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NOTE: The President spoke at 6:50 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Message on the Observance of Juneteenth

June 12, 2006

I send greetings to all those observing Juneteenth.

President Lincoln called the Emancipation Proclamation of 1863 the "central act" of his administration and "the greatest event of the nineteenth century." The joyous news of freedom did not reach Galveston, Texas, until two and a half years after emancipation when Major General Gordon Granger arrived and announced that the Civil War was over and all slaves were free. Ever since, Americans have marked June 19th with special celebrations and traditions commemorating this historic moment.

On this day, we honor the vision of President Lincoln, and we will keep striving to build a Nation where the dignity of every person is respected, where people are judged by the content of their character, and where the hope of the American dream reaches every neighborhood and every citizen. Together, we can continue to advance the ideals of liberty and justice that make our country strong and help more Americans realize the full promise of this great Nation.

Laura and I send our best wishes on this special occasion. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message. This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 16.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

June 10

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

June 11

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

June 12

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Then, on the North Portico, he participated in a photo opportunity with members of the World Cup Youth Delegation.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Camp David, MD, where he met with the Interagency Team on Iraq, some participating through video teleconference.

In the afternoon, the President met with the Interagency Team on Iraq.

In the evening, the President traveled to Baghdad, Iraq, arriving the following afternoon.

June 13

In the morning, while en route to Baghdad, Iraq, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, at the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad, the President met with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq. Later, the President met with Prime Minister Maliki, the Iraqi Cabinet, and his Cabinet, participating from Camp David, MD, through video teleconference. Later, the President had separate meetings with President Jalal Talabani and Speaker of the Council of Representatives Mahmoud al-Mashhadani of Iraq and Iraqi business, cultural, and education leaders.

In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC, arriving the next morning. While en route aboard Air Force One, he participated in an interview with radio and television reporters.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Bush will accompany Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan to Memphis, TN, on June 30 following Prime Minister Koizumi's visit to the White House on June 29.