AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

And I expressed my concerns about the situation with the President. He shares my concerns that the situation is dire. And now is the time for action. And I appreciate your thoughts, Mr. President.

We talked about, interestingly enough, the Darfur [Doha] * round. The President is concerned about whether or not the World Trade Organization round will go forward. He recognizes, like I recognize, that trade will lift more people out of poverty than any other mechanism. And I told the President, I am committed to the Darfur [Doha] * round. I believe in trade, and I believe in the necessity of trade. And so we'll work to see if we can't get that issue solved.

We talked about a lot of issues. We talked about Iran; we talked about the Middle East; we talked about our bilateral relations and his Government's commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS and our willingness to provide over $600 million to the folks in South Africa to help deal with this terrible pandemic.

I would call our relations strong and good and necessary. And Mr. President, welcome back, and the floor is yours.

President Mbeki. Thank you very much, President. Well, I was very glad, indeed, that we had this opportunity to meet with the President to discuss precisely these matters that he has indicated. Of course of immediate importance to us is the support we get from the President and the U.S. Government with regard to the resolution of these African conflicts.

And indeed, we are, all of us, keenly interested that we must increase the troops deployed in Darfur, to address these issues that the President mentioned, and hopefully the Security Council will move quickly on that to do that larger deployment of troops. It's very urgent, very necessary, and we will absolutely do everything to make sure that, from the African side, we remove any obstacles that might be to such bigger deployment in Darfur. It's very necessary.

Because also I mentioned, I discussed with the President the impact of the situation in Darfur on the neighboring countries, particularly Chad and the Central African Republic. But also the difficult situation in Somalia——

President Bush. Yes, sir.

President Mbeki. ——and the President, together, we are very keen that, indeed, something must move there. This was a failed state. It's necessary to support transitional government, to restoring a government, and to reunify the country and so on. It's an important thing because the problem—one of the big problems is that as it is, it provides a base for terrorists—find safe haven there and then can spread out to the rest of the continent. It's something that is of shared concern.

But again, of course, I was very, very reassured when the President said he is committed to the success of the WTO negotiations. It's a very important part, in terms of addressing the agenda of the poor of the world. They need these market-access issues addressed, and so on. I was very, very pleased, indeed, that President said indeed we must work to make sure that WTO negotiating process succeeds.

We—finally, President, I'd like to say I was very pleased that, indeed, you said we shall need to work even—together even more intensely than we have in the past, because with effect from the 1st of January, South Africa, of course, joins the Security Council as a nonpermanent member. As I'm saying, I was very glad that the President said that's going to mean we'll need better interaction so that we could work together, indeed, to help to find solutions to all these wide range of issues that are on the agenda of the Security Council.

But thank you very much, Mr. President.

President Bush. Proud you're back. Thank you, sir. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:12 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on the Death of Jeane J. Kirkpatrick

December 8, 2006

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of Jeane Kirkpatrick. As a professor, author, ambassador, and adviser to Presidents, she influenced the thinking of generations of Americans on the importance of

* White House correction.

American leadership in advancing the cause of freedom and democracy around the globe. She defended the cause of freedom at a pivotal time in world history, and her courageous service as our United Nations Ambassador inspired her fellow Americans and lovers of liberty around the world. Jeane's powerful intellect helped America win the cold war. Her insights and teachings will continue to illuminate the path ahead for the United States in the world. We send our condolences to Jeane's family and friends, and on behalf of all Americans, we give thanks for her extraordinary life.

Statement on the National Economy

December 8, 2006

Today we received a new report that confirms the continued strength of the American economy. The November jobs report showed that 132,000 more Americans found work last month and that job creation in previous months was stronger than first estimated, adding 42,000 jobs to the numbers released last month. The unemployment rate remained low at 4.5 percent. This is good news for American workers, and they are also seeing good news in their paychecks. As we look forward, our goal is to maintain the progrowth policies that have strengthened our economy and will stimulate the creation of good jobs and higher wages.

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.

December 2

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

December 3

In the afternoon, in the East Room, the President and Mrs. Bush hosted a reception for Kennedy Center honorees.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush went to the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts where they attended the Kennedy Center Honors ceremony. Later, they returned to the White House.

December 4

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in an interview with Brit Hume of FOX News.

The White House announced that the President will host Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom at the White House on December 7.

The President announced his designation of the following individuals as members of the Presidential delegation to attend the inauguration of Joseph Kabila as President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo on December 6: Elaine L. Chao (head of delegation); Roger Meece; Thelma J. Askey; Jendayi E. Frazier; Edward Brehm; Michael E. Hess; and John Fenn.

The President announced his intention to nominate Gregory B. Cade to be Administrator of the U.S. Fire Administration at the Department of Homeland Security.

The President announced his intention to nominate Sam Fox to be Ambassador to Belgium.

The President announced his intention to nominate Stanley Davis "Dave" Phillips to be Ambassador to Estonia.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jill E. Sommers to be Commissioner of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint Maria Cino as a member of the National Surface Transportation Policy and Revenue Study Commission.

The President announced his intention to designate Robert M. Couch as Acting General Counsel of the Department of Housing and Urban Development.