AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

Week Ending Friday, October 13, 2006

The President's Radio Address

October 7, 2006

Good morning. In recent days, we have seen shocking acts of violence in schools across our Nation. Laura and I are praying for the victims and their families, and we extend our sympathies to them and to the communities that have been devastated by these attacks.

I have asked Secretary of Education Spellings and Attorney General Gonzales to host a conference on school safety this Tuesday. We will bring together teachers, parents, students, administrators, law enforcement officials, and other experts to discuss the best ways to keep violence out of our schools. Our goal is clear: Children and teachers should never fear for their safety when they enter a classroom.

As we work to keep our classrooms safe, we must also ensure that the children studying there get a good education. I believe every child can learn. So when I came to Washington, I worked with Republicans and Democrats to pass the No Child Left Behind Act, and I was proud to sign it into law. The theory behind this law is straightforward: We expect every school in America to teach every student to read, write, add, and subtract.

We are measuring progress and giving parents the information they need to hold their schools accountable. Local schools remain under local control. The Federal Government is asking for demonstrated results in exchange for the money we send from Washington. Thanks to this good law, we are leaving behind the days when schools just shuffled children from grade to grade, whether they learned anything or not.

Earlier this week, I visited the Department of Education, where I was briefed on our progress under the No Child Left Behind Act. The most recent national tests show encouraging results. In reading, 9-year-olds have made larger gains in the past 5 years than at any point in the previous 28 years. In math, 9-year-olds and 13-year-olds earned the highest scores in the history of the test. In both reading and math, African American and Hispanic students are scoring higher, and they are beginning to close the achievement gap with their white peers.

The No Child Left Behind Act also gives parents more options. If your child's school consistently fails to show progress, you can get free, intensive tutoring for your child or transfer your child to a better public school. By shining a spotlight on schools that are not performing and offering parents and children a way out, the No Child Left Behind Act is ushering in a new era of accountability and choice. And this is putting America's children on the path to a better life.

The No Child Left Behind Act has brought good progress, yet we still have a lot of work to do. So I will be talking more about education in the coming months, especially as we discuss the reauthorization of this law next year. I will focus on three areas where we can improve. First, we must improve teacher quality, so that every child has an excellent teacher. Second, we must give more options to parents whose children are trapped in struggling schools. And third, we need to bring the same high standards and accountability of the No Child Left Behind Act to our high schools, so that every high school graduate has the tools he or she needs to go to college and to get a good-paying job.

When we set expectations high, America's children will rise to meet them. And by helping our children succeed, we're creating a brighter future for them and for our Nation.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on October 6 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 7. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 6 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office

of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at a Christening Ceremony for the USS *George H.W. Bush* in Newport News, Virginia

October 7, 2006

Mr. Secretary, thank you very much. Laura and I are honored to be here to honor our dad. We appreciate you coming. Mother, it's good to see you. Members of the Bush family, all of you, distinguished Members of Congress, Governor, ex-Governors, the men and women of the United States Navy, military veterans, the workers who helped build this great ship—I join you; I know you join me in saying to our father: President Bush, your ship has come in. [*Laughter*]

In a few minutes, my sister Dorothy will christen the newest and most advanced aircraft carrier in the Navy—the *George H.W. Bush*. For the pilots of the World War II generation who are with us today, this carrier may seem a little more inviting than the ones you landed on. As you can see, our Navy has made a few upgrades. The *George H.W. Bush* is the latest in the Nimitz line of aircraft carriers. She is unrelenting; she is unshakable; she is unyielding; she is unstoppable. As a matter of fact, probably should have been named the "Barbara Bush." [*Laughter*]

In accord with a long and honored tradition, we gather to christen this fine ship. We recall the service and sacrifice of earlier generations. And we pay tribute to a new generation of sailors and marines who have stepped forward to serve in freedom's cause.

The *George H.W. Bush* is named for a man who exemplifies the great character of our country. On the day Pearl Harbor was attacked, George H.W. Bush was a teenager—he was a high school senior. Six months later, he was sworn into the Navy. A year later, he received his wings at a ceremony in Corpus Christi, Texas. Here is what he said. He said, "I had an ensign's stripe and an admiral's confidence." [*Laughter*] "I was a Navy pilot."

Our dad would become known as one of the Navy's youngest pilots, but that wasn't his only distinction. While training along the Chesapeake Bay, the pilots in our dad's flight class learned about a beach across the way where young ladies liked to sunbathe. It became popular for the pilots to fly low over the beach. So one day he came in low to take a look. It just so happened to be the same day that a traveling circus had set up its tents. Dad's flyover upset an elephant, causing him to break loose and make a run throughout the town. He was called in for a reprimand from his commander. He puts it this way: "I was grounded for causing an elephant stampede"—probably the only Navy pilot in American history who can make that claim.

After training, he was assigned to a light carrier. He took part in the Great Turkey Shoot of the Marianas. He knew the horror of kamikaze attacks. He would complete 58 combat missions. These were tough days, but he had something that kept him going. And if you look closely at the photographs of the planes he flew, you will find what kept him going in the name he had painted under his cockpit: Barbara.

One of Dad's most important missions was a strike on a radio tower on an island called Chichi Jima. The Japanese were using that tower to intercept U.S. military radio transmissions and alert the enemy about impending American air strikes. On September 2, 1944, his squadron was given a simple assignment: to take it out. The pilots knew they would face heavy enemy fire because the Japanese had fortified the island. But Dad and his fellow pilots did their duty without complaint or hesitation. During that raid, his plane was hit by antiaircraft artillery, and it caught on fire. Yet, he kept his plane on course. He released his four bombs and scored four direct hits on that tower; he headed out to sea; he ejected.

Japanese boats were sent out to capture him. And after more than 2 harrowing hours at sea alone in a rubber life raft, he was rescued by the crew of the USS *Finback*. For his action, he earned the Distinguished Flying Cross. Yet it is characteristic that from those moments aboard his life raft to this ceremony today, Dad's thoughts have always been of the two fine members of his crew who did not make it home: Radioman Second