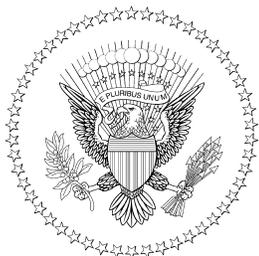


Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, March 13, 2006
Volume 42—Number 10
Pages 397–452

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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, March 10, 2006

Remarks Following Discussions With President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan and an Exchange With Reporters in Islamabad, Pakistan

March 4, 2006

President Musharraf. With your permission, Mr. President—ladies and gentlemen, it's indeed a great day; it's our honor, it's a proud privilege for Pakistan to receive President Bush, Mrs. Laura Bush, the First Lady, and such a large delegation from the United States. We are extremely glad that this has happened and the President is in our midst.

In our discussions, first of all, I expressed Pakistan's deepest regrets on the very sad incident of the killing of a United States diplomat in Karachi. We know that it has been timed very viciously to vitiate the atmosphere during the President's visit, but I'm very glad and I'm extremely grateful to the President for showing understanding and showing also the resolve not to let such terrorist acts interfere in the normal process of our strategic cooperation.

I also expressed Pakistan's gratitude to the President for the assistance that we got in the relief operations and the reconstruction activity of the earthquake in our hour of need. I don't think without the assistance of the Chinooks of United States and the medical teams, the hospitals, that we could have met the challenges of the relief operation in the earthquake. And we look forward to increased involvement—or sustained involvement of United States in assisting us in the reconstruction activity. So, our extreme gratitude to United States.

Ladies and gentlemen, Pakistan and United States have always had a strategic partnership, a strategic relationships all along. Today with my interaction with the President, we have revived and maybe further strengthened this relationship. We have laid the foundations of a very strong, sustainable, broad-based, and a long-term relation-

ship between Pakistan and United States. And this relationship includes, first of all, commencing our United States-Pakistan strategic dialog in an institutional manner, creating an institutional methodology of doing that, and talking of—within this, talking of trade and investment, talking of defense relationships, cooperation in education, and above all, cooperation in our fight against terrorism and extremism.

I did express my gratitude to the President also for his efforts towards resolution of disputes in the region, to bring peace into the region, and a special reference to the resolution of the Kashmir dispute. I did request the President to remain involved in facilitating a resolution of all disputes including, obviously, the Kashmir dispute.

Last of all, I did touch on the very thorny issue of the act, blasphemous act against our Prophet, peace be upon him. I did express the concerns of the Muslim world, in general, who condemn such acts and who reject the issue of justifying these acts in the name of freedom of press. May I say that the President did show concern, and I'm extremely grateful to him for showing concern toward the sentiments of the Muslim world.

In the end, I would like to say that, again, that I look forward to an era of cooperation, of strategic relationships with you, with the United States. And may I add on a personal note, I look forward to sustaining this great friendship that I have developed with you, personally, Mr. President. Thank you very much again for coming to Pakistan and doing us this honor of hosting. Thank you very much.

President Bush. Mr. President, thank you. Laura and I are really glad to be here, and we want to thank you and Ms. Musharraf for your hospitality. We do have a good friendship. It was displayed last night when I got off Air Force One and your daughter was there to greet us. And that was a really kind gesture, and I thank you very much for

that. I particularly thank your daughter for coming out.

We've had a—we're going to have a full day. We've just had a lengthy one-on-one discussion about common interests. Then we invited members of our Government in to continue our discussion. I'll talk a little bit about the earthquake relief—I mean, the—yes, the earthquake relief in a minute. But I am looking forward to the meeting with a cross-section of Pakistani society, which will take place later on today, and I'm particularly interested in cricket. I understand you've lined up a little cricket exhibition for us, and maybe I'll take the bat, I don't know. We'll see. [*Laughter*] I'm kind of getting old these days.

Mr. President and I reaffirmed our shared commitment to a broad and lasting strategic partnership. And that partnership begins with close cooperation in the war on terror. President Musharraf made a bold decision for his people and for peace, after September the 11th, when Pakistan chose to fight the terrorists. The American people appreciate your leadership, Mr. President, and so do I.

Pakistan has captured or killed hundreds of Al Qaida terrorists. Pakistan has lost brave citizens in this fight. We're grateful to all who have given their lives in this vital cause. We honor the Pakistanis who continue to risk their lives to confront the terrorists. This week's bombing in Karachi shows again the war on terror goes on. America mourns the loss of all killed in the attack. We send our condolences to the family of David Foy, and we send our condolences, as well, to the families of the Pakistanis who lost their lives. We're not going to back down in the face of these killers. We'll fight this war, and we will win this war together.

Pakistan is an important partner in fighting proliferation. Pakistan agreed to join the Container Security Initiative, an international effort to stop the spread of dangerous material shipments. And I thank you for that, Mr. President. We'll continue to work together to ensure that the world's most dangerous weapons do not end up in the hands of the terrorists.

We support democracy in Pakistan. President Musharraf understands that in the long run, the way to defeat terrorists is to replace an ideology of hatred with an ideology of

hope. And I thank you for your extensive briefing today on your plans to spread freedom throughout your country. President Musharraf envisions a modern state that provides an alternative to radicalism.

The elections scheduled for 2007 are a great opportunity for Pakistan. The President understands these elections need to be open and honest. America will continue to work—working with Pakistan to lay the foundations of democracy. And I appreciate your commitment.

Pakistan and India now have an historic opportunity to work toward lasting peace. President Musharraf and Prime Minister Singh have shown themselves to be leaders of courage and vision. I was reflecting with the President how much the atmosphere has changed since I first became inaugurated as President. You think back to 2001 and 2002, there was a lot of tension, a lot of concern. And yet the President has stood up and led the process toward better understanding, better exchanges with India. I encourage all sides to continue to make progress on important issues, including Kashmir.

We're proud to help our Pakistani friends recover from the devastation of the earthquake. We just saw a film of the earthquake. It is staggering what the people of this country have been through. It is unbelievable how many people lost their lives, how many people have lost their homes. And we're proud to help. We're proud to help a great Pakistan military take the lead. We're proud to stand with the NGOs and those who deliver compassion as this country rebuilds. We stand by our commitment, our pledge of one-half billion dollars for recovery and reconstruction.

We're cooperating to strengthen our economies. I congratulate the Government on its strong economic growth. We are in the process of working on a bilateral investment treaty that will encourage foreign investment and more opportunity for the people of Pakistan. We strongly support the President's vision of a reconstruction opportunity zone in remote areas of Pakistan and Afghanistan. This vision means that products manufactured in those zones would be eligible for duty-free entry into the United States. And so we're working to create such zones.

Our idea is to continue to work with our strong friend and ally, work to keep the peace, to win the war on terror, to help the spread of democracy and freedom, and to encourage vital economic development.

Finally, we look forward to continuing to work with the President on his vision to make sure that education is spread throughout this country, particularly for young girls. President Musharraf briefed us on his education plans today, and they're farsighted, and they're visionary. The United States looks forward to helping you, sir, implement that vision.

All in all, it's an honor to be here. Thanks for your hospitality. I'm looking forward to taking some questions.

Kashmir/Pakistan-U.S. Relations

Q. Thank you, President Musharraf.

President Bush, in your address to the Asia Society you talked about a strategic partnership with Pakistan, as did President Musharraf just now. And, of course, you just mentioned the bilateral investment treaty. Could you list some possible tangible milestones in forging this relationship and taking it forward? And also, on Kashmir, what are your perceptions on how this can be resolved, given that you've met both the leaders of Pakistan and India now? Thank you.

President Bush. The best way for Kashmir to be resolved is for leaders of both countries to step up and lead. And that's exactly what President Musharraf has done, and that's what Prime Minister Singh has assured me he wants to do, and that is to resolve this situation.

Obviously, there needs to be some confidence in order for the countries to go forward, and therefore, the confidence-building measures that the Governments have taken is beginning to bear fruits, in my judgment—increased trade, increased transportation. I thought it was interesting that the Indians sent supplies immediately upon the devastating natural disaster. In other words, things are—the atmosphere is changing.

However, in order for a deal to get done, it requires commitment at the leadership level. And in my perspective, I've seen the commitment, and the role of the United

States is to continue to encourage the parties to come together.

The first part of the question was tangible evidence. Well, part of the tangible evidence of our relationship is a half-a-billion-dollars commitment to help this country rebuild; it's the \$66 million last year to help implement the President's education initiative. It is the idea of developing reconstruction zones—I mean trade zones in remote areas so that goods manufactured in those zones can get duty-free access to the United States, on the theory that economic vitality and economic prosperity for people in the remote regions of Pakistan will help defeat the terrorists and their hateful ideology.

Sam Bodman is coming, our Secretary of Energy, to work with Pakistan on Pakistan's energy needs. There's a variety of things we can continue to cooperate on. Perhaps the most important one of all is to defeat these terrorists, some of whom are lodged here in Pakistan, some of whom have tried to kill your President. And close cooperation is needed to defeat them.

Terry Hunt [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

War on Terror

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, what would you like to see President Musharraf do in the war on terrorism that he's not doing now? Is the United States getting the access and the help that it needs to go after Al Qaida and Usama bin Laden?

President Bush. There's a lot of work to be done in defeating Al Qaida. The President and I know that. We've spent a good while this morning talking about the work that needs to be done. The best way to defeat Al Qaida is to find—is to share good intelligence to locate them, and then to be prepared to bring them to justice. So, one, the first question that I always ask is whether or not our intelligence sharing is good enough, and we're working on it to make sure it's good enough. Intelligence is gathered by—in a lot of different ways, but the key thing is that, one, it be actionable, and two, it be shared on a real-time basis.

Secondly, in order for Pakistan to defend herself from Al Qaida, she must have equipment necessary to move quickly, without tipping off the enemy. The President is training up special forces teams to do just that. And so while we do have a lot of work to be done, it's important that we stay on the hunt. Part of my mission today was to determine whether or not the President is as committed as he has been in the past to bringing these terrorists to justice, and he is. He understands the stakes; he understands the responsibility; and he understands the need to make sure our strategy is able to defeat the enemy.

Do you want to say something to that?

President Musharraf. May I add to this, with your permission—the first element that one needs to be very clear is the intentions. I think it's very clear that the intentions of Pakistan and my intentions are absolutely clear that we are a very strong—we have a strong partnership on the issue of fighting terrorism. So the intentions should be very clear.

Then we need to strategize. We have strategized. We have strategized how to deal with terrorism, and then strategized also on how to deal with extremism, which is very different from terrorism. So we have strategized both. Then we need to come forward to the implementation part. Now, the implementation has to be strong also, with all the resolve. We are doing that also. So if at all there are slippages, it is possible in the implementation part. But as long as the intention is clear, the resolve is there, and the strategy is clear, we are moving forward toward to delivering, and we will succeed. That is what I think. Yes.

Energy/Pakistan-U.S. Relations

Q. My question is to President Bush. President Bush, you've talked about a strategic relationship with Pakistan. You've also talked about helping Pakistan economically, and you just mentioned that the Energy Secretary is going to be visiting Pakistan. So Pakistan has some general energy needs, and in that respect, the Iran-Pakistan-India gas pipeline seems to have hit some problems because of the opposition from the United States. So what are some specific options that you have to address Pakistan's energy con-

cerns? And are you working on offering Pakistan a civilian nuclear deal? Thank you.

President Bush. As I mentioned, Secretary of Energy Sam Bodman will be here to work with the Pakistan Government. Our beef with Iran is not the pipeline; our beef with Iran is the fact that they want to develop a nuclear weapon. And I believe a nuclear weapon in the hands of the Iranians would be very dangerous for all of us. It would endanger world peace. So we're working very hard to convince the Iranians to get rid of their nuclear ambitions.

As to the civilian nuclear program, first of all, I understand—the President brought this issue up with me—that Pakistan has got energy needs because of a growing economy. And he explained to me the natural gas situation here in the country. We understand you need to get natural gas in the region, and that's fine.

Secondly, we discussed a civilian nuclear program, and I explained that Pakistan and India are different countries with different needs and different histories. So, as we proceed forward, our strategy will take in effect those well-known differences.

Toby [Tabassum Zakaria, Reuters].

Democracy in Pakistan

Q. Mr. President—

President Bush. Which one?

Q. Both of you can address this. Some critics—

President Bush. Trying to get you a question. [Laughter]

Q. Some critics say that Pakistan is not moving quickly enough on democratic reforms. And moves towards democracy has been one of the hallmarks of your administration. How do you respond to critics who say you are holding back on pressing President Musharraf on moves toward democracy because of its help in the war on terrorism? And I would also ask—

President Bush. Well, we discussed—we spent a lot of time talking about democracy in Pakistan, and I believe democracy is Pakistan's future. And we share a strong commitment to democracy. I just mentioned in my opening address the idea of making sure the elections go forward in 2007, and I discussed that with the President. President Musharraf

has made clear that he intends to hold elections—I'll let him speak for himself on this issue, but democracy has been definitely a part of our agenda here, as it should be.

Secondly, one of the things that the President is constantly talking about is the ways to defeat extremism. We're talking about making sure that we work closely to bring the terrorists to justice, but in the long run, he understands that extremism can be defeated by freedom and democracy and prosperity and better education. And we spent a lot of time strategizing on that subject today.

I'll let you speak for yourself on the subject, though, Mr. President.

President Musharraf. Unfortunately, we are accused a lot on not moving forward on democracy. But as I understand democracy, we are a—may I venture to tell you what we've done in line with democracy to introduce sustainable democracy in Pakistan. The first ingredient of democracy, I believe, is the empowerment of the people. We have empowered the people of Pakistan now—they were never empowered before—by introducing a local government system where we have given the destiny of their areas for development, for welfare, for progress in their own hands through financial, political, and administrative involvement.

It also—democracy also means empowerment of women. It is the first time that we have empowered the women of Pakistan, by giving them a say in the political milieu of Pakistan. Today, there are over 30,000 women in the political hierarchy of Pakistan. We have empowered the minorities of Pakistan for the first time. They have got a joint election system, where previously they had a separate election system. Therefore, they have been mainstreamed in that every person standing for elections has to go to the minorities to ask for their votes now. Therefore, they feel more a part of the Pakistani culture and Pakistan society.

Then we have empowered also—we have liberated the media and the press. If you see this press today sitting around here, and the media, previously there was only one Pakistani television. Today, there are dozens of channels. All these people sitting around are the result of my democratization of Pakistan,

opening the Pakistan society of the media—the print media and the electronic media, both. And they're totally liberated.

And then, finally—obviously, this is to do with freedom of speech and freedom of expression. And then, finally, is the issue of their having the right to vote and elect their own people. And that is what we do. Today, the senate, the national assembly, the provincial assemblies and the—of the local government is there. And they've been voted through absolute—franchise in a free and fair manner.

So, therefore, may I say that we have introduced the essence of democracy now in Pakistan. It has been done now. It never—all these things never existed before. What maybe you are talking of is merely the label which probably you are inferring on to my uniform. Indeed, and without saying that you are inferring to it, yes, indeed, that is an issue which needs to be addressed. And I will follow constitutional norms. Even now I am following constitutional norms where I have been allowed to wear this uniform until 2007—being in uniform as the President of Pakistan. Beyond 2007, yes, indeed, this is an issue which has to be addressed and it has to be addressed according to the Constitution of Pakistan. And I will never violate the Constitution of Pakistan.

So let me assure you that democracy will prevail. Sustainable democracy has been introduced in Pakistan and will prevail in Pakistan, especially beyond 2007. Long answer.

President Bush. Yes. Good job—important answer.

President Musharraf. Thank you very much.

President Bush. Very good job. Thank you again, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. In his remarks, he referred to President Musharraf's wife, Sehba Musharraf, and daughter, Ayla Raza; David Foy, a U.S. State Department official who was killed in a terrorist attack in Karachi, Pakistan, on March 2; and Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Members of the Community in Islamabad

March 4, 2006

Secretary Rice and Ambassador Crocker and I want to thank members from the civil society and members of Parliament for joining us. My trip to Pakistan is a really important trip. Pakistan is a strategic partner and a friend of the United States.

I want to thank those of you who have come to share with me and the Secretary and the Ambassador, your thoughts about how the United States can better work with the people of Pakistan.

One of the signs of a modern society is the empowerment of women. And I want to thank the women who have joined us here today to share your thoughts. And we've got the head of a bank; we've got a member of Parliament; we've got educators, heads of NGOs, businesspeople, that are all here to help us better understand the Pakistan society and how we can better interrelate.

Part of becoming closer friends is to listen, listen to concerns and to share our thoughts on common values. So we really want to thank you for being here. And thank you for your gracious hospitality to your country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:25 p.m. at the U.S. Embassy.

Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan: United States-Pakistan Strategic Partnership

March 4, 2006

President Bush and President Musharraf have affirmed the long-term, strategic partnership between their two countries. In 2004, the United States acknowledged its aspirations for closer bilateral ties with Pakistan by designating Pakistan as a Major Non-NATO Ally. The U.S.-Pakistan strategic partnership is based on the shared interests of the United States and Pakistan in building stable and sustainable democracy and in promoting peace and security, stability, pros-

perity, and democracy in South Asia and across the globe.

The two leaders are determined to strengthen the foundation for a strong, stable, and enduring relationship. This will require a significant expansion of U.S.-Pakistan bilateral economic ties, including mutual trade and investment. As a key step in this direction the United States and Pakistan are making meaningful progress toward concluding a Bilateral Investment Treaty.

Both leaders commit to working together with Afghanistan to make Pakistan and Afghanistan a land bridge linking the economic potentials of South Asia and Central Asia.

The American people feel profound sympathy for the victims of the tragic earthquake that struck on October 8, 2005. President Bush reaffirmed the United States' determination to stand by the Pakistani people as they recover and rebuild.

President Bush and President Musharraf reaffirm their condemnation of terrorism in all its forms and manifestations. Following the September 11 attacks, the United States and Pakistan joined international efforts to fight the scourge of terrorism. President Bush is grateful for President Musharraf's strong and vital support in the war on terror. The two leaders underscored the need for a comprehensive strategy for addressing the threat of terrorism and extremism. President Bush and President Musharraf will continue to work together to address political injustice, poverty, corruption, ignorance, and hopelessness. They resolve to maintain their close counterterrorism cooperation and to increase their efforts to reduce the threat of terrorism regionally and internationally.

The two leaders recognize the need to promote tolerance, respect and mutual understanding, and inter-faith harmony to strengthen appreciation of the values and norms common to the world's religions and cultures. The two leaders acknowledge with appreciation the various international initiatives in this regard including President Musharraf's concept of Enlightened Moderation. The two leaders agreed that acts that disturb inter-faith harmony should be avoided.

President Bush and President Musharraf support the peace process and composite dialogue between Pakistan and India for improvement of relations and resolution of disputes and building a better future in South Asia.

Both leaders share concern about the threat to global stability posed by the proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) and the threat of terrorist groups acquiring such weapons. President Bush and President Musharraf commit to play leading roles in international efforts to prevent the proliferation of WMD, their delivery systems, and related technology and expertise.

Strategic Dialogue

President Bush and President Musharraf are launching a Strategic Dialogue under the Strategic Partnership. The Dialogue will be co-chaired by the U.S. Under Secretary of State for Political Affairs and Pakistan's Foreign Secretary. They will meet regularly to review issues of mutual interest.

In implementation of the strategic partnership, President Bush and President Musharraf commit both countries to undertake the following steps in the areas of economic growth and prosperity, energy, peace and security, social sector development, science and technology, democracy, and non-proliferation:

Economic Growth and Prosperity

- Establish and implement strong financial sector controls that can defend against illicit finance.
- Facilitate Pakistan's economic growth through increased trade and investment links with the United States and within the region and the global economy, including through an enhanced economic dialogue encompassing bilateral cooperation for Pakistan's economic development, regional economic cooperation, and the global economy.
- The United States will provide financial support for the establishment of a Center for Entrepreneurship in Pakistan under the Broader Middle East and North Africa (BMENA) Initiative. The Center will promote entrepreneurial training and skills development to

young women and men to launch business initiatives that would generate employment opportunities.

Energy Cooperation

- Hold a High-Level Energy Meeting to inaugurate an energy working group, which will explore ways to meet Pakistan's growing energy needs and strengthen its energy security.
- Work together to develop public and private collaboration on a broad range of energy sources.

Peace and Security

- Build a robust defense relationship that advances shared security goals, promotes regional stability, and contributes to international security.
- Continue robust U.S. security assistance to meet Pakistan's legitimate defense needs and bolster its capabilities in the war on terror.
- Deepen bilateral collaboration in the fields of defense training, joint exercises, defense procurement, technology transfers, and international peace-keeping.
- Decide to increase the frequency of defense policy discussions to strengthen collaboration in the identified sectors.
- Work together to ensure the maintenance of peace, security, and stability in the South Asia region and beyond.
- Cooperate closely in international institutions, including bodies of the United Nations, on matters of mutual concern.

Social Sector Development

- Continue U.S. support in the health sector through collaborative projects and programs.
- Reinforce Pakistan's efforts to reform and expand access to its public education through continuing U.S. cooperation.
- Encourage educational programs and greater interaction and linkages between the research and academic institutions of the two countries.
- Promote exchange of students and scholars, fellowship programs, and

strengthened research collaboration, including through institutional support for higher education and training.

- Establish a wide-ranging High Level Dialogue on Education to enhance and strengthen cooperation in the education sector.

Science and Technology

- Build capacity in Pakistan and work toward increased cooperation in science, technology, and engineering.
- Improve the quality, relevance, or capacity of education and research at Pakistan's institutions of higher education in the field of science and technology.
- Establish Pakistan-U.S. Joint Committee on Science and Technology to develop collaborative activities and relationships between the scientific and technological communities and institutions of both countries.
- Enhance institutional capacity of Pakistan in the area of environment through exchange of experts and developing linkages and collaborative projects with relevant U.S. institutions.

Democracy

- Support Pakistan as it develops strong and transparent democratic institutions and conducts free and fair elections to ensure sustainable democracy.

Non-proliferation

- Support Pakistan's non-proliferation efforts and strengthen its capabilities, by:
 - Supporting Pakistan's measures for implementation of its new export control law, including adoption of enforcement regulations and establishment of a new export licensing body; and
 - Providing U.S. assistance through the Department of Energy's Second Line of Defense Program (Megaports) and the Department of Homeland Security's Container Security Initiative.

Presidential Visit

- President Bush thanked President Musharraf and the people of Pakistan for the generous reception and warm

hospitality accorded to him, Mrs. Laura Bush, and members of the Presidential delegation during their stay in Pakistan.

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

The President's Radio Address

March 4, 2006

Good morning. I have been traveling this past week in South Asia on a trip to Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan.

My first stop was Afghanistan, and I was thrilled to see firsthand the incredible transformation that has taken place there. Before September the 11th, 2001, Afghanistan was ruled by a cruel regime that oppressed its people, brutalized women, and gave safe haven to the terrorists who attacked America.

Today, the terror camps have been shut down, women are working, boys and girls are back in school, and 25 million people have now tasted freedom. The Afghan people are building a vibrant, young democracy that is an ally in the war on terror, and America is proud to have such a determined partner in the cause of freedom.

I was pleased to visit with President Karzai and members of his Cabinet and Government. I told them America will stand with the Afghan people as they build a free society and fight our common enemies, and we will see the mission through without wavering.

I was honored to visit our troops at Bagram Air Base who are serving on the frontlines of the war on terror. It was a privilege to thank them in person for their courage and for the sacrifice of their families back home. These fine Americans are standing watch for liberty halfway across the world, and I told them that all Americans were proud of them.

The next stop on my trip was India. Like America, India has endured terrorist attacks on its own soil. Like America, India is a democracy that understands the best way to ensure peace is to advance freedom. And like America, India is working to help nations like Afghanistan build the institutions of a free and democratic society.

Relations between the United States and India have never been better. One important aspect of this partnership is working together

to meet the energy needs of our growing economies, especially through the use of clean and safe nuclear power. On my trip, the United States and India reached an historic agreement to share civilian nuclear technology as India brings its civilian nuclear programs under the safeguards of the International Atomic Energy Agency. This agreement is good for American security because it will bring India's civilian nuclear program into the international nonproliferation mainstream.

The agreement also is good for the American economy. The agreement will help meet India's surging energy needs, and that will lessen India's growing demand for other energy supplies and help restrain energy prices for American consumers.

Another important aspect of this partnership is the growing trade between our two countries. In the past 10 years, India has passed economic reforms that have opened its door to trade and helped raised the living standards for millions of its people. In my meetings with Prime Minister Singh, I made clear that trade between our countries must be free and fair. I know that America's workers can compete with anyone, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

Ultimately, the best way to create jobs for Americans is to expand markets for American products. Today, India is one of the fastest-growing export markets for goods, services, and crops. India has now a growing middle class that is estimated at 300 million people—more than the entire population of the United States. Middle class Indians are buying home appliances from American companies like Whirlpool. Younger Indians are enjoying McCurry meals from McDonald's. And Air India has recently ordered 68 planes from Boeing. Last year, our exports to India grew by more than 30 percent. And all this trade is creating jobs and opportunity in America. So we will continue to work to level the playing field for our workers, farmers, and businesses—and deliver a better life for all Americans.

The final stop on my trip was Pakistan, another important ally in the war on terror. After September the 11th, 2001, President Musharraf understood that he had to make a fundamental choice. He could turn a blind

eye and leave his people hostage to the terrorists, or he could join the free world in fighting the terrorists.

President Musharraf made the right choice for his people, and America appreciates his leadership. Since he joined the fight against terror, President Musharraf has faced several attempts on his life, yet President Musharraf has not faltered. He understands that the terrorists are a threat to the peace and security of the Pakistani people and the world.

Our relations with Afghanistan, India, and Pakistan will enhance the security of our country. By working with these leaders and the people of these three nations, we're seizing the opportunities this new century offers and helping to lay the foundations of peace and prosperity for generations to come.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:05 a.m., local time, on March 3 in the Muarya Sheraton Hotel and Towers in New Delhi, India, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m., e.s.t., on March 4. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 3 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to Prime Minister Manmohan Singh of India; and President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan in Islamabad

March 4, 2006

Mr. President and Mrs. Musharraf and distinguished guests, Laura and I thank you for the warm and gracious welcome. It's such a pleasure to be here in Pakistan. We've had a fantastic day. I was fooled by a googly. *[Laughter]* Otherwise, I'd have been a better batsman. But it's been a full day, Mr. President, and your hospitality has overwhelmed us, and thank you.

I bring greetings from my fellow citizens, in particular the thousands of Pakistani Americans who call my land home, folks who have really made a tremendous contribution to the United States of America.

Our nations are strong allies, Mr. President. We're allies in the war on terror, and

we're allies in laying the foundation of lasting peace. In the struggle in the war on terror, Pakistan and America has lost many good citizens. And we ask for God's blessings on their families. Pakistan's efforts to enhance peace and security have earned the respect and the admiration of the American people. When the terrorists are defeated and when the peace is won, our two nations will share the peace together.

The American people care deeply about the people of Pakistan. We watched with horror and great sorrow as last year's earthquake devastated this ancient land. Americans have experienced the trauma of natural disasters in our own country, and we've witnessed the power of friendship to rebuild lives and to restore hope. I'm proud of the U.S. relief efforts. I want to thank those officials who are here to help the people of Pakistan.

I'm pleased that our helicopters earned the name "angels of mercy" from those who were anxious for help in the mountains. I'm proud that our Government and businesses and private organizations and individual families also saw your need and gave their time and treasures to help rebuild this vital nation. Our donations reflect the compassion of our country, the respect we have for Pakistan. And we will make good on our donations, Mr. President.

America and Pakistan have confronted great challenges together, and we will continue to do so. Americans will support the Pakistani people as they take further steps toward democracy, expand educational opportunities for boys and girls, and create prosperity through innovation and global trade. Pakistan has a bright future because of its proud people and because of the hard work of a strong leader. President Musharraf, you've proved yourself to be a man of courage and vision. I appreciate the honor of being your partner in working for peace and security.

And so, Mr. President, with gratitude for what we've accomplished and with optimism for what we will yet accomplish, I offer my respect to you, to your gracious wife, and to the people of Pakistan.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:10 p.m. at the Aiwan-e-Sadr. In his remarks, he referred to Sehba Musharraf, wife of President Musharraf.

The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Musharraf.

Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony for Edward P. Lazear as Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers

March 6, 2006

The President. Welcome. I'm here to swear in Ed Lazear as the Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers. Thank you all for coming. Eddie has brought a lot of his family here. For the family members who are here, welcome; thanks for supporting the old boy. [Laughter] I particularly want to thank Vicki and Julie, as well as his mother, Rose, for being here. I'm really glad you all are here. Does he still listen to you, Rose? [Laughter]

Mrs. Lazear. Oh, yes. He's a good boy.

The President. That's a good boy. Well, I hope my mother is saying the same thing about me. [Laughter]

Eddie is an award-winning economist from Stanford University. He's been a part of the Hoover Institute. He's taught and lectured in Asia and the Middle East and Europe. He's advised governments in the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe on economic reform. He's conducted path-breaking research in the field of labor economics. He's applied his theories to real-world problems like education and immigration and compensation and productivity. He's well-rounded, and he's plenty smart.

He also understands how to get his message across. After all, he was voted teacher of the year at Stanford's Graduate School of Business. That's not an easy accomplishment. He's a founding editor of the Journal of Labor Economics. He's a good man, who has served with distinction before in Government. He served on my Advisory Panel on Federal Tax Reform. And he's going to be an outstanding Chairman of my Council of Economic Advisers.

He succeeds another outstanding economist who still bears the title of Chairman, and that's Ben Bernanke. He just wears his title over at another place here in Washington. Eddie and Ben are part of a long line

of talented economists who have served my administration as CEA Chairman, including Harvey Rosen, Greg Mankiw, and Glenn Hubbard. I want to thank Eddie for agreeing to serve our country. I appreciate his understanding of the important role he will play in my administration.

I appreciate those who are here from my administration. I see Carlos Gutierrez, the Secretary of Commerce. Carlos, welcome. Josh Bolten, a member of the Cabinet, the Office of Management and Budget. Senator Bob Bennett, thank you for coming, Senator. I really appreciate you taking time to be here. Congressman Jim Ryun and Anne are with us as well. Eddie told me he's a runner. Don't run with Ryun, Eddie.

Eddie leads my Council of Economic Advisers at an exciting time. It's a time of opportunity and a time of challenge. Today, the American economy is the envy of the world. Last year our economy grew at a healthy 3.5 percent, faster than any other major industrialized nation. We've added more than 4.7 million new jobs during the last 2½ years. That's more than Japan and the European Union combined. Our unemployment rate is down to 4.7 percent. That's the lowest level since July of 2001. That's lower than the average of the 1970s, the 1980s, and the 1990s. More Americans now own their homes than at any time in our history. More minority families own homes than any time in our Nation's history. This administration believes in ownership. We love the fact that somebody opens the door to their own piece of property, says, "Welcome to my piece of my property; welcome to my home."

Real after-tax income is up more than 8 percent per person since the beginning of 2001. New orders for durable goods, like machinery, have risen sharply. We've had 33 straight months of growth in our manufacturing sector. Productivity has grown strongly over the last 5 years. Our small-business sector is thriving. America is productive; America is innovative; America is entrepreneurial. And I'm counting on Eddie's good advice to keep it that way.

We understand it's important to continue to promote pro-growth economic policies and sound initiatives with one goal in mind, to keep America the economic leader in the

world so our people can find jobs and realize their dreams.

Our economy grows when Americans have more of their own money to spend, save, and invest. In the last 5 years, we passed tax relief that left \$880 billion in the hands of American workers and small businesses and families. And the American people have used that money to help produce more than 4 years of uninterrupted economic growth.

The tax relief that we passed is set to expire in the next few years. If we do nothing, American families will face a massive tax increase they do not expect and will not welcome. Because America needs more than a temporary expansion, we need more than temporary tax relief. So in my State of the Union, I called upon the United States Congress to make the tax relief we passed permanent.

I also outlined several other steps to keep this economy strong and growing. We need to address our dependence on foreign sources of oil. You might remember I stood up in front of the country and said, "We have a real problem; we're addicted to oil." I meant what I said. I call upon Congress to join with this administration to pass the Advanced Energy Initiative that will fund research in cleaner, more reliable technologies like hydrogen and ethanol, so we become less dependent. For the sake of our national security and economic security, we must not be dependent on foreign sources of oil.

We need to ensure that Americans get the health care they need. And so we're working to make health coverage more affordable and available and portable through measures like health savings accounts and association health plans.

To maintain our edge in innovation and creativity, I proposed the American Competitiveness Initiative, to promote cutting-edge research and to ensure that American children get math and science skills they need for the jobs of the 21st century.

One of the most important steps we need to take to keep this economy strong is to restrain Federal spending in Washington. That's hard to do. Everybody thinks their spending idea is a great idea. They all—all these spending ideas sound wonderful on paper. Here's our view: It's important for the

Congress to set priorities. We are a nation at war, and one of the top priorities of this Government will continue to be to make sure our troops have the equipment they need to defend the United States and our citizens have what it takes to defend the homeland.

That means we must be careful about how we spend the taxpayers' money in other areas. In other words, we can't be all things to all people when it comes to spending the taxpayers' money. And we're making some good progress. Last year of the previous administration, nonsecurity discretionary spending rose by 15 percent. Every year of my Presidency, we've reduced the growth of this spending, and last year, at my request, Congress passed legislation that actually cut this spending. I thank them for their hard work.

Now I look forward to working on my—having them work on my 2007 budget that Josh Bolten is taking up to the Congress. This budget will save the taxpayers money, will cut—will continue to cut nonsecurity discretionary spending, and keep us on track to cut the deficit in half by 2009.

In the long run, the biggest challenge to our Nation's fiscal health is entitlement spending. I recently signed a bill to save nearly \$40 billion over 5 years in entitlement spending. The 2000 [2006] * budget we submitted proposes to save another \$65 billion over 5 years. We don't need to cut this mandatory spending; we need to slow its growth. In other words, we don't need to put our cars into reverse; we just need to slow it to meet the speed limit.

As well, I'm deady earnest in calling members of both parties together to work to pass—to propose something we can pass out of Congress that will modernize Social Security and Medicare. It's time for Congress to set aside needless partisan politics and focus on the future of our country with real, substantive entitlement reform.

We also need to do more to reform the way Washington spends people's money. Under the current system, Congress can slip spending provisions into large bills where they never get debated and never get discussed. Those are called earmarks. As a re-

sult, too many bills passed by Congress include unnecessary spending. These earmarks reflect special interests instead of the people's interest. I'm pleased that Congress is working on earmark reform, and I encourage Members of Congress to pass meaningful and real earmark reform.

Here's another idea for them: They need to give the President the line-item veto. Congress gave the President a line-item veto in 1996, but because with problems the way the law was written, the Supreme Court struck it down. That should not be the end of the story. So in my State of the Union, I called for new legislation creating a line-item veto that will meet Supreme Court standards. Today I'm sending Congress legislation that will meet standards and give me the authority to strip special interest spending and earmarks out of a bill and then send them back to Congress for an up-or-down vote. By passing this version of the line-item veto, the administration will work with the Congress to reduce wasteful spending, reduce the budget deficit, and ensure that taxpayer dollars are spent wisely.

Congress is on record, by the way, that the President should have the line-item veto authority. It has been approved previously. Forty-three Governors have this line-item veto in their States. Now it's time to bring this important tool for fiscal discipline to Washington, DC.

I'm really optimistic about the future of this country. I don't think there's any problem we can't tackle. It's really important as we put progrowth policies in place, to understand that the engine of growth is the ingenuity of the American people. I like to remind people: Government doesn't create wealth. Government creates an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit can flourish, in which people can realize their dreams, in which small businesses can grow to be big businesses, in which the newly arrived can have a chance to realize the great promise of our country.

Eddie understands that, and that's why I'm proud to have him by my side. And again, Eddie, thank you for agreeing to serve our great Nation. And now Andy Card will administer the oath of office.

* White House correction.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Victoria Lazear, wife of Edward P. Lazear, and their daughter, Julie; Ben S. Bernanke, Chairman, Federal Reserve System; and Anne Ryun, wife of Representative Jim Ryun. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Chairman Lazear.

Statement on Representative William M. Thomas' Decision Not To Seek Reelection

March 6, 2006

Congressman Bill Thomas is a friend and a man of great accomplishment who has been a very effective leader in the House of Representatives. As chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, he helped pass legislation that has brought about strong job creation and economic growth, improved health care for people of all ages, and ensured that America continues to benefit from free and fair trade. For the last 28 years, he has worked tirelessly for the people of the Bakersfield area in California and represented them with honor and distinction. I appreciate Bill's commitment and dedication to public service, and I look forward to working with him for the remainder of the session. I wish Sharon, Bill, and the entire Thomas family all the best in the future.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Legislative Proposal To Give the President a Line-Item Veto

March 6, 2006

To the Congress of the United States:

In my State of the Union Address, I asked the Congress to give the President a line item veto. Today, I am sending the Congress a legislative proposal to give the President line item authority to reduce wasteful spending. This legislation will help to limit spending and ensure accountability and transparency in the expenditure of taxpayer funds.

Although the Congress achieved significant spending restraint this past year, appropriations and other bills that are sent to my

desk still contain spending that is not fully justified, is a low priority, or is earmarked to avoid the discipline of competitive or merit-based reviews. When this legislation is presented to me, I now have no ability to line out unnecessary spending. In 1996, the Congress gave the President a line item veto—an important tool to limit wasteful spending—but the Supreme Court struck down that version of the law in 1998.

My proposed legislation, the "Legislative Line Item Veto Act of 2006," would provide a fast-track procedure to require the Congress to vote up-or-down on rescissions proposed by the President. There has been broad bipartisan support for similar proposals in the past. Under this proposal, the President could propose legislation to rescind wasteful spending, and the Congress would be obligated to vote quickly on that package of rescissions, without amendment. The same procedure would apply to new mandatory spending and to special interest tax breaks given to small numbers of individuals.

Forty-three Governors have a line item veto to reduce spending. The President needs similar authority to help control unjustified and wasteful spending in the Federal budget. I urge you to promptly consider and send me this legislation for enactment to reduce unnecessary spending and help achieve my goal of cutting the deficit in half by 2009.

George W. Bush

The White House,
March 6, 2006.

Remarks at a Celebration of Women's History Month and International Women's Day

March 7, 2006

Thank you all. Thank you, Laura. Welcome to the White House. We like to call this the people's house. I want to remind people from around the world that we're only temporary occupants here, but we're trying to make the most of our time here.

I want to welcome you all as we celebrate Women's History Month and International

Women's Day. Thanks for coming. We recognize the many contributions women have made to our country. We also honor those who have helped bring equality and freedom to women around the world.

A lot of strong women have influenced my life—[laughter]—beginning with my mother. [Laughter] She told me to say that, by the way. [Laughter] I am blessed to have a strong wife. And we are raising two young women to become independent, capable risk-takers—[laughter]—so that they can realize their dreams.

I have been blessed to have strong women in my Government. My administration is better off to have really capable women who feel comfortable marching in the Oval Office and giving the President their frank advice. [Laughter]

I want to thank Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao, who is with us; Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings—she's been giving me frank advice ever since I was the Governor of Texas. [Laughter] I want to thank Karen Hughes—Ambassador Karen Hughes, the Under Secretary for Public Diplomacy and Public Affairs. She's been really giving me a lot of advice. [Laughter] Paula Dobriansky, the Under Secretary for Democracy and Global Affairs; Harriet Miers, my attorney—by the way, for those of you who aren't familiar with America, it's always good to have a good attorney. [Laughter] Harriet Miers is my attorney. She gives me legal advice.

Fran Townsend is in charge of our—part of the National Security Council in charge of homeland security. Protecting our homeland is a vital part of America, and I rely upon a very capable, strong woman to give me good advice.

I want to thank my friend Pat Brister who is the U.S. Representative to the United Nations Commission on the Status of Women, for joining us. Pat is—there she is—from Louisiana, where Laura and I will be tomorrow, by the way.

I want to thank Congresswoman Judy Biggert from the State of Illinois. She's with us. For those of you who are unfamiliar with our Congress, we have a lot of very capable women who are running for office and have become elected—and making a big dif-

ference in the Halls of Congress. I appreciate the members of the diplomatic corps who have joined us. Thank you all for coming. It's good to see so many ambassadors and ambassadors here today. [Laughter]

I want to thank the members of the United States-Afghan Women's Council who are here. You all are making a significant difference in the lives of people who are beginning to feel the freshness of the light of democracy. And as Laura mentioned, we were in Afghanistan with President Karzai. And there's nothing better than being in a country that's beginning to realize the benefits of freedom, particularly women who have been completely suppressed under the Taliban are now beginning to see the beautiful—breathe that beautiful air of a free society. And so I want to thank the members of the United States-Afghan Women's Council for being so diligent and caring and staying with this important issue—that issue being the freedom of women in Afghanistan.

I want to thank the members of the International Republican Institute and the National Endowment for Democracy. Thank you for hosting our international delegates. Thank you for helping them in their training exercises and sharing expertise and compassion. I want to thank the delegations from Afghanistan and Iraq and around the world for joining us today. You're welcome in the United States of America—I hope you feel that way.

The struggle for women's rights is a story of strong women willing to take the lead. That's particularly true in the United States of America, where women like Susan B. Anthony and Alice Stone Blackwell and Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Rosa Parks changed the course of our Nation's history. Our history was altered because strong women stood up and led. These women broke down barriers to equality. We weren't always an equal society in America, and it required strong leadership to help make America a more equal place. And we're a better place because of the leadership of women throughout our history.

Women today are shaping the future of America as scientists and entrepreneurs and teachers and astronauts. They serve our Nation with honor and distinction in our Armed

Forces. The distinguished leadership of women like Secretary of State Condi Rice—where is she—she had an excused absence—[laughter]—and Justice Sandra Day O'Connor has helped open doors for women for future generations.

Across the world, the increasing participation of women in civic and political life has strengthened democracies. A democracy is strong when women participate in the society. The nation of Liberia recently elected its first woman President, and Laura and Secretary Rice were there to witness her swearing-in. I look forward to welcoming her to America, by the way.

Women lead Governments in Germany, in Chile, and the Philippines. In Rwanda, nearly half of the members of Parliament are women. And women are now holding more parliamentary seats in nations like Morocco and Jordan and Tunisia.

In the last 4 years, we have also seen women make great strides in Afghanistan and Iraq—countries where just a few years ago, women were denied basic rights and were brutalized by tyrants. Today in Afghanistan, girls are attending school. That speaks well for Afghanistan's future. Women hold about 20 percent of the seats in the National Assembly. Nobody could have dreamed that was possible 5 years ago. In last fall's elections, about 40 percent of the voters were women. In Iraq, women are voting in large numbers, and when the new Iraqi Parliament takes office, women will hold about one-quarter of the seats.

The United States is working to increase opportunities for women in these two emerging democracies. Through the Iraqi Women's Democracy Initiative, we're providing funds for Iraqi women to receive training in political leadership and learn about the legislative process, the judicial system, and how to defend and promote human rights.

In Afghanistan, we're helping women find ways to join the political process at the local level and to acquire the skills they need for advocacy and communication. We're working with the private sector in America to help Afghan women travel abroad to learn more about the political process and to be able to exchange ideas with fellow women, just like which is taking place here in America today.

Our work to help build vibrant and functioning democracies in Afghanistan and Iraq is part of a larger effort to encourage progress across the broader Middle East. We refuse to accept the status quo in the United States of America, particularly when we find women repressed. As women become a part of the democratic process, they help spread freedom and justice and most importantly of all, hope for a future.

One important program is the Women's Democracy Network, which is holding its inaugural meeting this week in Washington. This conference provides an opportunity for women leaders around the world to connect with each other and serve as mentors for women in developing democracies so they can help shape the future of their nations.

As we work to advance the equality of women in the world's newest democracies, we must remember that many women in other countries around the world are still struggling for basic rights in places like Iran and North Korea and Burma. America will help women stand up for their freedom, no matter where they live.

Recently I welcomed two women from Belarus who were concerned about the repressive nature of their Government. We stand with the women in Belarus who advocate human rights in a runup to this month's election. America will continue to support courageous reformers around the world—women like Burmese dissident Aung San Suu Kyi, who has spent years under house arrest for her efforts to bring democracy to her nation.

We will continue to fight the threats to women across the world. We'll continue working with nations around the world to end the sexual exploitation and the trafficking of women and young girls. It breaks our hearts, our collective hearts, to realize many young girls are sold into sex slavery, and we will use our prestige to stop that evil process.

We will continue working to fight the transmission of HIV/AIDS. America is proud to lead the world in the struggle to defeat this pandemic. We understand that by defeating the pandemic of HIV/AIDS, we will help children and women, who have been disproportionately affected by this horrible pandemic.

We live in extraordinary times. These are exciting times. They are times that require a firm conviction in our beliefs that all people are created equal. We've seen the fall of brutal tyrants and the rise of democracy. We're also seeing women take their rightful place in societies that were once closed and oppressive. And the United States welcomes the arrival of women into these oppressive societies. There's no doubt in my mind, empowering women in new democracies will make those democracies better countries and help lay the foundation of peace for generations to come.

So Laura and I welcome you to the White House. We're really glad you're here. We're so glad you're here, we're about to throw a reception on your behalf. [*Laughter*] And we wish you to enjoy it.

May God bless everybody here. May God bless your families, and may God bless our respective nations. Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:44 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; former Supreme Court Associate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor; President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia; Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany; President-elect Michelle Bachelet of Chile; President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines; Irina Krasovskaya and Svyatlana Zavadskaya, widows of prodemocracy advocates who disappeared in Belarus; and Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy in Burma. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Remarks on Election Day in Crawford, Texas

March 7, 2006

The President. Thank you all.

Q. Was it worth coming?

The President. Yes, you bet. It's always good to come home to vote. And I urge all people to vote when given a chance. It's always good to be home in Texas—get a little rest here in my homestead and then heading over to New Orleans tomorrow and Mississippi.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:43 p.m. at the Crawford Fire Department. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Executive Order 13397— Responsibilities of the Department of Homeland Security With Respect to Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

March 7, 2006

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to help the Federal Government coordinate a national effort to expand opportunities for faith-based and other community organizations and to strengthen their capacity to better meet America's social and community needs, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. *Establishment of a Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives at the Department of Homeland Security.*

(a) The Secretary of Homeland Security (Secretary) shall establish within the Department of Homeland Security (Department) a Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (Center).

(b) The Center shall be supervised by a Director appointed by Secretary. The Secretary shall consult with the Director of the White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives (WHOFBCI Director) prior to making such appointment.

(c) The Department shall provide the Center with appropriate staff, administrative support, and other resources to meet its responsibilities under this order.

(d) The Center shall begin operations no later than 45 days from the date of this order.

Sec. 2. *Purpose of Center.* The purpose of the Center shall be to coordinate agency efforts to eliminate regulatory, contracting, and other programmatic obstacles to the participation of faith-based and other community organizations in the provision of social and community services.

Sec. 3. *Responsibilities of the Center for Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.* In carrying out the purpose set forth in section 2 of this order, the Center shall:

(a) conduct, in coordination with the WHOFBCI Director, a department-wide audit to identify all existing barriers to the participation of faith-based and other community organizations in the delivery of social and community services by the Department, including but not limited to regulations, rules, orders, procurement, and other internal policies and practices, and outreach activities that unlawfully discriminate against, or otherwise discourage or disadvantage the participation of faith-based and other community organizations in Federal programs;

(b) coordinate a comprehensive departmental effort to incorporate faith-based and other community organizations in Department programs and initiatives to the greatest extent possible;

(c) propose initiatives to remove barriers identified pursuant to section 3(a) of this order, including but not limited to reform of regulations, procurement, and other internal policies and practices, and outreach activities;

(d) propose the development of innovative pilot and demonstration programs to increase the participation of faith-based and other community organizations in Federal as well as State and local initiatives; and

(e) develop and coordinate Departmental outreach efforts to disseminate information more effectively to faith-based and other community organizations with respect to programming changes, contracting opportunities, and other agency initiatives, including but not limited to Web and Internet resources.

Sec. 4. Reporting Requirements.

(a) *Report.* Not later than 180 days from the date of this order and annually thereafter, the Center shall prepare and submit a report to the WHOFBCI Director.

(b) *Contents.* The report shall include a description of the Department's efforts in carrying out its responsibilities under this order, including but not limited to:

- (i) a comprehensive analysis of the barriers to the full participation of faith-based and other community organizations in the delivery of social and community services identified pursuant to section 3(a) of this order and

the proposed strategies to eliminate those barriers; and

- (ii) a summary of the technical assistance and other information that will be available to faith-based and other community organizations regarding the program activities of the agency and the preparation of applications or proposals for grants, cooperative agreements, contracts, and procurement.

(c) *Performance Indicators.* The first report shall include annual performance indicators and measurable objectives for Departmental action. Each report filed thereafter shall measure the Department's performance against the objectives set forth in the initial report.

Sec. 5. Responsibilities of the Secretary. The Secretary shall:

(a) designate an employee within the department to serve as the liaison and point of contact with the WHOFBCI Director; and

(b) cooperate with the WHOFBCI Director and provide such information, support, and assistance to the WHOFBCI Director as requested to implement this order.

Sec. 6. General Provisions. (a) This order shall be implemented subject to the availability of appropriations and to the extent permitted by law.

(b) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by a party against the United States, its agencies, or entities, its officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

George W. Bush

The White House,
March 7, 2006.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:05 a.m., March 8, 2006]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on March 9.

Remarks Following a Tour of Recovery Efforts in the Areas Damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in New Orleans, Louisiana

March 8, 2006

I want to thank you all for coming. I want to thank Colonel Setliff for the tour that he just gave the Governor and the mayor and myself, along with Laura and part of our party. I want to thank Colonel Wagenaar for the aerial tour. We just flew over affected parts of Orleans Parish and Jefferson Parish and St. Bernard Parish, and getting a view of the progress that is being made.

I particularly want to thank my friend Don Powell for his hard work in coordinating Federal efforts with the Governor and the mayor. Governor Blanco and Mayor Nagin have been by my side when I've come down here, and I really appreciate them being a part of the recovery efforts. I want to thank Walter Isaacson and David Voelker, the members of the Louisiana Recovery Authority. They were on Air Force One today to make sure I fully understood—understand the strategies that the local folks are putting in place to help the good people of this part of the world recover from the devastating storm.

You know, we just came from a neighborhood where people are fixing to—are in the process of cleaning up debris. We went there because the mayor and the Governor thought it was important for me to see firsthand the devastation of the storm in certain neighborhoods and the progress that is being made for cleaning up the debris. There's still a lot of work to be done; no question about it. And obviously, as the plan gets laid out and as the housing plan I'm fixing to discuss comes to fruition, people will feel more comfortable in granting the local authorities the right to remove debris from their homes to be cleaned up.

But I want to share a story about a fellow, Romallice Harris, I met. He was there—was part of the construction crew. I asked him, I said, "Where were you during the storm?" He said he felt like he could ride it out. He heard the evacuation orders but thought it would be all right to ride out the storm. He lived on the third floor of an apartment complex. And he described to me and the Gov-

ernor and the mayor what it was like to see the water start to rise up to the second floor of the building. He and his three children and his wife and another relative were finally rescued by a boat.

I said, "What happened to you?" He said, "Well, I went to Salt Lake City, Utah." In other words, his is an example of what happened to the good folks in this part of the world. He watched the rising waters, and then he just had to abandon the part of the world he loves.

From there, the Federal Government helped fly him to Chicago, where he had some relatives—or a relative. He now has come back to work in the city he loves, New Orleans, with the hopes of rebuilding his life. His wife and children are still in Chicago; they're going to school there. But as he told us, he says he looks forward to bringing them home, bringing them back to Louisiana, to have his children educated right here. And I'm convinced he'll succeed. And our job at all levels of government is to provide the confidence and the help necessary so that people like Romallice Harris come home.

I appreciate the determination by the folks down here to rebuild. I fully understand, and I hope our country understands, the pain and agony that the people of New Orleans and Louisiana and the parishes surrounding New Orleans went through. But I think people would be impressed by the desire of the people in this part of the country to pick up and move on and rebuild. And that's why I'm so pleased that the Governor and the mayor have joined me, so we can discuss the importance of implementing a strategy that will help this part of the world rise again.

The first part of the strategy is to make sure these levees are strong. And we fully understand that if the people don't have confidence in the levee system, they're not going to want to come back. People aren't going to want to spend money or invest. I just got a briefing from the Army Corps of Engineers that said we're on schedule to repair the damage by the June 1st deadline. They're identifying and correcting design and construction deficiencies; so as we go into the start of the hurricane season, the levees will

be equal or better than what they were before Katrina.

The Corps is identifying areas that weren't damaged but that need additional attention. Over here you can see the, or one of the walls that are being built. I mean, there's a lot of concrete and a lot of steel being put in the ground to protect the levee system. By September of next year, additional improvements will be completed, bringing the entire levee system up to the full authorized design height, making it better and stronger than before.

Congress heard our message about improving the levees, but they shortchanged the process by about \$1.5 billion. And so in order to help fulfill our promise on the levees, Congress needs to restore the \$1.5 billion, to make this a real commitment, to inspire the good folks down here that they have a levee system that will encourage development and reconstruction.

As I mentioned, we went by the Ninth Ward to see the debris removal that was taking place. The vast majority of debris on public property has been removed. About 80 percent of the debris not related to demolition has been cleared. Most of the remaining debris is on private property, in yards or inside houses that need to be gutted or demolished. To get the debris, the residents need to give permission, in most cases, to the local authorities. And so they need to get back to their houses so they can decide what to keep and what to remove.

The problem is, obviously, many homeowners are still displaced. And that's why we're working at all levels of government to encourage evacuees to inspect their properties and to salvage what they can and to make decisions about the future.

Of course, the decisionmaking for the individual homeowners is going to be made easier when Congress funds the \$4.2 billion that I asked them to fund for the State of Louisiana for housing purposes. Now, this \$4.2 billion is in conjunction with the \$6.2 billion of CDBG money for housing grants. The \$4.2 billion request was done in a coordinated effort with State and local authorities.

The reason I thought this number made sense is because the number fits into a well-thought-out plan that has been put together

by the local folks. The housing plan has been coordinated by State authorities with local authorities as well as with HUD authorities. In other words, we've all been working together to figure out how to come up with a housing plan that will restore the confidence of the people of this important part of our country. And in order to make sure that housing plan meets its goals, Congress should make sure that the \$4.2 billion I requested goes to the State of Louisiana.

I'm also confident that this plan is solid right now. It's well-thought-out, and when it's submitted to HUD, because there's been close coordination, it should be approved on a timely basis.

And so again, I want to thank you all for inviting me to come back. I've always had a soft spot in my heart for Louisiana. Some of you might recall, I grew up across the line, over there in Texas, and really enjoyed my stay here when I came. I was pleased to see that the Mardi Gras parades went well, Mr. Mayor. As the mayor and the Governor described to me, it was as much of a homecoming as anything else. A lot of folks came back, came home. And that's what we want. We want people coming home. And the Federal Government will do our part, in conjunction with our State and local partners.

I ask for God's blessings on the people of this part of the world, and thank the hard-working folks here for working around the clock to get this part of the country up and running again. Thank you.

Now, Laura is traveling with me. She's got a very important announcement she'd like to make as well.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:33 a.m. at the Industrial Levee Canal. In his remarks, he referred to Col. Lewis F. Setliff III, USA, St. Louis district engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco of Louisiana; Mayor C. Ray Nagin of New Orleans, LA; Col. Richard P. Wagenaar, USA, New Orleans district engineer, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers; and Walter Isaacson, vice-chairman of the board, and David Voelker, board member, Louisiana Recovery Authority. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on Recovery Efforts in the Areas Damaged by Hurricanes Katrina and Rita in Gautier, Mississippi

March 8, 2006

Thank you all for coming. Laura and I are really honored to be back in Mississippi with the Governor and the first lady. And most of all, we're pleased to be with those who are helping to educate the young here on the gulf coast.

We, of course, want to thank those who are helping this important part of the country rebuild. Part of rebuilding the community is to make sure that the schools are able to function well and teach children how to read and write and add and subtract. Laura and I are committed to making sure no child is left behind anywhere in the United States of America.

Particularly want to thank the superintendent, the principal, and the teachers for helping this important part of the country recover from devastating storm.

And now it's my honor to introduce the First Lady, who is going to make an announcement.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:22 p.m. at College Park Elementary School. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Haley Barbour of Mississippi and his wife, Marsha; Wayne V. Rodolfich, superintendent, Pascagoula School District; and Suzanne Ros, principal, College Park Elementary School. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Remarks on New Home Construction in Gautier, Mississippi

March 8, 2006

The President. It's good to hear people hammering, isn't it?

Governor Haley Barbour. It really is. It's great for us in Mississippi.

The President. It is. People are building their lives back. And one of the reasons I've come down here is to remind people that there's still a lot of people hurting. And I talk to the Governor all the time about what

we can do to make sure this part of the world rebuilds. It's great to see rebuilding.

Haley has been real good about talking to us about a variety of issues. I want to thank you for your leadership.

Gov. Barbour. Mr. President, thank you. Let me just say publicly, thank you. In the last day, President Bush and the Bush administration has made the fifth extension of the deadline for the Government to cover 100 percent of debris removal and other emergency measures. And this extension is to June 30th, when we ought to be through.

And first, I want to say thank you for that. You know, it's been a huge issue for these little communities, that they don't have any tax base—so thank you for that. That was made public yesterday. I'm glad to announce today that last night HUD approved our plan for our homeowner grant program. We intend to make \$4 billion of community development block grant money from the Federal Government available to Mississippians, like Jerry and Elaine, so that they can rebuild their homes or build new homes, to get themselves out of the flood plain.

Tomorrow, we have been allowed by HUD to post our plan. You can see it on our web site, [mshomehelp—m-s-h-o-m-e-h-e-l-p— .gov](http://mshomehelp-m-s-h-o-m-e-h-e-l-p-gov), and we'll have to have a 2-week comment period, at the end of which we'll start taking applications. But somebody can go onto the web site now, Mr. President, or at noon tomorrow, and find out all the information they need to get, what all the rules are. And I'm pleased to say that the Akins qualify.

The President. That's good.

Gov. Barbour. They built this house up above the new flood plain, 25 feet above sea level, which is one of the requirements so that we reduce risks. And thank you for doing that.

The President. I always felt that it was really important to say to the Governor and to local folks, "Come to Washington with a plan to help people rebuild." I really didn't want the plan to be designed by Washington people; I wanted it to be designed by local folks. And Haley has put together a Mississippi plan. He not only put the plan together; he also came to Washington, DC, and helped get the plan funded—with the help of two fine United States Senators—

Gov. Barbour. The best pair of United States Senators in the country.

The President. —and Members of the House. And so I want to congratulate you and your team for putting together a good plan. Our job and our purpose is to help people like the Akins rebuild. And we want this part of the country rising up from the devastation. You know, people really didn't lose their spirit down here. But our job is to make sure that that spirit is able to kind of recapture the hope and optimism of the people and let that spirit flourish.

And I want to thank you for being a good leader. I appreciate you all having us. Listen, thanks. After all that work I've done, I'm thirsty. [Laughter]

Mr. Jerry Akins. Yes, sir. We have some lemonade, and we have some refreshments.

The President. You do? That's good. The other thing that's interesting is that we've got the Allens here from the Allen Brothers Construction Company; these are local folks—

Gov. Barbour. The Martins. [Laughter]

The President. The Martins. As I said, the Martins. You probably thought I said, the Allens. [Laughter] I said, the Martins. [Laughter]

You know, one of the interesting things is that there is going to be a lot of work, and here are the entrepreneurs with their sons helping to build this man's house. It's neat to be with them. Small businesses, if they seize the opportunity, are going to flourish. And that's what we want. These small construction companies are going to have work to do.

The other thing about the Martins, one of the boys won the Purple Heart in Iraq. There he is right there. It's my honor to congratulate him for serving the country. Thank you. At any rate—

The First Lady. Now we're going to present Jerry and Elaine a flag for your new house.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:10 p.m. at a new home construction site.

Statement on a Proposed United States-Malaysia Free Trade Agreement

March 8, 2006

The United States and Malaysia share strong trade and investment ties and a commitment to generating prosperity through openness, democracy, and freedom. Today we seek to further strengthen the ties between our two countries by launching negotiations on a comprehensive U.S.-Malaysia Free Trade Agreement.

Once completed, a Free Trade Agreement with Malaysia will generate significant commercial, economic, political, and strategic benefits to both countries. It will improve our ties with the Southeast Asia region and strengthen our engagement in Asia. Malaysia is our tenth-largest trading partner, and the United States is Malaysia's second-largest source of imports. A U.S.-Malaysia Free Trade Agreement will advance our commitment to opening markets around the world and expanding opportunities for America's farmers, ranchers, workers, and businesses.

Remarks Following a Meeting on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

March 9, 2006

We just had a very interesting dialog here. I want to thank members of the faith community, the community-based action community, the corporate community, the foundation community for joining in a dialog about how we can continue to foster the good works of millions of our fellow citizens who deeply care about the future of our country and the plight of their fellow citizen.

One of the things that always strengthens my belief in our future is my understanding of how many acts of kindness take place on a daily basis in the United States—and it doesn't require any government edict or government law. People really care about the future of our country; millions of our citizens weep when they know somebody hurts. But nevertheless, there still needs to be focused efforts on encouraging more giving of money and time.

So I want to thank you all very much for joining us. Appreciate your being social entrepreneurs. I thank you for really strengthening the heart of the United States of America. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:49 a.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel.

Remarks at the White House National Conference on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives

March 9, 2006

Thanks for coming. Appreciate you being here. Thanks for the warm welcome. This is the second White House National Conference on Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, and I appreciate your attendance. I take this conference very seriously, and I'm glad you do as well.

The last conference was in June of 2004. Some of you were probably wondering whether I'd be back for this conference. *[Laughter]* For those of you who did think I was going to be back, it was just as matter of faith. *[Laughter]* I appreciate you being here. It's good to see some old faces—on some young people—and some new faces.

I want to thank my Secretary of Commerce, Carlos Gutierrez, for introducing me. I appreciate Secretary Elaine Chao, the Department of Labor; Secretary Jim Nicholson. It's a good sign when Cabinet members come. It shows a commitment beyond just the President.

I appreciate my friend Jim Towey. I don't know if you know Towey. There he is. His job has been to make sure that the Faith-Based and Community-Based Initiative becomes an integral part of the Government and that the White House effectively reaches out to people to assure them that if they participate in the faith-based initiative, they won't have to lose their faith. It's hard to be a faith-based program if you can't practice your faith, no matter what your faith may be. And I'm proud of the work that Towey has done.

Every time I talk about Towey, I always bring up the same old, tired line about him, but I might as well try it one more time. So he was Mother Teresa's lawyer. And I al-

ways wonder about a society where Mother Teresa actually needed a lawyer, you know? *[Laughter]* But she—they picked a good one in Towey.

I want to thank Acting Administrator Fred Schieck of the USAID. He's here because USAID must continue to reach out to faith-based programs in order to make sure that we fulfill missions around the world in a compassionate way. Stephen Goldsmith, who is the Chairman of the Corporation for National and Community Service, is with us. Steve, thanks for being here.

Congressman Tom Osborne—where is the Congressman? He's somewhere here. Anyway, I appreciate you coming, Congressman. Dr. Jim Billington, who is the head of the Library of Congress—Dr. Billington, thank you for coming. Leaders in the armies of compassion—those would be your sergeants, your lieutenants, and a few generals—thank you all for joining. And I appreciate members of the corporate community who have joined us, and foundation America, that has joined us as well. This is an important conference.

We meet at a time of great hope for the country. In my State of the Union—I stated this, and I believe it firmly—that America is witnessing a quiet transformation, a revolution of conscience, in which a rising generation is finding that a life of personal responsibility is a life of fulfillment. Part of being personally responsible in America is to love a neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself. And for those of you who are finding those who have heard the call to help interface with those in need, I thank you from the bottom of my heart. You represent the true strength of the United States of America.

Statistics matter, and you'll hear me talk about some of the results of the faith-based initiative. It's hard to be a results-oriented society unless you actually focus on results. I'd like to share some results with you to boost my belief that there is a quiet transformation taking place. Violent crime rates have fallen to their lowest level since the 1970s. Welfare cases have dropped by more than half. Drug use amongst youth is down 19 percent since 2001. There are fewer abortions in America than at any point in the last three decades. The number of children born

to teenage mothers has fallen for a dozen years in a row. I attribute the success of these statistics to the fact that there are millions of our fellow citizens all working to help people who hurt, working toward a better tomorrow.

There's a lot of work to be done, obviously. We still have pockets of poverty where people wonder whether or not the American experience belongs to them. We have place where there is hopelessness and despair. We've got people that are homeless. We've got addicts trapped into a, what appears to them, I'm certain, kind of a never-ending cycle of despondency.

In answering the challenges, staying focused on helping change America one person at a time is a vital part of government, corporate America, philanthropic America, and the faith and community-based programs. It's got to be our continued focus. Even though statistics are improving, so long as we find anybody who hurts, we all should recognize that we hurt. It's the collective conscience of America that really helps define the nature of our country, and it gives me great optimism for the future of our country.

You know, it's interesting, as I—one of my jobs is to constantly herald our strengths. I think when people recognize if you deal with problems from your position of strength, it's more likely you'll be able to solve problems. And what's interesting about the conscience of our country is that it was first recognized by de Tocqueville. I often speak about Alexis de Tocqueville and his observations about what made America unique and different in the 1830s. He talked about voluntary associations, of people all coming together to achieve a common good.

That's what you've done. You're representing voluntary associations of people all aiming to achieve the common good. And the common good is achieved in America when we help people who hurt, when we provide mentors for people who need love, when we provide food for those who are hungry, and we provide shelter for those who need shelter.

Our job is to make sure that the spirit that de Tocqueville saw is not only relevant today but stays alive and well throughout the 21st century. There's forever going to be a need

of compassionate help in our society. And for those of you who are on the frontlines of social entrepreneurship, thank you for setting such a good example.

Part of this conference is to make sure that you receive encouragement. The other part is to make sure you've got the tools necessary to succeed. Part of the tools necessary to succeed is to help philanthropic America understand it's okay to support faith-based institutions.

We've got fantastic corporate foundations in America who recognize that we all ought to focus on results, not process; that the question government and private philanthropy ought to ask is, does the program get the results that we all want, as opposed to, what is the nature of the people trying to get results? When you focus on results, all of a sudden it becomes crystal clear how best to spend resource dollars to achieve certain objectives.

And today, I met with some folks earlier that talked about their foundations and how their foundations recognize the importance of achieving results—funding results-oriented programs, regardless of whether or not they're faith-based or not.

And for those of you who have set the example, I want to thank you very much, but the truth of the matter is that a recent survey of our Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives, headed by Towey, of 20 large corporate foundations, found that only about 6 percent of their grants went to faith-based groups. I believe the results are better than that. I am confident that the faith community is achieving unbelievable successes in—throughout our country.

And therefore, I would urge our corporate foundations to reach beyond the norm, to look for those social entrepreneurs who have been—haven't been recognized heretofore, to continue to find people that are running programs that are making a significant difference in people's lives.

When we studied 50 large foundations, we found that one in five prohibited faith organizations from receiving funding for social service programs. In other words, there's a prohibition against funding faith programs from certain foundations in the country. I would hope they would revisit their charters. I

would hope they'd take a look at achieving social objectives—make the priority the achievement of certain social objectives before they would make the decision to exclude some who are achieving incredible progress on behalf of our country.

I believe all of us, no matter what level of government we're in—Federal, State, and local—and I believe all of us, no matter if we're private or public, ought to allow religious organizations to compete for funding on an equal basis, not for the sake of faith, but for the sake of results.

The Tax Code can be—can encourage contributions. We had an interesting discussion from a person earlier that said that the level of giving in America is substantial, but it can be more. We all can do our part, individually, but the Tax Code can help as well. I've got some interesting ideas to help philanthropy here in America. One of them is to allow corporate America to deduct—take larger tax deductions for food donations.

If one of the issues—[*applause*]*—it's kind of a specialized request, I admit it. But if one of the issues is to get food to the hungry, it makes sense to provide incentives for people who have got the wherewithal to be able to provide the resources to get the food headed toward the hungry in the first place. I think it will help those of you who are worried about getting food to people, to know that providers of resources will be given an economic incentive to do that. That, hopefully, will make it easier for you to get the product to distribute.*

Secondly, seniors now have to pay taxes on a portion of their individual retirement account savings, and so why not allow them to take part of that money and send it to charitable organizations, as opposed to paying tax on it. So let me give you some practical ways that the Government—[*applause*]. I hope the Senate and the House takes these initiatives seriously, so that they recognize the Tax Code has got an important part of helping make sure that there's more than just talk behind the Faith-Based and Community-Based Initiative.

Government has got a role to play. As you know, this has been quite a controversial subject here in the United States Congress. We believe in separation of church and state—

the church shouldn't be the state, and the state shouldn't be the church. No question that's a vital part of the country, and that's a vital part of our heritage, and we intend to keep it that way. But when it comes to social service funding, the use of taxpayers' money, I think we're able to meet the admonition of separation of church and state and, at the same time, recognize that faith programs provide an important model of success. They help us achieve certain objectives in our country.

It used to be that groups were prohibited from receiving any Federal funding whatsoever because they had a cross or a star or a crescent on the wall. And that's changed, for the better. It's changed for the better for those who hurt in our society. And so now, when the government is making social service grants, money is rewarded to groups—awarded to groups that get the best results, regardless of whether they're a faith-based program or not. That's all people want. They want access to grant money on an equal basis, on a competitive basis, so there's no discrimination one way or the other.

I repeat to you, and I'm going to say this about five times, I'm sure: Our job in Government is to set goals and to focus on results. If you're addicted to alcohol, if a faith program is able to get you off alcohol, we ought to say, "Hallelujah and thanks," at the Federal level.

One of the things I asked old Jim Towe to do was to let me know if we're making any progress. You know, a lot of people around the country say, "Politicians are good at talking, but sometimes they don't really follow through." It's kind of like, the check is in the mail. So I said, why don't you give us a score card, and I want to share with you some of the results that has taken place over the last year. The Federal Government awarded more than \$2.1 billion in competitive social service grants to faith-based organizations last year. That's an increase of 7 percent over the previous year, and that is 11 percent of all Federal competitive social service grants. We're making progress about creating a level playing field for people to be comfortable in, one, applying for grants, and two, when receiving a grant—and then

actually getting the money out the door to social service organizations.

For example, \$780 million in grants was distributed through the Department of Health and Human Services. USAID gave \$591 million worth of grants. These are the faith-based organizations—\$521 million through HUD. And so going from ground zero to today, we're making progress. I can tell you why; it's because we're measuring.

A lot of people were nervous about applying for grants. I can understand that, you know. They said, "Why in the world would I want to interface with the Federal Government? [Laughter] They may try to run my business. They may want to try to tell me how to conduct—how to run my program." We've done a good job, I think, through these different faith-based offices and throughout our government of assuring people in the government, don't—look, don't tell people how to run their business, accept the way they are, and focus on results. And part of the reason we had these conventions and these outreaches, regional outreaches, is to assure people that the role of the government is to fund, not to micromanage how you run your programs. I repeat to you, you can't be a faith-based program if you don't practice your faith.

We've launched some other initiatives which some of you are involved with—programs to help those who are addicted find treatment. We've talked about mentors for children of prisoners. And for those of you involved in the mentoring program for children of prisoners, I want to thank you on behalf of a grateful nation. You are providing a fantastic service to help make sure the future is bright.

Can you imagine what it would be like growing up with your mom or dad in prison? Maybe some of you have. It's got to be a heartbreaking experience. And a lot of these kids just cry for love. And to help find a loving soul who is willing to embrace a child and to stay with that child is a wonderful contribution to the country, and it makes sense for the Federal Government to provide funding for such programs.

We are helping prisoners transition back into society. We want to help small service organizations gain capabilities. One of the

things that some of you who have been involved with the faith-based community understand, that, you know, the big guys get rolling and kind of get a nice head of steam up, and there doesn't seem to be much focus on smaller organizations, some of which are just getting started. Our job is to make sure that the Compassion Fund helps startups. I don't want to sound like a business guy, but there are some people just getting started; they need tutoring; they need help. But they can provide a vital service.

One reason faith programs exist is because some good soul sees there's a demand. And they may not be the well-established organization, and it seems like to me, it's a proper use of resource to help startups, new social entrepreneurs, small social entrepreneurs get their feet on the ground to provide compassionate help, alongside the big ones. [Applause] There you go.

There's other targeted programs, as well as social service competitive grant money. And I'm sure you're being briefed on—I hope you're being briefed on all this during this conference. You ought to feel comfortable about making sure that your program has a chance to participate in a myriad of opportunities. We want you to do that. We welcome your participation. We want involvement.

The other thing is, we're trying to work hard is to change the culture here in Washington. The faith-based program is relatively new, and it takes a while for cultures to change, and we want people throughout the bureaucracies to not fear the involvement of faith programs and community-based programs in the compassionate delivery of help. And one of the real challenges we have is at the State and local governmental level. We've made good progress, by the way, here at the Federal level, on competitive grant money.

See, a lot of money that comes out of Washington is formula-driven. It just kind of flows out. And so sometimes that money goes to the States, and the States are the decision-makers as to whether or not a faith program can be involved in the—in receiving that money to help meet social objectives. We are constantly working with Governors and mayors to convince them that having a faith-

based office in their respective centers of responsibility will really help improve their State, as well as the—as well as their cities.

And there's progress being made there. I think there's something like 30 Governors have now got faith-based offices, and over 100 mayors have got faith-based offices. And to the extent that you can influence your mayor or your Governor, convince them to open up an office and make sure that some of the Federal money that flows to the States is open for competitive bidding for faith-based programs.

By the way, we just set up a new faith-based and community office in the Department of Homeland Security. Last month, I signed a bill extending what's called charitable choice; it's a mechanism by which these programs can go forward. And it's—one of the most important things about the legislation I signed, it allows faith-based groups to receive Federal funding without changing their hiring practices. This is going to stay around for another 5 years. In other words, the bill extended the life of the charitable choice provision in the welfare reform law by another 5 years.

I would hope Congress would recognize the importance of charitable choice and extend it forever. I mean, if it makes sense today, it makes sense forever.

You know, one of the things that really inspires me is when I get to meet folks who are on the frontline of changing America one soul at a time. And today I had the privilege of meeting a woman named Dana Ingram. She's with us. She is the founder of a faith-based housing and financial service organization in Hinesville, Georgia, called JC Vision. This is an organization that provides financial counseling and assistance in receiving credit and securing a home loan.

See, one of the things that I know is important for the future of the country is to promote ownership. I really like the idea when somebody opens the door of the place they're living, and says, "Welcome to my home. Welcome to my piece of property." And this lady—and Dana is involved with counseling. Look, face it, when you look at a mortgage deal, all that fine print makes some people nervous. It makes me nervous. *[Laughter]* Of course, I'm in temporary housing. *[Laughter]*

When she first—a few years ago, her program served 500 people on a budget of less than \$100,000. She applied for Federal funding. She said, "Yes, I'm a faith-based program, but I do believe that we can benefit from competitive grant money." And so she applied, and she was awarded a grant. Her budget is now \$400,000. Now she's serving 10,000 people. The idea is to promote successful programs, to focus on whether or not these programs are successful. And if they are, encourage them. One way to encourage somebody is to have a little grant money available on a competitive basis—nothing more encouraging than to get some grant money. And so Dana is encouraged, and she's expanding her program.

One of the really successful programs in America is a program called Teen Challenge. I don't know if you're aware of Teen Challenge. So Pastor Arthur Stafford is with us. Arthur works at Teen Challenge New Haven. Notice I didn't say, "Mister." I said, "Pastor." Teen Challenge is a faith-based program.

And he is a—his program is aimed, like many of the Teen Challenge programs, at helping young folks overcome addiction to drugs, which oftentimes lead to crime and other problems. Not long ago, funding constraints limited how many people Teen Challenge in New Haven could host. And they spent—Arthur and his buddies spent a lot of time raising money for the program. For those of you who are on limited budgets who have got grand ambitions to save lives, you know how much time you can spend away from the task at hand toward finding money to sustain your programs. And so Arthur and Team Challenge competed for and earned a Federal grant through the Access to Recovery drug treatment program. For those of you involved in drug treatment, the Access to Recovery drug treatment program provides a good source of money for you. I recommend you applying for grants from that program.

And so what Arthur has said is that—when he got the money—"It's been a blessing to our ministry." I find that interesting, don't you—"It's been a blessing to our ministry. We're not worried about how to raise money all the time; we can focus on transforming lives."

And so today Matt Enriquez is with us. So Matt comes in to meet the President. I said, “How you doing, Matt?” He didn’t speak—he looked a little nervous. [Laughter] Matt was addicted to drugs. He had spent time because of robbery. He was lost, and then he was found by people at Teen Challenge. He is now going to college.

Where are you, Matt? There he is. Where’s Arthur? Pastor, stand up. [Applause] Yes, there you go. Get your Pastor, Matt. There he is. Thank you.

So Matt now goes to the Connecticut Culinary Institute. If you’re looking for a cook, he’s your man. [Laughter] Here’s what he said: “The best thing about”—speaking about Teen Challenge—is the love that’s in the program. I had no idea what I wanted to do at all. This let me know what I wanted to do for the rest of my life.”

See, Government can pass law, and it can hand out money, but it cannot love. And so I want to thank—[applause]. I appreciate the examples—letting me use you as examples. America can change one heart at a time. Matt is living proof. America changes not only when a soul like Matt gets saved but the person who is involved with helping Matt also becomes a stronger and better citizen as well.

And now Matt goes on. See, Matt himself serves as a way to help change lives. Maybe Matt—maybe somebody is listening here. I don’t know if this deal is on C-SPAN or not, but if it is, maybe somebody is out there like Matt, who needs help and can find help at a Teen Challenge or another program, all aimed at helping somebody save lives.

Matt, I know when you get your deal going and making a good living as a cook, you yourself will turn and help find somebody else find help too. So I appreciate you.

Our job is—for the next 3 years, is to continue to work with Congress to make sure that money is opened up to faith-based programs. Competitive grant money should not be earmarked. It should be open for competitive-based grants so that—[applause].

We’ll continue to work with local and State officials to open up their programs to faith and community-based programs. I’m going to continue to work on individual choice programs. I like the idea of providing help for individuals by empowering them to be the

decisionmaker. In other words, it makes a lot of sense to me to say to somebody who is trying to recover from a drug addiction, “Here’s the money to help you; you go pick the program that suits your needs so you can solve your problem.”

And so we got a lot of work to do, to continue to encourage you to do the work you’re doing. I am inspired by the love and compassion that I find as I travel the country. For those of you, by the way, who are involved with helping the Katrina folks, I want to thank you from the bottom of our Nation’s heart for welcoming those who I’m sure felt lost, and then felt welcomed when a total stranger embraced them in a typically American compassionate way. I assure you that as long as I’m the President, I will always recognize where the strength of this country lies, the true strength—and that’s in the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens.

My hope is that the vision that de Tocqueville saw in 1830 is a vision that some observer will find still strong in America in the year 2030 and 2060 and beyond. Because so long as America is able to unleash the compassion of our country, will it be able to bring hope into dark corners of our country, places where there is no light, places where there’s despair, places where people can realize their potential if given a chance.

And so I want to—for those of you who are a part of giving people a chance, for those of you who have heard the universal call, I thank you for your work and ask for God’s blessings on your lives and on your work.

Thanks for coming. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel.

Remarks on Signing the USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005

March 9, 2006

Welcome. Thanks for the applause. Glad you’re here in the people’s house.

I’m going to sign—in a few moments I’ll be signing the USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act. This is a really important piece of legislation. It is a piece of

legislation that's vital to win the war on terror and to protect the American people.

The law allows our intelligence and law enforcement officials to continue to share information. It allows them to continue to use tools against terrorists that they used against—that they use against drug dealers and other criminals. It will improve our Nation's security, while we safeguard the civil liberties of our people. The legislation strengthens the Justice Department so it can better detect and disrupt terrorist threats. And the bill gives law enforcement new tools to combat threats to our citizens from international terrorists to local drug dealers.

It is an important piece of legislation, and I thank those here who helped get it passed. I particularly want to thank the Attorney General, Al Gonzales. It's good to see former Attorney Generals here as well. I appreciate Secretary Mike Chertoff, Secretary John Snow, Ambassador Negroponte, Bob Mueller. Thank you all for coming. John Walters, appreciate you being here.

I particularly want to thank the Members of the Congress who are up here, starting with the Speaker of the House, Denny Hastert. Mr. Speaker, thanks for your leadership on this important piece of legislation. I do want to pay special tribute to Senator Arlen Specter and Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner. These are the chairmen of the Judiciary Committees that got this legislation to this desk. Thank you all for your hard work. I appreciate you being here.

I want to thank Pat Roberts, who's with us; John Boehner, who's majority leader; Roy Blunt, the majority whip. I want to thank all the other Members of the Congress who have joined us, particularly Peter King, who is the chairman of the House Homeland Security Committee.

I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. Chief Ramsey, it's good to see you. Appreciate you coming. Always be good to the local police chief. *[Laughter]*

America remains a nation at war. The war reached our shores on September the 11th, 2001. On that morning, we saw clearly the violence and hatred of a new enemy. We saw the terrorists' destructive vision for us when they killed nearly 3,000 men, women, and children.

In the face of this ruthless threat, our Nation has made a clear choice: We will confront this mortal danger; we will stay on the offensive; and we're not going to wait to be attacked again. Since September the 11th, 2001, we have taken the fight to the enemy. We've hunted terrorists in the mountains of Afghanistan, cities of Iraq, in the islands of Southeast Asia, and everywhere else they plot, plan, and train. Our men and women in uniform have brought down two regimes that supported terrorism. We liberated 50 million people. We've gained new allies in the war on terror.

As we wage the war on terror overseas, we're also going after the terrorists here at home, and one of the most important tools we have used to protect the American people is the PATRIOT Act. The PATRIOT Act closed dangerous gaps in America's law enforcement and intelligence capabilities, gaps the terrorists exploited when they attacked us on September the 11th.

The PATRIOT Act was passed with overwhelming bipartisan support. It strengthened our national security in two important ways. First, it authorized law enforcement and intelligence officers to share vital information. Before the PATRIOT Act, criminal investigators were often separated from intelligence officers by a legal and bureaucratic wall. The PATRIOT Act tore down the wall. And as a result, law enforcement and intelligence officers are sharing information, working together, and bringing terrorists to justice.

Secondly, the PATRIOT Act has allowed agents to pursue terrorists with the same tools they use against other criminals. Before the PATRIOT Act, it was easier to track the phone contacts of a drugdealer than the phone contacts of an enemy operative. Before the PATRIOT Act, it was easier to get the credit card receipts of a tax cheater than trace the financial support of an Al Qaida fundraiser. The PATRIOT Act corrected these double standards, and the United States is safer as a result.

Over the past 4 years, America's law enforcement and intelligence personnel have proved that the PATRIOT Act works. Federal, State, and local law enforcement have used the PATRIOT Act to break up terror

cells in Ohio, New York, Oregon, and Virginia. We've prosecuted terrorist operatives and supporters in California and Texas, New Jersey, Illinois, Washington, and North Carolina.

The PATRIOT Act has accomplished exactly what it was designed to do. It has helped us detect terror cells, disrupt terrorist plots, and save American lives. The bill I sign today extends these vital provisions. It also gives our Nation new protections and added defenses.

This legislation creates a new position of Assistant Attorney General for National Security. This will allow the Justice Department to bring together its national security, counterterrorism, counterintelligence, and foreign intelligence surveillance operations under a single authority. This reorganization fulfills one of the critical recommendations of the WMD Commission. It will help our brave men and women in law enforcement connect the dots before the terrorists strike.

This bill also will help protect Americans from the growing threat of methamphetamine. Meth is easy to make. It is highly addictive. It is ruining too many lives across our country. The bill introduces common-sense safeguards that would make many of the ingredients used in manufacturing meth harder to obtain in bulk and easier for law enforcement to track.

For example, the bill places limits on large-scale purchases of over-the-counter drugs that are used to manufacture meth. It requires stores to keep these ingredients behind the counter or in locked display cases. The bill also increases penalties for smuggling and selling of meth. Our Nation is committed to protecting our citizens and our young people from the scourge of methamphetamine.

The PATRIOT Act has served America well, yet we cannot let the fact that America has not been attacked since September the 11th lull us into the illusion that the terrorist threat has disappeared. We still face dangerous enemies. The terrorists haven't lost the will or the ability to kill innocent folks. Our military, law enforcement, homeland security, and intelligence professionals are working day and night to protect us from this threat. We're safer for their efforts, and we'll

continue to give them the tools to get the job done.

And now, it's my honor to sign the USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:46 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Charles H. Ramsey, chief, Metropolitan Police Department of Washington, DC. H.R. 3199, approved March 9, was assigned Public Law No. 109-177. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Signing the USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005

March 9, 2006

Today, I have signed into law H.R. 3199, the "USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005," and then S. 2271, the "USA PATRIOT Act Additional Reauthorizing Amendments Act of 2006." The bills will help us continue to fight terrorism effectively and to combat the use of the illegal drug methamphetamine that is ruining too many lives.

The executive branch shall construe the provisions of H.R. 3199 that call for furnishing information to entities outside the executive branch, such as sections 106A and 119, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to supervise the unitary executive branch and to withhold information the disclosure of which could impair foreign relations, national security, the deliberative processes of the Executive, or the performance of the Executive's constitutional duties.

The executive branch shall construe section 756(e)(2) of H.R. 3199, which calls for an executive branch official to submit to the Congress recommendations for legislative action, in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to supervise

the unitary executive branch and to recommend for the consideration of the Congress such measures as he judges necessary and expedient.

George W. Bush

The White House,
March 9, 2006.

Remarks at the Georgia Republican Party's President's Day Dinner in College Park, Georgia

March 9, 2006

Thank you all. I appreciate you coming. Please be seated. Thanks for being here. I appreciate the warm reception. Thanks for letting me come back to Georgia. I'm proud to be here to help support the Republican Party of Georgia, which is changing this State for the better.

And I'm proud to be introduced by Sonny Perdue, who is doing a heck of a good job as the Governor of this State. So here's the thing I like about Sonny: One, he married well—[*laughter*—where's Mary? Oh, there she is. Hi, Mary, good to see you. Thanks for being here. Secondly, he said his favorite title in life is not "Governor" but "Big Buddy." [*Laughter*] You know who calls him "Big Buddy?" His grandkids. Sonny has got his priorities straight. I'm proud to call him friend, and I know you're proud to call him Governor.

By the way, Mary, Laura sends her very best and her love. Laura is a remarkable person. She is patient, especially to be married to me. [*Laughter*] One of the things that I love about being the President is, well, I've got a 45-second commute—[*laughter*—and when I get home, there's a person there who is a wonderful partner in serving our country. She understands what I know: It's a huge honor to be the First Couple of the United States. And she is making an enormous difference in the lives of people in west Texas-type ways. And so she sends her love and sends her best.

I want to thank the—first of all, let me say something about your two United States Senators—they had votes, and that's good that they stayed there to do the job that you

send them to do. I was incredibly proud to watch them help shepherd through two Supreme Court Justices I named. When I campaigned in Georgia, I said, "If you elect me to be President, I will name people to the bench who will strictly interpret the Constitution and not try to write laws from the bench." I did so with Chief Justice Roberts, Judge Alito. And Senator Saxby Chambliss and Johnny Isakson were strong supporters for those nominees.

I want to thank the Members of the United States Congress who have joined us here today: Nathan Deal from north Georgia; John Linder; Phil Gingrey; Lynn Westmoreland; and Tom Price. Thank you all for joining us. We spent some quality time on Air Force One flying down here. These are smart people. They never pass up a free flight when they're offered one. [*Laughter*] But I enjoy them. They're good folks—good, down-to-earth, decent folks serving the State of the Georgia in the United States Congress, and I'm proud to call them friends.

I want to thank Glenn Richardson, who is the speaker of the house. I want to thank Eric Johnson, the president pro tem of the State senate. I want to thank all those who are serving in the statehouse. It's a—it is an important job.

You know things are changing in Georgia when you say welcome to the speaker—[*laughter*—and welcome to the leader of the senate. The Republican Party here has done a good job of establishing a grassroots political base that is not only helping people like me, but it's changing the statehouse for the better in the State of Georgia.

I want to thank Alec Poitevint, the mighty chairman and national committeeman of the great State of Georgia. Alec, good to see you, and Doreen is here. Alec has got his priorities straight. I've known him for a long period of time. We're quite familiar with each other. He said, "How many turkeys you got on your ranch?" I said, "I haven't been counting them lately." He says, "Well, I've been counting them on mine." The man's got his priorities straight. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank people who are running for office. I appreciate you willing to put your name on the line. I want to thank you for your willingness to get out and shake hands

and tell people what you believe and speak from the heart. Two candidates running for the Lieutenant Governor with us, Casey Cagle and Ralph Reed, and I appreciate them both being here tonight.

Finally, I want to say something about two Mac—well, one Mac, one Max. [Laughter] One of the reasons I've come down here is to thank you for supporting two good folks who are running for the United States Congress—Mac Collins and Max Burns. I know them well. I know Mac's wife, Julie, and I know Max's wife, Lora. I've served with them before. I have seen what kind of people they are up close. They're principled gentlemen. They understand the risks to the world in which we live. They're smart with the people's money. I urge the people of Georgia to send Mac Collins and Max Burns back to the United States Congress. I knew they were there somewhere.

And finally, I want to say something about Sonny. I think the people of this State need to judge your Governor based upon performance. He is a fellow who has performed. He's delivered results. He said he was going to do some things when he ran for the Governor of your State, and he did. I don't know if you remember, but when he took office, Georgia wasn't doing that well in the economy. Matter of fact, you were losing jobs. I don't know if people remember in this great State, but when Sonny first came into office, he had a State deficit of \$620 million. Today, Georgia's economy is on the march; you're increasing jobs; people are working; and you've got a surplus in the State treasury.

Now, Sonny knows how to get things done. And one of the main reasons I have come down here is to thank the good people of your State for electing such a good man to be the Governor of an important State. Sonny Perdue deserves to be reelected as the Governor of the State of Georgia.

We're living in historic times. We are a country still at war. I wish I could report—give you a different report. My job is to see the world the way it really is, not to see the world the way some would hope it would be. My job is—my thinking is, really—was defined on September the 11th—you've just got to know that. Some of my buddies from Texas come over there to the White House,

and they say, "What's it like to be the President?" First of all, I'm a person who is so honored to be sustained by the prayers of millions of people. It is—one of the truly great blessings of the Presidency is to be uplifted in prayer by people I never get to thank personally.

Secondly, I make a lot of decisions. It's a decisionmaking experience. Sonny will tell you, as the Governor of a State, you make decisions. That's what a chief executive officer does. In order to make decisions, you've got to make decisions based upon principle. And if not exactly sure what information you need, you've got to rely upon good people to give you information so you can make good decisions. A lot of my decisionmaking has come about as a result of the attack on our country. See, after that day, I vowed that I would do everything in my power to protect the United States of America from further attack.

That's why I'm proud to stand with Members of the United States Congress and candidates for Congress who understand our biggest job, our most important responsibility in Washington, is to protect the American people and never forget the lessons of September the 11th, 2001. I knew one of the challenges for our country would be, the farther we got away from that date, that day, that people would want to forget the trauma of the day and might be willing to forget the lessons learned on that day. I can assure you, these Members of Congress won't forget the lessons of that day, and neither will I.

And today I had the honor in the White House of signing an extension of the PATRIOT Act. We've asked brave souls to be on the frontline of fighting terrorists. They deserve every possible tool while we safeguard the civil liberties of the United States of America. Thank you all for supporting the PATRIOT Act. We did the right thing in Washington.

After the attacks on the country, I did what you would expect me to do, and ask people who are on the frontlines of defending you whether or not there was—there's more we could be doing. What can we do more to protect the American people? I vowed on September the 11th, I would do everything I can to protect the American people. I

would rally the assets and resources and brain power of our country to protect you.

And so I called people in and I said, “Is there anything else we could have done to prevent the attacks from September the 11th?” And a general named Mike Hayden said, “I believe there is, Mr. President; I believe we can design a system that will enable us to listen to a call from outside the country in, from a known Al Qaida affiliate or a suspected Al Qaida affiliate.” I said, that makes sense, doesn’t it? If the people inside the country that planned the attacks on the United States were making phone calls out, we’d want to know that prior to any attack.

And so I said, “Mike, show me how the system would work.” I then called in lawyers—and we’ve got a lot of them in Washington. [*Laughter*] By the way, two of my favorite lawyers are here today, Dan Coats and Connie Mack, former United States Senators who have been close to the White House on a variety of matters. So I’m not denigrating you two guys; I like lawyers. [*Laughter*] But we’ve got a lot of them—[*laughter*]—and some smart ones.

And I said, “Is the program that the NSA is recommending legal?” That’s what you’d expect the President to do. You’d expect the President to ask, is there more we could do, and if the suggestion—if someone made a suggestion, the first question is, is it legal to do so? And they came back and said, “Mr. President, you have the authority to do this program”—in other words, it’s legal.

Before I implemented the program, a program, by the way, which is limited in nature—phone calls coming from inside the country out and outside in, with one of the numbers being known Al Qaida, suspected Al Qaida, and affiliates—I then recognized that the United States Congress would be interested in this subject. So we briefed leaders from both parties, both chambers, on a program to protect the American people. We’ve kept them abreast more than one time, in a series of briefings, about a program that is necessary to protect the American people. As my buddy in Texas said, “If you’re trying to do something illegal, why did you brief the Congress?” [*Laughter*]

What we’re doing is the right thing. My thinking process, my decisionmaking, is

based upon my understanding of the job of the President and the Federal Government—is to protect our people so we never have to go through what we went again. It is right; it is necessary to listen to Al Qaida. If Al Qaida is making a phone call into the United States of America or vice versa, we want to know why, in order to protect this country.

In order to protect this country, we must remember the lessons of September the 11th. And lesson number one is, we have got to stay on the offense against the terrorist network that would like to do harm to the United States of America, and we are. We are on the hunt. We’ve got some fantastic men and women who wear our Nation’s uniform doing everything they can to find the terrorists before they can hurt us again. It’s hard to plan and plot and destroy America if you’re on the run. And we’re bringing a lot of the killers to justice. And I will continue to insist that we pursue the killers to keep America safe.

The second lesson, since this is a different kind of war, is that if you harbor a terrorist, you’re equally as guilty as the terrorist. We’re dealing with a shadowy network; we’re not fighting nation states. We’re fighting a group of coldblooded killers who adopted an ideology that’s the exact opposite of America, that tries to find safe haven. And therefore, part of the strategy is to deny the enemy safe haven. And when the President says something, he better mean what he says, and I meant what I said when I said to the Taliban, “Give up Al Qaida.” And when they refused, the United States of America removed a barbaric regime for our own security, and in so doing, however, we liberated 25 million people from the clutches of these barbaric people.

Another lesson of September the 11th is that we must deal with threats before they come to hurt us. You see, prior to September the 11th, 2001, a lot of folks assumed that we were safe in America. In other words, we could see a threat somewhere overseas, but we were fine. Oceans protected us; perhaps our might protected us. But that all changed for me on September the 11th, 2001. Whenever we see a threat, the United States of

America must take them seriously. We cannot take threats for granted. I saw a threat; the world saw a threat; people in the United Nations Security Council saw a threat; Republicans on Capitol Hill saw a threat; Democrats on Capitol Hill saw a threat in Saddam Hussein.

And the reason they saw a threat—this is a man who at least had the capacity to manufacture weapons; he had used weapons of mass destruction; he was on the terrorist list of the United States of America; he killed thousands of his own citizens; he was firing at U.S. jets; and he invaded his neighbor. He was a threat, and getting rid of Saddam Hussein has made America safer and the world a better place.

And I'm proud to be on stage with people who understood the stakes and stand strong, particularly when we put men and women in harm's way. I'm proud to have people up here who understand that any time we put an American volunteer into harm's way, he or she deserves the best pay, the best training, and the best possible equipment.

We've got a strategy for victory in Iraq. Now, you got to understand, we're facing an enemy that can't beat us militarily, and they certainly can't beat us ideologically. And they've got one weapon, and their weapon is the willingness to kill innocent people and to have the horror on the TV screens, understanding full well that the American people are decent and compassionate people. That's the only weapon they have.

Their goal, their stated goal, is to drive the United States of America and allies out of the Middle East so they can spread their totalitarian vision. That's what they've said, and when the enemy says something, we got to take them seriously. They believe we're weak. They believe their tactics will cause us to run. The United States of America will not run in the face of thugs and assassins, and we're going to stand strong in support of people who expressed themselves last year at the ballot box in the face of incredible threats. Eleven million Iraqis said loud and clear to the world, "We reject civil war; we want our freedom; and we want our democracy." And America is proud to stand with them.

We have a political strategy, and that is to encourage the votes which took place last year under—and they ratified a Constitution, which is a modern constitution. A government should be a unified government that recognizes minority rights so that the people—when the people speak, government responds.

And secondly, we have a security strategy that says loud and clear that we want the Iraqis to take the fight to the enemy. As the Iraqis stand up, our troops will stand down. But I want to assure you, what I said in the State of the Union is what I mean. Troop levels in Iraq will be decided not by Washington, DC, politics but by the commanders on the ground. I will be making the military decisions necessary to win this war, not based upon focus groups or opinion polls but based upon the solid, sound advice of a group of really fine military commanders.

Our objective is a country that can defend itself and sustain itself, a country that will not be a safe haven for Al Qaida and its terrorist network, a country which will be an ally in the war on terror, and a country which will serve as a powerful example for others in a part of the world that is desperate for freedom.

And so the ultimate way to achieve our objectives, which is to lay the foundation of peace for generations to come, is to help people live in liberty and help spread democracy. The people of the Middle East must understand that when I say democracy, I don't mean American-style democracy. I mean a democracy which reflects the values and the history and the tradition of the country in which democracy is spreading.

But I do believe in the universality of liberty. I personally believe there is an Almighty God, and I believe a gift from the Almighty God to every man and woman on the face of the Earth is freedom. Our country was formed based upon the natural rights of men and women, and we believe those natural rights extend to men and women all across the globe. The United States of America believes people desire to be free. And by freeing people, we are laying the foundation of peace for generations to come.

I've trotted this story out a lot, or my beliefs out a lot, about the effects of freedom.

But let me try to explain for—particularly the youngsters here—about what I mean for laying the foundation for peace to come.

One of my best buddies in the international arena is Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. What's interesting about that is 60 years ago, my dad, as an 18-year-old fighter pilot, Navy fighter pilot—and I'm sure many relatives of folks here fought the Japanese, because they were the sworn enemy. And this is one of the bloodiest of all wars. A lot of people lost their lives on both sides of this conflict. And yet today, the American President can speak to an audience in Atlanta, Georgia, and say, "I sit down at the table with Prime Minister Koizumi to keep the peace, to deal with some of the tough issues around the world. He's a partner in peace."

And so what happened? Something had to have happened between 18-year-old fighter pilot George H.W. Bush and George W. standing here as the President. And what happened was, Japan adopted a Japanese-style democracy. You see, democracies yield the peace, and someday, someday, if we do not lose our nerve and our will, an American President will be talking to a duly elected leader from Iraq, working together to keep the peace, and our children and grandchildren will be better off.

Now that you're stuck here, I'm going to tell you something else. [*Laughter*] Our economy has been through a lot in a relatively quick period of time. We've been through a recession; we've been through corporate scandals; we've been through a devastating attack on our country; we have dealt with war; we have dealt with high energy prices; and we have dealt with natural disasters, large natural disasters. Last year, our economy grew at 3.5 percent. The national unemployment rate is 4.7 percent. That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. We added 4.7 million new jobs over 2½ years. After-tax real income is up 8 percent. Productivity is at an alltime high. More people own a home than ever before in our Nation's history; more minority families own a home than ever before in our Nation's history. We're doing something right in Washington, DC, and you know what it is? We've unleashed the entrepreneurial spirit of the United States because of real,

meaningful tax cuts. Republicans believe that the more money you have in the pocket, the more you save, invest, and spend, the better off this economy is.

The tax relief we passed and these Members voted for, these candidates voted for, is set to expire. And if it does, the American people are going to get a tax increase they don't expect and they don't want. In order to make sure this economy continues to grow, in order to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit continues to remain strong, in order to make sure the small-business sector of our economy is as strong as it is today, we need to make the tax relief permanent.

Now, I know what they're going to say. They're going to say, "How can you balance the budget if you cut the taxes?" People will say, "Well, we need to raise your taxes in order to balance the budget." That's not the way Washington works. What will happen is, they will raise your taxes and figure out new ways to spend your money. The best way to balance the budget is to keep progrowth economic policies in place and be wise about how we spend your money. We're on our way to cutting that deficit in half by 2009, and I want to thank the Members up here for making the tough choices when it comes to our budget.

We got a choice to make in this country: Do we become a protectionist, isolated nation, or do we continue to lead? I made my choice. I believe America is better off when America takes a leadership role in this world. I believe we should not fear our economic future, because we should shape it. Part of shaping the future is to keep taxes low. Part of shaping our future is to get rid of these junk and frivolous lawsuits that are running good capital out of America.

Part of shaping our future is to make sure we're not hooked on oil. I know that sounds odd for a Texan to say. [*Laughter*] But if you see the world from my perspective, I think you would agree with me. Being addicted to oil is a problem. When demand for hydrocarbons or fossil fuels goes up in developing parts of the world, it causes the price of gasoline to go up here at home. When parts of the world that don't like the United States of America threaten to withhold supplies of

oil from the market, it creates a national security problem. And so I'm looking forward to working with Congress to diversify away from oil, to spend money on research and development so we can have plug-in hybrid automobiles that can drive the first 40 miles on electricity, to spend money to make sure that our technologies are able to help us develop ethanol. Look, we want our farmers in Georgia growing crops that can run our automobiles. We need to become less dependent on foreign sources of oil in order to be a competitive nation.

We need nuclear power and solar power and wind power. In order for this country to be competitive in the out years, in order for us to be confident about our national security, we have got to be less addicted to Middle Eastern oil, and I intend to lead that country this direction.

I want to talk to you about a couple of other things, about a competitiveness agenda. How do you stay competitive in a global economy? The key to making sure that America remains the leader in the world is to make sure our children are educated. You see, if our kids don't have the skills for the jobs of the 21st century, they're going to go somewhere else. That's just a fact of life. And so therefore, I told the United States Congress we need to work together to make sure that we're not only the leader in research and development, in technological development, but to make sure our children have got math and science skills so that we are educating the engineers of the future and the physicists of the future and the chemists of the future.

I want to congratulate Sonny Perdue for implementing the No Child Left Behind Act. I've heard all the debates about it; I'm sure you have as well. "How dare the Government measure?" Look, my attitude is, we're spending money. The taxpayer wants to know whether the money is well-spent. If you're spending money to teach a child to read and write, doesn't it make sense to measure, to determine whether or not the child is reading or writing? Doesn't it make sense to believe every child can read and demand that the school system teach every child to read? And how do you know? You measure. And if you find a child not reading early, I think it makes sense to provide additional help, additional

money for each child, like we're doing through No Child Left Behind Act, so no child is left behind. No, Republicans should stand for high standards and the belief that every child can learn, and we ought to demand change where we find children trapped in schools that will not teach and will not change.

And we're getting results. We're getting results nationwide. There's an achievement gap in America that's not right. We've got too many of our African American kids and young Latino kids who can't read at grade level. But that's changing. See, we're measuring, we're correcting problems early, before it's too late. And that achievement gap is narrowing, and America is better off for it.

And we've got a problem when it comes to math. See, our fourth-graders are testing fine in math but then falling off in the eighth grade. So what I want to do is apply the same rigor we've done for reading in the early grades to math in the middle grades, to make sure that America is competitive, to make sure that our children have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. This country of ours should not fear the future. We ought to welcome the future and shape the future. And the United States of America must put policies in place to make sure that we're the leading economy in the world, for the sake of our people and the sake of people who want to find work. And that's exactly what I intend to do for this country.

And finally—you'll probably be happy to hear the word, finally—I'm going to continue to work with people on this stage to promote a culture of life in the United States of America. We believe every person matters, every person counts. We believe that—we believe in medicine and sound science, but we don't believe in taking life to promote science. We believe in upholding values that are important. We believe in the faith-based initiatives. We understand there are people in this part of the world and people all over our country who hurt.

We also understand the limitation of government. Government can hand out money, but it cannot put hope in a person's heart or a sense of purpose in a person's life. That's

done when a loving individual finds a stranger in need or a child who needs to learn to read or a person addicted, says, “I love you, brother,” or, “I love you, sister. What can I do to help you?” The greatest strength of the United States of America is not our military, and it’s not the size of our wallet. The greatest strength of the United States of America lies in the hearts and souls of millions of our citizens who’ve heard the universal call to love a neighbor just like you’d like to be loved themselves, and are doing that on a daily basis.

We’ve got millions of our citizens who are helping change America one heart, one soul, and one conscience at a time. And it’s important for the Federal Government and the State government not to fear the armies of compassion but to support the armies of compassion as they help make this country a hopeful, optimistic place for every citizen who is honored to call themselves an American.

Listen, I love being your President. I love being back in Georgia. Thanks for giving me a chance to come back. Thanks for joining this great festival that celebrates the Republican Party of the great State of Georgia. And God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:22 p.m. at the Georgia International Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Sonny Perdue of Georgia, and his wife, Mary; Alec Poitevint, State chairman and national committeeman, Georgia Republican Party, and his wife, Doreen; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Interview With Diana Moukalled of Future Television of Lebanon

March 9, 2006

Lebanese Freedom

Ms. Moukalled. Mr. President, thank you for receiving Future Television. As you know, head of U.N. inquiry, Serge Brammertz, will present his report to the Security Council in a few days. How should the international community respond if the report concluded that Syria did not fully cooperate with the inquiry, as previous efforts did?

The President. Our position is, is that we want to know the truth, and we expect all

parties to be forthcoming with the truth. The truth is really important to help Lebanon meet a goal that we want for Lebanon, which is free of foreign interference, democratic and peaceful, so that people can realize dreams and so the great country of Lebanon can grow and prosper like I’m confident it can.

So the United States will constantly remind all parties that we seek the truth, and we expect parties, when asked about the truth, to be forthcoming with the truth. I’m worried about people who stall and hope that the world turns a blind eye to a terrible death. And we’re not going to turn a blind eye. We will keep focused on this important issue, because we believe in the future of Lebanon.

Syrian Withdrawal From Lebanon

Ms. Moukalled. From what you say, many in Lebanon fear that there might be a deal between Washington and Damascus. In other words, if Damascus complied with Washington demands regarding Iraq, regarding Hezbollah and Hamas, would you let the inquiry not reach its ultimate?

The President. Part of our desires for Damascus is, of course, to shut down terrorist bases in their country; and is, of course, to stop cross-border infiltration into Iraq; is, of course, to stop allowing people to find safe haven to plot and plan attacks in the neighborhood. But part of our demands was to—was 1559, which is, completely out of Lebanon. And so there are no deals. We are people who believe that when we say something, we’ve got to keep our word. And again I repeat to you, I think that the light of truth is very important toward establishing a peace that we all want in the region.

I really do want young boys and girls in Lebanon to be able to grow up in a world free of violence. Lebanon is a fabulous country; Beirut is one of the great international cities of all time. And it’s in the world’s interest that this democracy survive, and not only survive but flourish and thrive. And so we don’t—we really aren’t going to deal away Lebanon’s future.

U.S. Support for Lebanese Freedom

Ms. Moukalled. Regarding U.N. Resolution 1559, the Lebanese Government says that it wants to reach a true result with the issue through a national dialog—

The President. Yes.

Ms. Moukalled. —and you have demanded repeatedly that Lebanon should implement this resolution. Will you give the Lebanese Government a chance to resolve this issue through national dialog, or you will exercise more pressure?

The President. I think it's very important that the national dialog process succeed. The truth of the matter is that peace in Lebanon is going to be achieved by Lebanese leaders, people in Lebanon who are dedicated to the future. The United States can—we can work; we can help; we can pressure Syria; or we can do things. But what we can't do is to force people to be courageous in the name of peace. That's up to Lebanon's people themselves—the people of Lebanon themselves. The Lebanese must stand up and say, "We demand a open and free and transparent society so we can live in peace."

We'll help, but courage comes from within people's souls. And we have been encouraged by courage being shown by those who believe in Lebanon's future.

Ms. Moukalled. Are you following the national dialog that's happening now in Lebanon?

The President. I am.

Ms. Moukalled. Many believe that without international efforts, this dialog will not succeed, where other parties think that the American pressure is keeping Lebanese from reaching an agreement.

The President. No, I hope—I believe that an agreement can be reached. I understand the talks have been suspended for a week, but they will be ongoing, and I think it's a very important part of the Lebanese folks putting aside past—the past and focusing on a bright future. And we will help, and we will encourage, but ultimately the decisions have to be made by the Lebanese citizens, that they want something better than violence and war and division.

Hezbollah

Ms. Moukalled. The two controversial items are the ousting of President Emile Lahud and the disarming of Hezbollah.

The President. Yes.

Ms. Moukalled. What's your comment? What—

The President. Our position is clear: 1559, which we strongly support, says that armed militias should be disarmed, and secondly, we believe that the President ought to be independent, ought to be someone who will strongly represent the interests of the Lebanese people.

Ms. Moukalled. The Lebanese Government considers Hezbollah a resistance. What's your comment?

The President. My comment is, is that armed militias should disarm. And I think it's very important to understand that democracy—you can't have a democracy if political parties have their own armed force. Our position is that the Lebanese forces ought to be in control of the security of Lebanon, for the good of the people.

Lebanese Freedom

Ms. Moukalled. What's your position regarding ousting President Emile Lahud?

The President. Again, I repeat to you, I think the characteristics for the President ought to be somebody who is independent-minded, somebody who focuses on his—the future of the country, somebody who understands that foreign influences inside of a country can be very negative.

Spread of Democracy

Ms. Moukalled. Mr. President, as you know, the situation in Iraq is really deteriorating; the country is on the edge of a civil war. The support for U.S. policies among Arab public opinion is—it's minimal. Many believe that you are focusing on Lebanon to divert attention from what's going on in Iraq or it's a part of a whole scenario to control the region. Why did Lebanon get so much of your attention in the past year, whereas Syria controlled Lebanon for 30 years?

The President. Because I believe in democracy. I believe democracy yields peace. That's a historical—it's been proven throughout history that democracies yield the peace

we all want. And I repeat to you: I want young boys and girls in Lebanon to grow up in peace. It's what I want.

I am—I want the same thing for Iraq. I want Iraq to be a democracy—not a U.S. democracy but a democracy that takes into the—the traditions, the Iraqi traditions and the history of Iraq, just like the Lebanese democracy will reflect the history of Lebanon and the traditions of Lebanon.

I believe there are such things as universal values, and I believe everybody desires to be free. And it's difficult in Iraq, no question about it. But I want—I want you to remember that the Iraqi people expressed their opinion last December about civil war. Eleven million people went to vote in difficult conditions saying, "We want freedom, and we want democracy. Give us a chance." And I'm convinced, ultimately, the people's will will win out and defeat those who want to try to create a civil war. Our position in the Middle East and throughout the Muslim world is that we want to be a partner in peace; we want to help people realize their potential.

And I hear the—I hear the language about the United States, that United States is anti-Islam. It's just not true. We view Islam as a religion of peace—or that the United States has got this design. But we'll protect ourselves. But the best way to protect ourselves ultimately is to encourage good relations amongst Muslim people and to encourage democracy. That's what we want. We want people to be able to be free. We want there to be minority rights and human rights; we want there to be women's rights. We believe in societies where women have got a chance to realize their dreams. We want there to be good education and good health care, and to the extent that people want our help, we're willing to help.

Ms. Moukalled. But so far, you're not winning the hearts and minds of Arab people. Why not?

The President. Well, it's—there's a lot of negative news on TV. There's a—the enemy to democracy has got one tool, and that is the capacity and willingness to kill innocent people. And that shocks people. People of good conscience grieve when they see inno-

cent life being taken by car bombs or when they read about beheadings.

And it's really important for those of us who believe in peace and the civilized world—it's not civilized to kill innocent people, nor do I think it's religious. It's very important for us to be steadfast and strong and have faith in the capacity of freedom to help answer people's desires and change society for the better.

My dream is for there to be a Palestinian state at peace with Israel. My dream is for Lebanon's democracy to flourish. My hope is that Iraq's democracy will serve as an example for others, and so people can realize their potential. And I believe this is going to happen. But there are people who want to stop that progress. And I know that. But I'm a firm believer in the future, and we'll continue to work in a way that tries to share our deepest desires to help people, that will try to combat some of the ugly news people see on the TV with positive policies that uplift lives, give people a chance.

Ms. Moukalled. Thank you, Mr. President. Unfortunately, we ran out of time.

The President. Well, thank you for coming.

Ms. Moukalled. Thank you.

The President. I'm honored you would come all the way from Beirut to interview me.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 10:40 a.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. Ms. Moukalled referred to Serge Brammertz, commissioner, United Nations International Independent Investigation Commission into the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri of Lebanon; and President Emile Lahud of Lebanon. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 10. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks at the National Newspaper Association Government Affairs Conference and a Question-and-Answer Session

March 10, 2006

The President. Thank you very much. Jerry likes to give a short introduction.

[*Laughter*] I appreciate you letting me come by to visit with you some, and I look forward to answering some questions you might have. You can't come to a newspaper deal without answering questions. [*Laughter*]

First, I want to thank you all for being part of the backbone of democracy. You know, you can't have a democracy unless there is a free and vibrant press corps. I sometimes remind people I may not like what you print, but what you print is necessary to maintain a vibrant public forum where people feel comfortable about expressing themselves. And so thanks for what you do. I appreciate it very much.

I also recognize that not all the press is located in the big cities in America. I remember running for the United States Congress in 1978. I came in second in a two-man race, by the way. [*Laughter*] And I remember people telling me, "Whatever you do, you make sure you go knock on the door of the rural newspaper." If you're interested in finding out what's going on in the community, you not only go take questions, but you listen to what the people are saying. And I've never forgotten that lesson that good politics means paying attention to the people not only in the big cities but outside the big cities. It's one of the reasons I was grateful to accept your invitation. I'm looking forward to being here.

A couple of thoughts on my mind. First, obviously, your businesses thrive when the economy is good. And part of our job here in Washington is to make sure the environment for entrepreneurship and small businesses and the farmers and ranchers of this country is a strong environment. And this economy of ours has overcome a lot. We've overcome a recession and an attack, a national emergency, corporate scandals, a war, natural disasters. And we've overcome it, and the reason I say that is because the statistics say it—not just the politicians—but statistics: 3½ percent growth last year. The national unemployment rate as of today is 4.8 percent. That's lower than the average rate of the 1970s, 1980s, 1990s. Today we just learned that we've added 243,000 new jobs last month. That's about 5 million jobs over the past 2½ years. American workers are defying

the pessimists. Our economy is strong. Productivity is up. Homeownership is up.

The fundamental question facing folks here in Washington and at the State governments is: What do you do to make sure that the economy remains strong? My philosophy can be summed up this way: The role of Government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit flourishes.

I believe one of the reasons we're having the economic success we're having is because we cut the taxes on the people. I believe that when somebody has more money in their pocket to save, invest, or spend, the economy benefits. The tax relief we passed is working. Parts of it are set to expire. I'm reminding the American people that if the Congress doesn't act, you're about to get hit with a tax increase you don't expect and most people don't want. So for the sake of economic vitality, to make sure this economy continues to grow, and to make sure America is competitive in a global economy, Congress needs to make the tax relief permanent.

Now, some will say, "Well, we've got to raise taxes in order to balance the budget." That's not the way Washington works. Washington will raise your taxes and figure out new ways to spend your money; that's how it works.

The best way to balance the budget is to keep pro-growth economic policies in place. In other words, keep the taxes low so the economy grows, which generates more revenues for the Treasury, and set priorities on the people's money. I've submitted a budget to the Congress which keeps us on track to cut the deficit in half by 2009.

Setting priorities is a difficult task for some in Washington. Every program sounds worthwhile. Everybody's spending request is necessary. But Congress needs to set priorities, needs to be wise about the people's money. And if they need some help, they ought to give me the line-item veto, and that way we can bring budget discipline, help keep budget discipline in Washington.

The long-term budget challenge is—it really has to do with mandatory spending, what's called mandatory spending. That's code word for Social Security and Medicare. Baby boomers like me are getting ready to retire. My retirement age happens in 2008,

by the way, which is aligned perfectly. [Laughter] I talked about the issue last year. I'm going to keep talking about the issue. The job of a President is to confront problems—that's why you put me up here—is to deal with problems, not to pass them on or hope somebody else takes care of it.

And we have a problem with Social Security and Medicare. We've got a lot of people retiring and not enough people paying into the system. We've been promised a lot of benefits, our generation, better benefits than the previous generation. And so Congress needs to join me in setting aside all the needless politics in Washington, DC, to come together and to present a solution to the American people, so we can say we've done our job. I'm looking forward to working with Congress.

I said it in the State of the Union: I want people at the table. I meant it. I want Republicans and Democrats to come to the table, to come up with a solution. Part of the solution is going to be—the best way to describe it is like an automobile; if you're speeding, you slow your car down to get to the speed limit. You don't put it in reverse. We can fix the problem. We can come together and show the American people we're capable of dealing in a bipartisan way.

We also need bipartisanship when it comes to energy. I surprised some of you, and I'm sure some of my Texas friends here were somewhat surprised to hear me say, "We're addicted to oil, and that's a problem." [Laughter] And it is a problem. It's an economic problem—economic/security problem. When demand for fossil fuels goes up in India or China or elsewhere, it affects the price of gasoline in Granbury, Texas, Jerry.

When I'm sitting around the Oval Office talking about national security matters and somebody says, "Did you see what the Iranians said about consequences?"—really what they're talking about, I guess, is energy. So for national security purposes, we have got to become not addicted to oil.

And there are ways to do this—really interesting ways, exciting new technologies. And Congress and the administration needs to work together to fund those new technologies; for example, it's possible to develop energy from saw grass. We know we can de-

velop energy from sugar and corn; we're doing it in the Midwest. Those of you in the Midwest have seen the advent of the 85 pumps. Well, we need to be able to get ethanol out of other forms of biomass. And it's coming; we're close to some breakthroughs. We want people driving cars from fuels grown in America; that's what we want.

There's going to be hybrid batteries being developed that will enable you to plug in your car or your truck, and you'll be able to drive the first 40 miles on electricity. That's coming. It's called plug-in hybrid vehicles. That's going to be a part of making sure we're not addicted to oil.

Same on the electricity front. We can use wind power and electricity. These are all coming to the market because of research. They're becoming competitive forms of energy. We need nuclear power, in my judgment. It's a renewable source of energy that doesn't create greenhouse gases. We're spending a lot of money, by the way, on clean coal technology—we've got 250 years of coal here in the United States of America. And we can—we're developing technology so that we can burn the coal cleanly. In other words, we've got a comprehensive strategy to get us off oil, and looking forward to working with both Republicans and Democrats to get this passed.

One other issue, then I want to talk about the war on terror right quick; then I'll answer questions. Probably wondering whether I'm going to filibuster you. [Laughter]

We've got to make sure our children have the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. If you're interested in talking about No Child Left Behind, you can ask me about it. I'm a firm believer. I believe it's changing public education for the better because we're measuring. And we've got to use the same high standards that we've applied for reading in the early grades for math in the middle years, junior high. That's what we need to do.

And we need to spend research and development money at the Federal level so that we're always on the leading edge of technological change, that the United States is the leader of the world, and that we've got to make sure the research and development tax credit is a permanent part of the Tax Code,

recognizing two-thirds of research dollars comes from the private sector.

One of the things—I guess what I’m telling you is, is that I don’t fear the future for the United States, because we intend to shape the future with good policies that keeps our economy flexible, entrepreneurial, that recognizes that small business is the backbone of job creation, that honors the contribution of our ranchers and farmers. I’m very optimistic about the economic future of the United States, and I’m looking forward to working with Congress to make sure the environment continues to encourage job growth.

We’re at war. I wish I could report to you we weren’t at war; we are. There’s an enemy that still lurks, that would like to do serious harm to the United States. Much of my thinking, the decisions I have made, all revolve around that fateful moment when we got attacked. As concerned citizens, I’m going to share with you a little bit about why I have made decisions I have made. I’ll be glad to answer any question you have along those decisions.

But I vowed after September—on September the 11th and after, I would use all assets at our disposal to protect you. That is, by far, the most important job of the President, is to secure this homeland. There are lessons to have been learned after September the 11th. One of them is that we cannot take our security for granted. Listen, I understand that this is a different kind of war, and there are some in our country that may not believe there is a global war on terror. They may believe this is an isolated incident—I don’t. I know we’re at war with a jihadist movement that has got strategies and tactics to back up those strategies.

So we cannot take our security for granted. And we must remain on the offense, and we are. We’re dismantling Al Qaida. It takes time. But whoever is the President of the United States after me must always keep the pressure on Al Qaida.

Secondly, we cannot let terrorists find safe haven. They found safe haven in Afghanistan, where they could plot and plan and attack. And therefore, it’s very important for the United States to deny safe haven.

Thirdly, when we see a threat, we’ve got to take it seriously and never allow it to materialize. The first choice of any President ought to be to deal with issues diplomatically. And we dealt with the issue of Iraq diplomatically—Security Council resolution after Security Council resolution after Security Council resolution, until 1441, when the world spoke with a united voice that said to Iraq: “Disarm, disclose, or face serious consequences.” Saddam Hussein chose otherwise. He was removed from power. And there’s no doubt in my mind that the United States is more secure, and the world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power.

And now we must achieve a victory in Iraq by helping this country defend itself, secure itself, and become an ally in the war on terror. The enemy we face has got a powerful weapon. They can’t defeat us militarily. They do not have an ideology that is appealing to people. But they do have the capacity to kill innocent life, and they’re willing to do so, all attempting to shake our will and cause us to leave the Middle East, so they can find save haven from which to launch attacks. That is what they have said. And as your President, it is important for me to see the world the way it is, the realities of the world, not the way some would hope it would be.

We’ve got a three-part strategy in Iraq, that on the one hand says there is a—that politics can help achieve our objective. And the Iraqi people have said loud and clear—not in one election, but three elections during the past year—they want freedom. Eleven million people went to the polls in the face of terror and threats. There are some who are trying to, obviously, sow the seeds of sectarian strife. They fear the advancement of a democracy. They blow up shrines in order to cause this Iraqi democracy that is emerging to go backwards, to not emerge. That’s what you’re seeing on your TV screens. You’re seeing the use of violence to try to create strife. And there’s no question, this is a period of tension in Iraq.

The Iraqi forces responded well, however, which is the second part of our strategy, and that is to let the Iraqis take the fight to the enemy. It’s up to Iraq to make the decision. They made the political decision, and now

it's up to them to make the decision to defend their own security against those who would stop the march of democracy. And after the shrine bombing, while there was no question about it, there was attacks; nevertheless, the Iraqi forces moved. In 16 of the 18 provinces, there was relative calm. And they performed, by and large, in good fashion.

I know people in your parts of the world wonder how long the troops are going to be there. They're going to be there so long as the commanders on the ground say they're necessary to achieve victory. But they're coming home as the Iraqis are more likely to be able to take the fight to the enemy.

And the third aspect is economic development. That includes wise reconstruction efforts, creation of a central bank, a sound currency, small businesses. And if we don't lose our nerve, I'm confident we'll achieve our objectives. And a democracy in the heart of the Middle East is going to help lay peace.

Part of winning this war on terror requires alliances. America has got a lot of friends in the war on terror. People understand the stakes. They understand that the bombings around the world were an indication of the plans that terrorists have for those of us who embrace freedom.

Obviously, you've been reading about the UAE issue. And I want to make a comment on that, the port issue. I'm sure that the decision by DP World was a difficult decision, to hand over port operations that they had purchased from another company. My administration was satisfied that port security would not have been undermined by the agreement. Nevertheless, Congress was still very much opposed to it. My administration will continue to work with the Congress to provide a greater understanding of how these transactions are approved, in other words, the process, and how we can improve that process in the future.

I'm concerned about a broader message this issue could send to our friends and allies around the world, particularly in the Middle East. In order to win the war on terror, we have got to strengthen our relationships and friendships with moderate Arab countries in the Middle East. UAE is a committed ally

in the war on terror. They are a key partner for our military in a critical region.

And outside of our own country, Dubai services more of our military ships than any country in the world. They're sharing intelligence so we can hunt down the terrorists. They've helped us shutdown a worldwide nuclear proliferation network run by A.Q. Khan. UAE is a valued and strategic partner. I'm committed to strengthening our relationship with the UAE and explaining why it's important to Congress and the American people.

Thank you for letting me come by—be glad to answer some questions.

Yes, sir.

South Dakota Abortion Legislation

Q. Governor Mike Rounds signed a bill this week banning almost all abortions in South Dakota, sort of a frontal assault on the Constitution—[inaudible]. I wonder if you agree with this process that the State has taken.

The President. As a former Governor, I fully recognize that State legislatures will vote on matters that they think expresses the will of the local folks. Obviously, this bill he signed will work its way through the court system, and maybe someday be given a fair hearing in the Supreme Court. I don't know. I can't predict to you the course these legal challenges will take. I can assure you, however, if it does make it to the Supreme Court, the two people I nominated and who were approved were not picked because of any litmus test. They will interpret laws based upon the Constitution, is what they'll do. And so I followed this in the newspapers. I haven't talked to the Governor about it.

Health Care/Association Health Plans

Q. Mr. President—

The President. Yes, I meant to call on you first. I'm sorry. [Laughter] Don't hold it against the man from South Dakota.

Q. After that long introduction I gave you, I figured you owed me something.

The President. I do owe you one. [Laughter]

Q. This organization and its members are vitally interested in the passage of association

health plans. And we wonder what the possibilities are for that.

The President. I appreciate that.

Q. And then as the next questions come around, we'll just hand this microphone around. So thank you.

The President. Look what you did. Fine with me. No, don't worry about it. I don't care. [Laughter] I don't have to deal with the guy. I'm fixing to leave. [Laughter] I'm going to go meet with President Toledo of Peru here after this.

The question is association health plans. First of all, I fully understand the pressures being put on small businesses because of rising health care costs. And therefore, good policy needs to address the rising cost of health care. I've got some ideas for you. I'll get to AHPs in a minute.

I think it's very important that there be more transparency in pricing in health care. It's really the only industry, when you think about it, where somebody else decides whether the price is worthwhile. The consumer isn't directly involved in health care decisions; a third-party payer is. And so there's really no interaction between the provider and the customer when it comes to health care.

I'm a big believer in what's called health savings accounts because it puts consumers in charge of health care decisions, and we strongly urge small businesses to look at this vehicle.

Secondly, the health care is an inefficient industry—when you really think about what information technology has done to your business, providing better productivity increases, as well as interesting challenges, by the way. The same productivity increases haven't happened in health care. I mean, you've got a guy writing down prescriptions by hand and/or files being written by hand, and doctors don't write so good anyway, which leads to medical error and inefficiencies.

So information technology, which we're now advancing here at the Federal level in conjunction with providers throughout the country, to develop a common vocabulary so that eventually there will be electronic medical records with ample privacy protections

available, will help wring out some of the costs of health care.

Health care costs are driven by frivolous lawsuits. Doctors practice defensive medicine in order to be able to withstand a court challenge. And a lot of times that practice of defensive medicine isn't necessary, except for legal reasons.

Secondly, lawsuits cause premiums to go up, which causes price to go up. And therefore, I'm a believer in medical liability reform at the Federal level. I wasn't when I first arrived in Washington; I thought States should handle it okay. But the problem is, is that it's estimated that these lawsuits and defensive practice of medicine and the rising premiums cause us to spend about \$28 billion a year in additional Federal money through Medicaid and Medicare and veterans' benefits. And so I'm for medical liability at the Federal level.

Finally, AHPs makes a lot of sense. I am a strong backer. I believe small businesses ought to be able to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can get the same benefits from larger risk pools that big companies get. So I'm a believer in AHPs. I think we've got a pretty good chance this year, I hope so, to get it out of the—I know we got it out of the House; we've got to get it out of the Senate. So part of a comprehensive strategy for dealing with health care costs is to have AHPs as a part of a health care vision.

Yes, sir.

Postal Reform

Q. Mr. President, I've got a followup question about the small business—keeping small business healthy, that you referred to. Postal delivery rates are very important to community newspapers, much as you might know, I believe, Bonnie Mullens, of the McGregor Mirror and Crawford Sun down in your area. And we are—

The President. She didn't call you to go after a subscriber, did she? [Laughter]

Q. No, we just did a little research.

The President. Okay, good. Smart man. That's called due diligence. [Laughter]

Q. Postal reform, which has been going on in Congress for about 10 years, was really pushed forward by a commission that you appointed, and it was passed overwhelmingly

by both Houses. And we have this bill going to conference in April or May. There's some concern that the administration may want to oppose this bill or veto it if it's so-called not favorable to the Federal budget. But there are things in that bill that are very important to the newspaper industry. And part of that is the funding that keeps rates fair—because of some overpayment of military pensions—that we don't think should be put on the taxpayers, the rate payers. So we'd ask your support on behalf of us, and Bonnie Mullens—

The President. Thank you.

Q. —to support that bill as it's in the Congress, if it comes to your desk, sir.

The President. As you know, we do support postal reform. And as you accurately noted, we've got the process started, and we look forward to working with Congress on an acceptable bill.

Frankly, this issue hasn't made it to my desk prior to me arriving at this meeting. And I'm mindful of the bill. I need to know more about the particulars before I make you a commitment one way or the other.

Yes, sir.

Iraq/Spread of Democracy

Q. Mr. President, what are our plans if civil war breaks out in Iraq?

The President. Yes. Step one is to make sure—do everything we can that there not be one. Secondly, I believe the Iraqi people have made a choice. It wasn't all that long ago that 11 million people went to the polls. It may seem like an eternity, but that was last December that people defied assassins, car bombers, threats, and said, "We want a democracy."

Secondly, the first real test for an interim government occurred when the Shias' shrine was blown up, the holy site. And while there's—as I said earlier, there was—no question there was violence and killing, the society took a step back from the abyss. And people took a sober reflection about what a civil war would mean.

I just got off of a teleconference with Ambassador Zal Khalilzad, as well as General Casey. They're obviously concerned about sectarian violence and the violence you see. They understand people are trying to create

this tension, this ethnic tension. But they were also pleased with the response of the security forces. It wasn't perfect across the board. But, nevertheless, in 16 of the 18 provinces, I've mentioned that there was relative calm. Most of the violence was in the Baghdad area. It's the violence you're seeing on your TV screens.

And so the purpose is to make sure that we continue to remind the Interim Government that the people want democracy. One of the keys is going to be to get a unity government up and running, a government that reflects the diversity of the country. We talked about that today. We want the Iraqis to make that selection, of course. They are the ones who got elected by the people. They're the ones who must form the government.

But we are going to continue to remind them that the sooner they can get a unity government up and running, the more confidence the people will have in their future. So it's to take advantage of the desire of the Iraqis to live in a peaceful world and encourage government to continue to respond to fight off the desires of few people, fight off those who are trying to sow the seeds and get a democracy going.

It's very important for the people in the Muslim world to understand that we understand there's a—we're dealing with a—that we want them to have a democracy that reflects their histories and their traditions. Iraqi democracy doesn't have to look like the United States, nor should it. But it's also important for people around the world to recognize that there are such things as the natural rights of men and women.

That's what we're founded on here in America. We believe in the universality of freedom. We believe people desire to be free, not just Americans, but universally. And that faith—at least my faith in the natural rights of men and women and the desire for people to be free was expressed at the ballot box. And it's that powerful statement that I believe will enable Iraq to develop a democracy.

A democracy in Iraq is important. It's important to deny safe haven to Al Qaida. Zawahiri made it clear—he's the number two man in Al Qaida—that it's just a matter of

time for America leaving. That's what he said. And the reason why that was important for him to say because they wanted to use Iraq as a place to plot/plan, as well as to spread their jihadist, their Islamist—radical Islamic view. They're totalitarians. That's what they are. And we've got to recognize them as such.

And so it's kind of a long-winded answer to my belief that we will succeed, and we must succeed. And the reason I say we will is because the Iraqis want us to succeed. They want to succeed.

There's a lot of talk about Iran. A free Iraq will inspire reformers in Iran. I believe the more women are empowered in the Middle East, like it's going to happen in Iraq, the more that will inspire others in the Middle East to demand their freedom.

Now, if you don't believe freedom is universal, then I can understand skepticism about what I just said. But I reject that notion that freedom is only available to some of us. I believe liberty is universally desired. And I know it's in our interest to help democracy spread.

I like to remind people about this historical parallel, and I've used it a lot. You've probably have heard it, so I beg your pardon for bringing it up again. But it's important for me to connect the idea of laying the foundation for peace with reality, and that reality is what we see in Europe today. There were two major world wars in Europe in the 1990s—I mean, the 1900s. And today, Europe is free and whole and at peace. And a lot of that has to do with the fact that the nations of Europe are democracies. Democracies don't war.

One of my best buddies in the international arena is Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. What's interesting about that is my dad fought the Japanese—as did, I'm sure, your relatives, some of your relatives. And yet today, I can tell the newspaper owners that I work with Koizumi to keep the peace. Democracy has the capacity to turn enemies into allies and cause, kind of, warring factions to come together. And it's hard work to help a democracy get hold, particularly if you had just left—lived under the thumb of a brutal tyrant, somebody who'd kill you in a moment—or get you killed in a moment's notice.

Remember, we discovered mass graves of a lot of people in Iraq. This guy—Saddam Hussein was brutal for the people of Iraq. And there's a lot of tension and a lot of rivalry. One of the big issues we're going to have to deal with is to make sure that people don't take revenge outside the rule of law. Militias that are, kind of, seeking revenge. And at any rate, I'm just trying to share with you some of my—the philosophical tenets of the decisions I have made, and my optimism about the future, and my hopefully realistic assessment about the necessity for us to achieve our objectives.

Remember this is a global war on terror. We've got a strong ally in Pakistan fighting off Al Qaida. And Saudi Arabia and the Kingdom of Saudi has committed itself to fighting Al Qaida. Lebanon is now becoming a freer democracy, although we've still got work there to make sure foreign influence is—allow the Lebanese democracy to grow. Libya made a decision to get rid of its weapons programs. And there's—positive things are happening. And they need to happen on a global basis because this is a global war on terror.

Yes, ma'am.

Trade

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Many of the things that you've mentioned today are affecting the State. We have a high unemployment rate. And of course, much of our economy is dependent upon the automobile industry.

The President. Right.

Q. General Motors is having problems with their health care plans, their pension plans, and of course, the issue of gas is definitely one—energy conservation. I know the auto industry has asked the administration for advice and for help in this problem. What role do you see the Federal Government playing in terms of some of the industries in the country that are partially problem-makers for your policies, as well for the people of our State?

The President. People have asked whether or not private companies that have made pension promises should be relieved of their responsibility. And my answer is, if you make a promise, you've got to keep it—that if you

said, “I—Company X, Y, Z—promise you this,” it’s up to the company to make good on the promise. I think that’s a very important principle to state loud and clear.

One of the real issues that affects Michigan and people in Michigan is trade. They’re concerned about trade. They’re worried that trade has only benefited our friends but not our country. Let me take a step back and tell you I’m a free trader. I believe it’s very important for this country to be opening markets. I’m confident that if the playing field is level, that we can compete with anybody. And therefore, one of the things I’ve tried to assure the people of Michigan is that not only am I free trader, I believe the rules ought to be fair. In other words, I would hope that American people say, “Just treat us fairly, and we’ve got the confidence to compete.”

I know our farmers can compete. And for those of you who remember the price of soybean a couple of years ago, part of that is because we opened up markets. If you’ve got cattle men and women in your area, buying your newspapers, one of the things they constantly talk to me about is, “Get those markets open; work with the Japanese to get that market open again.” If you’ve got chicken growers—I remember one of the first discussions I had with Vladimir Putin in Russia was, “You made some promises on our chickens; open up your markets like you said you would do.”

My point is, is that opening markets is good, so long as we’re treated fairly. So I’ve constantly reminded the Chinese leadership that intellectual property rights needs to be protected; your currency needs to be floated; treat our people fairly. That’s all we want. Our manufacturers need to have a level playing field.

And so I fully understand Michiganders’ concerns about the trade arena. And I would think it would be a mistake if we become a protectionist nation. I thought so strongly about it that I put it in my State of the Union Address. I am worried about isolation and protectionism. To me, it’s a lack of confidence in our ability to shape the future, and I think it would be wrong economic policy. And so I will continue to work to open up

markets. But I fully am aware of the issues in Michigan.

Yes, sir.

Gulf Coast Reconstruction

Q. Mr. President, I publish in the southern and eastern suburbs of Baton Rouge, Louisiana.

The President. There you go.

Q. I know you’ve heard a lot of complaints from Louisiana and seen a lot of hands out. I would like to thank you for your personal interest and also for all the money. [*Laughter*]

My Congressman, Richard Baker, came up with the idea of employing a Federal entity to buy out property in New Orleans and sell it back into commerce selectively. It seemed to have a political consensus in Louisiana from both parties. It got to your office and was rejected.

The President. Correct.

Q. Can you talk a little bit about the problems that you see with Richard’s plan? And also, you’re still about to send billions more down to us. How would you like to see that money handled, since you’ve been to us 10 times?

The President. Well, thank you. First of all, I want to thank the people of Baton Rouge for being so generous to the evacuees. I want to thank my fellow Texans for being generous to evacuees, and I’m sure people throughout—I’ll bet you most of you are involved with communities that said, “Welcome.” And that was a fantastic gesture of kindness by the American people, by the way.

I felt like there was a better approach to the housing issue. He’s talking about a good fellow, a really good guy named Richard Baker, came up with a plan that basically had the Government buying the property, getting developers to develop the property, and to the extent that money was not recovered, the Government would basically be the banker.

Working with the folks—let me step back. Right off the bat, I knew it was important for Louisiana to develop its own plan, not have the Federal Government say, this is the—impose a plan, but to have the folks in Louisiana come up and develop a plan. We obviously have interfaced with them, because as you recognize, in kind of a cavalier way,

“Thanks for all the money.” [Laughter] Well, not “cavalier.” You made sure you mentioned it, let me put it to you that way. [Laughter]

And Louisiana had the Baker plan but also was developing another plan, as well, and one that we agreed to. Governor Blanco has put together a citizens group of distinguished people—good, honorable people—who are working closely with the group that Mayor Nagin put together, to develop a plan that will take CDBG money, and money I’ve requested in the supplemental, to basically have money that goes directly to the homeowner. I like that idea better than the Government moving in and becoming the bank, as opposed to the Government providing money for individual homeowners to make decisions.

And the rules and the zoning laws attributable to that money are now being developed. But it’s a very good concept, in my judgment. It’s very important for Congress to make sure that the \$4.2 billion, I think it was, request in the supplemental go to Louisiana, as I said down in New Orleans the other day.

Step one in the recovery in New Orleans has got to be to make sure that the levees are strong enough—equal to or better than pre-Katrina—in order for there to be confidence for the market, confidence for the homeowner to be able to rebuild in certain parts of New Orleans.

Secondly, it’s important that as the levees are rebuilt and people gain confidence, that there be a rational development plan in place. I think a lot of taxpayers really don’t want to pay money for people to rebuild in an area that’s likely to be flooded again. And the people of New Orleans understand that, and the people of Louisiana understand that. That issue is being addressed.

Thirdly, it’s very important that the Federal Government rebuild the infrastructure that we’re obligated to rebuild in a timely fashion. Incredibly enough, the Slidell bridge, as I understand it, because of proper incentives, was built in record time, under budget. That may be a contradiction in terms when you hear a Federal official saying, “under budget, on time,” but nevertheless, I believe that’s what the Governor told me.

And so there is a comprehensive strategy in place that I’m comfortable with. Details need to be worked out, more details about dealing with the flood plain issue and how high the houses have to be rebuilt if people choose to rebuild there. I like the idea of funding people, of letting them make the decision.

By the way, Mississippi—and I don’t know if we’ve got any folks from Mississippi here—but if you’ve ever been to the gulf coast of Mississippi since the storm, you’ll know what I’m saying, it looked like a bomb blast. It just leveled, absolutely wiped out a lot of homes and property and some lives along there. And they developed a plan too—their own plan.

Louisiana is different from Mississippi. They came up with a Mississippi plan that has been funded. And they are now in the process of saying to homeowners, “We’re helping you rebuild your lives.” I went to a home where the guy building—rebuilding it on the beach. I forgot how high he’s got it up, but it’s high enough to meet new standards, new building standards.

Debris removal in both locations is—you just can’t imagine how much debris was there. As you know, I’m not too poetic to begin with, so I’ll probably not be able to describe it properly. Let me just say, it’s a lot. [Laughter] I mean, a whole lot. And Mississippi has moved a lot of it off private and public land—I’m probably telling you more than you want to know.

I’ll just give you an interesting public policy dilemma. When we first got down there, the Government will remove debris off public property but not private—will pay to remove debris off public property, but not private property. The simplest way to explain why not is, you start moving debris off private property, and the guy shows up and says, “Where’s my million-dollar necklace?” And so therefore, there needs to be a kind of a held-harmless statute, or a held-harmless agreement with local authorities. And so we’ve devised a perfectly legal way of saying that if you declare a health and safety hazard for particular blocks, then Government money will pay to clean up the land. A lot of Mississippi has been cleaned up because

a lot of the local folks decided to take that tack.

Now, the problem in Louisiana, as far as debris cleanup, is that—like in the lower Ninth, a lot of people haven't come back to their homes yet to see the devastation. They've been displaced around the country. And until people are able to come home, and until people are clear about what the rules will be and the funding mechanism will be, it's going to be—the debris removal will be slow. We've done a pretty effective job of cleaning debris off the public right-of-ways, public lands but not off the private lands. And so that's yet another deterrent to economic development.

So all this is coming together. My point—the funding is coming together; the levees are coming together; the rules about reconstruction are coming—or rebuilding are coming together; and the debris removal, albeit slow at this point in time, waiting for people to inspect their houses, will probably accelerate when people realize there's a way forward—long answer to a complicated problem.

We've got \$100 billion that has been allocated for the region, which is going to create some interesting opportunities and further problems. One is going to be labor. People are going to be rebuilding down there a long time. If you're interested in making a living, go down there, and there will be a job. And we want the first people hired, of course, to be Mississippi people and Louisiana people. It's a great opportunity, by the way, for small business development. And I'm a believer—as you can tell, I'm an optimistic person. I believe that out of this terrible harm and grief is going to come a vibrant part, a vibrant economy.

You know, sales taxes receipts are, I think, almost equal to what they were last year in Mississippi. It's amazing, isn't it? There's great resiliency to the American people.

Anyway, thanks for asking. Yes, sir.

Democracy/Free Speech

Q. Aurora, Colorado—and in our town a teacher was suspended for remarks critical of your State of the Union message, made the talk shows, et cetera—compared you to Hitler and—actually, I've heard the tape and

he didn't; he said, "Hitler-esque," but it's not the—

The President. He's not the only one. [Laughter]

Q. And it's not the content that my question is about. My question is about your sense of the free speech right in the classroom or in public to criticize you without being considered unpatriotic.

The President. Yes, I think people should be allowed to criticize me all they want, and they do. [Laughter] Now, what are you all laughing at over there? [Laughter] Don't cheer him on. [Laughter]

Look, there are some certain basic freedoms that we've got to protect. The freedom of people to express themselves must be protected. The freedom of people to be able to worship freely—that freedom is valuable. I tell people all the time, you're equally American if you're a Christian, Jew, or Muslim. You're equally American if you believe in an Almighty or don't believe in an Almighty; that's a sacred freedom.

The right for people to express themselves in the public square is a freedom. Obviously, there's limitations; if, for example, someone is inciting violence, or the destruction of property, or public—causing somebody harm. But the idea of being able to express yourself is a sacred part of our society. And that's what distinguishes us from the Taliban. And that's important for Americans to understand.

We're in an ideological struggle. And one way for people to connect the ideological struggle with reality is to think about what life was like for people under the rule of the Taliban. If you didn't agree with their view of religion, you were punished. If you tried to send your little girl to school, you were punished. These people have a backward view. I don't believe—I believe religion is peaceful. I believe people who have religion in their heart are peaceful people. And I believe these people have subverted a great religion to accomplish a political end.

And so thank you for bringing that up; I appreciate it. People say to me, my buddies in Texas, "How do you handle all this stuff?" After a while, you get used to it. [Laughter] But you have to believe in what you're doing, see. You have to believe in certain principles

and beliefs. And you can't let the public opinion polls and focus groups, one, cause you to abandon what you believe and become the reason for making decisions.

My job is a job where I make a lot of decisions. And I decide big things and little things. And there are certain principles to decisionmaking. You make decisions—you know, you have to make a lot of decisions. And you don't put your finger in the air to figure out how to make a decision, and neither should the President of the United States. And you have to know what you believe.

Good decisionmaking rests on certain basic principles. I believe in the universality of freedom. I believe democracies lead to peace. I believe people ought to worship freely. I do believe there's an Almighty God that has spread freedom—making freedom available for everybody. I believe in private enterprise. I believe in free enterprise. I believe in high standards in education. These are basic beliefs that I'm not going to change.

And I know some would like me to change, but you can't be a good decisionmaker if you're trying to please people. You've got to stand on what you believe. That's what you've got to do if you're going to make decisions that are solid and sound. And I understand some of the things I've done are unpopular. But that's what comes with the territory.

If you're afraid to make decisions and you only worry about whether or not people in the classroom are going to say nice things about you, you're not leading. And I think we've got to lead. We've got to lead to spread the peace; we've got to lead to protect this country; and we've got to lead to make sure we're the preeminent economic power, so our people can benefit.

Yes, sir.

War on Terror/Iran/North Korea

Q. Who do you think the biggest threat is: Iran, North Korea, or China?

The President. Interesting question. The biggest threat to American security: Iran, North Korea, or China. Why did I call on you? [Laughter] No. It would be an Oklahoma guy, you know? [Laughter]

The biggest threat to American security, short-term, is Al Qaida. They would like to attack us again. I think about Al Qaida and

their potential to attack all the time—all the time. That's what you want your President doing. My job is to basically insulate people from some concerns. You don't risk capital if you're worried about an attack coming tomorrow. You don't go confidently about your business if an attack is right around the corner. I understand that. But I think about it a lot. So step one—I'm changing your question: Would you please order the threats?—Al Qaida.

I said in an early speech there was an axis of evil, and it included Iran and North Korea. I said that, I think, help me out here, April—2002 perhaps? Yes, State of the Union. If it's not 2002, it's April's [April Ryan, American Urban Radio Networks] fault, because she nodded her head. [Laughter] Relatively early in my Presidency.

I did that because I'm concerned about totalitarian governments that are not transparent, that have stated their intentions to develop nuclear weapons. One of the real dangerous threats, of course, is the nexus of terrorist groups, nonstate groups that get a weapon of mass destruction, which is their stated objective. And so I'm concerned about that.

I'm concerned about—I would say they're equal, Iran and North Korea, as for a security threat, because any time there's a nontransparent regime without a free press to hold people to account, it creates an unpredictability in the world. The Iranian President has stated his desire to destroy our ally, Israel. So when you start listening to what he has said, to their desire to develop a nuclear weapon, then you begin to see an issue of grave national security concern.

And therefore, it's very important for the United States to continue to work with others to solve these issues diplomatically—in other words, to deal with these threats today, and we are. We've got the EU-3—which is Great Britain, France, and Germany—diplomatic lingo, sorry—are basically taking the position for the free world to the Iranians, that said, “No nuclear weapon and no knowledge about how to make a nuclear weapon.”

I talked to Vladimir Putin this week—or the Foreign Minister from Russia this week, about making sure that we're—Russia says the same thing. In other words, we want the

Iranians to hear loud and clear that the world is speaking with one voice when it comes to their capacity to develop a nuclear weapon. Remember now, the reason we are where we are is because they had agreed to international norms, and then were caught not adhering to the international norms. In other words, they basically tried to pull one over on the world. And to me, that's a warning signal we've got to take seriously.

Korea—the issue is one in which we tried to alter the relationship with the Koreans to be more than just the voice of the United States saying to the Koreans the same thing. And so we've now got China, South Korea, Russia, Japan, and the United States involved in what's called the six-party talks.

Ultimately, I think it's very important for the people in those countries to be able to live in a free society. If you believe liberty is universal, then you would hope liberty would spread to those countries as well.

The Chinese—you know, our relationship is a very interesting relationship with the Chinese. It's an amazing country, in many ways. It's a country that has got—it's got to create 25 million new jobs a year to stay even. Think about that. It's a country that has chosen the path, by and large, of markets and enterprise. They are an economic issue for us, and that's why we've got a huge deficit with them. And therefore, it's very important for the Government to, on the one hand, reject protectionism, but on the other hand, insist that their market is open and it be traded freely and fairly, like I answered the lady from Michigan. I don't view—China is a more—China is a strategic partner when it comes to trade, for example. And I can't say that about the other two countries. And so the relationship is different; it's a different relationship.

He's giving me the hook, because I've got to go see President Toledo. But anyway—yes, ma'am.

No Child Left Behind Act

Q. I represent the Tullahoma News, from Tullahoma, Tennessee. I have the very best job there. I'm the wife of the publisher.

The President. Yes. I don't know if Laura would say the same thing. [*Laughter*]

Q. But I wanted to know what you understand the complaints to be about your No Child Left Behind policy, and if you acknowledge those complaints as any weaknesses to the policy? How effective do you think that it is in spite of that?

The President. No, good question. I'm glad you brought up No Child Left Behind. The complaint is that, "How dare the Government cause us to measure"—one of the complaints—"Too much testing," you know. I heard that when I was the Governor of Texas. Jerry didn't editorialize there, I'm sure. [*Laughter*] Maybe you did.

You know, "How dare you test people who don't speak English as a first language." My answer to those concerns is that, how do you know if you don't test? How can you possibly tell whether a child is learning to read and write if you don't measure? When I was the Governor of our State, I was deeply concerned about a system where people would come to me and say, "You know what, we're getting kids in college that are not very literate." This kind of, just—social promotion was the culture and the norm.

If I were a newspaper owner, I'd want to make sure people could read. And one way to make sure people read is to measure early whether or not people can pass a test. I've heard people say, "All we're doing is teaching the test; you're causing people to teach the test." And my answer to that is, teaching a child to be literate will enable that child to pass the test. There's something fundamental about literacy.

Secondly, people said, "We believe in local control of schools, and the No Child Left Behind Act is not local control of schools." I strongly disagree. I believe in local control of schools. The No Child Left Behind Act said, "We're spending a lot of Federal money, particularly on Title I students; show us whether or not the money is being well spent."

We didn't say, "Here's the curriculum you must use; here are the class sizes you'll have." We didn't say, "We're going to design the test on your behalf." I fought off a national test, because I believed a national test would undermine local control of schools. All we said was, "Measure, and post your scores for everybody to see, and that you've got to be

meeting a higher standard.” In other words, we’re holding people to standards. So I believe the No Child Left Behind Act honors local control of schools.

One of the classic debates that takes place at the local level is what curriculum to use. I’m sure some of you have been through the classic reading curriculum debates. They raged hot and heavy in the State of Texas for a while. And you’d have, this side would be yelling at that side. One way to make sure that your curriculum works is to measure. If a child is passing reading by using this curriculum, and another child is not passing reading when they use another curriculum, it provides a useful tool for the local newspaper, for example, to say, “We told you so, the curriculum is not working; or we told you so, the curriculum is working.”

There’s got to be accountability in the public school system. If you do not diagnose a problem, you can never solve the problem. And one of the things about No Child Left Behind which is important is that when we diagnose a reading problem early, there is supplemental service money to help that child be brought up to speed. That’s why it’s called No Child Left Behind. We believe every child can learn—every child. And therefore, this is a program that says we want accountability for the taxpayers’ money. We’ll provide extra help early on when we find a child who needs extra help. And it’s working. That’s the other thing that I would tell people. How do I know? Because we measure. There’s an achievement gap in America that is not right. When you measure at the fourth grade, Anglo kids did fine; African American and Latino kids didn’t. And that’s not fair, and it’s not right. And so we’ve essentially ended social promotion in the early grades and said, we’re going to correct problems. And it’s working because that gap is narrowing. And the reason I can say that is because we measure.

Interestingly enough, when you, kind of, compare measurements internationally in math and science or math, we’re doing fine in the fourth grade. We’re falling off in the eighth grade. And so what I want to do is to apply the same rigor for reading that we did in the early grades to math in junior high. So in the eighth grades we get those scores

and, kind of, lay that foundation for the sciences and the engineering—the physicists, so we can compete.

I’m a strong believer in No Child Left Behind. My Secretary of Education, my good buddy, Margaret Spellings, who helped me put a similar program in place in the State of Texas, is now the Secretary of Education. She’s obviously listening to complaints about certain aspects of AYP. But we’re not going to undermine the basic tenet that says we believe in high standards; we believe every child can learn; and we’re going to measure. And when we see the status quo is unacceptable, we’ll challenge the status quo. That’s what you need to, and I’m sure you are doing that. It ought to be unacceptable to opinion makers when you find illiteracy. And you ought to demand change, not only for your own self interest but for the sake of this country. And so thanks for asking the question.

I’ve got to go. Listen, I’ll be a diplomatic problem if I don’t get over there on time. [Laughter] I’m honored you’d have me. Thanks for letting me come by and visit with you. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:45 a.m. at the Wyndham Washington Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Jerry Reppert, president, and Jerry Tidwell, vice president, National Newspaper Association; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; A.Q. Khan, former head of Pakistan’s nuclear weapons program; U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad; Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Ayman al-Zawahiri, founder of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and senior Al Qaida associate; President Vladimir Putin and Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov of Russia; Gov. Kathleen Babineaux Blanco of Louisiana; Mayor C. Ray Nagin of New Orleans, LA; President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad of Iran; and President Alejandro Toledo of Peru.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Alejandro Toledo of Peru March 10, 2006

President Bush. I am very pleased to welcome *mi amigo* back to the Oval Office. I have grown to admire President Toledo for his strength of character, his clear vision, his willingness to make difficult decisions, even

sometimes when the popularity polls suggest he do something differently. Leadership requires strength of character, the willingness to make tough choices.

I admire my friend's record. Peru is on the verge of elections, and he'll be passing on to a successor a stable economy and stable political process. And that is a wonderful legacy—the first President in 50 years to be able to say, “I'm passing on a stable economy and a stable political process.”

I admire the growth rate, the economic growth rate of Peru. It's the strongest growth rate in South America. I always admire this about my friend—he is—he says that one of his biggest goals was to reduce poverty, and he recognizes that while progress is being made—a lot of progress—that more needs to be done. He cares deeply about the people of Peru. He's a man of—he's got a *corazon gigante*.

I have enjoyed working with him. We accomplished some important missions, one of which was a free trade agreement—free trade agreement between Peru and the United States was the result of his leadership and his vision.

And so it's with mixed emotions that I meet my friend. I'm pleased to be in the presence of an accomplished person, somebody who's led, and I'm going to miss working with him, because he's been a partner in peace.

And so, Mr. President, welcome to the Oval Office. It's an honor to have you back, and it's a joy to be with you. Welcome.

President Toledo. Thank you very much. You're very generous.

Let me say very briefly, Peru and Latin America are partners with the United States in more than just a free trade agreement. It's very important, the free trade agreement, because it generates jobs and enables to continue the sustained rates of economic growth, to reduce poverty. But we are also partners in spreading the democratic values in the region. We're also partners in the fight against narcotrafficking and terrorism. We are partners in the search of peace in the world. We are partners in trying to inculcate in the region that democracy is the imperfect way, but it's the best way that we have. We are partners in trying to convey the idea that

being elected democratically is good, but it's insufficient; we need to govern democratically.

And I'm sure that after I finish and pass away the power to the next President, the Peruvians and Latin Americans do not want to go through this cycle that creates instability, that does not attract capital investment to continue growth, to generate jobs, to invest more in health, nutrition, and education, and to reduce poverty.

Mr. President, partnership means to focus seriously and deliver results in what we believe, but also means to have the degrees of tolerance to entertain our differences. And that's democracy, as practiced over here.

It has been a very productive relationship. I also have mixed feelings. And I would say publicly, you are my friend now, you will be my friend after I'm not President, and you will be my friend when you are no longer President. [*Laughter*]

The United States is a market of 290 million people, with an average income of \$37,000 a year. It's a market that I will leave for the next President, and that means jobs, because that has to do with poverty. I don't believe in giving away fish, just a decent job and a quality education and health.

Mr. President, I hope that we soon will sign the free trade agreement and will continue working for the approval of that free trade agreement in our respective Congress.

I went through a tough time, but I'm stubborn. I'm a believer, a strong believer in my convictions. And I'm sure that the wisdom of Peruvians will, on April 9th—or May—will elect someone that believes in democracy, that believes in the stability to continue on, to build on our accomplishment, but correct our mistakes; that we cannot go back and forth, because the poor people cannot afford to wait so much.

Thank you very, very much for receiving us today. It has been a very productive meeting. I want to thank my collaborators. I'm not going away yet, I still have 5 more months. [*Laughter*] And we will continue working. We have done a good job, I think, of exchanging productive ideas in the meetings of APEC. APEC represents around 57 percent of the world economy, 46 percent of the world trade. And so in 2008, the next

Peruvian President, he or she will receive you in Peru as a President of the APEC.

Thank you very, very much.

President Bush. *Mi amigo, gracias.* Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:53 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on the Resignation of Gale Norton as Secretary of the Interior

March 10, 2006

Gale Norton has been a strong advocate for the wise use and protection of our Nation's natural resources and a valuable member of my administration for more than 5 years. As the first woman Secretary of the Interior, she served the Nation well with her vision for cooperative conservation, protection and improvement of our national parks and public lands, and environmentally responsible energy development on public lands and waters. She was instrumental in establishing my Healthy Forests Initiative that has helped make communities safer from catastrophic fire, while improving wild-life habitat. Gale played an influential role in shaping the Nation's offshore and onshore energy policies to help enhance America's domestic production. When Hurricane Katrina devastated the gulf coast region, she played a leading role in my administration's efforts to restore badly needed offshore energy production to avoid further supply disruption and higher energy costs for consumers. Because of her leadership and thoughtful attention to management, repairs, and maintenance issues, Americans will be able to better enjoy our great national parks and wildlife refuges for generations to come. I appreciate Gale's dedicated service to our country, and I wish Gale and John all the best.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest an-

nounced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

March 4

In the morning, at the U.S. Ambassador's residence in Islamabad, Pakistan, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, the President of Pakistan's residence, he and Mrs. Bush participated in an arrival ceremony with President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan. Then, in the Pink Room at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, he met with President Musharraf.

Later in the morning, in the Reception Hall at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, the President participated in a briefing on the Pakistani earthquake and reconstruction efforts.

In the afternoon, in the President's Dining Room at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, the President and Mrs. Bush had lunch with President Musharraf and his wife, Sebha Musharraf. Later, at the U.S. Embassy in Islamabad, the President greeted U.S. Embassy staff. Then, in the Raphael Memorial Gardens of the U.S. Embassy, he participated in a cricket clinic with Pakistani youth.

In the evening, in the Reception Hall at the Aiwan-e-Sadr, the President and Mrs. Bush attended a performance. Later, they returned to Washington, DC, arriving the following morning.

March 6

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, he dropped by a meeting of the Academic Competitiveness Council.

In the afternoon, the President participated in a briefing on Hurricane Katrina recovery and rebuilding efforts along the gulf coast.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Alejandro Toledo of Peru to the White House on March 10.

March 7

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergey Viktorovich Lavrov of Russia.

Later, he and Mrs. Bush traveled to Crawford, TX.

The President made additional disaster assistance available to areas of Mississippi impacted by Hurricane Katrina.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jerry Gayle Bridges to be Chief Financial Officer at the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The President announced his intention to nominate Richard Capka to be Administrator of the Federal Highway Administration.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert F. Godec to be Ambassador to Tunisia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Philip D. Moeller and Jon Wellinghoff to be members of the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael E. Ranneberger to be Ambassador to Kenya.

The President announced his intention to nominate Warren W. Tichenor to be the U.S. Representative to the European Office of the United Nations and other international organizations with the rank of Ambassador.

The President announced his intention to appoint Scott G. Kriens as a member of the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Advisory Commission on Drug-Free Communities: James R. Aiona, Jr. (State Organization); Sandra Heverly (National Organization); Keith N. Humphreys (Public); Patricia J. Kempthorne (Public); Charles W. Larson, Jr. (State Organization); Darren L. Myles (National Organization); and Camille Q. Solberg (Public).

The President announced his intention to designate William McCabe as Acting Chief Financial Officer of the Department of Education.

March 8

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to New Orleans, LA. While en route aboard Air Force One, he had an intelligence briefing, and then he and Mrs. Bush participated in a briefing on hurricane recovery and rebuilding efforts in New Orleans

and other parts of Louisiana. Upon arrival in New Orleans, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Theo Richards.

Later in the morning, aboard Marine One, the President and Mrs. Bush participated in an aerial tour of hurricane-damaged areas of New Orleans followed by a walking tour of damaged areas and reconstruction efforts in New Orleans, including the lower Ninth Ward and Industrial Levee Canal. During the tour, they stopped in at Stewart's Diner in the lower Ninth Ward. They then traveled to Gautier, MS, where they toured hurricane-damaged areas.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

March 9

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany to discuss foreign policy issues. Later, he had an intelligence briefing. He then participated in a photo opportunity with the National and Distinguished Principals of the Year.

Later in the morning, the President met with Republican congressional leaders to discuss legislative priorities. Later, on the North Portico, he participated in a photo opportunity with U.S. Senate Youth Program students.

In the afternoon, the President met with bipartisan Members of Congress to discuss his proposed Advanced Energy Initiative.

In the evening, the President traveled to College Park, GA. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Cancun, Mexico, to meet with President Vicente Fox of Mexico and Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada on March 30–31.

March 10

In the morning, the President had breakfast with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. Later, he had an intelligence briefing. He then participated in a National Security Council meeting on Iraq.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush had lunch with President Alejandro Toledo of Peru. Later, in the Oval Office, he and Mrs. Bush met with members of military

service organizations that have participated in the Department of Defense's America Supports You program.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland to the White House on March 17 and that he and Prime Minister Ahern will meet with Secretary of State for Northern Ireland Peter Hain of the United Kingdom. They will then meet with community peace activists from Northern Ireland.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert D. McCallum, Jr., to be Ambassador to Australia.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted March 7

Jerry Gayle Bridges,
of Virginia, to be Chief Financial Officer,
Corporation for National and Community
Service, vice Michelle Guillermin, resigned.

Richard Capka,
of Pennsylvania, to be Administrator of the
Federal Highway Administration, vice Mary
E. Peters, resigned.

Robert F. Godec,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior
Foreign Service, class of Counselor, to be
Ambassador Extraordinary and Pleni-
potentiary of the United States of America
to the Republic of Tunisia.

Philip D. Moeller,
of Washington, to be a member of the Fed-
eral Energy Regulatory Commission for the
term expiring June 30, 2010, vice Patrick
Henry Wood III, resigned.

Michael E. Ranneberger,
of Virginia, a career member of the Senior
Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor,

to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Pleni-
potentiary of the United States of America
to the Republic of Kenya.

Jon Wellinghoff,
of Nevada, to be a member of the Federal
Energy Regulatory Commission for the term
expiring June 30, 2008, vice William Lloyd
Massey, term expired.

Withdrawn March 7

James Hardy Payne,
of Oklahoma, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for
the Tenth Circuit, vice Stephanie K. Sey-
mour, retired, which was sent to the Senate
on September 29, 2005.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office
of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as
items nor covered by entries in the Digest of
Other White House Announcements.

Released March 4

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Sec-
retary Scott McClellan

Transcript of a press briefing by Secretary
of State Condoleezza Rice on the President's
visit to South Asia

Fact sheet: United States and Pakistan:
Long-Term Strategic Partners

Released March 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Sec-
retary Scott McClellan

Transcript of a press briefing by Lt. Gen.
Carl Strock, commander and chief of engi-
neers, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, on re-
covery efforts in the gulf coast

Transcript of a press briefing by Office of
Management and Budget Director Joshua B.
Bolton on the President's line-item veto leg-
islation

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit by President Alejandro Celestino Toledo Manrique of Peru

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 1777

Fact sheet: President Submits Line Item Veto Legislation to Congress

Released March 7

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Mississippi

Released March 8

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Fact sheet: India Civil Nuclear Cooperation: Responding to Critics

Fact sheet: Gulf Coast Update: Hurricane Relief, Recovery, and Rebuilding Continues

Released March 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of Prime Minister Ahern of Ireland

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Bush To Travel to Cancun, Mexico

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 3199 and S. 2271

Fact sheet: Compassion in Action: Producing Real Results for Americans Most in Need

Fact sheet: Safeguarding America: President Bush Signs Patriot Act Reauthorization

Released March 10

Fact sheet: Economic Growth Continues—Almost 5 Million Jobs Created Since August 2003

**Acts Approved
by the President**

Approved March 6

S. 1777 / Public Law 109–176
Katrina Emergency Assistance Act of 2006

Approved March 9

H.R. 3199 / Public Law 109–177
USA PATRIOT Improvement and Reauthorization Act of 2005

S. 2271 / Public Law 109–178
USA PATRIOT Act Additional Reauthorizing Amendments Act of 2006