

Lebanon during the decades of Syrian military occupation. The Syrian regime should also cease its efforts to undermine Lebanese sovereignty by denying the Lebanese people their right to participate in the democratic process free of foreign intimidation and interference.

The people of Syria hope for a prosperous future with greater opportunities for their children and for a government that fights corruption, respects the rule of law, guarantees the rights of all Syrians, and works toward achieving peace in the region.

### Remarks Following a Meeting With President Thomas Yayi Boni of Benin

December 14, 2006

**President Bush.** It's been my honor to have a visit with the President of Benin. We had a very long discussion about a variety of subjects. My administration is committed to helping the democracies on the continent of Africa deal with very significant problems. The President and I are about to go to a summit where the United States of America will commit resources, time, and talent to help rid much of Africa of malaria.

And, Mr. President, I'm proud to announce today that you're one of the countries that we'll be concentrating our help upon. We cannot succeed, however, unless there's an administration that is willing and capable to do the hard work necessary to educate people, spread nets, insecticides necessary to deal with a disease that can be defeated.

We talked about the Millennium Challenge Account. It's one of the most innovative foreign policy initiatives ever proposed by an administration. It's having a positive effect around the world. And I want to thank you for working toward that end.

We talked about the need for us to work together to deal with problems such as Darfur. The President recognized the genocide taking place in Darfur, as does the administration. We want to work through the United Nations to have a very strong and capable AU force, augmented by United Nations help, to save lives.

One thing I'm impressed with is the President's commitment to democracy, rule of

law, decency, and education. And to the extent that we can help—continue to help your country, Mr. President, we will do so.

Welcome, I'm glad you're here.

**President Yayi.** I have come here to, first and foremost, thank Mr. President Bush for all the initiatives that have been taken so far to eradicate poverty on the continents. As you may know, among these initiatives, we have the agua initiative, empowerment of women, the fight against HIV/AIDS, and the initiative of MCA—that is Millennium Challenge Account. It is very important for us in Africa because the MCA will help us eradicate poverty. And I would like to thank President Bush for that last initiative he took.

Africa is aware of her responsibility in the roles she has to play, globally speaking, because we have to reach prosperity, and that prosperity has some conditions. We need peace. We need stability. We need security. And Africa—America has a leading role to play in our combat to restore a peaceful continent.

Of course, we have to be together with America to build—succeed in all these challenges, to take up all these challenges. And multilaterally, it should be also a part of concern of the American people. We are aware of the fact that America can really play a very important role to continue building capacity among the institutions like IMF and the World Bank, and the institution of—[*inaudible*]*—*which is very important for us also.

And the efforts should continue being made by the American Government within the G-8 group, because Africa needs a lot from this G-8, and international exchanges also have to be reenforced. The Doha negotiations need to find a solution now—try to make it easier because cotton is but one of our important products in Africa, and in my country, two people out of three live out of cotton. It's the same reality in countries like Burkina Faso, Mali, Senegal, where cotton is a very important product.

So some subsidies granted to some countries like America here cause a kind of disfunctioning in our country and on the continent also. So America should help us smooth this mechanism. I'm very happy to hear that America is trying to set up a parallel mechanism that would really help promote

the production of cotton. So by the time the WTO will also reach an agreement, I think that this problem of Doha will be definitely solved.

Let me end my speech by saying that I want to thank the American Government, thank President Bush, and the American people for all they are doing to really help us eradicate poverty on African continent.

**President Bush.** Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:02 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Yayi spoke in French, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

### Remarks at the White House Summit on Malaria

December 14, 2006

**The President.** Thank you. Please be seated. Thanks for inviting me to what sounded like a festive occasion. [Laughter] I'm honored to be here. I'm pleased to visit with you all here at the National Geographic Society, and I want to thank you for inviting me to come to this important conference. I appreciate all of today's speakers, including my personal favorite—[laughter]—Laura.

As you conclude this summit, we turn our thoughts to those who carry the burden of sickness during this holiday season. There are members of our own families here in America who are ill, and they live in villages halfway around the world. For many of their illnesses, there is a known relief; for many, there is no known relief. Yet for malaria, we know exactly what it takes to prevent and treat the disease. The only question is whether we have the will to act. All of you have heard the call to act, and you have responded, and I appreciate your compassion.

Because of your work, children who once wanted [sic] to die are now preparing to live, and whole regions are replacing suffering and fear with hope and health. We can take pride in the progress we have made, and today we will renew our commitment to a world without malaria.

I've just had a state visit, an important visit, with a remarkable leader from Benin. Mr. President and Mrs. Yayi, welcome to America, and thank you for being here.

The President is committed to a free society. He understands the need to confront illness so his people can live in peace. And, Mr. President, I thank you very much for your commitment and your willingness to work with those who want to help to eliminate malaria in your country.

I want to thank members of my Cabinet who are here, particularly Madam Secretary of Education, Margaret Spellings. Thanks for coming. I thank Randy Tobias. He's the Director of USAID. He, by the way, led the initiative to help put America squarely in the fight to eliminate HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa. Randy, you will have a wonderful legacy in your service to our country, and I want to thank you.

I appreciate Admiral Tony [Timothy]\* Ziemer. He is the U.S. Malaria Coordinator. I see a lot of people who are working hard in my administration on these initiatives, and I thank you for your participation. I thank members of the diplomatic corps who have joined us. I want to thank Members of Congress—I think that's Senator Leahy, Senator Frist—[laughter]—thank you all for coming. Thank you for taking an interest in it—Congressman Smith. I'd better stop. [Laughter] I think I'm going to leave somebody out. But I want to thank you all for your interest in this initiative.

I appreciate John Fahey—he's the president and CEO of National Geographic Society—and Gil Grosvenor. I want to thank Ray Chambers, who is the chairman of the board of Malaria No More. I thank all the social entrepreneurs who are here. I think people will understand that there is a call to act when we see a crisis at hand, and I want to thank you for acting. I appreciate Isaiah Washington, who is the emcee of this event. I want to thank all the program participants. Thank you all for coming.

By bringing together such a wide variety of people, this summit is sending a clear message that we are determined to defeat malaria. We are also sending a broader message about America's purpose in the world. In this new century, there is a great divide between those who place no value on human life and rejoice in the suffering of others and those

\* White House correction.