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President Bush. Thank you, sir. Glad you're here. Good job.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:41 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Members of Congress

December 6, 2006

I've just met with Members of Congress from both political parties. My message is this: I want to work with the Congress; I want to work with people in both parties, so that we can send a message to the American people that the struggle for freedom, the struggle for our security is not the purview of one party over the other. The American people want us to work together, and my intention is to do just that.

Today the Baker-Hamilton Commission, the Iraq Study Group put out what I thought was a very interesting report. There's some very good ideas in there. Not all of us around the table agree with every idea, but we do agree that it shows that bipartisan consensus on important issues is possible—really important for the American people to know that there are people of good will here in town willing to set aside politics and focus on the security of this country and the peace of the world.

And I want to thank you all for taking time out of your schedules to come. It means a lot to me, and I think it means a lot to the American people, to recognize that there are people in this town who are concerned more about the security of this country than they are about the security of their own political positions. And I'm proud to be with you. And I want to thank you for your thoughts. I take your comments very seriously. I take your ideas very seriously. And it's important to me that we continue to hear from the Congress as we fashion a way—a new way forward in Iraq, a new look, to achieve our objective of a country which can sustain itself, govern itself, defend itself, and be an ally in this war against extremism and terrorism.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:27 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Robert M. Gates To Be the Secretary of Defense

December 6, 2006

I am pleased the Senate has overwhelmingly voted to confirm Dr. Robert Gates as the next Secretary of Defense. In his confirmation hearing, Dr. Gates demonstrated he is an experienced, qualified, and thoughtful man who is well respected by members of both parties and is committed to winning the war on terror. Throughout his career, Dr. Gates has transformed the organizations he has led and empowered them to successfully address complex issues. I am confident that his leadership and capabilities will help our country meet its current military challenges and prepare for emerging threats of the 21st century.

I thank Chairman Warner and Ranking Member Levin for leading dignified and constructive hearings, and I thank the Senate for moving quickly on this nomination.

Executive Order 13417—Establishing an Emergency Board To Investigate Disputes Between Metro-North Railroad and Certain of Its Employees Represented by Certain Labor Organizations

December 6, 2006

Disputes exist between Metro-North Railroad (Metro-North) and certain of its employees represented by certain labor organizations. The labor organizations involved in these disputes are designated on the attached list, which is made a part of this order.

The disputes have not heretofore been adjusted under the provisions of the Railway Labor Act, as amended, 45 U.S.C. 151 *et. seq*. (RLA).

A party empowered by the RLA has requested that the President establish an emergency board pursuant to section 9A of the RLA (45 U.S.C. 159a).