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Contents

Addresses and Remarks

See also Bill Signings; Meetings With Foreign Leaders
Florida
Reception for congressional candidate Vern Buchanan in Sarasota—1871
Tour of Gyrocam Systems, LLC, in Sarasota—1876
Iowa, luncheon for congressional candidate Jeff Lamberti and Iowa Victory 2006 in Des Moines—1892
Michigan
Reception for senatorial candidate Michael Bouchard in Warren—1898
Remarks to reporters in Clinton Township—1898
Morley Candy Makers—1898
National Italian American Foundation dinner—1867
Radio address—1869
Urban Trust Bank—1870

Bill Signings

Secure Fence Act of 2006, remarks—1891

Interviews With the News Media

Exchange with reporters in the Oval Office—1903
News conference, October 25—1877

Letters and Messages

Eid al-Fitr, message—1870

Meetings With Foreign Leaders

Dominican Republic, President Fernandez Reyna—1890
North Atlantic Treaty Organization, Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer—1903

Proclamations

United Nations Day—1867

Resignations and Retirements

Chief Usher Gary Walters, retirement, statement—1877

Statements by the President

See Resignations and Retirements

Supplementary Materials

Acts approved by the President—1906
Checklist of White House press releases—1906
Digest of other White House announcements—1905
Nominations submitted to the Senate—1906

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, October 27, 2006

Proclamation 8073—United Nations Day, 2006

October 20, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On October 24, 1945, the United Nations was formed to promote peace and international security, further economic and social development, protect fundamental human dignity, and recognize the equal rights of men and women. On United Nations Day, we recognize the establishment of this important organization and underscore our commitment to making the world free and secure.

The United Nations was built on the idea that nations can act together to resolve conflict, and in the more than six decades since it was formed, the United Nations has addressed significant international challenges. With 192 member countries, the United Nations works to promote freedom, expand opportunity, and reach out to those in need.

Today, as we work to combat extremism and terror with justice and dignity, the efforts of the United Nations are as vital as ever. The world needs the members of the United Nations to stand together to help the organization live up to its founding ideals, fulfill its mission, and spread hope and liberty to people around the globe. Together, we can combat terrorism, help empower the voices of moderation, fight disease, and work for a world where all people are free to determine their own destinies.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 24, 2006, as United Nations Day. I urge the Governors of the 50 States, the Governor of the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, and the officials of other areas under the flag of the United States to observe United Nations Day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twentieth day of October, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., October 24, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 25. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at a National Italian American Foundation Dinner

October 20, 2006

Ian [Ken] *, thank you for that kind introduction. But what you forgot to tell the people was that my mother said, "Listen, son, I know you're going to be going over there this evening. Remember your father has already spoken, so keep your remarks short." [*Laughter*]

I thank you for your kind words about my mother and father. I am real proud they're with you today. He is a remarkable guy and—[*applause*]. The only mistake you made was not to insist that Laura spoke instead of me. [*Laughter*] She's doing great. She said, "Look, you keep it short too, because the food is on the table." [*Laughter*]

But thanks for letting me come by to say hello. I'm honored to be with you. I love to pay homage to the Italian Americans that have made our country so great. And that's precisely what you do. The National Italian American Foundation is an important organization because it reminds people of the great

* White House correction.

Italian heritage of many of our citizens. It also heralds the great diversity of our country. So thanks for what you're doing. Thanks for letting me come by to say hello.

I'm honored to be here with the Ambassador from the great country of Italy. Mr. Ambassador, it's good to see you, sir. I am proud to say that Italy is a strong ally of the United States of America.

I see we've got some of the third branch of Government with us—Justice Scalia and Justice Alito. Thank you all for being here. I know that you are paying Alito an honor, and I tell you, he paid this country an honor by agreeing to serve on the Supreme Court of the United States. I make a lot of decisions as your President, and one of the finest decisions I made was to ask this man to serve.

And I understand you're honoring Frankie Valli. Sorry I'm not going to be around to hear you, but rest assured, I've heard plenty of you when I was growing up. [*Laughter*] Congratulations to both you men. You picked fine winners here. Thanks for letting me come and pay homage to them as well.

I'm proud to be with Secchia—Peter Secchia. See, he picks up the phone, calls the Oval Office, and says, "Man, you're the only sitting President who's never come to this organization." He said, "You better get over here tonight." [*Laughter*] I said, "All right, Secchia." But I'm proud to call you friend.

You know, the story of this country is a story of immigrants, and we've always got to remember that. And some of the greatest stories of our country are the result of your ancestors who came to America and realized the big dream of our country. And what this country must always do is be a land of dreamers and doers, is to reward hard work and honor faith and family. And the Italian Americans inspire that greatness of America every day through your acts of kindness and generosity and through your contributions to the country.

You know, the list of Italian Americans that have made a significant contribution to our country is long. I mean, Tommy Lasorda, Yogi Berra, and for you Colt 45 fans—that's the old Houston baseball team—"Hollywood" Kenny Aspromonte. Where are you, Aspro? Yes, sir.

I'm sorry tonight that one outstanding Italian American can't join you, but he'll be joining me tomorrow at a meeting in the White House, and that's Peter Pace. Peter "Pac"—[*laughter*]—four-star general in the United States Marine Corps, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs. The reason I bring him up and the reason I'm meeting with him—first, there's no finer American than Peter Pace. He's an outstanding American, an outstanding Italian American.

I bring it up because we are in a titanic struggle between extremists and radicals who cannot stand the way of life of America. They don't like the thought that people from different backgrounds are able to live under a nation and work together and achieve greatness. They can't stand the thought of free societies flourishing in their midst.

And generations of Italian Americans before this generation have served with such valor to make sure freedom still stands, and now another generation of Americans is challenged. There are many Italian Americans who wear our uniform today, brave men and women who have volunteered in the great challenge of the 21st century, which is to protect our country from terrorist attack and, at the same time, spread the great blessings of liberty so that a generation of Americans can grow up in peace.

Taking the inspiration of those who have come before us, there's no doubt in my mind that this generation of Americans will succeed. We won't falter in the face of danger. We'll be steadfast in our resolve to protect you. We will be confident in the power of liberty to transform hostile regions into hopeful regions. And when we persevere, someday, somebody will step up here to this mike, years from now, and say, "Thank goodness a generation of Americans did their duty for the sake of the security of the United States and the peace of the world."

So I come before you with a lot on my mind. But one of the things that's on my mind is how grateful I am to be the President of such a fabulous country, a country full of spirited, entrepreneurial, decent, compassionate people.

I hope you enjoy your evening tonight. Thanks for letting me come by. God bless you. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:43 p.m. at the Washington Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to A. Kenneth Ciongoli, chairman, and Ken Aspromonte, member of the board of directors, National Italian American Foundation; Italy's Ambassador to the U.S. Giovanni Castellaneta; entertainer Frankie Valli; former U.S. Ambassador to Italy Peter F. Secchia; and baseball Hall of Famers Tommy Lasorda and Yogi Berra. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

October 21, 2006

Good morning. Earlier this week, I spoke with Prime Minister Maliki of Iraq. We discussed the recent increase in violence in his country. Attacks have grown significantly during the first weeks of the Muslim holy month of Ramadan.

There are a number of reasons for this increase in violence. One reason is that coalition and Iraqi forces have been conducting focused operations to bring security to Baghdad. Side by side, Iraqi and American forces are operating in the city's most violent areas to disrupt Al Qaida, capture enemy fighters, crack down on IED makers, and break up death squads. As we engage our enemies in their stronghold, these enemies are putting up a tough fight. In a briefing in Iraq on Thursday, General William Caldwell said the operation to secure Baghdad has "not met our overall expectations." He also explained, "It's no coincidence that the surge in attacks against coalition forces coincides with our increased presence in the streets in Baghdad."

Our goal in Iraq is clear and unchanging: Our goal is victory. What is changing are the tactics we use to achieve that goal. Our commanders on the ground are constantly adjusting their approach to stay ahead of the enemy, particularly in Baghdad. General Pete Pace, the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs, recently put it this way: "From a military standpoint, every day is a reassessment day." We have a strategy that allows us to be flexible and to adapt to changing circumstances. We've changed the way we train the Iraqi security forces. We have changed the way we deliver reconstruction assistance in areas that have been cleared of terrorist influence. And we will continue to be flexible and make every necessary change to prevail in this struggle.

Iraq's new leaders are beginning to take the difficult steps necessary to defeat the terrorists and unite their country. The Prime Minister recently met with tribal leaders from Anbar Province, who told him they are ready to stand up and fight the terrorists. He's also taken action to clean up the Iraqi National Police. His government suspended a National Police unit after allegations that some of its members were linked to militias and death squads. A battalion commander was arrested for possible complicity in sectarian deaths. And earlier this week, two of Iraq's most senior police commanders were reassigned as part of a major restructuring of the national police force.

Another reason for the recent increase in attacks is that the terrorists are trying to influence public opinion here in the United States. They have a sophisticated propaganda strategy. They know they cannot defeat us in the battle, so they conduct high-profile attacks, hoping that the images of violence will demoralize our country and force us to retreat. They carry video cameras and film their atrocities and broadcast them on the Internet. They e-mail images and video clips to Middle Eastern cable networks like Al Jazeera and instruct their followers to send the same material to American journalists, authors, and opinion leaders. They operate web sites, where they post messages for their followers and readers across the world.

In one recent message, the Global Islamic Media Front—a group that often posts Al Qaida propaganda on web sites—said their goal is to "carry out a media war that is parallel to the military war." This is the same strategy the terrorists launched in Afghanistan following 9/11. In a letter to the Taliban leader Mullah Omar, Usama bin Laden wrote that Al Qaida intended to wage "a media campaign to create a wedge between the American people and their Government."

The terrorists are trying to divide America and break our will, and we must not allow them to succeed. So America will stand with the democratic Government of Iraq. We will

help Prime Minister Maliki build a free nation that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself. And we will help Iraq become a strong democracy that is a strong ally in the war on terror.

There is one thing we will not do: We will not pull our troops off the battlefield before the mission is complete. There are some in Washington who argue that retreating from Iraq would make us safer. I disagree. Retreating from Iraq would allow the terrorists to gain a new safe haven from which to launch new attacks on America. Retreating from Iraq would dishonor the men and women who have given their lives in that country and mean their sacrifice has been in vain. And retreating from Iraq would embolden the terrorists and make our country, our friends, and our allies more vulnerable to new attacks.

The last few weeks have been rough for our troops in Iraq and for the Iraqi people. The fighting is difficult, but our Nation has seen difficult fights before. In World War II and the cold war, earlier generations of Americans sacrificed so that we can live in freedom. This generation will do its duty as well. We will defeat the terrorists everywhere they make their stand, and we will leave a more hopeful world for our children and our grandchildren.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:30 p.m. on October 20 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 21. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 20 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; Maj. Gen. William B. Caldwell IV, spokesman, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Message on the Observance of Eid al-Fitr

October 20, 2006

I send greetings to Muslims in the United States and around the world celebrating Eid al-Fitr.

Islam is a great faith that has transcended racial and ethnic divisions and brought hope and comfort to many people. Throughout Ramadan, Muslims have fasted to focus their minds on faith and to direct their hearts to charity. Eid al-Fitr marks the completion of this holy month with the Festival of Breaking the Fast. During this joyous celebration, Muslims thank God for his guidance and blessings by gathering with family and friends, sharing traditional foods, and showing compassion to those in need.

America is strengthened by the countless contributions of our Muslim citizens, and we value our ties with Muslim nations throughout the world. For people of all faiths, Eid al-Fitr is an opportunity to reflect on the values we share and the friendships that bind all who trace their faith back to God's call to Abraham.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a joyous Eid and for health, happiness, and prosperity in the year ahead. Eid Mubarak.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 23. An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Remarks at Urban Trust Bank

October 23, 2006

The President. I want to thank Bob Johnson and Dwight Bush for hosting this meeting here at the Urban Trust Bank. I also want to thank Tim and Tony and Kathy for joining us. These are local entrepreneurs who are living the American Dream, which is, they've started their own businesses; they're growing their own businesses; they are hoping to expand and hire more people.

One of the great things about America is that somebody can start with nothing and end up with something when it comes to business. People can have a dream, and they can work hard to achieve that dream. And the role of government, it seems to me, is to make sure that the dreamers are rewarded for their hard work and their ingenuity and success. And the best way to do that is to reduce taxes on people. The more money a entrepreneur has in his or her pocket, the

more likely it is he or she will be able to expand that business, which will create jobs.

Government has got to be careful about the regulations it passes. We've got to be careful about the number of lawsuits that threaten these young companies. Government can do well at helping to team up with private corporations to enhance capital flows. But the strength of this economy depends upon the strength of the small-business sector.

We've added a lot of jobs since August of 2003—6.6 million new jobs. And that's a result of small businesses growing and expanding. I was just talking to Tim. He's got 30 employees. That's up from zero 5 years ago. It's really enlightening and encouraging for me to talk to these hard-working people.

One of the interesting things about our economy that's also important is that as the economy has grown, the real wages for American workers has increased. Last year it increased by 2.2 percent. That's the largest increase in recent years. And that's important, because not only does it mean the small businesses are doing well, it means our working families are doing as well.

And so I want to thank you, Bob, for letting me come by. Congratulations on the example you've set.

Robert L. Johnson. My pleasure, sir.

The President. Appreciate you very much.

Mr. Johnson. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:01 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Robert L. Johnson, founder and chairman, The RLJ Companies; Dwight L. Bush, president and chief executive officer, Urban Trust Bank; Timothy Sullivan, founder and chief executive officer, Fidelis Security Systems, Inc.; Tony Rome, president and chief executive officer, Maven Strategies; and Kathy Boden, president and chief executive officer, Bluehouse Water Solutions.

Remarks at a Reception for Congressional Candidate Vern Buchanan in Sarasota, Florida

October 24, 2006

Thank you all. I'm proud to be here. I appreciate you turning out—to give me a chance to say that Vern Buchanan is the right man to be the United States Congressman from the 13th Congressional District. He is smart; he is capable; he is successful; he shares your values; he loves his family; he practices his faith with sincerity. He's a decent, honorable man who deserves to be elected to the United States Congress.

And I want to thank you for helping him. I appreciate you coming out. It makes me feel good. I know it makes the Congressman-to-be feel good. But it gives us a chance to remind you that we're in the final stretches of this campaign. And he's been working hard, and his family has been working hard. And he's going to count on you to turn out the vote.

So I want to thank you in advance for what you're going to do, which is to find our fellow Republicans—to remind our fellow citizens we have an obligation to vote, and when you get them headed toward the polls, tell them if they want a country that's strong and an economy that's strong, send Vern Buchanan to Washington, DC.

I was pleased to meet Sandy and James and Matt—Sandy would be the wife—[*laughter*]—James and Matt, the sons. I told them how much I appreciated them supporting Vern for his run. I know what it's like to run for office, and it's important to have a wife and family stand with you. It can kind of get lonely out there on the campaign trail sometimes. And to have that strong family standing with him means a lot for this candidate.

I know what I'm talking about, because I married well, just like Vern married well. And Laura sends her love to our good friends down here in Florida. And we've got a lot of friends down here. As a matter of fact, I don't have a lot of friends down here—I've got some relatives down here. You know, Jeb and I share the same campaign consultant—[*laughter*]—our mother. [*Laughter*] And so for you little ones here, my advice

is, listen to your mother. At 60 years old, I'm still listening to mine. But Laura sends her love; Mother sends her love; and I know Jeb Bush is strongly for Vern Buchanan to be the next Congressman from this district.

I, too, want to thank my buddy, the Senator from the great State of Florida, Mel Martinez. Thank you for coming.

There's a lot of issues that we can talk about. I want to talk about two today. And the first issue I want to talk about is the taxes you pay. It's an important issue. We have made our position clear. We believe in lower taxes, and we intend to keep them that way. The Democrats consistently oppose cutting your taxes. It should tell you how they feel. See, we just have a fundamental disagreement. They think they can spend your money better than you can. We believe you can spend your money far better than the Government can.

When you go to the voting booth in 2 weeks, the lever you pull will determine the taxes you pay for years to come. Americans will cast their ballots on November the 7th, but you will feel the results every April 15th. We share a philosophy that when you have more money in your pocket to save, spend, or invest, the economy benefits.

He knows what he's talking about. It's important for people from this part of the great State of Florida to have somebody who has been a successful entrepreneur represent you. This is an entrepreneurial State; this is an entrepreneurial area; this is a man who has taken risks. He's built businesses, but more importantly, he's employed people. He is successful; he understands how the economy works. He has lived the American Dream.

The Republican Party is dedicated to making sure the American Dream is viable for every single American. We understand that if you have more money in your pocket, it's easier to save for a child's education. We understand if you have more money in your pocket, a young Floridian can afford a downpayment on a new home. We understand that when small businesses have more money in their treasury, it makes it more likely that small business will grow and expand and hire new people. Our economy grows and the American Dream expands when you keep taxes low, and therefore I was able to lead the United States Congress to pass the largest tax relief since Ronald Reagan was the President of the United States.

And now the results of the tax relief are in. Tax cuts we passed have left more than a trillion dollars in the hands of American workers and families, farmers, and small-business owners. And the American people have used that money to help fuel strong economic expansion.

The Democrats said the tax cuts were not the solution to solving an economy that was slipping into recession, you might remember, back in 2001. The truth is, the tax cuts have helped make the American economy grow faster than any major industrialized nation. This economy is the envy of the world.

The Democrats said that the tax cuts would lead to a jobless recovery. The truth is that our economy has added jobs for 37 months in a row, and since August of 2003, our economy has created 6.6 million new jobs.

The Democrats said tax cuts would not help increase wages. Well the truth is, real wages have grown 2.2 percent over the last 12 months.

The Democrats said tax cuts would cause the deficit to explode. Well the truth is that tax cuts led to economic growth, and that growth has helped send tax revenues soaring. And as a result, the deficit has been cut in half 3 years ahead of schedule.

The Democrats have made a lot of predictions. Matter of fact, I think they may be measuring the drapes. [*Laughter*] If their electoral predictions are as reliable as their economic predictions, November 7th is going to be a good day for the Republicans.

And here's the truth. One of the reasons that the Democrats will lose on election day: Because they want to raise your taxes. No, I know they don't want to tell it that plainly, but that's what they're going to do. You know, the top Democrat leader in the House made an interesting statement recently. She said, "We love tax cuts." Given her record, she must be a secret admirer. [*Laughter*]

When we cut taxes on everybody that paid income taxes, she and her colleagues—most of her colleagues—voted against it. When we reduced the marriage penalty, she and most

of her colleagues voted against it. When we cut the taxes on small businesses, she voted against it. When we lowered taxes for families with children, she voted against it. When we reduced the taxes on capital gains and dividends, she voted against it. When we put the death tax on the road to extinction, she voted against it. Time and time again, she had an opportunity to show her love for taxes. [*Laughter*] If this is the Democrats' idea of love, I wouldn't want to see what hate looks like.

You know, you listen to the debate, and they're trotting out the same old stuff. They're saying they're only going to raise taxes on the rich. It's important for people in this district not to be fooled by that language. It's important for people all across the United States who are making up their mind who to vote for in these elections not to be fooled by the language, "Oh, we'll only tax the rich."

Some of you are old enough to remember 1992. [*Laughter*] They campaigned on saying they will—for a middle class tax cut. You might remember that rhetoric. But when they took office, the middle class tax cut they promised turned out to be one of the largest tax increases in history. See, here's what happens. You get up to Washington, DC, and you start spending the people's money if you're a Democrat, and you start making all these promises on the campaign trail. Then you get up and you say, "Well, I think I'm going to spend money here or there."

Earlier this year, the Democrats in the House, for example, put a budget alternative to call for 177 billion additional dollars than that which we're going to spend. The problem is, if they only raise taxes on the rich—raise taxes on people making $200,000 or more—they would fall far short of meeting their spending promises. So guess who gets to pay the bill? All of a sudden, the tax cut on the rich means you have to pay. It means the middle class in America have to pay. America should not be fooled by the empty rhetoric of the Democrats running for Congress. The best way to make sure that the Democrats don't raise your taxes is to put Congressman Vern Buchanan in Washington, DC.

It's important for you to understand this fact as you're rounding up people to go to the polls, as you're getting ready to get on the telephone, dial people and remind them to vote—and if somebody says, "Well, tell me about this election"—when it comes to taxes, here's the way it works in Washington. Under the current law, the tax cuts we passed, many of them, are set to expire. In other words, if Congress doesn't be proactive, the tax cuts will go away. And if the tax cuts go away, you're paying higher taxes. In other words, if Congress fails to act, your taxes go up.

And so they asked the ranking member of the Ways and Means Committee—that's the tax-writing committee; he would be the one who would take the lead in taxes—and his response to a question was, he couldn't think of one of our tax cuts he would extend. See, this is the attitude of those who want to run the House of Representatives on the Democrat side. He said, he couldn't think of one of the tax cuts—he couldn't even think of one that he would extend. Asked if he meant that would consider—asked if that meant he would consider tax hikes across the income spectrum, he said, "Of course it would." See, they're genetically—[*laughter*]—disposed to raise your taxes.

If there is no legislation renewing or extending the tax cuts, every tax rate will go back up to the old level. The marriage penalty will return. The death tax will spring back to life. The child credit will be cut in half, from $1,000 per child to just $500 per child. So I want people who are listening to the debate in this election to think about what that would mean, if the Democrats take control.

If you're sitting around the dinner table and there's two children, your taxes just went up $1,000, if they take control. If you're got three children at the dinner table, your taxes went up by $1,500. If you're a family of four and you're working hard to make ends meet and the Democrats take control of the House, your taxes just went up $2,000. The best way to make sure you have more of your own money in your pocket to spend on your family is to vote for Vern Buchanan, and we'll work to make the tax cuts we passed permanent.

I want to talk about another issue, if you've got some time. The most important issue facing this Nation is to protect you. The most important job in Washington, DC, is to do everything we can to protect you from another attack. We face an enemy that is brutal; they have no conscience. They have an ideology which is the opposite of our ideology. They can't stand freedom. They have desires, and that is to spread a kind of caliphate, a governing organization, throughout the Middle East from which to launch attacks and spread their dark vision of the world. They use murder as a weapon to achieve their objectives. There is no negotiation possible with these kind of people. You can't reason with them. The best way to protect the American people is to stay on the offense and bring them to justice so they don't hurt us again.

We had a series of interesting votes in Washington, DC, recently that should explain the fundamental differences between how we view the war on terror and how the Democrats view the war on terror. I felt that the President should do everything in his power, within the Constitution, to protect you.

And therefore, after 9/11, I made a couple of decisions that recently were brought to a vote on the floor of the House of Representatives, which should give you an indication about the differences of opinion. I believe that we must work to prevent attacks from happening in the first place, but here in the homeland—by staying on the offense. But here in the homeland, I understand that the enemy has to be right one time, and we have to be right 100 percent of the time in order to protect you. And therefore, I feel it's important to make sure our professionals have the tools necessary to protect you.

I felt like that if Al Qaida or an Al Qaida affiliate was making a phone call into the United States of America from outside our country, our intelligence professionals need to know why. This is a different kind of war. Past wars—in past wars, you could watch flotillas of ships or count airplanes to determine the intent or the strength of the enemy; you could watch manpower being moved. This is a different kind of war. It's a war that requires intelligence so that we can make sure our professionals are able to protect you.

The idea of people—professionals being able to listen to Al Qaida and its affiliates came to a vote on the floor of the United States Congress. The American people must fully understand that the vast majority of Democrats opposed the right of this administration to have a tool necessary to protect you. We just have a different view. They must not think we're at war. They must think that the best way to protect you is to respond after the attack. I understand this is a war, and the United States of America will do everything we can to protect you before the enemy hits again.

This is a different kind of war, and we pick up people off the battlefield, and we want to know what they know. I'm sure you've been reading recently about some of the people that we have picked up since that fateful attack on us on September the 11th, 2001. We captured a man named Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who our intelligence officers believe was the mastermind of the September the 11th attacks. I felt it was important that our professionals find out what he knew, in order to make sure I could say to you, standing right here, that we're doing everything we can to protect you.

I felt it was important for these brave souls who work for the intelligence service to have the tools necessary to inquire to these killers what they know, in order to be able to stop a further attack. This vote came up on the floor of the United States House of Representatives. The vast majority of Democrats voted against giving our professionals the right to interrogate to protect America. These are patriotic souls, but their vision of the world is wrong, and we need to make sure that we continue to control the House of Representatives to provide the protection necessary for—[*applause*].

This is a global war. There are many fronts in the war on terror. We've got some fantastic men and women who wear our uniform. The best way to protect the American people is to keep the enemy on the run. It is hard to plot and plan when you're hiding in a cave. It's hard to plot and plan when you know the mighty United States military and/or our intelligence services are breathing down your neck. And therefore it is important to have Members of the United States Congress who

understand the stakes of the world in which we live and will join me in making sure our troops have all the equipment, all the support, all the pay that is necessary for them to do their job.

A central front in this war, a central part of protecting America from an enemy that would like to strike us again, is Iraq. It's tough fighting in Iraq. It is tough fighting because the enemy understands the stakes of success in Iraq. A lot of people in Washington, a lot of Democrats, say that Iraq is a diversion on the war on terror. As you know, I have a difference of opinion; I believe it is a central front in the war on terror.

And that's an honest debate to have, but if you haven't made up your mind yet, listen to the words of Usama bin Laden or his number-two person in Al Qaida, Mr. Zawahiri, both of whom made it clear that their objective is to inflict as much pain as possible so America will withdraw from Iraq, so they can have safe haven from which to plot and plan attacks, so they can have more resources to develop the weapons they would like to use against us, so they can topple moderate governments.

It is conceivable 20 years from now, people would look back on this period of time in the midst of a world in which radicalism and extremism was prevalent, in which allies such as Israel were surrounded by incredibly hostile forces, in which Iran had a nuclear weapon, in which governments were in control of these radicals who then cut off oil supplies to the West. That's the scenario that will happen if we withdraw before we achieve our objectives. People will look back and say, "What happened to them in the year 2006? How come they couldn't see the threat?" I see the threat. That is why we have got a strategy for victory in Iraq.

The stakes are high, and the enemy understands that. Our goal is to have a country that can defend itself, sustain itself, govern itself, and be an ally in the war on terror. Our goal was to remove a threat. I made the right decision in taking Saddam Hussein out of power. And now our goal is to help this young democracy succeed, is to help these brave souls defeat the thugs and the sectarians and the Al Qaida, from toppling their dreams.

Twelve million Iraqis went to the polls. They said, "We want to be free." You shouldn't be surprised. Freedom is universal. We don't own freedom in America. I believe there is an Almighty, and I believe one of the great gifts of the Almighty is the deep desire to be free.

For those of you who understand military, I'm running the war this way: I set the goal, and I count on our commanders on the ground and our Ambassador in Baghdad to set the tactics in order to achieve the goal. We're constantly changing. The enemy changes, and we change. The enemy adapts to our strategies and tactics, and we adapt to theirs. We're constantly changing to defeat this enemy.

But if the Democrats were to take control, their policy is pretty clear to me: It's cut-and-run. Oh, they try to claim it's not. They try to claim it's not, but if you listen to their leaders, the man I ran against for President in 2004 said we need a date certain from which to withdraw. My attitude is, look, I want to bring our troops home as much as anybody, but I want to make sure they come home with victory, not with defeat.

For the sake of these little kids here, we will fight in Iraq, and we will win in Iraq. And when we achieve our goal, we will have dealt the enemy an incredible blow. You know, we've got great assets on our side. We've got a fantastic country, people that are strong. We've got a military that is bold and courageous. We got one other thing going for us, too, and that is the great power of liberty.

Liberty is a powerful, powerful tool. You see, liberty will yield the peace we want. Free societies will yield the peace. We're in an ideological struggle between extremists and radicals who hate and between moderate people who simply want to live in peace. It's a struggle between good and decent people and evil killers. It's a struggle that is going to take a while to achieve. But it is an ideological struggle, and you can defeat an ideology of hate with an ideology of hope—and freedom is that ideology of hope.

You know I—recently I had an interesting experience. I share this with people all around our country because I want to bring to life that which we are now accomplishing.

I went to Elvis's place—[*laughter*]—with the former Prime Minister of Japan. He was the sitting Prime Minister of Japan then. I went. I had never been there. [*Laughter*] The Prime Minister wanted to go there. [*Laughter*] See, he was an Elvis fan. [*Laughter*]

But I wanted to tell an interesting story. It's the story about a family—my family—and a story about liberty. My dad fought the Japanese. You've had relatives—I know people here whose families fought the Japanese. They were the sworn enemy of the United States. It was a bloody conflict. Thousands of people lost their lives. Young kids volunteered to defend their country, just like people are volunteering today to defend our country, and a lot didn't come home.

As a matter of fact, it took us a while to get Japanese—slurs of Japanese people out of our vocabulary; the hate was so bad. I find it interesting that I'm on the airplane flying down to Elvis's place with the Prime Minister of a former enemy talking about the peace, talking about bringing peace to the world. For some of you young ones out there, 60 may seem like a long time. For those of us who are 60, it just seemed like a snap of the fingers. [*Laughter*]

Something happened between 18-year-old Navy fighter pilot George H.W. Bush and his President—and his son, the President, talking about keeping the peace with the Prime Minister of a former enemy. And what happened was, Japan adopted a Japanese-style democracy. Liberty has got the capacity to change hate into hope. Liberty has got the capacity to help change an enemy into an ally. Someday, someday, an American President will be sitting down with duly elected leaders from the Middle East talking about the peace, and a generation of Americans will be better off.

The stakes in this election are high. I ask you to vote for Vern Buchanan. He'll be an ally in making sure your taxes stay low so the economy grows and an ally in making sure the United States Government does everything in our power to protect the American people and to make sure that a generation of Americans can grow up in peace.

God bless, and thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:35 p.m. at the Sarasota Bradenton International Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad; and former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks Following a Tour of Gyrocam Systems, LLC, in Sarasota

October 24, 2006

I wanted to stop by here at Gyrocam for a couple of reasons: One, low taxes encourage small-business growth. One of the reasons why we're adding jobs in this country of ours is because our small-business sector is flourishing. And in order to make sure that companies such as this little company continue to expand, you got to keep taxes low. If we run up taxes, it's going to make it harder for the small businesses to expand.

There's a big—there's a significant issue in this campaign; make no mistake about it, if the Democrats take control of the Congress, they'll raise taxes by letting the tax cuts expire. And we intend to keep taxes low.

The other thing that's interesting about this little company is, one of the products they make is an IED detector. And I've been saying to the American people that our goal in Iraq has not changed, which is a country that can sustain itself, defend itself, govern itself. Our tactics are adjusting. And one of the adjustments we had to make in order to protect lives and achieve our mission was to better detect IEDs. And this little company right here makes an IED detector that enables our troops to be able to ferret out an IED before they come across it.

And one of the interesting things I was able to do was talk to a couple of Iraq vets who now work for this company. They're bringing their expertise off the battlefield to help this company design a product which will work. Interestingly enough, they then send people back to maintain the detectors.

At any rate, I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to come by. I'm proud to be with you. The entrepreneurial spirit must remain strong in this country. It is strong inside this company, and we intend to keep it strong by keeping taxes low, less

regulation, hopefully less lawsuits, and our economy will remain strong. If we run up taxes, it will falter.

Thank you. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:40 p.m.

Statement on the Retirement of Chief Usher Gary Walters

October 24, 2006

Chief Usher Gary Walters has been a valued public servant to seven First Families for more than three decades at the White House. We have known Gary for many years and are especially grateful for making our family feel at home and for managing and overseeing the operations of the White House, a museum of American history. While we are sad to see him leave, we wish Gary all the best in his future endeavors.

NOTE: This statement was released by the Office of the Press Secretary as a statement by the President and the First Lady.

The President's News Conference

October 25, 2006

The President. Thank you all very much. I'm going to spend a little more time on my opening comments than I usually do, but I'll save plenty of time for questions.

Over the past 3 years, I have often addressed the American people to explain developments in Iraq. Some of these developments were encouraging, such as the capture of Saddam Hussein, the elections in which 12 million Iraqis defied the terrorists and voted for a free future, and the demise of the brutal terrorist Zarqawi. Other developments were not encouraging, such as the bombing of the U.N. headquarters in Baghdad, the fact that we did not find stockpiles of weapons of mass destruction, and the continued loss of some of America's finest sons and daughters.

Recently American and Iraqi forces have launched some of the most aggressive operations on enemy forces in Baghdad since the war began. They've cleared neighborhoods of terrorists and death squads and uncovered large caches of weapons, including sniper scopes and mortars and powerful bombs. There has been heavy fighting. Many enemy fighters have been killed or captured, and we've suffered casualties of our own. This month we've lost 93 American service members in Iraq, the most since October of 2005. During roughly the same period, more than 300 Iraqi security personnel have given their lives in battle. Iraqi civilians have suffered unspeakable violence at the hands of the terrorists, insurgents, illegal militias, armed groups, and criminals.

The events of the past month have been a serious concern to me and a serious concern to the American people. Today I will explain how we're adapting our tactics to help the Iraqi Government gain control of the security situation. I'll also explain why, despite the difficulties and bloodshed, it remains critical that America defeat the enemy in Iraq by helping the Iraqis build a free nation that can sustain itself and defend itself.

Our security at home depends on ensuring that Iraq is an ally in the war on terror and does not become a terrorist haven like Afghanistan under the Taliban. The enemy we face in Iraq has evolved over the past 3 years. After the fall of Saddam Hussein, a sophisticated and a violent insurgency took root. Early on this insurgency was made up of remnants of Saddam Hussein's Baath Party as well as criminals released by the regime. The insurgency was fueled by Al Qaida and other foreign terrorists, who focused most of their attention on high-profile attacks against coalition forces and international institutions.

We learned some key lessons from that early phase in the war. We saw how quickly Al Qaida and other extremist groups would come to Iraq to fight and try to drive us out. We overestimated the capability of the civil service in Iraq to continue to provide essential services to the Iraqi people. We did not expect the Iraqi Army, including the Republican Guard, to melt away in the way that it did in the face of advancing coalition forces.

Despite these early setbacks, some very important progress was made in the midst of an incredibly violent period. Iraqis formed

an interim government that assumed sovereignty. The Iraqi people elected a transitional government, drafted and adopted the most progressive democratic Constitution in the Arab world, braved the car bombs and assassins to choose a permanent government under that Constitution, and slowly began to build a capable national army.

Al Qaida and insurgents were unable to stop this progress. They tried to stand up to our forces in places like Fallujah, and they were routed. So they changed their tactics. In an intercepted letter to Usama bin Laden, the terrorist Zarqawi laid out his strategy to drag Iraq's Shi'a population into a sectarian war. To the credit of the Shi'a population, they resisted responding to the horrific violence against them for a long time.

Yet the persistent attacks, particularly last February's bombing of the Golden Mosque in Samarra, one of Shi'a Islam's most holy shrines, eventually resulted in sectarian reprisals. The cycle of violence, in which Al Qaida insurgents attacked Shi'a civilians and Shi'a death squads retaliated against Sunnis, has sharply increased in recent months, particularly in Baghdad.

As the enemy shifts tactics, we are shifting our tactics as well. Americans have no intention of taking sides in a sectarian struggle or standing in the crossfire between rival factions. Our mission is to help the elected Government in Iraq defeat common enemies, to bring peace and stability to Iraq, and make our Nation more secure. Our goals are unchanging. We are flexible in our methods to achieving those goals.

On the military side, our commanders on the ground are constantly adjusting our tactics to stay ahead of our enemies. We are refining our training strategy for the Iraqi security forces so we can help more of those forces take the lead in the fight and provide them better equipment and firepower to be successful. We've increased the number of coalition advisers in the Iraqi Ministries of Defense and Interior so they can better plan and execute security operations against the enemy.

We have changed our force structure so we can better respond to the conditions on the ground. For example, during the Iraqi elections, we increased our force levels to more than 150,000 troops to ensure people could vote. Most recently, we have moved additional coalition and Iraqi forces into Baghdad so they can help secure the city and reduce sectarian violence.

After some initial successes, our operations to secure Baghdad have encountered greater resistance. Some of the Iraqi security forces have performed below expectations. Many have performed well and are fighting bravely in some of Baghdad's toughest neighborhoods. Once again, American troops are performing superbly under very difficult conditions. Together with the Iraqis, they've conducted hundreds of missions throughout Baghdad. They've rounded up or killed key insurgents and death squad leaders.

As we fight this enemy, we're working with the Iraqi Government to perform the performance—to improve the performance of their security forces, so they can regain control of the nation's capital and eventually assume primary responsibility for their country's security.

A military solution alone will not stop violence. In the end, the Iraqi people and their Government will have to make the difficult decisions necessary to solve these problems. So in addition to refining our military tactics to defeat the enemy, we're also working to help the Iraqi Government achieve a political solution that brings together Shi'a and Sunnis and Kurds and other ethnic and religious groups.

Yesterday our Ambassador to Iraq, Zal Khalilzad, laid out a three-step approach. First, we're working with political and religious leaders across Iraq, urging them to take steps to restrain their followers and stop sectarian violence.

Second, we're helping Iraqi leaders to complete work on a national compact to resolve the most difficult issues dividing their country. The new Iraqi Government has condemned violence from all quarters and agreed to a schedule for resolving issues, such as disarming illegal militias and death squads, sharing oil revenues, amending the Iraqi Constitution, and reforming the de-Ba'athification process.

Third, we're reaching out to Arab States such as Saudi Arabia, the UAE, and Jordan

and asking them to support the Iraqi Government's efforts to persuade Sunni insurgents to lay down their arms and accept national reconciliation. The international community is also supporting the international compact that outlines the support that will be provided to Iraq as it moves forward with its own program of reform.

These are difficult tasks for any government. It is important for Americans to recognize that Prime Minister Maliki's unity Government has been in office for just over 5 months. Think about that. This young Government has to solve a host of problems created by decades of tyrannical rule. And they have to do it in the midst of raging conflict, against extremists from outside and inside the country who are doing everything they can to stop this Government from succeeding.

We're pressing Iraq's leaders to take bold measures to save their country. We're making it clear that America's patient is not unlimited. Yet we also understand the difficult challenges Iraq's leaders face, and we will not put more pressure on the Iraqi Government than it can bear. The way to succeed in Iraq is to help Iraq's Government grow in strength and assume more control over its country as quickly as possible.

I know the American people understand the stakes in Iraq. They want to win. They will support the war as long as they see a path to victory. Americans can have confidence that we will prevail because thousands of smart, dedicated military and civilian personnel are risking their lives and are working around the clock to ensure our success. A distinguished independent panel of Republicans and Democrats, led by former Secretary of State Jim Baker and former Congressman Lee Hamilton, is taking a fresh look at the situation in Iraq and will make recommendations to help achieve our goals. I welcome all these efforts. My administration will carefully consider any proposal that will help us achieve victory.

It's my responsibility to provide the American people with a candid assessment on the way forward. There is tough fighting ahead. The road to victory will not be easy. We should not expect a simple solution. The fact that the fighting is tough does not mean our efforts in Iraq are not worth it. To the contrary, the consequences in Iraq will have a decisive impact on the security of our country, because defeating the terrorists in Iraq is essential to turning back the cause of extremism in the Middle East. If we do not defeat the terrorists or extremists in Iraq, they will gain access to vast oil reserves and use Iraq as a base to overthrow moderate governments across the broader Middle East. They will launch new attacks on America from this new safe haven. They will pursue their goal of a radical Islamic empire that stretches from Spain to Indonesia.

I know many Americans are not satisfied with the situation in Iraq. I'm not satisfied either. And that is why we're taking new steps to help secure Baghdad and constantly adjusting our tactics across the country to meet the changing threat. But we cannot allow our dissatisfaction to turn into disillusionment about our purpose in this war. We must not look at every success of the enemy as a mistake on our part, cause for an investigation, or a reason to call for our troops to come home. We must not fall prey to the sophisticated propaganda by the enemy, who is trying to undermine our confidence and make us believe that our presence in Iraq is the cause of all its problems.

If I did not think our mission in Iraq was vital to America's security, I'd bring our troops home tomorrow. I met too many wives and husbands who have lost their partners in life, too many children who won't ever see their mom and dad again. I owe it to them and to the families who still have loved ones in harm's way to ensure that their sacrifices are not in vain.

Our country has faced adversity before during times of war. In past wars, we've lost young Americans who gave everything to protect our freedom and way of life. In this war, we've lost good men and women who've given their lives for a cause that is necessary and it is just. We mourn every loss, and we must gird ourselves for the sacrifices that are yet to come. America's men and women in uniform are the finest in the world. I'm awed by their strength and their character. As General Casey reported yesterday in Iraq, "The men and women of the Armed Forces have never lost a battle in over 3 years in the war."

Every American can take pride in our troops and the vital work they are doing to protect us.

Our troops are fighting a war that will set the course for this new century. The outcome will determine the destiny of millions across the world. Defeating the terrorists and extremists is the challenge of our time and the calling of this generation. I'm confident this generation will answer that call and defeat an ideology that is bent on destroying America and all that we stand for.

And now I'll be glad to answer some of your questions. Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

War on Terror/Democracy Efforts in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, the war in Iraq has lasted almost as long as World War II for the United States. And as you mentioned, October was the deadliest month for American forces this year—in a year. Do you think we're winning, and why?

The President. First of all, this is a different kind of war than a war against the fascists in World War II. We were facing a nation-state—two nation-states—three nation-states in World War II. We were able to find an enemy by locating its ships or aircraft or soldiers on the ground. This is a war against extremists and radicals who kill innocent people to achieve political objectives. It has a multiple of fronts.

Afghanistan was a front in this war against the terrorists. Iraq is now the central front in the war against the terrorists. This war is more than just finding people and bringing them to justice; this war is an ideological conflict between a radical ideology that can't stand freedom and moderate, reasonable people that hope to live in a peaceful society.

And so it's going to take a long time, Terry. I am confident we will succeed. I am confident we'll succeed in Iraq, and the reason I'm confident we'll succeed in Iraq is because the Iraqis want to succeed in Iraq. The ultimate victory in Iraq, which is a government that can sustain itself, govern itself, and defend itself, depends upon the Iraqi citizens and the Iraqi Government doing the hard work necessary to protect their country. And our job is to help them achieve that objective. As a matter of fact, my view is, the only way we lose in Iraq is if we leave before the job is done.

And I'm confident we can succeed in the broader war on terror, this ideological conflict. I'm confident because I believe the power of liberty will defeat the ideology of hate every time, if given a chance. I believe that the radicals represent the few in the Middle East. I believe the majority of people want to live in a peaceful world. That's what I believe.

And I know it's incumbent upon our Government and others who enjoy the blessings of liberty to help those moderates succeed because otherwise we're looking at the potential of this kind of world: a world in which radical forms of Islam compete for power; a world in which moderate governments get toppled by people willing to murder the innocent; a world in which oil reserves are controlled by radicals in order to extract blackmail from the West; a world in which Iran has a nuclear weapon. And if that were to occur, people would look back at this day and age and say, "What happened to those people in 2006? How come they couldn't see the threat to a future generation of people?"

Defeat will only come if the United States becomes isolationist and refuses to, one, protect ourselves, and two, help those who desire to become—to live in a moderate, peaceful world. And it's a hard struggle, no question about it. And it's a different struggle.

Q. Are we winning?

The President. Absolutely, we're winning. Al Qaida is on the run. As a matter of fact, the mastermind, or the people who they think is the mastermind, of the September the 11th attacks is in our custody. We've now got a procedure for this person to go on trial, to be held for his account. Most of Al Qaida that planned the attacks on September the 11th have been brought to justice.

Extremists have now played their hand; the world can clearly see their ambitions. You know, when a Palestinian state began to show progress, extremists attacked Israel to stop the advance of a Palestinian state. They can't stand democracies. Extremists and radicals want to undermine fragile democracy because it's a defeat for their way of life, their ideology.

People now understand the stakes. We're winning, and we will win, unless we leave before the job is done. And the crucial battle right now is Iraq. And as I said in my statement, I understand how tough it is, really tough. It's tough for a reason: because people understand the stakes of success in Iraq. And my point to the American people is, is that we're constantly adjusting our tactics to achieve victory.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Iraqi Military and Security Forces

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Are you considering sending more U.S. troops to Iraq? What would be the justification for it? And how reliable is this new timetable of 12 to 18 months?

The President. I will send more troops to Iraq if General Casey says, "I need more troops in Iraq to achieve victory." And that's the way I've been running this war. I have great faith in General Casey. I have great faith in Ambassador Khalilzad. I trust our commanders on the ground to give the best advice about how to achieve victory. I want to remind you, victory is a government that can sustain itself, govern itself—a country that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself, and serves as an ally in the war on terror—which stands in stark contrast to a government that would be chaotic, that would be a safe haven for the enemy to launch attacks on us.

One way for the American people to understand what Iraq could look like is what Afghanistan looked like under the Taliban, a place where there was no freedom; a place where women were taken to the public square and beaten if they did not adhere to the strict, intolerant guidelines of the Taliban; a place where thousands trained to attack America and our allies. Afghanistan doesn't have nearly the resources that Iraq has. Imagine a safe haven for an enemy that ended up with the resources that it had.

It is—and so this is a war where I say to our generals, "Do you have what it takes to win?" Now, General Casey talked about part of our strategy, and part of the strategy is to give the Iraq Government the tools necessary to protect itself, to defend itself. If you're able to defend yourself, you're more likely to be able to govern yourself as well. But politics—the political way forward and the military way forward must go hand in hand.

And what the General was saying yesterday is that there is a three-step process to enable the Iraqi forces to be able to help this Government bring security. One was to train and equip. The goal is 325,000 troops—137,000 military and the balance, police.

Second was to put the Iraqi security forces in the lead. Six of ten divisions now are in the lead in helping this Government defend itself. The strategy has been to embed U.S. personnel, officers and non-com officers, into these forces to help them gain the confidence and the capacity to be effective when they're in the lead.

And the third step is for the Iraqi security forces to be able to operate independently. And this, perhaps, is going to be one of the most difficult aspects of having the Iraqis ready to go, because that means they have to be able to drive themselves, maintain their vehicles, provide logistics, have combat service support. And that's what General Casey was describing.

The key is that our commanders feel that there—they have got enough flexibility to design the program to meet the conditions on the ground. You know, last spring, I thought for a period of time we'd be able to reduce our troop presence early next year. That's what I felt. But because we didn't have a fixed timetable and because General Casey and General Abizaid and the other generals there understand that the way we're running this war is to give them flexibility, have the confidence necessary to come and make the right recommendations here in Washington, DC, they decided that that wasn't going to happen. And so what he was describing to you was the way forward to make sure that the Iraqis are fully prepared to defend themselves.

Q. What about the 12 to 18 month estimate?

The President. It's a condition, a base estimate. And that's important for the American people to know. This notion about, you know, fixed timetable of withdrawal, in my judgment, is a—means defeat. You can't

leave until the job is done. Our mission is to get the job done as quickly as possible.

Let's see here—Dave [David Gregory, NBC News].

Progress in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, for several years you have been saying that America will stay the course in Iraq; you were committed to the policy. And now you say that, no, you're not saying, stay the course, that you're adapting to win, that you're showing flexibility. And as you mentioned, out of Baghdad we're now hearing about benchmarks and timetables from the Iraqi Government, as relayed by American officials, to stop the sectarian violence.

In the past, Democrats and other critics of the war who talked about benchmarks and timetables were labeled as defeatists, "defeatocrats," or people who wanted to cut and run. So why shouldn't the American people conclude that this is nothing from you other than semantic, rhetorical games and all politics 2 weeks before an election?

The President. David, there is a significant difference between benchmarks for a government to achieve and a timetable for withdrawal. You're talking about—when you're talking about the benchmarks, he's talking about the fact that we're working with the Iraqi Government to have certain benchmarks to meet as a way to determine whether or not they're making the hard decisions necessary to achieve peace. I believe that's what you're referring to. And we're working with the Iraqi Government to come up with benchmarks.

Listen, this is a sovereign government. It was elected by the people of Iraq. What we're asking them to do is to say, when do you think you're going to get this done, when can you get this done, so the people themselves in Iraq can see that the Government is moving forward with a reconciliation plan and plans necessary to unify this Government.

That is substantially different, David, from people saying, "We want a time certain to get out of Iraq." As a matter of fact, the benchmarks will make it more likely we win. Withdrawing on an artificial timetable means we lose.

Now, I'm giving the speech—you're asking me why I'm giving this speech today—because there's—I think I owe an explanation to the American people, and will continue to make explanations. The people need to know that we have a plan for victory. Like I said in my opening comments, I fully understand: If the people think we don't have a plan for victory, they're not going to support the effort. And so I'll continue to speak out about our way forward.

Jessica [Jessica Yellin, ABC News].

Iran and Syria

Q. Sir, you've called Iran part of the axis of evil and Syria a state sponsor of terrorism. You said earlier today that your administration will consider any proposal that will help us achieve victory. So, I'm wondering, if it's determined that Iran and Syria could help you achieve victory in Iraq, would you be willing to work with them?

The President. Iran and Syria understand full well that the world expects them to help Iraq. We've made that very clear to them.

Let me talk about the Iranian issue. We've got a lot of issues with Iran. First is whether or not they will help this young democracy succeed. The second issue, of course, is whether or not they will help the Lebanese democracy succeed—the Siniora Government, which is—a priority of this Government is to help that Siniora Government. The big issue right now is whether or not Iran will end up with a nuclear weapon. And so our issues with Iran are many. And our position is very clear to the Iranians: There is a better way forward for the Government and the people than to be isolated.

And we will continue to work to make it clear to the Iranian Government that all three accounts and the sponsor of terrorists will cause more isolation. We've got a very active diplomatic effort taking place. The Iranians know our position on Iraq, and they know it clearly. More importantly, they know the Iraqis' position relative to Iran. We're helping a sovereign government succeed. And the Iraqis have sent messages to the Iranians: To help us succeed, don't interfere in the internal affairs.

As to Syria, our message to Syria is consistent: Do not undermine the Siniora Government in Lebanon; help us get back the—help Israel get back the prisoner that was captured by Hamas; don't allow Hamas and Hizballah to plot attacks against democracies in the Middle East; help inside of Iraq. They know our position as well, Jessica.

Q. May I just follow? James Baker has himself said that he believes the U.S. should work with Iran. So would you be willing to work with Iran in a way that allows some sort of negotiations in Iraq, even if they don't come to the table in the P–3 and P–5 negotiations?

The President. Jessica, Iran has a chance to come to the table with the United States to discuss a variety of issues. And the way forward is one that I had made clear at previous press conferences, and that is, if they would verifiably stop their enrichment, the United States will be at the table with them. In the meantime, they understand our position, and they understand, more importantly, the Iraqi position about their interference inside their country.

Progress in Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Prime Minister Maliki apparently gave his own news conference this morning, where he seemed to be referring to Ambassador Khalilzad and General Casey yesterday, when he said, nobody has the right to set any timetables in Iraq—and also seemed to be upset about the raid in Sadr City, saying he wasn't consulted. And I believe the quote was, "It will not be repeated." Do you still have full, complete, and total confidence in Prime Minister Maliki as a partner in Iraq? And what can you tell the American people about his ability to rein in the militias, since he seems to derive much of his power from them?

The President. Yes. First, this is back to the question that David asked about benchmarks. You called it "timetables."

Q. He did, sir.

The President. Okay, he called it "timetables;" excuse me. I think he was referring to the benchmarks that we're developing that show a way forward to the Iraqi people, and the American people for that matter, about how this unity Government is going to solve problems and bring the people together. And if his point is, is that those benchmarks, or the way forward, can't be imposed upon Iraq by an outside force, he's right. This is a sovereign government. But we're working closely with the Government to be able to say, "Here's what's going to happen then; here's what we expect to happen now; here's what should be expected in the future."

Second part of your question?

Q. I was wondering—first of all, he seemed to be pushing back with——

The President. Oh, on the sectarian—on the militias. I heard that, and I asked to see his complete transcript of this press conference, where he made it very clear that militias harm the stability of his country. Militias—people out—who operate outside the law will be dealt with. That's what the Prime Minister said in his press conference. The idea that we need to coordinate with him is a—makes sense to me. And there's a lot of operations taking place, which means that sometimes communications may not be as good as they should be. And we'll continue to work very closely with the Government to make sure that the communications are solid.

I do believe Prime Minister Maliki is the right man to achieve the goal in Iraq. He's got a hard job. He's been there for 5 months, a little over 5 months, and there's a lot of pressure on him, pressure from inside his country. He's got to deal with sectarian violence; he's got to deal with criminals; he's got to deal with Al Qaida—all of whom are lethal. These are people that will kill. And he wants to achieve the same objective I want to achieve, and he's making tough decisions.

I'm impressed, for example, by the way, that he has got religious leaders, both Sunni and Shi'a, to start working together. I appreciate the fact that he has made a very clear statement on militias. And, by the way, death squad members are being brought to justice in this—during these operations in Baghdad.

I speak to him quite frequently, and I remind him we're with him, so long as he continues to make tough decisions. That's what we expect. We expect that the Iraqi Government will make the hard decisions necessary to unite the country and listen to the will of the 12 million people.

Let's see here. Yes, sir, Bret [Bret Baier, FOX News].

Situation in North Korea

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. North Korean leaders apparently today warned South Korea against joining international sanctions, saying South Korea would pay a high price if they did so. Are you still confident that South Korea and China will implement the full force of the U.N.-passed sanctions? And what happens if North Korea continues to thumb its nose at the world?

The President. I believe that—first of all, I've been briefed on this subject recently by the Secretary of State, who just came back from the Far East. She met with the Japanese, the South Koreans, the Chinese, and the Russians. Her report is that all countries understand we must work closely together to solve this problem peacefully. And that means adhering to the latest United Nations Security Council resolution that was passed.

The leader of North Korea likes to threaten. In my judgment, what he's doing is just testing the will of the five countries that are working together to convince him there is a better way forward for his people. I don't know the exact words he used, but he is—this is not the first time that he's issued threats. And our goal is to continue to remind our partners that when we work together, we're more likely to be able to achieve the objective, which is to solve this problem diplomatically. And so I would report to you the coalition remains firm, and we will continue to work to see to it that it does remain firm.

Baker [Peter Baker, Washington Post].

Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you for taking questions today.

The President. What was that?

Q. Thank you for taking questions today.

The President. Baker, I'm just happy to be able to do so, brother. [*Laughter*] I can't tell you how joyful it is. [*Laughter*]

Q. When you first ran for President, sir, you talked about the importance of accountability. We learned from Bob Woodward's recent book that Secretary Card, on two occasions, suggested that you replace Secretary Rumsfeld, and both times you said no. Given that the war in Iraq is not going as well as you want, and given that you're not satisfied as you just told us today, why hasn't anybody been held accountable? Should somebody be held accountable?

The President. Peter, you're asking me why I believe Secretary Rumsfeld is doing a good job, I think, if I might decipher through the Washington code.

Q. ——or someone else——

The President. Well, let's start with Rumsfeld, Secretary Rumsfeld. I've asked him to do some difficult tasks as the Secretary of Defense—one, wage war in two different theaters of this war on terror, Afghanistan and Iraq, and at the same time, asked him to transform our military posture around the world and our military readiness here at home. In other words, the transformation effort into itself is a big project for any Secretary to handle. But to compound the job he has, he's got to do that and, at the same time, wage war. And I'm satisfied of how he's done all his jobs.

He is a smart, tough, capable administrator. As importantly, he understands that the best way to fight this war, whether it be in Iraq or anywhere else around the world, is to make sure our troops are ready, that morale is high, that we transform the nature of our military to meet the threats, and that we give our commanders on the ground the flexibility necessary to make the tactical changes to achieve victory.

This is a tough war in Iraq. I mean, it's a hard fight, no question about it. All you've got to do is turn on your TV. But I believe that the military strategy we have is going to work. That's what I believe, Peter. And so we've made changes throughout the war, we'll continue to make changes throughout the war. But the important thing is whether or not we have the right strategy and the tactics necessary to achieve that goal. And I believe we do.

Dick [Richard Keil, Bloomberg News].

Q. And from the——

The President. Wait a minute, let me say—the ultimate accountability, Peter, rests with me. That's the ultimate—you're asking about accountability, that's—rests right here. It's what the 2004 campaign was about. If people want to—if people are unhappy about

it, look right to the President. I believe our generals are doing the job I asked them to do. They're competent, smart, capable men and women. And this country owes them a lot of gratitude and support.

Yes, now Dick, sorry.

War on Terror

Q. Mr. President——

The President. It was a clever little followup you slipped in there. Sorry, Gregory. I mean, look—Gregory is still mad he didn't get the followup, but it's okay.

Q. You've said, Mr. President, several times here this morning that the definition of failure in Iraq would be to leave before the job was done. But you also said that you have no intention of seeing our troops standing in the crossfire of a sectarian war within that country. With many observers on the ground saying that civil war in Iraq is as close as it's ever been, how do you reconcile those two statements? And what happens if a full-fledged civil war breaks out?

The President. Dick, our job is to prevent the full-scale civil war from happening in the first place. It's one of the missions, is to work with the Maliki Government to make sure that there is a political way forward that says to the people of Iraq, it's not worth it. Civil war is not worth the effort—by them. That's the whole objective, is to help this Government be able to defend itself and sustain itself so that the 12 million people that voted—they didn't vote for civil war; they voted to live under a Constitution that was passed. And so we will work to prevent that from happening. I——

Q. What about——

The President. Let me finish. I view that this is a struggle between radicals and extremists who are trying to prevent there to be a democracy, for a variety of reasons. And it's in our interest that the forces of moderation prevail in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East. A defeat there—in other words, if we were to withdraw before the job is done, it would embolden extremists. They would say, you know, we were right about America in the first place, that America did not have the will necessary to do the hard work. That's precisely what Usama bin Laden has said, for example. A defeat there would make it easier for people to be able to recruit extremists and kids, to be able to use their tactics to destroy innocent life. A defeat there would dispirit people throughout the Middle East who wonder whether America is genuine in our commitment to moderation and democracy.

And I told you what the scenario, Dick, could look like, 20 or 30 years from now, if we leave before the job is done. It's a serious business. And that's why I say it's the call of this generation. And I understand how tough it is, see, but I also said in my remarks, just because the enemy has been able to make some progress doesn't mean we should leave. Quite the contrary, we ought to do everything we can to help prevent them from making progress. And that is what our strategy is.

Elaine [Elaine Quijano, Cable News Network].

Q. What if there is a civil war?

Iraqi Government

The President. You're asking me hypotheticals. Our job is to make sure there's not one, see. You been around here 5½ years; you know I won't answer hypotheticals. Occasionally slip up, but——

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You talk about the U.S. Government and the Iraqi Government working closely together on benchmarks. I'm wondering, sir, why was Prime Minister Maliki not at the news conference yesterday with General Casey and Ambassador Khalilzad? Would that not have sent a strong message about there being a very close level of cooperation between the two Governments?

The President. Elaine, I have no idea why he wasn't there.

Q. Was he invited, sir?

The President. I have no idea. I'm not the scheduler of news conferences. I do know they work very closely together, and they've got a very close working relationship, and that's important.

Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki

Q. May I ask you, sir, following up, when you say that you're not satisfied with the way things are going in Iraq, why should that not be interpreted by some to mean that you are

dissatisfied with Prime Minister Maliki's performance?

The President. Because I know Prime Minister Maliki; I know how hard his job is; and I understand that he is working to make the decisions necessary to bring this country together. And he's—look, we'll push him, but we're not going to push him to the point where he can't achieve the objective. And we'll continue to work with him. He represents a government formed by the people of Iraq. It's a—and he's got a tough job. I mean, think about what his job is like. He's got to deal with political factions. He's got to deal with the hatred that is left over from the tyranny of Saddam Hussein.

There's a lot of people still furious about what happened to them during Saddam Hussein's period. You can imagine that. What happens if your brother or sister had been assassinated by Saddam Hussein and his political party? You'd be—you wouldn't be happy about it. Reconciliation is difficult in a society that had been divided and tortured by a tyrant.

And Prime Minister Maliki has got the difficult job of reconciling these grievances and different political parties on top of that, plus dealing with violence. I've talked to him a lot. I like his spirit. I like his attitude. He's confident we can achieve the mission. He's not—he's realistic about how difficult it is in Iraq.

It's in our Government's interest that we help him succeed, because he wants a unified country. And I believe we will succeed. I know we're not going to succeed, however, if we set artificial timetables for withdrawal or we get out of there or we say to the enemy, "Just keep fighting; we'll leave soon." That's not going to work. What will work is a strategy that's constantly—tactics that constantly change to meet the enemy. And that's what I was describing in my speech; we're constantly adjusting. As the enemy changes, we change. War is not a—this war, and other wars, they're not static. They're dynamic events. And we must adjust to meet those events, and we are.

Jim [Jim Rutenberg, New York Times].

Progress in Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Does the United States want to maintain permanent bases in Iraq? And I would follow that by asking, are you willing to renounce a claim on permanent bases in Iraq?

The President. Jim, any decisions about permanency in Iraq will be made by the Iraqi Government. And frankly, it's not in much of a position to be thinking about what the world is going to look like 5 or 10 years from now.They are working to make sure that we succeed in the short term. And they need our help, and that's where our focus is.

But remember, when you're talking about bases and troops, we're dealing with a sovereign Government. Now, we entered into an agreement with the Karzai Government. They weren't called permanent bases, but they were called arrangements that will help this Government understand that there will be a U.S. presence so long as they want them there. And at the appropriate time, I'm confident we'll be willing to sit down and discuss the long-term security of Iraq. But right now we're discussing how to bring security to Baghdad and what do we do in Al Anbar province, where Al Qaida still uses violent methods to achieve political objectives.

You know, it's interesting, if you—I'm sure people who watch your TV screens think the entire country is embroiled in sectarian conflict and that there's constant killing everywhere in Iraq. Well, if you listened to General Casey yesterday, 90 percent of the action takes place in 5 of the 18 provinces. And around Baghdad, it's within a 30-mile area. And the reason I bring that up is that while it seems to our American citizens that nothing normal is taking place—and I can understand why; it's a brutal environment there, particularly that which is on our TV screens—that there is farmers farming; there are small businesses growing; there's a currency that's relatively stable; there's an entrepreneurial class. There's commerce. General Abizaid was describing to me what it was like to go to Baghdad markets.

There's a lot of work to be done; don't get me wrong, but it is—there are people living relatively normal lives who I believe—strongly believe that they want to continue that normalcy, and it's up to Prime Minister

Maliki to do everything he can to make the situation as secure as possible.

Ann [Ann Compton, ABC News]. Sorry, Rutenberg; you're through.

2006 Elections

Q. Thank you, sir. Is the coming election a referendum on Iraq? Should it be?

The President. I think the coming election is a referendum on these two things: which party has got the plan that will enable our economy continue—to continue to grow, and which party has a plan to protect the American people. And Iraq is part of the security of the United States. If we succeed—and when we succeed in Iraq, our country will be more secure. If we don't succeed in Iraq, the country is less secure.

The security of this country—and look, I understand here in Washington, some people say we're not at war. I know that. They're just wrong, in my opinion.

The enemy still wants to strike us. The enemy still wants to achieve safe haven from which to plot and plan. The enemy would like to have weapons of mass destruction in order to attack us. These are lethal, cold-blooded killers. And we must do everything we can to protect the American people, including questioning detainees or listening to their phone calls from outside the country to inside the country. And there was—as you know, there was some recent votes on that issue. And the Democrats voted against giving our professionals the skill—the tools necessary to protect the American people.

I will repeat, like I've said to you often: I do not question their patriotism; I question whether or not they understand how dangerous this world is. And this is a big issue in the campaign. Security of the country is an issue, just like taxes are an issue. If you raise taxes, it will hurt the economy. If you don't extend the tax cuts, if you don't make them—in other words, if you let the tax cuts expire, it will be a tax increase on the American people.

Take the child tax credit; if it is not made permanent—in other words, if it expires—and you got a family of four sitting around the breakfast table, the taxpayers can be sure that their taxes will go up by $2,000—500 for that child, 500 for the one right there, 500 for this one, and 500 for that one. That is a tax increase. And taking $2,000 out of the pockets of the working people will make it harder to sustain economic growth.

So the two issues I see in the campaign can be boiled down to, who best to protect this country and who best to keep taxes low. That's what the referendum is about.

Let's see here—David [David Greene, Baltimore Sun]. Hold on for a minute. David.

Iraqi Prime Minister al-Maliki

Q. Thank you, sir. You've long talked about the importance when the Federal Government is involved in an effort, spending money and resources, of measuring success, accountability, as Peter said. Now you've set some benchmarks on the Maliki Government. You've said that you're expecting him to make tough decisions. Can you tell the American people how you plan to measure his success in reaching those benchmarks, and what happens if he doesn't hit those benchmarks?

The President. David, the first objective is to develop benchmarks that the Government agrees with and that we think are important. You can't—it's really important for the American people to understand that to say, "Okay, these are the benchmarks you must live with," is not going to work nearly as effectively as if we have—when we have buy-in from the Government itself, the sovereign Government of Iraq.

And so the step is to say to the Maliki Government—which we're doing—let us work in concert to develop a series of benchmarks to achieve different objectives. And the purpose of that is to assure the Iraqi people that this unity Government is going to work to—for the improvement of the Iraqi people. In other words, it will be beneficial for the Government to say to the Iraqi people, "Here is what we intend to do, and here's when we intend to do it."

It will also be beneficial for the American people to be able to see that this Iraqi Government is going to make the difficult decisions necessary to move forward, to achieve the goal. And that's what we're talking about when it comes to benchmarks. It's—again,

I repeat: One should not expect our Government to impose these benchmarks on a sovereign government. You'd expect us to work closely with that Government to come up with a way forward that the Government feels comfortable with. And there's probably going to be some bones of contention during these discussions, but nevertheless, we'll respect the fact that the Iraq Government is sovereign, and they must respect the fact that we've got patience but not unlimited patience.

Q. What happens if that patience runs out?

The President. See, that's that hypothetical Keil is trying to get me to answer. Why don't we work to see to it that it doesn't work out—run out? That's the whole objective. That's what positive people do. They say, "We're going to put something in place, and we'll work to achieve it."

Let's see here—Stephen [Stephen Dinan, Washington Times].

2006 Elections

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. With a Republican Congress, you failed to achieve three major goals of your second term: Social Security reform, a Tax Code overhaul, and a comprehensive immigration bill. Why shouldn't Americans give Democrats a chance to work with you on those issues, especially when divided government seemed to work in the late 1990s, on the budget?

The President. That's a tricky little question there. [*Laughter*] First, I haven't given up on any of those issues. I've got 2 years left to achieve them. And I firmly believe it is more likely to achieve those three objectives with a Republican-controlled Congress and a Republican-controlled Senate. And I believe I'll be working with a Republican-controlled Congress and a Republican-controlled Senate.

I understand here in Washington people have already determined the outcome of the election, like it's over even before the people actually start heading—voting. But that's not what I see when I'm on the campaign trail. You know, we've got some people dancing in the end zone here in Washington, DC; they've got them measuring their drapes; they're going over to the Capitol and saying, "My new office looks beautiful; I think I'm going to have this size drape there, or this color." But the American people are going to decide, and they're going to decide this race based upon who best to protect the American people and who best to keep the taxes low.

Secondly, I'll tell you what I see—you didn't ask, but I'm going to tell you anyway. I see there's a lot of enthusiasm amongst the grassroots activists. Our people are going out there to man the phones and to put up the yard signs. You know, they're showing up when it comes time to—these absentee votes. We're organized. We've got a fantastic grassroots organization to turn out the vote. This campaign has obviously got national implications to it, no question about it—the Iraq war, the security of the country, economic vitality and growth. But each of these elections turn out to be local in their scope and in their character.

And we've got good candidates running hard, and we're going to win. Now, I know that defies conventional wisdom here. I'm not suggesting anybody in this august crowd has determined the outcome of the election already, but they're running profiles on who this person is going to be running this office, or this one that's going to be—magazines have got all kinds of new stars emerging when they haven't won the votes yet.

And anyway, thanks for asking about the campaign. I'm enjoying it out there. I like campaigning. It's what guys like me do in order to get here. We campaign. We shake the hands, you know, and give the speeches. And Laura is campaigning too. From my perspective, our people are ready to go out there and vote for—vote our candidates back into power.

Let me see here, Michael Allen [Time].

U.S. Armed Forces in Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Your comment earlier that last spring you believed that troops would be able to come home early next year——

The President. Yes.

Q. ——I wonder if you could talk to us about how you came to believe that and over what period of time or whether it was a single development because you realized that wasn't feasible.

The President. No, no, no, look, Mike, here's the way it works. I meet with our—or talk to our generals all the time. And the security situation looked like, at that point in time, that beginning next year, we could reduce our troop presence. That's what we felt—until the conditions on the ground changed. And when they changed, our generals changed their attitude. And when their attitude changed, my attitude changed.

Look, I want to get our troops home as fast as we can. But I do not want to leave before we achieve victory. And the best way to do that is to make sure we have a strategy that works, tactics that adjust to the enemy, and commanders that feel confident making recommendations to the Secretary and to the Commander in Chief. And that's how that happened. In other words, they're saying it looks like things are positive, things are stepping up. The security situation is—looks like it could be this way. And then when it changed, we changed. And that's important for the American people to know, that we're constantly changing tactics to meet the situation on the ground.

Knoller [Mark Knoller, CBS Radio].

Q. Excuse me——

The President. No.

Q. May I follow up?

The President. Well, you're taking Wolffe's time. Is this your question, Wolffe [Richard Wolffe, Newsweek]?

Q. No, sir, it's not.

The President. Okay, okay.

Q. But I yield.

The President. Then it's your question.

Q. Only for a moment.

The President. Okay.

Q. I just wanted to ask you quickly, sir, if you believe that Iraq will be able to defend, sustain, and govern itself by the time you leave office?

The President. Mike, I believe Iraq will be able to defend, govern, and sustain itself; otherwise, I'd pull our troops out. See, you all got to understand that, and the parents of our troops must understand, that if I didn't believe we could succeed and didn't believe it was necessary for the security of this country to succeed, I wouldn't have your loved ones there. That's what I want these parents to hear.

And that's a backhanded way of getting me to put a timetable. My answer is, we'll work as fast as we can get the job done.

Mark and then Richard.

Q. Thank you, sir.

The President. That way it will give you time to——

2006 Elections

Q. I understand why you would claim or assert that the Republicans will win the midterm elections. But if in your heart of hearts you really didn't think that, would you tell us so? [*Laughter*] And are you resentful that some Republican candidates seem to be distancing themselves from you?

The President. You know, no, I'm not resentful, nor am I resentful that a lot of Democrats are using my picture. All I ask is that they pick out a good one. [*Laughter*] Make me look good, at least, on the picture.

Mark, the first part of your question, the serious part, if I thought we were going to lose, would I tell you—we're not going to lose, in my heart of hearts. [*Laughter*] No, again, I understand how—look, I read the—look at the newspapers around here. I can see why you would think that I'm concealing something in my heart of hearts. The race is over as far as a lot of the punditry goes. They've got it all figured out. And they just—as I said, they're dancing in the end zone. They just haven't scored the touchdown, Mark, you know; there's a lot of time left. And these candidates are working hard out there. And my message to them is, keep talking about the security of the United States and keeping taxes low, and you'll come back here.

Last question. Richard.

Ethics in Government

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Back in 2000, you campaigned around the country saying you wanted to usher in the responsibility era, to end the days when people said, "If it feels good, do it, and if you've got a problem, blame somebody else."

The President. Right.

Q. Yet over the last several months, we've seen many members of your own party in Congress embroiled in one scandal or another and all too ready to blame somebody

else, whether prosecutors or Democrats or even the media. So I'm wondering, why do you think it is so many people in your own party have failed to live up to the standards of the responsibility era?

The President. If any person in any party fails to live up to high standards, they ought to be held to account, Richard. It's important for there to be trust in the Halls of Congress and in the White House and throughout government. People got to trust elected leaders in order for democracy to work to its fullest extent. And I fully expect people to be held to account if there's wrongdoing, just like I expect corporate executives to be held to account for wrongdoing, just like I expect people throughout our society to be held to account for wrongdoing.

People do have to take responsibility for the decisions they make in life. I take responsibility for the decisions I make. I also understand that those of us in positions of responsibility have the duty to bring honor to the offices we hold. People don't have to agree with somebody's opinion—there's all kinds of opinions here—but in order to make this country work and to make democracy succeed, there's got to be high standards, and people must be held to account to achieve those standards.

I thank you for your time. See you on the campaign trail.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 10:31 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Gen. John P. Abizaid, USA, combatant commander, U.S. Central Command; Prime Minister Fuad Siniora of Lebanon; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this press conference.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Leonel Fernandez Reyna of the Dominican Republic

October 25, 2006

President Bush. *Bienvenidos a mi amigo,* the President of the Dominican Republic. I'm proud to be with a strong leader who is focused on reform and rule of law and prosperity.

The President informed me that the economy of the Dominican Republic grew by 9 percent last year. And I want to congratulate you, Mr. President.

We talked about how to continue economic growth and vitality. It's in the interests of the United States that the Dominican Republic have a strong economy. We talked about the need for us to help with the multilateral institutions, to work with—for them to work with this Government to help with cash flows and cash demands so that this economy can continue its growth and strength.

We talked about DR–CAFTA and how important this piece of legislation is to the people of the Dominican Republic and to the people of the United States. And I assured the President that we will implement DR–CAFTA as quickly as possible, as soon as possible. And to that end, I had my trade minister, Ambassador Susan Schwab, here to make sure that we both heard the message of the President, that this was a very important piece of legislation and that we have committed—our Government has committed to working with you, Mr. President, to get this done as quickly as possible.

Y por fin, we talked about the need for us to work closely on drug trafficking. The United States of America must continue to work to diminish the demand for drugs, and we are. As well, we want to work with our partners in the hemisphere, particularly the Dominican Republic, to interdict the drugs and to help these countries be able to avoid and fight off the scourge of drugs, because there is a direct correlation between drugs and crime. And the more we can cut down on drug use and drug trafficking and drug supplies, the easier it will be for respective countries to protect their people.

Mr. President, I appreciate very much your presence here. I thank you for your leadership in the hemisphere. I appreciate the advice you have given me on how we can work together to make sure our own neighborhood is secure and peaceful and hopeful. Welcome.

President Fernandez Reyna. I thank you very much, Mr. President. It's a pleasure to be here. And I want to thank President Bush for the warm welcome that he has given me, along with my delegation, here to the Oval Office of the White House.

As the President indicated, we have touched on a number of issues of mutual interest to our two countries. First of all, DR–CAFTA; its implementation, hopefully, will take place very soon. We are now in the final phase. This is a bill now before our own Congress in the Dominican Republic. We are dealing with some minor legal amendments, and our two teams have been working very hard to obtain a speedy implementation of DR–CAFTA. President Bush and we have agreed to the need to accelerate this process to benefit both our countries.

Second, as President Bush indicated, we have also touched on the issues of disbursements by multilateral institutions. These are extremely important in order to help the progress of countries like the Dominican Republic to establish confidence, to maintain the confidence in our countries, and also to help us sustain ability of our economies.

The Dominican Republic has agreements with these multilateral institutions, and we hope that they will be honored soon, with regard to these disbursements. The sooner that they are complied with the better it will be for us.

And third, of course, we have touched on a number of issues such as the issue of drug trafficking, as President Bush mentioned, the issue of crime, the issue of the good relations that we have had for so many years between the United States and the Dominican Republic, the issue of good governance, the issue of respect for human rights, and a number of other things.

It has been a very good meeting. Thank you so much.

President Bush. *Gracias por su tiempo.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Fernandez Reyna spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on Signing the Secure Fence Act of 2006

October 26, 2006

Thank you all. Thank you. Please be seated. I'm pleased that you all are here to witness the signature of the Secure Fence Act of 2006. This bill will help protect the American people. This bill will make our borders more secure. It is an important step toward immigration reform.

I want to thank the Members of Congress for their work on this important piece of legislation. I welcome you here to the White House. I'm looking forward to signing this bill.

I appreciate the Vice President joining us today. I thank the Deputy Secretary, Michael Jackson, of the Department of Homeland Security. Rob Portman—he happens to be the Director of the OMB. I want to thank Ralph Basham, who is the Commissioner of the U.S. Customs and Border Protection—David Aguilar is the Chief of the U.S. Border Patrol.

I appreciate the fact that Senate Majority Leader Bill Frist has joined us, as well as House Majority Leader John Boehner. I appreciate them coming in from their respective States as I sign this piece of legislation. I want to thank Congressman Peter King, who's the chairman of the Homeland Security Committee in the House of Representatives. I appreciate you being here, Peter.

Ours is a nation of immigrants. We're also a nation of law. Unfortunately, the United States has not been in complete control of its borders for decades, and therefore, illegal immigration has been on the rise. We have a responsibility to address these challenges. We have a responsibility to enforce our laws. We have a responsibility to secure our borders. We take this responsibility seriously.

Earlier this year, I addressed the Nation from the Oval Office. I laid out our strategy for immigration reform. Part of that strategy begins with securing the border. Since I took office, we have more than doubled funding for border security—from $4.6 billion in 2001 to $10.4 billion this year. We've increased the number of Border Patrol agents from about 9,000 to more than 12,000, and by the end of 2008, we will have doubled

the number of Border Patrol agents during my Presidency.

We've deployed thousands of National Guard members to assist the Border Patrol. We've upgraded technology at our borders. We've added infrastructure, including new fencing and vehicle barriers. We're adding thousands of new beds in our detention facilities so we can continue working to end catch-and-release at our southern border. During the course of my administration, we have apprehended and sent home more than 6 million people entering our country illegally. And I thank the Border Patrol for their hard work.

The Secure Fence Act builds on this progress. The bill authorizes the construction of hundreds of miles of additional fencing along our southern border. The bill authorizes more vehicle barriers, checkpoints, and lighting to help prevent people from entering our country illegally. The bill authorizes the Department of Homeland Security to increase the use of advanced technology like cameras and satellites and unmanned aerial vehicles to reinforce our infrastructure at the border. We're modernizing the southern border of the United States so we can assure the American people we're doing our job of securing the border. By making wise use of physical barriers and deploying 21st century technology, we're helping our Border Patrol agents do their job.

The Secure Fence Act is part of our efforts to reform our immigration system. We have more to do. Meaningful immigration reform means that we must enforce our immigration laws in the United States. It is against the law to hire someone who is here illegally. We fully understand that most businesses want to obey that law, but they cannot verify the legal status of their employees because of widespread document fraud. So we're creating a better system for verifying documents and work eligibility and, in the meantime, holding people to account for breaking the law.

We must reduce pressure on our border by creating a temporary-worker plan. Willing workers ought to be matched with willing employers to do jobs Americans are not doing for a temporary—on a temporary basis.

We must face the reality that millions of illegal immigrants are already here. They should not be given an automatic path to citizenship; that is amnesty. I oppose amnesty. There is a rational middle ground between granting an automatic pass to citizenship for every illegal immigrant and a program of mass deportation. And I look forward to working with Congress to find that middle ground.

The bill I'm about to sign is an important step in our Nation's efforts to secure our border and reform our immigration system. I want to thank the Members of Congress for joining me as I sign the Secure Fence Act of 2006.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:34 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. H.R. 6061, approved October 26, was assigned Public Law No. 109–367. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at a Luncheon for Congressional Candidate Jeff Lamberti and Iowa Victory 2006 in Des Moines, Iowa

October 26, 2006

Thanks for coming. Please be seated. Thank you for the warm Iowa welcome. It's kind of like old home week here when I look around. [*Laughter*] It's good to be in the midst of a lot of friends who made possible for me to stand here and address you as the President of the United States.

I'm proud to be here with Jeff Lamberti. No doubt in my mind he is going to be the next Congressman from this congressional district. He is smart; he is capable; he is accomplished; he listens; and he cares. The right man to represent the Third Congressional District in Iowa is Jeff Lamberti.

I not only feel that way, but Laura feels that way. [*Laughter*] She sends her best to Jeff and Shannon and their family. She sends her best to you all. She has got to be the most patient woman in America. [*Laughter*] I also happen to believe, in all due respect to my mother, she's the greatest First Lady our country has ever had.

I am proud to be here with one of the finest United States Senators any State has ever produced in Chuck Grassley. Jeffrey, if you want to learn how to win, hire Grassley. [*Laughter*] Jeff and I were talking about what we can do together when he wins. And I said, well, why don't we work with Senator Grassley and Congressman Tom Latham, who is with us, and Congressman Steven King, who is with us, to make sure that this renewable fuels initiative we started continues to remain an important part of not only the Iowa economy but an important part of making sure we become less dependent on foreign sources of oil.

I can remember when this guy from Texas came here in 2000 and said, "I support ethanol." I think old Grassley didn't really believe me. [*Laughter*] I think he kind of thought, well, maybe that's just typical political talk. I meant what I said, and I mean what I say today. I'm looking forward to working with this new Congressman to make sure that we use Iowa farm crops to power the U.S. economy.

I do appreciate Congressman Latham coming down to say hello to the man you'll be serving with. And I appreciate Congressman Steve King coming over to be here with Jeff. These are two fine, fine Members of the United States Congress. I'm proud to call them friends. I'm proud to serve with you on behalf of the United States.

I ran into State Auditor Dave Vaudt. I said, "How's your campaign going?" [*Laughter*] He said, "Pretty good." [*Laughter*] What's it like to run unopposed? [*Laughter*] But I'm proud of you, Dave, and I'm glad you're here with your wife, Jeanie. Thanks for coming. Now that you've got a little spare time on your hands, why don't you help our man get elected here in the Third Congressional District?

The next secretary of state of Iowa is somebody I know quite well. I used to see her all the time in the Oval Office—Mary Ann Hanusa is with us today. Thanks for running. Vote for her. She'll do a fine job.

I'm proud that members of the ex-Governors club are with us. [*Laughter*] I'm a member. [*Laughter*] Two of the better members are here: Governor Ray and Governor Branstad, two of the finest public servants the State has had. Thank you for coming. I particularly look forward to telling Mother and Dad that you're looking just fine, Bob. [*Laughter*] And so are they.

I want to thank all the grassroots activists who are here. I appreciate the chairman of the Iowa party, Ray Hoffmann. Thank you for coming. I want to thank all of you who are involved with helping this good man. I appreciate you giving—helping fill the hat. But I also want to encourage you to make sure you do more than contribute just of your money. I ask you to contribute of your time and your efforts. There's nothing better for a candidate coming down the stretch in a campaign to know that he's got a lot of folks standing side by side with him. I ask you to make the phone calls and put up the signs and turn out the vote.

I know the other side is already dancing in the end zone, except they haven't made the end zone yet. [*Laughter*] They're up there in Washington already kind of picking out their offices and measuring the drapes. [*Laughter*] This campaign only ends after the voters have had a chance to speak. No doubt in my mind, with your help, Dave [Jeff] * Lamberti will be the next United States Congressman.

Dave [Jeff] * and I believe a lot of things. We believe that you ought to keep more of your own money. We believe in family values. We believe values are important. And we believe marriage is a fundamental institution of civilization.

Yesterday in New Jersey, we had another activist court issue a ruling that raises doubts about the institution of marriage. I believe that marriage is a union between a man and a woman, and I believe it's a sacred institution that is critical to the health of our society and the well-being of families, and it must be defended. And I'm looking forward to working with Jeff Lamberti to do just that.

I think one of the biggest issues in this campaign is, is what's going to happen to the money in your pocket. A big issue in this campaign is whether you're going to have more money to spend as you see fit. This election is going to have a direct impact on

* White House correction.

your family budget. When you go to the voting booth less than 2 weeks from today, the lever you pull will determine the taxes you pay. Americans will cast their ballots on November the 7th, but you're going to feel the results every April 15th. And make no mistake about it, there is a big difference in philosophy when it comes to taxes.

We believe—the Congressman-to-be and I believe—the Senator, Congressman-to-be, and two Congressmen and I believe that we think you can spend your money far better than the Federal Government can spend your money. We believe that when you have more of your own money in your pocket to save, spend, or invest, the economy benefits. We believe that the more money there is in the hands of private citizens, the more likely it is people from all walks of life will be able to realize the American Dream. That's what we believe.

Not only do we believe that; that's what we acted on. I was proud to sign the largest tax relief since Ronald Reagan was the President of the United States. And I thank Chairman—yes, Chairman Grassley—see, he's the chairman of the Finance Committee—for taking the lead. These tax cuts would not have happened without the leadership of Chuck Grassley nor without the support of Latham and King.

And now the results of the tax cuts are in. What matters in this business is results—that's what matter. And the results are strong. Because of the tax cuts we passed, small businesses flourish, the farm economy is strong, American families have got more money in their pocket. The United States economy is the envy of the industrialized world.

The Democrats said the tax cuts were not a solution for the economy that was slipping into a recession. The truth is that the tax cuts have helped make the American economy the fastest growing of any major industrialized nation. The Democrats said the tax cuts would lead to a jobless recovery. The truth is that our economy has added jobs for 37 months in a row, and since August of 2003, our economy has created 6.6 million new jobs.

The Democrats have said the tax cuts would not help increase wages. The truth is that real wages have grown 2.2 percent over the past year. The Democrats said tax cuts would cause the deficit to explode. Well, the truth is the tax cuts led to economic growth, and that economic growth helped send our tax revenues soaring. As a matter of fact, we cut the deficit in half 3 years ahead of schedule.

And now the Democrats have another prediction—they're predicting they're going to win this November 7th. The truth is, if their electoral—election predictions are as good as their economic predictions—[*laughter*]—Lamberti is going to win.

One big reason we're going to win is because the truth is, the Democrats will raise your taxes. You know, you're not going to hear much about it; they're not going to go bragging about that fact. But they've got a record they're going to have to run on. They're going to have to answer to the voters why, time and time again, they voted against the tax cuts we passed.

They don't want you to know the truth. As a matter of fact, recently, the top Democrat leader in the House made an interesting declaration. She said, we love tax cuts. Given her record, she must be a secret admirer. [*Laughter*] It's just not—just the so-called tax cuts for the rich she opposes. When we cut taxes for everyone who pays income taxes, she and her colleagues voted against them. When we reduced the marriage penalty, she and her colleagues voted against them. When we cut the taxes on small businesses, she and her colleagues voted against them. When we lowered the taxes for families with children, she and her colleagues voted against them. When we put the death tax on the road to extinction, she and her colleagues voted against it. Time and time again, when she had the opportunity to show her love for taxes, she voted no. If this is the Democrats' idea of love—[*laughter*]—I wouldn't want to see what hate looks like. [*Laughter*]

Now they're throwing out the same old line. I don't know if it's happening in this campaign, but in district after district, you can hear them saying, "Oh, we're just going to tax the rich." But that's not the way it works when you've got a spending appetite as big as their appetite. You might remember what happened in 1992. They said, "We're going to run on middle-class tax cuts. Elect

us—we're going to cut the taxes on the middle class." Sure enough, they got elected, and we had the largest—one of the largest tax increases in American history.

Now, the way it works is this: If the tax cuts we pass are not made permanent and they are left to expire, your taxes are going up. See, these tax cuts we passed are set to expire. And if they were to expire—something I'm against and something Jeff Lamberti is against and something Senator Grassley is against and these two Congressmen are against—your taxes go up. And make no mistake about it, the Democrats want these tax cuts to expire.

Why do I say that? Recently the ranking Democrat on the House Ways and Means Committee—that's the committee that decides the level of your taxes—said he can't think of one of the tax cuts that he would extend. Those are his words, not mine. Asked if that meant he would consider tax hikes across the income spectrum, he answered, "No question about it."

I want you to think about that, what happens if the tax cuts aren't made permanent. Say you're just sitting around the breakfast table, and you have three children. If those tax cuts are not made permanent, you could look at that child and say, $500 more on my taxes going to go up. Or you can look at that other child sitting there with you, that's another 500. If you got three children, your taxes are going up $1,500. Now, that may not seem like a lot to these Washington, DC, Democrats, but it's a lot to the working people here in Iowa. The best way to make sure your taxes stay low, the best way to make sure we keep economic vitality alive, is to elect Jeff Lamberti to the United States Congress.

The biggest issue facing this country, as far as I'm concerned, is the security of the United States of America. I think about it every day. Every day I am briefed about the fact that there's still an enemy that lurks, plans, and plots and wants to kill Americans. I wish I did not have to report that. You know, when I campaigned here in 2000, I said [didn't say] *, "I want to be a war President." No President wants to be a war President, but I am one. Not because the United States chose war, but because an enemy chose to attack us. And these folks are lethal, and they are brutal. And the best way to deal with them is to bring them to justice before they can hurt the American people again.

We face an enemy that has an ideology that is the opposite of what we believe. We believe in freedoms. We believe in the universality of freedom. We believe in the right for people to choose how they worship. We believe in freedom of the press. We believe in freedom of dissent. They don't believe in any of those freedoms. And what makes this war a tough war is that they're willing to kill innocent women and children to achieve their objectives. And they have objectives. They want to establish a governing authority from Spain to Indonesia in which they can impose their dark vision of the world. These are their words. The Commander in Chief must take the words of the enemy very seriously, particularly since the most important job that we have in Washington, DC, is to protect the American people from further attack.

Here at the homeland, we must be right 100 percent of the time in order to protect you, and the enemy only has to be right one time. And so therefore, after 9/11, after September the 11th, 2001, I vowed to give our professionals all the tools necessary to protect the American people from further attack. For example, if Al Qaida or an Al Qaida affiliate was making a phone call into the United States of America, in order to make sure that we're doing our job to protect you, we've got to understand what that person is saying. If the enemy is making a phone call, in this different kind of war that requires instant information to protect you, we better understand what the enemy is thinking and what they're planning.

Recently, the terrorist surveillance program came up for a vote in the Halls of the United States Congress. Our Members stood strong in understanding that the number-one responsibility is to protect the American people and that we must give our professionals the tools necessary to protect you. Over 80 percent of the Democrats voted no, in giving the professionals the tools they need. There's just a different mindset in Washington, DC,

* White House correction.

in what we believe. They must not fear the enemy. You cannot wait to respond to the enemy after we have been attacked. To protect the American people, we have got to make sure.

This is a different kind of war. I see we've got vets here, and I want to thank you for serving. But this is a war unlike any we have fought before. In past wars, you could determine success based upon the number of ships sunk or airplanes down or territory taken. This is a war that is global in nature, fought on a myriad of fronts, that requires precise knowledge as how to interface and react with this enemy. We pick people up off the battlefield. We pick people off the battlefield like Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, who our intelligence services believe was the mastermind of the attacks that killed over 3,000 of our citizens on September the 11th.

I felt that it was important to understand and find out what Khalid Sheikh Mohammed knew, in order to protect you. I authorized the professionals of the Central Intelligence Agency to set up a program to inquire to Mr. Khalid Sheikh Mohammed about what he knew. This bill came in front of the United States Congress to authorize the Government to be able to do so. Over 80 percent of the Democrats in the House of Representatives voted against giving our professionals the tools necessary to gain information so that we can protect you.

There is a difference of opinion, and our voters in Iowa and across the country must understand that the Democrats have a different view about this war on terror, a view that I think makes America less secure and makes it harder for us to do our job to protect the American people.

This front—this war on terror is on many fronts. And the central front right now is in Iraq. The lessons of September the 11th are many: One, we've got to stay on the offense and keep the enemy on the run. It's hard to plan, plot, and attack if you're on the run. It's hard to plan, plot, and attack if you're in a cave. And we got great professionals who are constantly keeping the pressure on this enemy. But there's another lesson of September the 11th, and I just mentioned it—we cannot afford to wait when we see a threat. If this is a different kind of war, this country of ours must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. Saddam Hussein was a threat; the world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power.

And now the fundamental question is, does this country have the wherewithal and the perseverance to help this young democracy flourish in the heart of the Middle East? I will tell you, it's important to defeat the enemy overseas so we do not have to face them here at home.

It's tough fighting in Iraq. It's tough fighting because there are folks there who understand the stakes in this important battle in the war on terror. They understand that if we lose our nerve and leave before the job is done that they will be able to gain safe haven from which to launch further attacks. They understand that if the United States were to withdraw, it would be a significant victory for them in the war on terror. It would embolden them to recruit. It would enable them to more likely topple moderate governments.

I want you to envision a world 20 to 30 years from now in which there are violent forms of radicals—violent radicals fighting for power in the Middle East, in which moderate governments have been toppled, in which oil resources will have been used in order to blackmail Western countries into retreat. And couple all that with an Iran with a nuclear weapon, and a generation of Americans will look at our generation and say, "What happened to them? Couldn't they see the threats? Weren't they able to see the dangers?" Well, I want you to know I understand the dangers. I see—clearly see the threats. We will help this young democracy in Iraq succeed.

We will help the Iraqis defend their democracy. We will help this country become a nation that can govern itself and sustain itself and defend itself and serve as an ally in the war on terror. We will stand with the 12 million folks who went to the polls and said they want to live in freedom. We'll help train the Iraqis so they can take the fight to the enemy, and then our boys and girls will come home with the honor they have earned.

There's a mighty debate in the United States of America on this important subject.

I will tell you, if we leave before the job is done, we will have let down a generation of Americans. If we leave before the job is done, we will have not honored the sacrifice of incredibly brave men and women who wear our uniform. If we leave before the job is done, we will embolden a dangerous enemy that still wants to strike the United States of America. No question, the fighting is tough, but the United States of America has done this kind of tough fighting before. We will adjust our tactics. We will support our troops. We will fight, and we will win in Iraq.

There is a difference of opinion in Washington on this important issue. The Democrat leadership and many of the Democrats have a more limited view of the war on terror. Recently the top Democrat in the House, who wants to become the Speaker, said this on a nationally televised interview: She said, quote, "It's not right to say that Iraq is part of the war on terror." She said, instead, "The war on terror is the war in Afghanistan."

Her position must come as news to Usama bin Laden, who has proclaimed that the "third world war is raging in Iraq." Her position would come as news to the number-two man of Al Qaida, who has called the struggle in Iraq "the place for the greatest battle." Her position would come as news to the terrorists from Syria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, Libya, Yemen, and other countries who come to Iraq to fight the rise of democracy and the United States. Her position must come as news to the people of Iraq who have lost loved ones to terrorist car bombings and assassinations and attacks in markets and mosques. Her position would come as news to the American troops in Iraq who are risking their lives every day to fight the terrorists and prevent them from regaining the safe haven like they had in Afghanistan.

Her position on the war on terror, that it's contained only to Afghanistan, would come as news to the people in London and Madrid and Oman and Bali and Beslan and Riyadh and Istanbul and Casablanca and other cities where the terrorists have massacred and murdered innocent men, women, and children.

Her position in the war on terror is wrong. You cannot win a war if you do not believe we are in a war. It's very important for the citizens of this important State to understand that if we leave Iraq before the job is done, the enemy will follow us here. The best way to secure the peace for the United States, the best way to do—the most important job of the Federal Government is to support the troops, to support the young democracy, and defeat the enemy in Iraq and—what we'll do. And I'm proud to be standing here with Jeff Lamberti, who understands the stakes in this war.

We've got one other asset at our disposal I want to share with you, and that is the power of liberty. One of my favorite stories to share is the story that happened here a couple of weeks ago—or weeks ago—when I went to Elvis's place in Memphis with then-sitting Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. The reason I like to share that story is because it's got a good lesson for our citizens, particularly younger citizens who may not have really studied that period of history too much, the history of Japan-U.S. relations.

People say, "Why did you go down there?" Well, I'd never been. [*Laughter*] And the Prime Minister, he wanted to go. [*Laughter*] He was an Elvis fan. [*Laughter*] But here's the story I want to tell. My dad fought the Japanese. He was an 18-year-old kid who volunteered, just like a lot of our troops are doing today—they're all volunteers. By the way, these men and women understand the stakes. They understand the consequences of early retreat. They know what it's like to give up the ground to an enemy. They have volunteered during dangerous times. I want to thank you for your service, brother. Thanks for joining us.

That's what happened, too, after the Japanese attacked us, see. By the way, we lost more people on September the 11th than we did at Pearl Harbor. But a lot of the young folks signed up. One of them was George H.W. Bush. And he and a lot of other brave Americans fought tooth and nail to defeat the Japanese. They were the sworn enemy of the United States. And it was a bloody conflict, a tough fight. And yet, some 60 years later,

the Navy pilot's son is on Air Force One flying down to Elvis's place, talking about the peace.

You see, on the flight down, the Prime Minister of Japan, our former enemy, and I talked about what we could do to work together to make the world a more peaceful place. We talked about the fact that Japan had 1,000 troops in Iraq to help that young democracy fight off the extremists and moderates—to help the moderates fight off the extremists. See, Prime Minister Koizumi and I understand we're in an ideological struggle between moderate people and people who just want to live in peace, and extremists and radicals who want to impose their view. He understands that. And he knows that as a free nation, we need to help struggling democracies survive if we want there to be peace for our children and our grandchildren.

And we talked about North Korea. We talked about helping HIV/AIDS victims in Africa. We talked about making this world a better place. Isn't it interesting that the son of a man who fought the Japanese is able to talk the peace with the Prime Minister of a former enemy. What happened was, Japan adopted a Japanese-style democracy. The power of the—of that lesson is this: Liberty has got the capacity to transform an enemy into an ally—just like liberty has got the capacity to transform a region of hate into a region of hope. Someday, an American President will be talking with elected leaders from the Middle East about the peace, and a generation of Americans, a generation to come, will be better off for it.

These are the stakes in this election. I'm proud you're here. Thank you for standing with Jeff. Take it to the final day, and he'll win. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:42 p.m. at the Iowa State Fairgrounds. In his remarks, he referred to Robert Ray and Terry Branstad, former Governors of Iowa; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader, and Ayman Al-Zawahiri, senior associate, Al Qaida terrorist organization; and former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks to Reporters in Clinton Township, Michigan

October 26, 2006

Purchase at Morley Candy Makers

The President. They asked me why I came here, and I said, one, I like small businesses, and two, I like sweets. [*Laughter*] The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in this store. And the job of those of us in Washington who are lucky enough to serve the American people is to keep the taxes low on the small-business people, as well as the people who work for the small-business people.

And so we want to wish you all the best. Thanks for thinking the big dream.

Ronald W. Rapson. Thank you very much, Mr. President, for coming. Enjoy Sanders hot fudge, one of the best products in the State of Michigan.

The President. Looking forward to it. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Rapson. A couple of Michigan State and Michigan candy bars for you there.

The President. There you go. Now, the other thing is, is that the big money here is, of course, with the press corps. And I would fully suspect you all to shop. [*Laughter*] Fletcher [Michael Fletcher, Washington Post], how about it?

Q. Yes, sir.

The President. All right. Thank you. Good to be with you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:05 p.m. at Morley Candy Makers. Participating in the event was Ronald W. Rapson, president, Morley Brands LLC.

Remarks at a Reception for Senatorial Candidate Michael Bouchard in Warren, Michigan

October 26, 2006

Thank you all. Thanks for coming. The way to go from worst to first is elect Mike Bouchard to the United States Senate. I am impressed by Mike Bouchard's character, his decency, his compassion for the people of Michigan. And there's no doubt in my mind, with your hard work, he'll be elected to the United States Senate.

I thank you for coming. You know, it's an interesting year. The other side is dancing in the end zone—except they're on the 15-yard line. We got the issues on our side. We got the right candidates running. Mike Bouchard is going to win. And I appreciate you coming to support him.

And I'm proud to be here with Pam and his family. I thank—you know, there's nothing better than having a candidate who has got a strong family. I appreciate the fact that he puts family first in his life. And I know what it's like to have a loving wife and kids that love you because I've got a loving wife. And she understands what I know: Michael Bouchard is the right man for this job.

I appreciate Congressman Joe Knollenberg joining us. Congressman, I appreciate you coming. We got the State attorney general, Michael Cox. Michael, where are you? Thanks for coming, buddy. [*Applause*] There you go. He's a good man to be running with. He's a good, strong leader. I appreciate you coming, Mike.

I'm proud to be here with the grassroots activists for the State of Michigan, the party chairman, the national committeewoman; the cochair of the Michigan Republican Party happens to Jane Abraham. I know her husband quite well. [*Laughter*] The reason I bring up the grassroots activists is, I want to remind you that giving money is one thing; turning out the vote is the other. And coming down the stretch, this good man is going to give it his all, but he needs you by his side. He needs people getting on the telephones and putting up the signs and knocking on doors and reminding people of Michigan, if they want good government and good results, Mike Bouchard is the—should be the United States Senator.

And when he wins, we've got a lot to do together—got a lot to do together. One thing we're going to do together is to make sure we continue to develop alternative fuel for our automobiles. See, we've got a problem here in America. We are too dependent on foreign sources of oil. And the best way to diversify away from foreign sources of oil is to encourage renewable fuels like ethanol. We want Michigan farmers growing the fuel that runs our automobiles, for the sake of economic security and national security.

I'm looking forward to having this good Senator vote to confirm the judges I nominate to the Federal bench. Make no mistake about it, one of the key issues in this campaign is the type of judiciary we end up having in America. My job is to appoint judges who will strictly interpret the Constitution and not use the bench from which to legislate. And it would be—if you believe in that philosophy, it's important that you have at least one United States Senator from Michigan who will support a conservative judiciary, and that's Senator Mike Bouchard.

I mentioned his love for family. He understands what I know, that marriage is a fundamental institution of our civilization. Yesterday in New Jersey, we had another activist court issue a ruling that raises doubts about the institution of marriage. I believe that marriage is a union between a man and a woman. Mike and I believe that marriage is a sacred institution, that it is critical to the health of our society and the well-being of families, and marriage must be defended.

Another big issue in this campaign, and one I'm looking forward to working with Senator Bouchard on, is taxes. You know, we believe that we ought to keep your taxes low because we believe you can spend your money better than the Government can. The Democrats believe that they can spend your money better than you can and, therefore, will raise your taxes.

Make no mistake about it, this is a key issue in this campaign. When we were confronted with recession and corporate scandal and an attack on the United States and the war—needed to defend ourselves—and hurricanes and high energy prices, this economy was able to withstand those challenges because we cut the taxes. See, if you have more money in your pocket to save, invest, or spend, this economy grows.

Oh, you heard all the rhetoric during those tax debates. For those people who are undecided in this campaign, you might want to look up the words of the respective candidates when it came to cutting taxes. You might want to make sure you understand the record of people who are running in this race for the United States Senate when it comes to taxes. You might remember, the Democrats said that tax cuts were not the solution

for an economy that was slipping into recession. Truth is, the tax cuts have helped make America's economy the fastest growing of any major industrialized nation.

The Democrats said the tax cuts would lead to a jobless recovery. You might remember that rhetoric. The truth is that our economy has added jobs for 37 months in a row, and since August of 2003, our economy has created more than 6.6 million new jobs. Oh, the Democrats said the tax cuts would cause the deficit to explode. Well, the truth is that the tax cuts led to economic growth, and that growth has helped send tax revenues soaring. As a result, we cut the deficit in half 3 years ahead of schedule.

And now the Democrats are telling you they're going to win on election day. But the truth is, if their electoral predictions are as reliable as their economic predictions—[*laughter*]—November 7th is going to be a good day for Michigan because Mike Bouchard is going to win the United States Senate.

One of the reasons why we're going to hold the Senate and hold the House on election day is because the Democrats are determined to raise the taxes on the people that work in this country. Oh, I know, they're not going to admit it out loud, but I want to remind you of what the top Democrat leader in the House said recently. She said, "We love tax cuts." Given her record, she must be a secret admirer. [*Laughter*]

It's just not the so-called tax cuts for the rich that she opposes. When we cut taxes for everyone who pays income taxes, she and her House colleagues, as well as Members of the United States Senate, voted against that tax cut. When we reduced the marriage penalty, she and her colleagues in Washington, DC, voted against it. When we cut the taxes on small business, she and her colleagues voted against it. When we lowered taxes for families with children, she and her colleagues voted against it. When we reduced the taxes on capital gains and dividends, she and her colleagues in Washington, DC, voted against it. When we put the death tax on the road to extinction, she and her colleagues in Washington, DC, voted against it. Time and time again, when she had an opportunity to show her love for tax cuts—[*laughter*]—she voted no. If this is the Democrat's idea of love—[*laughter*]—I wouldn't want to see what hate looks like. [*Laughter*]

No, taxes are a big issue—big issue. Oh, you'll hear them try to obscure the deal by saying, "We're just—only going to tax the rich people." I want you to tell your fellow citizens who have yet to make up their mind that in 1992, they campaigned on, "We're going to give you a middle class tax cut." And when they had the power and the capacity to make the decisions about taxes in the White House and in the Congress, we had the largest—one of the largest tax increases—increases—in American history. Their record is clear. They can run, but they can't hide. If the people of Michigan want low taxes, you vote for Mike Bouchard as United States Senator.

I want to talk about taxes just a little bit more. [*Laughter*] See, I know how important they are for this economy of ours. I know how important they are for small businesses. I know how important it is for our farmers and ranchers to get tax cuts. I know how important it is for people who are working for a living to be able to have more money in your pocket so you can make the decisions for your family. I know how important it is to keep taxes low. I've seen it work. We've got a record that we can run on.

You know, the way it works is, is that these tax cuts we passed are set to expire, so, therefore, they have to be renewed by Congress or made permanent. So recently they asked the head man on the Ways and Means Committee in the House of Representatives—he would be the head man; see, he's the ranking member on the Ways and Means Committee—they asked him about which tax cuts he would extend—the ones that maybe help the family with children, or the ones that get rid of the marriage penalty. He asked that—he couldn't think of one of those tax cuts that he would extend. In other words, by not extending, he's raising your taxes. See, they try to hide behind the language.

I don't know if your opponent is trying to hide behind the language, but I doubt that she's going to be there to make sure these tax cuts we passed stay intact. I want to tell you what that means. It means that if the child tax credit were cut in half, if these tax

cuts aren't extended, if you're having breakfast with your family and you got one kid, your taxes go up $500, if they get control. Imagine having lunch with four children and the tax cuts don't get extended. That mother and father can rest assured that the Democrats will have caused their taxes to go up by 500 times four. That would be $2,000. That may not seem like a lot to the big spenders in Washington, DC, but it's a lot to the people who work for a living. If you want to keep your taxes low, you vote for Mike Bouchard for the United States Senate.

Mike mentioned an issue that's on my mind a lot. As a matter of fact, every day I think about how best to protect the American people, because that is the most important responsibility of your Government. I wish I didn't have to say that, but as your Commander in Chief and as the person responsible for rallying the Federal Government to use all assets to protect you, I've got to speak plainly to the American people. An enemy still lurks; a dangerous enemy still exists, which will use any means they can to attack us again. And therefore, we must use every means we have at our disposal to protect you. The most important job I have, and the most important job this United States Senator will have, is to make sure that we do everything in our power to protect the American people.

See, we face an enemy that knows no bounds of decency. They're ideologues, but they're ideologues of hate. They have taken a great religion and have twisted it to their evil intentions. They want to establish a caliphate, a governing structure, from Spain to Indonesia, in which they're able to impose their dark vision on decent men and women. They want safe haven from which to launch attack against America again. They would like the wealth so they can develop weapons of mass destruction to use against us.

You cannot negotiate with these people. You cannot reason with these people. The best way to attack—the best way to defend America is to go on the attack, stay on the attack, and bring the people to justice before they hurt us again.

And Michigan needs a United States Senator who understands the stakes of the world in which we live, and that Senator will be Mike Bouchard. We need a Senator up there who understands this is a global war fought on a variety of fronts. One of the lessons of September the 11th is, we must stay on the offense. Look, it's hard to plan, plot, and attack if you're running or hiding in a cave. And you got to know, we got immense pressure on those who would do harm to the United States.

The other lesson—another lesson is, is that when we see a threat overseas, we must take that threat seriously. America cannot wait to respond after we've been attacked. One of the lessons of that fateful day is, we must do everything in our power to protect you before there's an attack. I saw a threat in Iraq. Getting rid of Saddam Hussein has made the United States safer and the world better off.

And now our job is to complete the mission, and that is to help Iraq become a government—a country that can govern itself, sustain itself, defend itself, a country that will be an ally in the war against these extremists that want to harm us. And the stakes are high. It's important that we succeed. It's important that we understand there's an enemy that will kill innocent life so they can get their images on our TV screens, because they believe it's just a matter of time before we leave before the job is done.

If we were to listen to the Democrats in Washington, DC, who say, "Let's have a fixed date of withdrawal"—by the way, that's code word for saying, leave before the job is done—we would turn over this important country to radicals and extremists who would plot and plan and attack.

I want you to think about a world in which violent forms of extremists battle for power, a Middle East in which moderate governments have been toppled, a Middle East in which these extremists get ahold of oil and energy and enable—to enable them to blackmail the United States. Imagine the message: "If you don't abandon your relationship with Israel," for example, "We'll run the price of oil up to—if you don't retreat to allow us to continue to expand our caliphate or governing structure, we'll run the oil up." Imagine Iran with a nuclear weapon 20 or 30 years from now. People would look back at this period of time and say, "What happened to

them? How come they couldn't see the threats to a generation of Americans who are growing up? Why weren't they able to see the dangers that persisted?"

I see the dangers. I understand the stakes. Victory in Iraq is essential for the security of the United States of America. We will change our plans; we will adjust our tactics; but we will support our military. We will support this young democracy, and we will win in Iraq.

And there's a fundamental difference of opinion. You listen to the rhetoric of the leaders of the Democrat Party. They have a different view than I do about whether or not this is a global war on terror. They have a different view about how aggressive the United States should be in pursuing enemies overseas so we do not have to face them here at home.

I want you to listen to what the—one of the leaders in Washington, DC, said this past Sunday. She said—a Democrat leader in a nationally televised interview—she said, "It is not right to say that, quote, 'Iraq is part of the war on terror.' " In other words, they don't believe Iraq is a part of the war on terror. They believe it is a separate theater of some kind. I'm not sure what they believe. This is a global war we're—fight. You can't win a war if you don't believe we're in a war. And therefore, we need leaders in Washington, DC, who understand the stakes.

And her position on Iraq would come as news to Usama bin Laden, who has proclaimed that the "third world war is raging in Iraq." Her position would come as news to the number-two man of Al Qaida, Mr. Zawahiri, who has called the struggle in Iraq "the place for the greatest battle." Her position on Iraq would come as news to the terrorists from Syria, Saudi Arabia, Egypt, Sudan, Lybia, Yemen, and other countries who have come to Iraq to fight America and the coalition forces. Her position would come as news to the people of Iraq who have lost loved ones as a result of terrorist bombings and beheadings and brutal acts of terror. Her position would come as news to those brave men and women who wear the uniform of the United States of America who are risking their lives every day to protect the American people.

And her position that the war on terror—see, she went on to say it's only in Afghanistan—her position that the war on terror should be fought only in Afghanistan would come as news to the citizens of London and Madrid and Amman and Bali and Beslan and Riyadh and Istanbul and Casablanca and other cities where the terrorists have murdered innocent men, women, and children.

We need people in Washington, DC, who understand the stakes of the world in which we live. Our most important duty is to protect you. And the best way to protect the American people is to confront the enemy overseas so we do not have to face them here at home. And the best way to confront the enemy is to be clear-eyed and understand that if we were to leave Iraq before the job is done, the enemy would follow us right here to the United States of America. We will fight; we will win in Iraq.

We got a lot of assets at our disposal. We got the finest military that has ever existed, and we need a United States Senator who will support them. And when I say support them, I mean give them all the tools necessary so they can do their job. This Government owes these young men and women and their families all the support necessary, and I'm confident that Senator Mike Bouchard will help me provide that support.

But we've got another asset, and that's the power of liberty. I like to tell the story—as a matter of fact, I'm going to tell it as many times as people will listen—[*laughter*]—about my trip to Elvis's place. [*Laughter*] I went down there, as you might recall, with the then sitting Prime Minister of Japan, who no longer holds the office, Prime Minister Koizumi. He's a friend of mine. We went down there. I'd never been, thought it would be fun to go. He wanted to go a lot. [*Laughter*] He was an Elvis fan.

But I also wanted to tell a story. And here's the story: My dad, like many of your—who got relatives here, many of you whose relatives did the same thing, who are—you're here; the relatives probably aren't—[*laughter*]—joined the Navy to fight the Japanese. You know the kind of people I'm talking about. He's an 18-year-old kid; the Japanese had attacked America. They killed more people on 9/11 than were killed at Pearl Harbor.

And yet he went, just like the kids who are signing up today. We've got unbelievable men and women who are saying, "I understand the stakes, and I want to go defend my country"—as volunteers. That's what happened in World War II. And it was a bloody war, and a lot of people lost their lives. It was a tough, tough fight.

I find it to be really interesting that the son of this Navy pilot is on Air Force One flying down to Memphis, Tennessee, with the Prime Minister of the former enemy, talking about peace, talking about the fact that this country of Japan has sent 1,000 troops into Iraq, because the Prime Minister Koizumi and I understand that we're involved in an ideological struggle between decent people who want to live in peace and radicals and extremists who will battle democracy in order to be able to impose their will.

We talked about North Korea and the fact that not only the North Korea—man trying to get him a nuclear weapon and how destabilizing that would be, but we mourned the fact that thousands starve inside that country. We talked about HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa and our understanding that to whom much is given, much is required; and that this great country, I assured him, would continue to take the lead in providing antiretroviral drugs to help save lives. And we talked about helping Afghanistan build up its democracy.

Isn't it amazing? My dad fought the Japanese, and I'm talking about keeping the peace. Something happened between World War II and today, and what happened was, Japan adopted a Japanese-style democracy. Democracies yield the peace. Liberty has got the capacity to transform an enemy into an ally. Liberty has got the capacity to transform regions of hopelessness to regions of light and hope.

Someday, an American President will be sitting down with duly elected leaders from the Middle East talking about keeping the peace, and our children and grandchildren will be better off for it.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:03 p.m. at the Mabry Banquet and Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Pam Bouchard, wife of senatorial candidate Michael Bouchard; Saulius "Saul" Anuzis, chairman, and Holly Hughes, national committeewoman, Michigan Republican Party; former Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; former Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea.

Remarks Following Discussions With Secretary General Jakob Gijsbert "Jaap" de Hoop Scheffer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization and an Exchange With Reporters

October 27, 2006

President Bush. I'm proud to welcome the Secretary General of NATO here to the Oval Office. We've just had a fascinating discussion.

First, Mr. Secretary General, you've been a very strong leader. As a matter of fact, you've made NATO a values-based organization that is capable of dealing with the true threats of the 21st century. I appreciate your leadership. I particularly appreciate the fact that you have led the 26 nations of NATO into Afghanistan to help this young democracy. You know what I know, that the real challenge for the future is to help people of moderation and young democracies succeed in the face of threats and attacks by radicals and extremists who do not share our ideology, have kind of a dark vision of the world.

I appreciate the fact that you're reaching out to global partners, nations which share our value but have not been considered a—necessarily considered a part of NATO. I want to thank your view of making sure NATO continues to provide the opportunity for other nations to join NATO.

I'm looking forward to Riga. The Riga summit is a time for us to celebrate the great successes of this partnership. Mr. Secretary General and I will be there reminding our partners that we have a lot of work to be done in the noble cause of peace.

So, welcome.

Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer. Mr. President, thank you very much, and thank you for giving me your time. I can echo your words. NATO is delivering security in

the 21st century. And that means defending values, and that means defending values not only in Europe but far away from NATO's traditional area. And the case in point, of course, is Afghanistan, where there was a regime which was grossly violating human rights, no women's rights, public executions. There we are trying to assist the Afghan Government to establish democracy, to establish human rights, to establish those values.

And let me say that when, in those actions of NATO, of those brave NATO soldiers, civilians are killed, as happened 2 days ago, that's always a tragedy. That's a tragedy.

But let me convince you to look at the broader picture. They are against democracy. Girls did not go to school when the Taliban was running Afghanistan. Now they go to school. Now there is a precedence. Now there is a government. Civilian victims are a tragedy, but we are there in favor of democracy. They are there to destroy democracy, and they are there to destroy our values.

Mr. President, I'm looking forward to the Riga summit, where we'll see a 21st century NATO delivering security in many, many places of the world with 50,000 soldiers, including many Americans, on three continents. That is the challenge, but I can tell you that NATO is up to the challenge. NATO is delivering security, and NATO will continue to do this, indeed, with its presence, but also with global partners, because terrorism, proliferation, failed states, and failing states are global threats we have to face and to counter on a global scale.

Mr. President, once again, thank you very much for being here.

President Bush. Yes, sir.

I'll answer a couple of questions this morning. Jennifer [Jennifer Loven, Associated Press].

Iran

Q. Thank you, sir. What does it say to you that Iran is doubling its enrichment capacity?

President Bush. It says to me that we must double our effort to work with the international community to persuade the Iranians that there is only isolation from the world if they continue working forward on such a program. And I've read the speculation about that that's what they may be doing, but whether they've doubled it or not, the idea of Iran having a nuclear weapon is unacceptable, and it's unacceptable to the United States, and it's unacceptable to nations we're working with in the United Nations—to send a common message.

Caren [Caren Bohan, Reuters].

Interrogation of Terrorists

Q. Sir, do you agree with the Vice President that a dunk in the water is a "no brainer" when it comes to interrogating a terror suspect?

President Bush. This country doesn't torture. We're not going to torture. We will interrogate people we pick up off the battlefield to determine whether or not they've got information that will be helpful to protect the country.

Keil [Richard Keil, Bloomberg News].

2006 Elections

Q. Mr. President, with the elections just about 10 days away, polls show that voters are more disenchanted with the Republican-led Congress than at any time since 1994, when the Democrats lost power. What explanation or answer do you have for people who feel that way?

President Bush. Keil, I understand people here in Washington have already determined the outcome of the elections. As I said in my press conference the other day, I've seen it before, where people start measuring the drapes in their new offices before the vote has been counted—in other words, they're taking the people's vote for granted.

This election is going to be determined by how our candidates run locally. And I believe if they continue to emphasize the big issues—keeping taxes low and protecting the American people—we'll win. And so we'll see how the outcome comes. I know there's a lot of speculation here in Washington, DC, and there's a lot of fascination about listening to these pundits and people who are giving their opinions.

All I can tell you is what I see: I see enthusiasm amongst Republicans; I see candidates who are saying, "Vote for me. I will work to make sure America doesn't get attacked again." And I'm seeing candidates saying, "I understand that if we run up your taxes like

the Democrats do, it's going to hurt this economy, and so we'll keep your taxes low."

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:53 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

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.

October 21

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

During the day, in the Roosevelt Room, the President met with National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley; Deputy National Security Adviser Jack D. Crouch II; State and Defense Department officials; military commanders; and Vice President Dick Cheney, who participated via video teleconference.

October 23

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice. He then met with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld.

Later in the morning, in the East Room, the President participated in a photo opportunity with crew members of the Space Shuttle *Discovery*, Space Shuttle *Atlantis*, and Space Station Expeditions 11, 12, and 13. Then, on the South Portico, he and Mrs. Bush participated in a photo opportunity with King Carl XVI Gustaf and Queen Silvia of Sweden.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush had lunch with the King and Queen Sweden. He then went to the Urban Trust Bank, where he participated in a discussion on the economy with small-business owners and community bankers. Later, in the Old Family Dining Room, he participated in an interview with Maria Bartiromo of CNBC, for later broadcast.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Hanoi, Vietnam, to attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation Leaders' Meeting on November 18–19, to meet with President Nguyen Minh Triet and Prime Minister Nguyen Tan Dung of Vietnam on November 17, and that he will travel to Singapore and Indonesia.

October 24

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Sarasota, FL, where, upon arrival in the afternoon, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Tom Cooney.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Fort Lauderdale, FL, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer David Greenberger. He then traveled to Boca Raton, FL, where, at a private residence, he attended a Republican National Committee dinner.

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

The President declared a major disaster in New York and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding on October 12–13 and continuing.

October 25

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in an interview with print journalists.

October 26

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Des Moines, IA, where, upon arrival in the afternoon, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Sally Bates.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Clinton Township, MI, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer George Kolf. He then traveled to Warren, MI.

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

October 27

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Map Room, he participated in separate interviews with

Laurie Kinney of Hearst-Argyle Television, Grant Rampy of Tribune Broadcasting, and Jim Fry of Belo Broadcasting.

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Deputy Regional Forester Tom Tidwell of the U.S. Forest Service to express his condolences for the deaths of four Forest Service firefighters in the fire near Palm Springs, CA.

The President declared a major disaster in Alaska and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a fire from August 3–4.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released October 23

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Bush To Attend the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) Leaders' Meeting in Vietnam and Travel to Singapore and Indonesia

Released October 24

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Tony Fratto

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to New York

Released October 26

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Fact sheet: The Secure Fence Act of 2006

Released October 27

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Alaska

Acts Approved by the President

Approved October 26

H.R. 6061 / Public Law 109–367
Secure Fence Act of 2006