AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO



***Rear Adm. Robinson.*** Thank you very much.

***The President.*** Appreciate being here. God bless. Thank you.

I'm doing fine; my health is fine. I probably ate too many birthday cakes.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:40 p.m. Participating in the visit was Rear Adm. Adam M. Robinson, Jr., USN, commander, National Naval Medical Center, and chief, Navy Medical Corps.

## Remarks on the Renovation of the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room and an Exchange With Reporters

*August 2, 2006*

***Press Secretary Tony Snow.*** All right, well, never mind. See, every once in a while, hideous threats have a clarifying effect. And sometimes they make people make important choices, and apparently the threat of my singing has persuaded the President of the United States to intervene on yet another mission of peace.

Mr. President.

***The President.*** Dee Dee, how're you doing?

***Margaret J. "Dee Dee" Myers.*** Mr. President.

***The President.*** Marlin, you're looking as pretty as ever.

***Marlin Fitzwater.*** Thank you, Mr. President. Really good to see you.

***The President.*** Sarah, good to see you.

***Sarah Brady.*** How are you?

***The President.*** Jim, really good to see you, sir. Thank you.

***James S. Brady.*** Nice seeing you too.

***Q.*** Speech, speech.

***Q.*** Press conference.

***Q.*** Welcome, Mr. President.

***Q.*** We have a few questions, if you don't mind.

***Q.*** Just a couple of questions.

***The President.*** I know you've been complaining about the digs for a while. [*Laughter*] So this is like the end of an old era. And let me just say, we felt your pain. And so we decided, you know, to help you renovate and come up with a new Brady center.

And so I want to thank the former spin meisters for joining me up here. Tell my people how to do it, will you? I mean, it's a—[*laughter*].

But anyway, Laura and I wanted to come by and wish you all the best as you get to move headquarters for a while. I look forward to welcome you back here in, I guess, 6 or 7 months. Is that right?

***Q.*** Nine months. We hope.

***Q.*** We're setting no timetables, Mr. President. [*Laughter*]

***The President.*** That's what you get when you bring your crackpot up from Texas. [*Laughter*]

***Q.*** No comment, sir. [*Laughter*]

***The President.*** So, like, suede chairs? [*Laughter*] Is that what you're looking—kind of velvet armchairs? Armchairs. Everybody wants to be able to lean back.

It looks a little crowded in here. And so you want to double the size?

***Q.*** Yes.

***The President.*** Forget it. [*Laughter*] You get to work like the rest of us. We may have some air conditioning if we decide to. [*Laughter*]

Anyway, good luck in the new building. Looking forward to seeing you over there.

***Q.*** Can we come see you?

***The President.*** I don't know. Does the air conditioner work better there than here? [*Laughter*]

***Q.*** Yes.

***The President.*** The last time I had a press conference in here, it felt like it was outside. As a matter of fact, some of your makeup was running. [*Laughter*]

***Q.*** Mr. President, should Mel Gibson be forgiven? [*Laughter*]

***The President.*** Is that you and Gregory [David Gregory, NBC News] standing back there?

***Q.*** I was there first. [*Laughter*]

***The President.*** You know——

***Q.*** ——complaining that the Jews start all the wars——

***The President.*** Is that Sam Donaldson? [*Laughter*] Forget it. You're a has-been. We don't have to answer has-been's questions.

***Q.*** Oo-o-oh!

***Q.*** Mr. President, do you want to say a little about the White House press corps, please?

***The President.*** Say something about the White House press corps?

***Q.*** Yes, sir.

***The President.*** It's a beautiful bunch of people. [*Laughter*]

***Q.*** How about your best moment in here, sir? Can you remember your——

***The President.*** My best moment in here is when my press conference ended. [*Laughter*]

***Q.*** [*Inaudible*]—about Mel Gibson——

***The President.*** I can't hear you; I'm over 60, just like you. [*Laughter*]

***Q.*** ——Ronald Reagan could get away with that, sir.

***The President.*** He was over 60 as well. At any rate, as you can tell, I'm thrilled to be here. [*Laughter*] But we do wish you all the best. Looking forward to being here when you kick off the new room. You deserve better than this. I appreciate the relationship with the press. I know these folks enjoyed the—enjoyed dealing with you—well, another crowd of you, been dealing with you as well. It's an important relationship.

***Joe Lockhart.*** Some of the same crowd.

***The President.*** Well, you're the head of the whole thing. Like, have you got a thing—a role to play?

***Q.*** No, no, no.

***The President.*** Okay, good. But anyway, good luck.

***Q.*** What about Crawford?

***The President.*** For those of you going to Crawford, saddle up. All right, good to see you.

***Press Secretary Snow.*** Thank you, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:57 p.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. Participating in the visit were former White House Press Secretaries Margaret J. "Dee Dee" Myers, Marlin Fitzwater, Joe Lockhart, Ron Nessen, and James S. Brady, and his wife, Sarah. In his remarks, the President referred to ABC News national correspondent Sam Donaldson. A reporter referred to actor Mel Gibson.

## Remarks Following a Tour of the Lake County Emergency Management Agency in Mentor, Ohio

*August 2, 2006*

I have just been briefed by the emergency management teams of Lake County and the other counties affected by the recent flooding. Law enforcement was there; firefighters were there; and our FEMA representative was there at the briefing.

A couple of impressions: One, the local response was really good. The interoperability between various jurisdictions was superb. And as a result, a lot of people's lives were saved. And I want to congratulate you, Sheriff, and congratulate Larry for your good work in helping people.

Secondly, FEMA has been on the ground here, and I signed a major disaster declaration for this part of the country, which means this: that individuals will be helped. Individuals will be helped with rental assistance; individuals will be helped with temporary housing; individuals will be helped with grants to help rebuild their homes; and small businesses will be helped with low-interest loans. In other words, the first wave of help from the Federal Government as a result of these disasters is now available for people whose lives were affected by the flooding.

There are still assessments going on for further Federal help and Federal assistance, and when those assessments are made, the proper help will be granted. For those people who are wondering about the Federal help, there's toll-free numbers. You can call the emergency center, they'll give you the toll-free numbers if you've been a citizen affected by these recent floods.

Again, I want to congratulate you all for a job well done. I had the honor of talking to dispatchers, hardworking people that are on the phone all the time helping people. And now, once the lives have been saved, with the exception of one soul, that it's now time to help the people rebuild their lives. There's a lot of people concerned and a lot of people working here, and the Federal Government will do its part with the local authorities.

Thank you all very much. Appreciate you.