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Message to the Congress Transmitting Draft Legislation on Military Commissions

September 6, 2006

To the Congress of the United States:

I transmit for the consideration of the Congress draft legislation entitled the "Military Commissions Act of 2006." This draft legislation responds to the Supreme Court of the United States decision in *Hamdan v. Rumsfeld*, 126 S. Ct. 2749 (2006), by establishing for the first time in our Nation's history a comprehensive statutory structure for military commissions that would allow for the fair and effective prosecution of captured members of al Qaeda and other unlawful enemy combatants. The Act also addresses the Supreme Court's holding that Common Article 3 of the Geneva Conventions applies to the conflict with al Qaeda by providing definitions rooted in United States law for the standards of conduct prescribed by Common Article 3.

The military commission procedures contained in this draft legislation reflect the result of an extended deliberation both within the executive branch and between representatives of my Administration and Members of Congress. The draft legislation would establish a Code of Military Commissions that tracks the courts-martial procedures of the Uniform Code of Military Justice, but that departs from those procedures where they would be impracticable or inappropriate for the trial of unlawful enemy combatants captured in the midst of an ongoing armed conflict, under circumstances far different from those typically encountered by military prosecutors.

Five years after the mass murders of 9/11, it is time for the United States to begin to prosecute captured al Qaeda members for the serious crimes that many of them have committed against United States citizens and our allies abroad. As we provide terrorists the justice and due process that they denied their victims, we demonstrate that our Nation remains committed to the rule of law.

I ask that the Congress carefully consider this legislation and respectfully urge its speedy passage for enactment into law.

George W. Bush

The White House,
September 6, 2006.

Remarks to the Georgia Public Policy Foundation in Atlanta, Georgia

September 7, 2006

Thank you all very much. Please be seated. Thank you. Sonny, thanks for the introduction. Thanks for your leadership. It's always a pleasure to be in Georgia. I appreciate you coming, and I appreciate this chance to speak here before the Georgia Public Policy Foundation. And I thank you for what you do. For 15 years, you've been researching and writing on issues that matter. You take on tough questions; you apply innovative thinking; you push for action; and you do it all without regard to politics. Come on up to Washington. [*Laughter*]

I have come here to Atlanta to continue a series of speeches marking the fifth anniversary of the September the 11th, 2001, attacks. Last week at the American Legion Convention in Salt Lake City, Utah, I outlined the ideological struggle between the forces of moderation and liberty and the forces of extremism across the Middle East. On Tuesday in Washington, I described our enemies in their own words and set forward a strategy to defeat them. Yesterday I announced that the men we believe orchestrated the 9/11 attacks have been transferred to Guantanamo Bay, and I called on the United States Congress to pass legislation creating military commissions to bring these people to justice.

Today I'll deliver a progress report on the steps we have taken since 9/11 to protect the American people, steps we've taken to go on the offense against the enemy, and steps we are taking to win this war on terror.

Today I traveled with two United States Senators who clearly see the issues before us, and I appreciate and I'm proud to be associated and friends with Senator Saxby Chambliss and Senator Johnny Isakson.

I do thank Brenda Fitzgerald for encouraging the board of governors to invite me and for taking the lead for the Georgia Public Policy Foundation. And I want to thank the board of governors for your kind invitation. I appreciate very much being with Major General Terry Nesbitt. He's the director of the Georgia office of Homeland Security.

Joining us today is a man I got to know quite well under trying circumstances, and that would be Lieutenant General Russ Honore of the United States Army—Honore. He issued one of the great lines I've ever heard, and you're welcome to use it—"Don't get stuck on stupid." It's good advice for people in Washington, DC. [*Laughter*]

I welcome the other State and local officials here. Thank you all for letting me come by.

In Atlanta, you know the pain of terrorism firsthand. This summer, you marked the 10th anniversary of the bombing in Centennial Olympic Park. That was the act of one madman. Next Monday is the fifth anniversary of an attack on our Nation, and on that day, we awoke to a new kind of terrorism. Instead of a localized strike, we faced multiple attacks by a network of sophisticated and suicidal extremists. In the years since, we've come to learn more about our enemies. We've learned more about their dark and distorted vision of Islam. We've learned about their plan to build a radical Islamic empire stretching from Spain to Indonesia. We learned about their dreams to kill more Americans on an even more devastating scale. That's what they have told us. As President, I took an oath to protect this country, and I will continue using every element of national power to pursue our enemies and to prevent attacks on the United States of America.

Over the past 5 years, we have waged an unprecedented campaign against terror at home and abroad, and that campaign has succeeded in protecting the homeland. At the same time, we've seen our enemies strike in Britain, Spain, India, Turkey, Russia, Indonesia, Jordan, Israel, Afghanistan, Iraq, and other countries. We've seen that the extremists have not given up on their dreams to strike our Nation. Just last month, police and intelligence officers from Great Britain, with the help of the United States and other allies, helped break up a terror cell in London. Working together, we foiled a suicide plot to blow up passenger planes on their way to the United States.

Many Americans look at these events and ask the same question: Five years after 9/11, are we safer? The answer is, yes, America is safer. We are safer because we've taken action to protect the homeland. We are safer because we are on the offense against our enemies overseas. We're safer because of the skill and sacrifice of the brave Americans who defend our people. Yet 5 years after 9/11, America still faces determined enemies, and we will not be safe until those enemies are finally defeated.

One way to assess whether we're safer is to look at what we have done to fix the problems that the 9/11 attacks revealed. And so today I'll deliver a progress report. The information about the attacks in this report is largely drawn from the work of the 9/11 Commission and other investigations of the terrorist attacks. I'll begin by looking back at four key stages of the 9/11 plot, the gaps in our defenses that each stage exposed, and the ways we've addressed those gaps to make this country safer.

In the first key stage of the 9/11 plot, Al Qaida conceived and planned the attacks from abroad. In the summer of 1996, Usama bin Laden issued a *fatwa* from Afghanistan that said this: "By the grace of Allah, a safe base here is now available." And he declared war on the United States. A month later, the Taliban seized control of Kabul and formed an alliance with Al Qaida. The Taliban permitted bin Laden to operate a system of training camps in the country which ultimately instructed more than 10,000 in terrorist tactics. Bin Laden was also free to cultivate a global financing network that provided money for terrorist operations. With his fellow Al Qaida leaders, Usama bin Laden used his safe haven to prepare a series of attacks on America and on the civilized world.

In August 1998, they carried out their first big strike, the bombing of two U.S. Embassies in east Africa, which killed more than 200 people and wounded thousands. Shortly after the Embassy bombings, bin Laden approved another attack. This one was called

the "planes operation." Our intelligence agencies believe it was suggested by a fellow terrorist named Khalid Sheikh Mohammed—or KSM. KSM's plan was to hijack commercial airliners and to crash them into buildings in the United States. He and bin Laden selected four preliminary targets—the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, the Capitol Building, and the White House. The "planes operation" would become the 9/11 plot, and by the middle of 1999, KSM was at work recruiting suicide operatives to hijack the airplanes.

The first stage of the 9/11 plot exposed serious flaws in America's approach to terrorism. Most important, it showed that by allowing states to give safe haven to terrorist networks that we made a grave mistake. So after 9/11, I set forth a new doctrine: Nations that harbor or support terrorists are equally guilty as the terrorists and will be held to account. And the Taliban found out what we meant. With Afghan allies, we removed the Taliban from power, and we closed down the Al Qaida training camps. Five years later, Taliban and Al Qaida remnants are desperately trying to retake control of that country. They will fail. They will fail because the Afghan people have tasted freedom. They will fail because their vision is no match for a democracy accountable to its citizens. They will fail because they are no match for the military forces of a free Afghanistan, a NATO Alliance, and the United States of America.

Our offensive against the terrorists includes far more than military might. We use financial tools to make it harder for them to raise money. We're using diplomatic pressure, and our intelligence operations are used to disrupt the day-to-day functions of Al Qaida. Because we're on the offense, it is more difficult for Al Qaida to transfer money through the international banking system. Because we're on the offense, Al Qaida can no longer communicate openly without fear of destruction. And because we're on the offense, Al Qaida can no longer move widely without fearing for their lives.

I learned a lot of lessons on 9/11, and one lesson is this: In order to protect this country, we will keep steady pressure, unrelenting pressure on Al Qaida and its associates. We will deny them safe haven. We will find them, and we will bring them to justice.

Key advantages that Al Qaida enjoyed while plotting the 9/11 attack in Afghanistan have been taken away, and so have many of their most important leaders, including Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. For the past 3 years, KSM has been in the custody of the Central Intelligence Agency. He's provided valuable intelligence that has helped us kill or capture Al Qaida terrorists and stop attacks on our Nation. I authorized his transfer to Guantanamo Bay, and the sooner the Congress authorizes the military commissions I have called for, the sooner Khalid Sheikh Mohammed will receive the justice he deserves.

In the second key stage of the 9/11 plot, KSM and bin Laden identified, trained, and deployed operatives to the United States. According to the 9/11 Commission, two of the first suicide hijackers to join the plot were men named Hazmi and Mihdhar. KSM's plan was to send these two men to infiltrate the United States and train as pilots so they could fly the hijacked planes into buildings. Both operatives attended a special training camp in Afghanistan, and then traveled to Malaysia and Thailand to prepare for their trip to America. KSM doctored Hazmi's passport to help him enter the United States. And from Thailand, the two men flew to Los Angeles in January of 2000. There they began carrying out the plot from inside our Nation. They made phone calls to planners of the attack, overseas, and they awaited the arrival of the other killers.

Our intelligence community picked up some of this information. CIA analysts saw links between Mihdhar and Al Qaida, and officers tracked Mihdhar to Malaysia. Weeks later, they discovered that he had been accompanied by Hazmi and that Hazmi had flown to Los Angeles. This gave the CIA reason to be suspicious of both these men. Yet at the time, there was no consolidated terrorist watch list available to all Federal agencies and State and local governments. So even though intelligence officers suspected that both men were dangerous, the information was not readily accessible to American law enforcement, and the operatives slipped into our country.

Since 9/11, we've addressed the gaps in our defenses that these operatives exploited. We've upgraded technology. We've added layers of security to correct weaknesses in our immigration and visa systems. Today, visa applicants like Hazmi or Mihdhar would have to appear face to face for interviews. They would be fingerprinted and screened against an extensive database of known or suspected terrorists. And when they arrived on American soil, they would be checked again to make sure their fingerprints matched the fingerprints on their visas. Those procedures did not exist before 9/11. With these steps, we made it harder for these—people like these guys to infiltrate our country.

Nine-Eleven also revealed the need for a coordinated approach to terrorist watch lists. So we established common criteria for posting terrorists on a consolidated terrorist watch list that is now widely available across Federal, State, and local jurisdictions. Today, intelligence community officials would immediately place terrorist suspects like Hazmi and Mihdhar on a consolidated watch list. And the information from this list is now accessible at airports, consulates, border crossings, and for State and local law enforcement. By putting terrorists' names on a consolidated watch list, we've improved our ability to monitor and to track and detain operatives before they can strike.

Another top priority after 9/11 was improving our ability to monitor terrorist communications. Remember, I told you the two had made phone calls outside the country. At my direction, the National Security Agency created the terrorist surveillance program. Before 9/11, our intelligence professionals found it difficult to monitor international communications such as those between the Al Qaida operatives secretly in the United States and planners of the 9/11 attacks. The terrorist surveillance program helps protect Americans by allowing us to track terrorist communications so we can learn about threats like the 9/11 plot before it is too late.

Last year, details of the terrorist surveillance program were leaked to the news media, and the program was then challenged in court. That challenge was recently upheld by a Federal district judge in Michigan. My administration strongly disagrees with the ruling. We are appealing it, and we believe our appeal will be successful. Yet a series of protracted legal challenges would put a heavy burden on this critical and vital program. The surest way to keep the program is to get explicit approval from the United States Congress. So today I'm calling on the Congress to promptly pass legislation providing additional authority for the terrorist surveillance program, along with broader reforms in the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act.

When the FISA was passed in 1978, there was no widely accessible Internet, and almost all calls were made on fixed landlines. Since then, the nature of communications has changed quite dramatically. The terrorists who want to harm America can now buy disposable cell phones and open anonymous e-mail addresses. Our laws need to change to take these changes into account. If Al Qaida commander or associate is calling into the United States, we need to know why they're calling. And Congress needs to pass legislation supporting this program.

In the third key stage of the 9/11 plot, the rest of the 19 Al Qaida operatives arrived in the United States. The first two hijackers in America, Hazmi and Mihdhar, had given up flight training, so Khalid Sheikh Mohammed selected operatives from a cell in Germany to become the new pilots. These men, led by Mohammed Atta, obtained visas, and they traveled to the United States, and then they enrolled in flight training schools. Atta and his team visited airports and flight training centers along the east coast, including here in Georgia. Atta was pulled over by police. On his way—one of his co-conspirators, the terrorist who would go on to pilot Flight 93, was also stopped. Yet there was no information that the men were dangerous, so the officers treated the encounters as routine traffic stops. By September the 10th, the hijackers had moved to their final destinations near major airports and were ready to execute their attacks.

As these terrorists finalized their plans, Al Qaida dispatched another operative named Moussaoui to the United States. Moussaoui took flight lessons in Oklahoma and Minnesota. He communicated with an Al Qaida leader abroad. But he remained isolated from

the other operatives and was not a suicide hijacker on the day of the attacks, didn't participate in the 9/11 attacks.

During this stage, law enforcement and intelligence authorities failed to share the insights they were learning about the 9/11 plot. For example, the FBI intelligence analyst working at the CIA came across information that raised her suspicions about Hazmi and Mihdhar. But she did not relay her concerns to FBI criminal investigators because of a wall—or "the wall" that had developed over the years between law enforcement and intelligence. You see, throughout the Government, there was an assumption that law enforcement and intelligence were legally prohibited from sharing vital information. At one point, key officials from the CIA, the intelligence branch of the FBI, the criminal branch of the FBI were all sitting around the same table in New York, but they believed that "the wall" prohibited them from telling each other what they knew about Hazmi and Mihdhar, and so they never put the pieces together.

By the summer of 2001, intelligence about a possible terrorist attack was increasing. In July, an FBI agent in Phoenix noted that a large number of suspicious men were attending flight schools in Arizona. He speculated that this activity might be part of a bin Laden plan to attack inside the United States. The following month, the FBI field office in Minneapolis began an investigation into Moussaoui. He was soon arrested on immigration charges, and Minneapolis agents sought a FISA warrant to search his computer. FBI headquarters turned them down, saying the case did not justify a FISA request because there was not enough intelligence tying Moussaoui to a foreign power. The FBI later learned that Moussaoui had attended an Al Qaida training camp in Afghanistan, but the information didn't arrive until September the 13th.

It is clear, after 9/11, that something needed to be done to the system; something needed to be changed to protect the American people. And it is clear to me that this started with transforming the FBI to ensure that it effectively and quickly respond to potential terrorist attacks. And so now the top priority of the FBI, since 9/11—the culture of that important agency, full of decent people, has changed. The top priority is to protect the American people from terrorist attack. The Bureau has hired large numbers of counterterrorism agents and analysts. They're focusing resources on what they need to do to protect America. They created a unified National Security Branch to coordinate terrorist investigations. They expanded the number of Joint Terrorism Task Forces. And the Bureau is submitting more FISA requests in terrorist cases. In other words, they understand the challenge, and the FBI is changing to meet those challenges. The FBI is responding to terrorist threats like Moussaoui more quickly, more effectively, and with more resources. At every level, America's law enforcement officers now have a clear goal—to identify, locate, and stop terrorists before they can kill again.

Since the attacks, we've also worked with Congress to do something about that wall that prevented intelligence and criminal investigators from talking to each other. The wall made no sense. It reflected an old way of thinking. And so I called upon Congress to pass a piece of legislation that would tear down the wall, and that was called the PATRIOT Act. The PATRIOT Act has increased the flow of information within our Government, and it has helped break up terrorist cells in the United States of America. And the United States Congress was right to renew the terrorist act—the PATRIOT Act, the terrorist prevention act called the PATRIOT Act.

We created the National Counterterrorism Center, where law enforcement and intelligence personnel work side by side in the same headquarters. This center hosts secure video teleconferences every day that allow for seamless communication among the FBI, the CIA, and other agencies. Now officials with critical threat information are sitting at the same table and sharing information. We created the position of the Director of National Intelligence to operate the intelligence community as a single unified enterprise. We set up the Terrorist Screening Center, which maintains the Government's master list of suspected terrorists and helps get this information in the hands of State and local law enforcement. Today, a police officer who

stops a driver for a routine traffic violation can access terrorist watch lists and be automatically directed to the Terrorist Screening Center if there's a match.

We've learned the lessons of September the 11th. We're changing how people can work together. We're modernizing the system. We're working to connect the dots to stop the terrorists from hurting America again.

The fourth and final stage of the 9/11 plot came on the morning of the attack. Starting around 6:45, the 19 hijackers, including Hazmi and Mihdhar, checked in, cleared security, and boarded commercial jets bound for the west coast. Some of the hijackers were flagged by the passenger prescreening system. But because the security rules at the time focused on preventing bombs on airplanes, the only precaution required was to hold the operatives' checked baggage until they boarded the airplane. Several hijackers were also carrying small knives or box cutters, and when they reached the security checkpoints, they set off metal detectors. The screeners wanded them but let them board their planes without verifying what had set off the alarms. When the flights took off, the men hijacked each plane in a similar way: They stabbed or subdued the pilots and crew; they seized control of the cockpit; and they started flying the airplane. By 9:03 a.m., the hijackers had driven two of the flights in the World Trade Center. By 9:37, they had struck the Pentagon. And shortly after 10 a.m., the fourth plane crashed into a field in Pennsylvania. The passengers realized what was happening, and they rose up against their captors. These brave passengers saved countless lives on the ground; they likely spared the Capitol or the White House from destruction; and they delivered America its first victory in the war on terror.

We have taken many steps to address the security gaps that the hijackers exploited that morning. We created the Transportation Security Administration to ensure that every passenger and every bag is screened. We increased the number of Federal air marshals on domestic and international flights. We trained and authorized thousands of pilots to carry firearms. We hardened cockpit doors to prevent terrorists from gaining access to the controls. We merged 22 Government agencies into a single Department of Homeland Security and tripled spending for homeland security on our airlines, on our ports, and our borders and other critical areas. We will continue to provide the resources necessary to secure this homeland.

Even if all the steps I've outlined this morning had been taken before 9/11, no one can say for sure that we would have prevented the attack. We can say that if America had these reforms in place in 2001, the terrorists would have found it harder to plan and finance their operations, harder to slip into the country undetected, and harder to board the airplanes and take control of the cockpits and succeed in striking their targets.

We are grateful to all those who have worked to implement these important reforms. We're grateful to our Federal and State and local law enforcement officers who are working tirelessly to protect our country. We're grateful to all the intelligence and homeland security and military personnel. Together these dedicated men and women are keeping their fellow Americans safe, and Americans are proud of their important service to our country.

On the morning of 9/11, we saw that the terrorists have to be right only once to kill our people, while we have to be right every time to stop them. So we had to make a larger choice about how to respond to the threats to our country. Some suggested that our effort should be purely defensive, hunkering down behind extreme homeland security and law enforcement measures. Others argue that we should respond overseas, but that our action should be limited to direct retaliation for 9/11. I strongly disagree with both approaches. Nine-Eleven lifted the veil on a threat that is far broader and more dangerous than we saw that morning, an enemy that was not sated by the destruction inflicted that day and is determined to strike again. To answer this threat and to protect our people, we need more than retaliation; we need more than a reaction to the last attack; we need to do everything in our power to stop the next attack.

And so America has gone on the offense across the world. And here are some of the results. We've captured or killed many of the

most significant Al Qaida members and associates. We've killed Al Qaida's most visible and aggressive leader to emerge after 9/11, the terrorist Zarqawi in Iraq. We've kept the terrorists from achieving their key goal, to overthrow governments across the broader Middle East and to seize control. Instead, the governments they targeted—such as Pakistan and Saudi Arabia—have become some of the most valuable allies in the war on terror. These countries are joined by the largest coalition in the history of warfare—more than 90 nations determined to find the terrorists, to dry up their funds, to stop their plots, and to bring them to justice.

This coalition includes two nations that used to sponsor terror but now help us fight it—the democratic nations of Afghanistan and Iraq. In Afghanistan, President Karzai's elected Government is fighting our common enemies. In showing the courage he's showing, he's inspired millions across the region. In Iraq, Prime Minister Maliki's unity Government is fighting Al Qaida and the enemies of Iraq's democracy. They're taking increasing responsibility for the security of their free country.

The fighting in Iraq has been difficult, and it has been bloody, and some say that Iraq is a diversion from the war on terror. The terrorists disagree. Usama bin Laden has proclaimed that the "third world war is raging" in Iraq. Al Qaida leaders have declared that Baghdad will be the capital of the new caliphate that they wish to establish across the broader Middle East. It's hard to believe that extremists would make large journeys across dangerous borders to endure heavy fighting and to blow themselves up on the streets of Baghdad for a so-called "diversion." The terrorists know that the outcome in the war on terror will depend on the outcome in Iraq. And so to protect our citizens, the free world must succeed in Iraq.

As we fight the enemies of a free Iraq, we must also ensure that Al Qaida, its allies, and the extremists never get their hands on the tools of mass murder. When we saw the damage the terrorists inflicted on 9/11, our thoughts quickly turned to the devastation that could have been caused with weapons of mass destruction. So we launched the Proliferation Security Initiative—a coalition of more than 70 countries that are cooperating to stop shipments related to deadly weapons. Together with Russia, we're working on a new Global Initiative to Combat Nuclear Terrorism. We worked with Great Britain to persuade Libya to give up its nuclear weapons program, and now the components of that program are secured right here in the United States. We uncovered the black market nuclear network of A.Q. Khan, who was shipping equipment to Iran and North Korea—that network is now out of business. And now the world is uniting to send a clear message to the regime in Tehran: Iran must end its support of terror;; it must stop defying its international obligations; and it must not obtain a nuclear weapon.

Our enemies have fought relentlessly these past 5 years, and they have a record of their own. Bin Laden and his deputy Zawahiri are still in hiding. Al Qaida has continued its campaign of terror with deadly attacks that have targeted the innocent, including large numbers of fellow Muslims. The terrorists and insurgents in Iraq have killed American troops and thousands of Iraqis. Syria and Iran have continued their support for terror and extremism. Hizballah has taken innocent life in Israel and succeeded briefly in undermining Lebanon's democratic Government. Hamas is standing in the way of peace with Israel. And the extremists have led an aggressive propaganda campaign to spread lies about America and incite Muslim radicalism. The enemies of freedom are skilled, and they are sophisticated, and they are waging a long and determined war. The free world must understand the stakes of this struggle. The free world must support young democracies. The free world must confront the evil of these extremists. The free world must draw full measure of our strength and resources to prevail.

We see that full measure and the strength of this Nation in the men and women in uniform who fight this war and we have—and who have given their lives in the cause of liberty and freedom. One of these soldiers was a young lieutenant named Noah Harris, who was killed last summer in Iraq when his Humvee was hit by a roadside bomb. Noah grew up here in Georgia. He graduated from the University of Georgia. He volunteered

for the Army after September the 11th, 2001. He told his dad that people had an obligation to serve a cause higher than themselves. In Iraq, Lieutenant Harris was an officer known for his toughness and his skill in battle and for the Beanie Babies that he carried with him to hand out to the Iraqi children. He was also known for the photo of his parents' home in Ellijay that he used as a screensaver on his computer. When his troops asked why he chose that picture, he explained, "That is why I'm here."

Lieutenant Harris understood the stakes in Iraq. He knew that to protect his loved ones at home, America must defeat our enemies overseas. If America pulls out of Iraq before the Iraqis can defend themselves, the terrorists will follow us here, home. The best way to honor the memory of brave Americans like Lieutenant Harris is to complete the mission they began—so we will stay; we will fight; and we will win in Iraq.

The war on terror is more than a military conflict; it is the decisive ideological struggle of the 21st century. And we're only in its opening stages. To win this struggle, we have to defeat the ideology of the terrorists with a more hopeful vision. So a central element in our strategy is the freedom agenda. We know from history that free nations are peaceful nations. We know that democracies do not attack each other and that young people growing up in a free and hopeful society are less likely to fall under the sway of radicalism. And so we're taking the side of democratic leaders and reformers across the Middle East. We're supporting the voices of tolerance and moderation in the Muslim world. We're standing with mothers and fathers in every culture who want to see their children grow up in a caring and peaceful world. And by leading the cause of freedom in the vital region, we will change the conditions that give rise to radicalism and hatred and terror. We will replace violent dictatorships with peaceful democracies. We'll make America, the Middle East, and the world more secure.

In the early days after 9/11, I told the American people that this would be a long war, a war that would look different from others we have fought, with difficulties and setbacks along the way. The past 5 years have proven that to be true. The past 5 years have also shown what we can achieve when our Nation acts with confidence and resolve and clear purpose. We've learned the lessons of 9/11, and we have addressed the gaps in our defenses exposed by that attack. We've gone on the offense against our enemies and transformed former adversaries into allies. We have put in place the institutions needed to win this war. Five years after September the 11th, 2001, America is safer, and America is winning the war on terror. With vigilance, determination, courage, we will defeat the enemies of freedom, and we will leave behind a more peaceful world for our children and our grandchildren.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:24 a.m. at the Cobb Galleria Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Sonny Perdue of Georgia; Brenda Fitzgerald, chairman, board of governors, Georgia Public Policy Foundation; Lt. Gen. Russel L. Honore, USA, commanding general, First United States Army; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, senior Al Qaida leader responsible for planning the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack, who was captured in Pakistan on March 1, 2003; U.S. District Court Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan Anna Diggs Taylor; Zacarias Moussaoui, an Al Qaida operative who was sentenced on May 4 for helping to plan the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; and Ayman Al-Zawahiri, founder of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and senior Al Qaida associate. He also referred to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission).

Remarks at a Reception for Congressional Candidate Max Burns in Pooler, Georgia

September 7, 2006

Thanks for coming. I want to thank you all for coming and joining me in supporting my friend Max Burns to be the next Congressman from this district.

Max, this is a good sign that so many people would show up. [*Laughter*] And I thank you for supporting him. I know him quite well. See, as he mentioned, we have worked