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not hesitate to use. The images of policemen using night sticks on peaceful protestors were carried on television screens across the country, and they stung the conscience of a slumbering America.

One week after Selma, President Lyndon Johnson took to the airwaves to announce that he planned to submit legislation that would bring African Americans into the civic life of our Nation. Five months after Selma, he signed the Voting Rights Act into law in the rotunda of our Nation's Capitol. In a little more than a year after Selma, a newly enfranchised black community used their power at the ballot box to help defeat the sheriff who had sent men with whips and clubs to the Edmund Pettus Bridge on that bloody Sunday.

For some parts of our country, the Voting Rights Act marked the first appearance of African Americans on the voting rolls since Reconstruction. And in the primaries and elections that followed the signing of this act, many African Americans pulled the voting lever for the first time in their lives.

Eighty-one-year-old Willie Bolden was the grandson of slaves, and in the spring of 1966, he cast his first ballot in Alabama's Democratic primary. He told a reporter, "It felt good to me. It made me think I was sort of somebody." In the America promised by our Founders, every citizen is a somebody, and every generation has a responsibility to add its own chapter to the unfolding story of freedom.

In four decades since the Voting Rights Act was first passed, we've made progress toward equality, yet the work for a more perfect union is never ending. We'll continue to build on the legal equality won by the civil rights movement to help ensure that every person enjoys the opportunity that this great land of liberty offers. And that means a decent education and a good school for every child, a chance to own their own home or business, and the hope that comes from knowing that you can rise in our society by hard work and God-given talents.

Today we renew a bill that helped bring a community on the margins into the life of American democracy. My administration will vigorously enforce the provisions of this law, and we will defend it in court. This legislation is named in honor of three heroes of American history who devoted their lives to the struggle of civil rights: Fannie Lou Hamer, Rosa Parks, and Coretta Scott King. And in honor of their memory and their contributions to the cause of freedom, I am proud to sign the Voting Rights Act Reauthorization and Amendments Act of 2006.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:34 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Bruce S. Gordon, president and chief executive officer, National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP); civil rights leader Rev. Joseph E. Lowery; Marc H. Morial, president and chief executive officer, National Urban League; Juanita Abernathy, wife of deceased civil rights leader Rev. Ralph D. Abernathy; civil rights leader Rev. Jesse L. Jackson, Sr., founder and president, Rainbow/PUSH Coalition; 2004 Democratic Party presidential candidate Rev. Alfred C. Sharpton; Dr. Benjamin L. Hooks, National Civil Rights Museum board chairman, and his wife, Frances; and Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC. H.R. 9, approved July 27, was assigned Public Law No. 109–246.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Traian Basescu of Romania and an Exchange With Reporters

July 27 2006

President Bush. The Prime Minister and I will take a couple of questions a side after opening statements—Mr. President, excuse me. Welcome.

President Basescu. Thank you.

President Bush. The President and I are friends. Romania and the United States are friends, and we're allies. And as such, we've had an in-depth discussion about a variety of subjects. We talked about the international scene and how we can work together to promote democracy and peace. We talked about the neighborhood, and I assured him that the United States position on Moldova is that we support the territorial integrity of Moldova.

We talked about bilateral relations. One of the—of course, the issues that's on the President's mind is visa policy. He was very articulate and strong in his position that the United States must be forward-leaning when

it comes to granting visas to the citizens of Romania. I listened very carefully. I assured him that there is a way forward; there's a roadmap that we'd like to work with our friends and allies on, and we will pay very careful attention to what the President said.

We've got a lot on our agenda because we're friends. And I do want to thank the people of Romania for their strong support for the young democracies in Iraq and Afghanistan. And your contribution, Mr. President, has been worthwhile and meaningful, and I know the Iraqi people are grateful, and so am I.

So welcome back to the Oval Office.

President Basescu. Thank you very much, Mr. President. In fact, we meet each other after one year—compare it with what we discussed last year, we conclude that both parties fulfilled assumed obligations. Romania will continue to remain an ally of the United States in supporting the democracy in Iraq and Afghanistan, in supporting democratic regimes in these countries like a key of freedom on the area.

In same time, we analyze together the bilateral relations and the problems which are around Black Sea, around of the region where Romania exists. We analyzed the Western Balkans situation; we analyzed the situation of Moldova and the necessity having Republic of Moldova in his territory unaffected by anybody.

In same time, we conclude that we have to continue our cooperation in economical area, in political area, and in security area. And in same time, Romania will contribute with peace possibilities in spreading the democracy around of Romania, mainly on the Black Sea region.

That's all in a few words. I thank you very much, Mr. President, for our discussion.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

Jennifer [Jennifer Loven, Associated Press].

Situation in the Middle East

Q. Thank you, sir. Israel's Justice Minister said that the lack of a call from the international community for an immediate cease-fire essentially gives Israel a green light to push harder. And the top general there says there will be several more weeks of fighting. Is your administration okay with these things?

President Bush. I believe this: I believe that, as Condi said yesterday, the Middle East is littered with agreements that just didn't work. And now is the time to address the root cause of the problem. And the root cause of the problem is terrorist groups trying to stop the advance of democracies.

Hizballah attacked Israel. I believe Hizballah—I know Hizballah is connected to Iran. And now is the time for the world to confront this danger. Look, we care deeply about the loss of life. And I'm troubled by the destruction that has taken place in Lebanon. You know, we grieve when Lebanese families lose innocent life. I've urged that there be caution when it comes to dealing with Hizballah. On the other hand, I fully understand that whatever is done diplomatically must address the root cause. And the root cause is terrorist activities. One of the things I said initially when these incidents first started happening, was that it's important for the Lebanese democracy to survive and to become strong.

And so what you're watching is American policy aiming to address the root cause and aiming to strengthen Lebanese democracy so that we can have peace. I view this as a clash of forms of government. I see people who can't stand the thought of democracy taking hold in parts of—in the Middle East. And as democracy begins to advance, they use terrorist tactics to stop it.

And so I appreciate my Secretary of State's hard work. There's a lot of diplomacy being done. There's a lot of discussions about how to go forward. Yesterday's meetings were successful in this way: It showed a diplomatic way forward. And so you're seeing a lot of diplomacy take place.

But our objective is to make sure those who use terrorist tactics are not rewarded, and at the same time, help those who have suffered as a result of the responses.

Q. So several more weeks of fighting is okay to achieve those goals?

President Bush. My goal is exactly what I said it was, and that is to hopefully end this as quickly as possible, and at the same time, making sure there's a lasting peace—not a fake peace, not a fake, you know, kind

of circumstances that make us all feel better, and then, sure enough, the problem arises again. And that's the goal of the United States. And we're working toward that end, and we're working hard diplomatically. Look, as soon as we can get this resolved the better, obviously, but it must be real. And it can't be fake. And so there's a serious diplomatic effort going forward, led ably by my Secretary of State.

You want to ask somebody from the Romanian press?

Romania's Participation in International Affairs

Q. Is there any role for the Romanian—for Romania in the American foreign policy strategies besides its participation within the American-led coalitions in Iraq and Afghanistan?

President Bush. Absolutely. I spent a lot of time listening to my friend's advice on the Black Sea region. We're going to spend time over lunch talking about specific issues related to the Balkans. And Romania's role in this area and in her neighborhood is a vital role, one that I listen very carefully to his advice on, because this area of the world is one where there's emerging democracies. And it's an area of the world that is—where there has been historical conflict, and it's an area of the world where we've got to pay attention to it. And so the Romanian role is a vital role.

And so, as I say, we're going to spend time strategizing about the role over lunch.

Holland [Steve Holland, Reuters].

War on Terror

Q. Sir, thank you. Dr. Zawahiri has surfaced again with a new videotape urging Muslims to fight and become martyrs because of the conflict in Lebanon. What's your reaction to that?

President Bush. My answer is, I'm not surprised people who use terrorist tactics would start speaking out. It doesn't surprise me. I am—Zawahiri's attitude about life is that there shouldn't be free societies, and he believes that people ought to use terrorist tactics, the killing of innocent people, to achieve his objective. And so I'm not surprised he feels like he needs to lend his voice to terrorist activities that are trying to prevent democracies from moving forward.

Al Qaida has made it clear about their vision for the future, and it's one that is exactly opposite to what the American people believe and this Romanian President believes, and that is, people ought to be free—free to worship, free to speak their minds, free to participate in the process.

And so, you know, here's a fellow who is in a remote region of the world putting out statements basically encouraging people to use terrorist tactics to kill innocent people to achieve political objectives. And the United States of America stands strong against Mr. Zawahiri and his types.

U.S. Visa Policy

Q. Mr. President, sir, about a visa waiver, how soon can Romanians expect to travel to U.S. without a visa? And when taking this decision that Romanians are expecting, are you going to take under consideration, for instance, that Romanians will probably want to come and work in the United States in huge numbers? Is that the problem for the United States?

President Bush. No, no. It's an interesting question you bring up, however. I told the President we're dealing with an immigration debate here in the United States and that I'm hopeful that we'll get a comprehensive immigration bill that will accommodate people who want to work here, but we want them to work here on a temporary basis and in a legal way.

No, the issue with the visa policy first started because of what was an overstay problem based upon a history of people traveling to the United States during a different era. In other words, a lot of people during the previous era—that era would be one defined by a non-free society versus a free society—would come to the United States on a temporary visa and then would overstay their visa. And we have laws on the books that say countries who had people come and overstay their visas, therefore, must be viewed differently than others.

Now, one of the first changes we have made is that we have said, "Okay, that's a bygone era; now let's look toward the future." Secondly, we've said to countries, "We

want to work together on a roadmap to make sure the visa policy will work." And that's where we are with Romania as well as other countries. And so each country has to develop its own roadmap based upon its own particular circumstances.

And that's what we're doing, Mr. President. The answer is, as quickly as we can get these issues resolved, the better. But we've still got work to do.

President Basescu. If you allow me, Mr. President, mainly for the American journalists. Romanians don't look at the United States like immigration area. In fact, as a member of European Union, the Romanians have a lot of places to work around Romania.

The problem which we have now—and for this reason, I raised the subject of visas in discussions with the President—is in connection with our students which are more and more present in American universities, with our intelligent peoples which are working in IBM or in Oracle, with our business peoples—and if you look at the volume of the business in the last 3 years, was three times increased. And now a businessperson from Romania, in order to obtain a visa coming in United States, discussing about developing the business, need minimum 3 months.

And in fact, the Romanians don't look at the United States like a place to immigrate illegally or to find a working place. This problem was settled for Romanians in Europe. We already have the people spread around of Europe, like Romania have people from Europe, from other countries which work in Romania. Romania will not be illegal immigration problem, or a problem from the point of view of jobs which exist in the United States.

Thank you, Mr. President.

President Bush. Good job. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ayman Al-Zawahiri, founder of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and senior Al Qaida associate. A reporter referred to Minister of Justice Haim Ramon of Israel.

Remarks on Signing the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006

July 27, 2006

The President. Thank you all for coming. Please be seated. Welcome and good afternoon. In a few moments, I will sign the Adam Walsh Child Protection and Safety Act of 2006. Twenty-five years ago today, Adam Walsh was abducted from a department store, and he was later found murdered. In the years since, his parents, John and Reve Walsh, have become advocates for missing children. They've helped combat child abduction and exploitation across this country. And the bill I sign today will strengthen Federal laws to protect our children from sexual and other violent crimes, will help prevent child pornography, and will make the Internet safer for our sons and daughters. I want to thank you all for joining us today, and thank you for your tireless crusade.

I'm pleased to be up here with the Attorney General, Al Gonzales. I want to thank all the Members of the House and the Senate who have joined us. John, as you can see, you've attracted quite a crowd here.

John Walsh. S.W.A.T. team for kids.

The President. Yes, it is, S.W.A.T. team for kids.

I appreciate very much the bill sponsors who have joined us, and the committee chairmen and the leadership that has made this bill possible. This is a good piece of bipartisan legislation, and I'm really going to be proud to sign it.

I want to thank all the family members of victims who have joined us today. I particularly want to say hello to Elizabeth Smart and Amie Zyla. Thank you all for coming.

You know, having someone harm your child is one of the worst nightmares a parent could face. And the families who have joined us today have felt that pain firsthand. In your suffering and loss, many of you have found the courage to become advocates for the safety of other children. Because of your efforts, this important measure is going to become the law of the land, and the children of parents you may never meet will be spared the anguish your families have known. So thank you for your contribution.