modernization Act, diabetes screenings and glaucoma tests for eligible beneficiaries are now covered by Medicare as a part of an initial physical exam for new Medicare beneficiaries. Medicare also covers glaucoma