

you're concerned about the future of America, you can volunteer to help make our future brighter. You can mentor a child; you can teach somebody to read; you can go visit the elderly; you can feed the hungry; you can find shelter for the homeless; and you'll make a significant contribution to America. And as you do so, you'll find you make a significant contribution to your own self-worth and your own soul.

We're heralding volunteerism here today. It is a really important aspect of American society. I'm proud of our fellow citizens who have answered the call. I encourage you to continue on. And for those of you who want to enrich your own life, you can find a way to volunteer and help somebody else, and it will do just that.

So thank you all for joining us. Appreciate your good work. God bless those of you who are volunteering. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:32 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Following a Tour of the YMCA Anthony Bowen

February 13, 2007

Thanks. The reason I'm here is that we're heralding volunteerism in America. No better place to come where volunteers are doing their work. One of the most important things we can do in our society is to mentor, is to serve as examples and to share knowledge with people so that everybody has a chance to realize the potential of the country. We've got mentors here, people who could be doing something other than being here today, but have chosen to mentor a child.

And so I personally want to thank you very much. And I encourage people to volunteer. One of the great things about our country is that there are millions of people around our Nation who take it upon themselves to help improve the community in which they live by lending their talents and their time to mentor a child or teach somebody to read or feed the hungry or provide shelter for the homeless.

My job as the President is to rally the armies of compassion and to herald those examples where people are selflessly helping out others, such as here at this YMCA, right here in Washington, DC, and to call upon our fellow citizens to recognize that by helping somebody else, you really help yourself in many ways. You strengthen your spirit, and you strengthen your soul.

So thank you all for having me. I'm thrilled to be here with the mentors and the mentorees. Volunteerism is an—has been an integral part of our country, and is today, and it needs to be in the future.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:03 p.m.

Statement on the Death of Charlie Norwood

February 13, 2007

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of Congressman Charlie Norwood. Charlie was a good friend and a strong, spirited legislator who always stuck to his principles, remembering that his duty was to represent the best interests of the citizens of his district. Throughout his seven terms in Congress, he was a strong advocate for patients' rights, high-quality education, and protecting the homeland. As a lawmaker, he had the ability to deliver on his promises. I enjoyed working with him and valued our close friendship.

After becoming ill, Charlie demonstrated his extraordinary strength by continuing to serve our Nation with the same dedication. He was a good man and a true patriot.

Laura and I send our prayers to Charlie's wife, Gloria, and his children and grandchildren.

Statement on the Six-Party Talks

February 13, 2007

I am pleased with the agreements reached today at the six-party talks in Beijing. These talks represent the best opportunity to use diplomacy to address North Korea's nuclear programs. They reflect the common commitment of the participants to a Korean Peninsula that is free of nuclear weapons.

In September 2005, our nations agreed on a joint statement that charted the way forward toward achieving a nuclear-weapons-free peninsula. Today's announcement represents the first step toward implementing that agreement.

Under the agreements reached today, North Korea has committed to take several specific actions within the next 60 days. Among other things, North Korea has agreed to shut down and seal all operations at the primary nuclear facilities it has used to produce weapons-grade plutonium and has agreed to allow international inspectors to verify and monitor this process. In addition to those immediate actions, North Korea has also committed to disclose all its nuclear programs and disable its existing nuclear facilities—as an initial step toward abandoning all of those programs and facilities under international supervision.

The other parties have agreed to cooperate in economic, humanitarian, and energy assistance to North Korea. Such assistance will be provided as the North carries out its commitments to disable its nuclear facilities.

I commend Secretary Rice, Ambassador Hill, and our negotiating team in Beijing for their hard work.

The President's News Conference

February 14, 2007

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for coming in on an icy day. I have just finished a conversation with General David Petraeus. He gave me his first briefing from Iraq. He talked about the Baghdad security plan. It's the plan that I described to the Nation last January, and it's a plan that's beginning to take shape. General Petraeus and General Odierno talked about how the fact that the Iraqi Government is following through on its commitment to deploy three additional army brigades, Iraqi Army brigades in the capital. We talked about where those troops are being deployed, the position of U.S. troops with them, as well as the "embeds" with the Iraqi troops. And we talked about the plan.

He also talked about the new Iraqi commander. The commander who Prime Min-

ister Maliki picked to operate the Baghdad security plan is in place. They're setting up a headquarters, and they're in the process of being in a position to be able to coordinate all forces. In other words, there's still some work to be done there to get the command and control center up and running in Baghdad.

We talked about the fact that our coalition troops that are heading into Baghdad will be arriving on time. In other words, I'm paying attention to the schedule of troop deployments to make sure that they're there, so that General Petraeus will have the troops to do the job—the number of troops to do the job that we've asked him to do.

We talked about the coordination between Iraqi and coalition forces. And I would characterize their assessment as—the coordination is good. In other words, there's good conversation, constant conversation between the commanders of our troops and their troops, and that's a positive development.

The operation to secure Baghdad is going to take time, and there will be violence. As we saw on our TV screens, the terrorists will send car bombs into crowded markets. In other words, these are people that will kill innocent men, women, and children to achieve their objective, which is to discourage the Iraqi people, to foment sectarian violence, and to, frankly, discourage us from helping this Government do its job.

Yesterday there was a suicide bomber. In other words, there's an active strategy to undermine the Maliki Government and its Baghdad security plan. And our generals understand that; they know that they're all aimed at, frankly, causing people here in America to say it's not worth it. And I can understand why people are concerned when they turn on the TV screens and see this violence. It's disturbing to people, and it's disturbing to the Iraqi people. But it reminds me of how important it is for us to help them succeed. If you think the violence is bad now, imagine what it would look like if we don't help them secure the city—the capital city of Baghdad.

I fully recognize we're not going to be able to stop all suicide bombers. I know that. But we can help secure that capital, help the Iraqis secure that capital so that people have