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every generation. From Valley Forge, across Europe and Asia, and in Afghanistan and Iraq, courageous Americans have given their lives so that others could live in freedom. These Soldiers, Sailors, Airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen took an oath to defend America, and they upheld that oath with bravery and decency. They have liberated the oppressed, spread freedom and peace, and set a standard of courage and compassion for our Nation. All who enjoy the blessings of liberty live in their debt.

This debt of gratitude extends also to the families who stood by our servicemen and women in times of war and times of peace. Each of the fallen has left behind loved ones who carry a burden of grief, and all Americans are inspired by the strength of these families.

At this important time in the history of freedom, a new generation of Americans is defending our flag and our liberty. These men and women carry on the legacy of our Nation's fallen heroes and demonstrate that the United States Armed Forces remain the greatest force for freedom in human history.

Those who lost their lives in the defense of freedom helped protect our citizens and lay the foundation of peace for people everywhere. On Memorial Day, a grateful Nation pays tribute to their personal courage, love of country, and dedication to duty.

In respect for their devotion to America, the Congress, by a joint resolution approved on May 11, 1950, as amended (64 Stat. 158), has requested the President to issue a proclamation calling on the people of the United States to observe each Memorial Day as a day of prayer for permanent peace and designating a period on that day when the people of the United States might unite in prayer. The Congress, by Public Law 106–579, has also designated the minute beginning at 3:00 p.m. local time on that day as a time for all Americans to observe the National Moment of Remembrance.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Memorial Day, May 29, 2006, as a day of prayer for permanent peace, and I designate the hour beginning in each locality at 11 a.m. of that day as a time to unite in prayer. I also ask all Americans to observe the National Moment of Remembrance beginning at 3 p.m., local time, on Memorial Day. I encourage the media to participate in these observances. I also request the Governors of the United States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the appropriate officials of all units of government, to direct that the flag be flown at half-staff until noon on this Memorial Day on all buildings, grounds, and naval vessels throughout the United States, and in all areas under its jurisdiction and control. I also request the people of the United States to display the flag at half-staff from their homes for the customary forenoon period.

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

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:52 a.m., May 17, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 18.

Remarks at a State Dinner Honoring Prime Minister John Howard of Australia

May 16, 2006

Mr. Prime Minister, Mrs. Howard, distinguished guests: Welcome to the White House. This is going to be a joyous occasion because we're honoring two really good friends. We wish you a warm welcome. We thank the Howards for making a long journey, and thanks for spending so much time with us here in the States.

Our partnership is broad, and it's deep. Australia and America are working together to expand trade and to counter threats of nuclear proliferation, to make the latest energy technologies available to all nations. In the global war on terror, we have no better ally than Australia and John Howard. And in the spread of freedom to create lasting peace, we have no better friend than Australia and John Howard.

Mr. Prime Minister, we value your courage and your faithfulness and your strength, and

I value your friendship. Laura and I have cherished every visit with you and Janette. We really appreciated the chance to plant those trees yesterday at the Australian Embassy. [*Laughter*] We wanted to bring a Texas tree up, but they don't grow too well here in Washington. [*Laughter*] But I know those trees are going to grow strong and sturdy, just like our friendship has grown strong and sturdy.

I was thinking about how to really describe John Howard and his leadership in Australia, and I thought I would remind everybody what Ronald Reagan used to say: it was "morning in America." And Mr. Prime Minister, that's still true for our country. We're really an optimistic people, and we firmly believe the best days are ahead for our country. I know you feel the same way about Australia. It's also comforting to know that on the other side of the world, it's already morning in Australia. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Prime Minister, Laura and I offer a toast to you and Janette, to our allies, and to the great people of Australia.

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

Remarks Honoring the United States Winter Olympic and Paralympic Teams

May 17, 2006

Thank you all very much. Please be seated. Laura and I are so honored to welcome the 2006 Winter Olympic and Paralympic teams to the White House. It is such a joy to have you all here, and congratulations for being champs.

I appreciate the Members of the Congress who are here: Senator Thomas and Congressmen Shays, Buyer, Hastings, and Ryun. Thank you all for coming. Thanks for honoring these great Olympians—Congressman Ted Poe from Texas as well.

I want to thank all the athletes who've taken time to come. We really appreciate your giving us a chance to pay respects to your athleticism and your character. I want to thank the coaches and the team leaders and the U.S. Olympic staff. I particularly want to thank the members of the Texas A&M Singing Cadets for joining us today; thanks for coming to provide the—[*applause*].

I wish I could have been at the games there in Turin, but fortunately we do have TVs here in the White House. [*Laughter*] It was such a thrill to watch you all compete. Laura represented our country and really enjoyed getting to know you all. She came back and talked about the kindness and the integrity of our athletes. I appreciate the fact that you treated her with such respect. More importantly, I appreciate the fact that you represented our country with such nobility and dignity.

I thank you for the example you set. I don't know if you know this or not, but there's all kinds of people watching our Olympic and Paralympic athletes, wondering whether or not it's possible for them to be able to achieve the same level of accomplishments that you all achieved. The fact that you compete hard and train hard and set high goals and succeed is a really important part of encouraging others to follow in your footsteps. Being a champ means that you've got enormous responsibilities, and I thank you for upholding those responsibilities with the class that you've showed as athletes in Turin.

Thanks for creating so many lasting memories for the American people. We love our athletes. We follow your successes. We love it when the "Star Spangled Banner" is played. We also understand that not everybody is going to win the gold, but we appreciate so much the fact that you competed so hard and in such a way that brought honor to our country.

The memories are such that we remember the—America's first medal in ice dancing in 30 years with Tanith and Ben. Congratulations to you both. We appreciate the courage of Lindsey Kildow, who overcame a terrible crash in the training run and then decided to continue to compete. That kind of courage stirs our hearts. It's such a great example for people.

We appreciate Joey Cheek, who won the gold and then turned around and donated