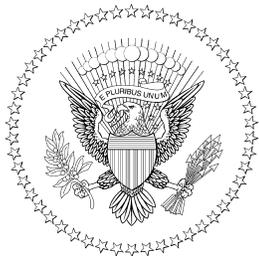


Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, February 19, 2007
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IMPORTANT NOTICE

This is the last publication of the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* series.

The Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, has created a new publication called the *Daily Compilation of Presidential Documents*. The *Daily Compilation* appears on the Government Printing Office's Federal Digital System (FDsys) web site and replaces the printed *Weekly Compilation* series.

Like its predecessor, the *Daily Compilation* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House. As an FDsys web publication, the *Daily Compilation* reaches a much broader audience and is updated frequently, as information is released by the White House press office. The *Daily Compilation* web site is integrated with historical *Weekly Compilation* files to provide continuity and permanent public access. The new *Daily Compilation* web site is available at www.presidentialdocuments.gov.

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Week Ending Friday, February 16, 2007

The President's Radio Address

February 10, 2007

Good morning. Last Saturday, I addressed the annual retreat of Democrats from the House of Representatives. I thanked the Members of the new majority for their service in Congress, and we discussed our responsibility to work together on a wide range of issues—from fighting the global war on terror to making health care more affordable to balancing the Federal budget.

One area with great potential for bipartisan cooperation is energy policy. The need for action is clear. Our Nation's reliance on oil leaves us vulnerable to hostile regimes and terrorists, who could damage our economy by disrupting the global oil supply. A spike in oil prices anywhere in the world could lead to higher prices at gas pumps here in America. And burning oil and gasoline creates air pollution and greenhouse gases.

Republicans and Democrats both recognize these problems. We agree on the solution: We need to diversify our energy supply and make America less dependent on foreign oil. The best way to do that is by developing new energy technologies here at home. So the Federal Government has provided more than \$10 billion over 5 years for research into alternative sources of energy. Our scientists and engineers have made great progress, and our Nation is now on the threshold of dramatic breakthroughs in clean energy technology.

These advances in energy technology will help us meet a great new national goal: to reduce America's gasoline usage by 20 percent in the next 10 years. I call this goal "Twenty in Ten," and appreciate the support that many Democrats and Republicans have shown for it.

I know there are different views about the best way to meet this goal. Some say we should increase the supply of alternative fuels. Others say we should decrease demand

for gasoline. I believe we need to do both. So on the supply side, I proposed a new mandatory fuels standard that will require the use of 35 billion gallons of renewable and other alternative fuels by 2017. That is nearly a fivefold increase over the current target. On the demand side, I proposed to reform fuel economy standards to make cars more energy efficient, just as my administration did for light trucks.

This past week, we took a key step toward my "Twenty in Ten" goal when I sent Congress my budget for the next fiscal year. The budget proposes \$2.7 billion to expand alternative energy research, a 53-percent increase over the 2006 funding level. These funds will support further research into cellulosic ethanol, which can be produced from sources like wood chips and grasses. These funds will also support promising technologies beyond ethanol, such as new forms of biodiesel, lithium ion batteries, and hydrogen fuel cells.

I look forward to working with Congress to pass this budget and to meet my "Twenty in Ten" goal. I'm optimistic because the technology we need to achieve this goal is advancing every day. A few weeks ago, I traveled to a DuPont research facility in Delaware, where scientists told me that they are close to making the use of cellulosic ethanol a reality. Imagine what technologies like this would mean for your daily life. You could fill up your gas tank with fuel that comes mostly from an American prairie or farm instead of an oil well overseas. You could drive to work in a car that runs on electricity instead of gasoline, or on hydrogen fuel cells that emit no pollution. You would see the rise of dynamic new businesses that create jobs for American workers and sell alternative energy products around the world.

This is an ambitious vision, but with the talent and enterprise of our people, it can be achieved. Every Member of Congress who cares about strengthening our economy,

protecting our national security, and confronting climate change should support the energy initiatives I have set out. By working together to pass energy legislation soon, we can help solve one of the great challenges facing our generation, and we can leave behind a cleaner and better world for our children and grandchildren.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on February 9 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 10. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 9 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Message to the Congress Certifying Exports to the People's Republic of China

February 11, 2007

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the provisions of section 1512 of the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999 (Public Law 105–261), I hereby certify that the export to the People's Republic of China of the following items is not detrimental to the U.S. space launch industry, and that the material and equipment, including any indirect technical benefit that could be derived from such exports, will not measurably improve the missile or space launch capabilities of the People's Republic of China:

- Twenty Honeywell model QA 750 accelerometers to be incorporated into railway geometry measurement systems for China's Ministry of Railways.
- Equipment and technology associated with the production and testing of composite components for Boeing commercial aircraft.

George W. Bush

The White House,
February 11, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 12.

Remarks at a Dinner in Honor of the Ford's Theatre Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration

February 11, 2007

Good evening, and welcome. Laura and I are delighted to have you here as we celebrate the 198th birthday of Abraham Lincoln. And we're really glad you're here.

We thank Ford's Theatre for helping us honor this great American President. We thank David Herbert Donald and Doris Kearns Goodwin for scholarship that has given us a deeper appreciation of Lincoln's life and purpose. We welcome all the Lincoln scholars who are here.

We are here tonight to remember the life, the incredible life and the great sacrifice of the man who saved our Union. We remember Abraham Lincoln's eloquence, his wisdom, his unshakeable faith in the enduring truth that we're all created equal. He worked to renew the promise of America's founding and to build a more perfect union for all Americans.

As we approach the bicentennial of President Lincoln's birth, his words and principles continue to guide our Nation. We look to his example for courage and to find the better angels of our nature. His legacy is the birthright of all Americans, and tonight we honor those who helped pass the story of his life from generation to generation.

In this story of this good and decent man, we really find the best of America. And so tonight I would like to offer a toast to our 16th President, Abraham Lincoln, and to our blessed country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:40 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to David Herbert Donald and Doris Kearns Goodwin, members, Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission Advisory Committee. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 12.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Valdas Adamkus of Lithuania

February 12, 2007

President Bush. It's my honor to welcome a personal friend and a friend of freedom and peace to the Oval Office. Mr. President, I respect you; I respect your country. Lithuania has been a country whose history has been one of great tragedy. You yourself have lived through that tragedy. And it's so refreshing for a person like me to talk to somebody and to strategize with somebody who knows the great blessings of living in a free society.

The example of your country is an important example for the world, and that is that freedom is universal, that those of us who have the benefits of living in a free society must prevent a country such as yours from ever again being subjected to the tyranny of a few. You know full well the suffering that your relatives went through.

And therefore, I find it—I'm not surprised that in a struggling democracy like Afghanistan, your country has stood up bravely to support the Karzai Government and the people of Afghanistan. And I thank you. And I thank the citizens of your country for your willingness to contribute to peace by helping a young democracy survive. I thank you very much for your support for the people of Iraq. It's hard work in Iraq. But nevertheless, it is inspiring to know that Lithuania has said, "We want to help the people realize the blessings of a free society."

We talked about a lot of issues. We talked about energy independence. I was very pleased by the strategy that you and others in the Baltics are working to achieve—to achieve energy independence. We share the same objectives here in America, and I look forward to working with you, as new technologies become available, to make us all less dependent on oil and natural gas.

Secondly, the President was quite adamant about visa waiver. I can understand your strong position, Mr. President. I thank you very much for your clarity of thought. There should be no doubt that here in the Oval Office that President Adamkus represented the will of the majority of Lithuanian people

when discussed visa waiver and his desire for the people of his country to be treated like most of the other people in the European Union. I assured him we'll work with Congress to get a fair piece of legislation forward as quickly as possible so we can deal with this issue once and for all.

All in all, I'm so grateful that you and the First Lady came by to say hello here in the Oval Office. And I know Laura was very much looking forward to entertaining your good wife over there at the Residence. I thought the business session here went very well in a very constructive way. And again, I welcome you back to the Oval Office.

President Adamkus. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I believe the visit is just reconfirmation of the Lithuanian people for what we stand for. And I believe there is no doubt that our commitments—international commitments, joining United States, actually based on the principles, principles which were the guiding light for us during the very difficult times of the Soviet occupation, almost for a half of the century.

But at the same time, like I indicated to you, knowing what it means to be free and knowing, I mean, that this freedom still is not available in some part of the world, this is why we are with our, I would say, meager resources, but standing by you in Afghanistan, in Iraq, in Kosovo. And definitely, we are going to stand shoulder with shoulder just to make sure that the remaining people who cannot even enjoy today those kind of privileges—free speech, respect for human rights—would be given to them.

So I want to just thank you once again, I mean, for the support we are receiving. We are going to work together, especially in developing situations like we just mentioned during our conversations here, about the latest statements in Munich. I believe this is not going to sway away the free people from the—I mean, its ideals, the direction we are going together, and I think that in the final outcome will be—this is what we dream about; this is for what the American people stand for, for centuries, and the day is coming.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

President Adamkus. Thank you very much.

President Bush. Appreciate you being here. Thank you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:02 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan.

Remarks at a Celebration of African American History Month February 12, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. Welcome to the White House. I'm so pleased that you all have joined us for the 81st celebration of African American History Month. During this special month, we reflect on the many ways African Americans have shaped our Nation's history and we honor outstanding achievements by our fellow citizens.

One of those achievements took place two Sundays ago in Miami, Florida—took place at a football game. [*Laughter*] It might just have been a game for some, but for a lot of folks, it was a moment, an historic moment. And we congratulate Tony Dungy and Lovie Smith for their strong leadership and their example they have set. That's an achievement.

I'm also proud to be here with another football coach who deserves a lot of credit, Sylvester Croom, who is the head football coach from Mississippi State University. His achievement is the first African American coach in the Southeastern football league—Southeastern Conference. He was picked because he's a strong leader and a fine man. And I thank you for blazing trails.

I'm proud to be here with Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of State. So last night on this very stage, we celebrated Abraham Lincoln, and we welcomed Doris Kearns Goodwin, who wrote a book called "The Team of Rivals." Abraham Lincoln surrounded himself with fine Cabinet officers, all of whom wanted one thing—his job. [*Laughter*] Not so fast, Madam Secretary. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate so very much Members of the Congress for joining us—first, the chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee, Charlie Rangel. That's an achievement. [*Laughter*] I'm looking forward to working

with this achievement to get some things—[*laughter*—to get some things done. He's a good man and a smart guy. Senator Norm Coleman from Minnesota—Senator, thank you for coming.

From the U.S. Court of Appeals, DC Circuit, one of the most important benches in America, Justice Janice Rogers Brown. Good to see you, Janice; thank you. And Dewey—good move, Dewey. Dewey tried to lead the standing ovation. That was—[*laughter*]—a loyal husband.

I appreciate Doctor Dorothy Height. Thank you for coming, Dr. Height. Roslyn Brock, who is the vice chairman of the board of directors of the NAACP. Roslyn, it's great to see you. Thanks for coming. Proud you're here. Thanks for taking time.

I am so pleased that the Jackson High School Black History Tour Group from Jackson, Michigan, is with us, and Director Shirley Pitts. Thanks for coming. I'm looking forward to hearing you. Proud you're here.

The theme of this year's African American History Month is "From Slavery to Freedom: Africans in the Americas." For hundreds of years, the people of Africa were brought and—were bought and sold by colonial merchants and transported as cargo to this hemisphere. The journey endured by millions of Africans is one of the largest migrations of history and one of the great crimes of history. For the men, women, and children who survived this journey, life in the New World was a life in chains. They toiled for the bread that others would eat. They were often denied even the comfort of suffering together. And their families were broken up when a spouse or child was sold.

Yet despite these assaults on culture and humanity, the children of Africa persevered. They kept faith that the freedom that God intended for all would one day be theirs. And across this hemisphere, in different places and at different times, that faith would be redeemed.

In America, their first real hope of freedom came on New Year's Day in 1863, when President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation in a room right upstairs. The heroes of the civil rights movement continued the struggle for freedom, and by their courage, they changed laws and

opened up the promise for millions of our citizens.

Today, African Americans are seizing opportunities gained at great price, and they're making their mark in this wonderful country in countless ways. We see their character and achievement in the neighborhoods across our Nation, and we see it right here in this room, right here in the White House.

One of those faces is familiar to us, Wesley Autrey. You know, you might remember Wesley from the State of the Union Address. I remember Wesley was, like, I think, sending a hand signal to you, Mr. Chairman. So was I, by the way. *[Laughter]* I love you, man. *[Laughter]* Yes, not yet, Wesley. I've got to tell the story one more time. *[Laughter]*

So in case you haven't heard the story, he was waiting at a Harlem subway station. He saw the guy fall into the path of a train. He had seconds to act. He jumped onto the track, and he pulled the man into a space between the rails, and he held him as a train went right over them. And so they said, "You're a hero." He said, "No." Yet Wesley—I told him—I said, "You're a hero." He told me, "No." I said, "Wesley, I disagree, as do millions of our fellow citizens." *[Laughter]*

And so we're proud you're here again. We thank you for your courage. We thank you for your commitment to a life of a stranger. What a wonderful example you've set for young and old, black, white, anybody in the United States of America. Welcome back here. Hey, buddy. Yes, sir. Thank you, man.

I want to tell you the story about Bonnie St. John. She grew up in California, which is—most places in California are not very close to the snow. *[Laughter]* But she wanted to be a skier. The problem was, at age 5, she lost one of her legs, but she never lost her dream. She said she fell down a lot while learning to ski, but she also learned that the key to success was how fast she got up after the fall.

And so she went to Harvard, and she became a Rhodes scholar. And then she won medals in downhill skiing in the Paralympics. She owns her own small business. She's writing an inspirational book to encourage others. She is the kind of person that you really want to be around and the kind of person that

shows that individual courage matters in life. And so, Bonnie, thanks for coming. God bless.

So at one time in my life, I was a baseball person. *[Laughter]* Nearly all my life I was a baseball fan. And so I remember a pitcher named Jim "Mudcat" Grant. Some of you baby boomers might remember Mudcat. He pitched for the Minnesota Twins. They went to the 1965 World Series, and he won 25 games. He founded what's called the Black Aces. This is an organization made up of African American pitchers who have won at least 20 games in a single season.

I view the organization as a way not only to herald success but to inspire others. See, it wasn't all that often—let me just say this: At certain points in our past, we didn't have a lot of African American pitchers. And I want to thank you, Mudcat, for showing courage, character, and perseverance. And also, thank you for setting an example.

With you today happens to be a—I like to call him a former Texas Ranger; Chicago Cubs fans remember him as a Chicago Cub. Any baseball fan knows he's a Hall of Famer—and that's Fergie Jenkins, a member of the Black Aces, as well as Mike Norris, former pitcher for the—*[applause]*.

Sir—Mudcat, don't sit down yet—sit up yet. Mudcat Grant, everybody.

There happens to be other Black Aces in baseball, one of whom joined us—Dontrelle Willis of the Florida team. Dontrelle can—he can throw. *[Laughter]* So I thought I was looking at a little, tiny left-hander when I first heard Dontrelle Willis was going to be here. No. You might stand up and show everybody that you're not a little, tiny left-hander. Dontrelle, welcome.

Thank you, Mudcat, for bringing your friends. And thank you for bringing class to the baseball diamond.

We've got two folks here who know how to reach for the stars, and that would be Robert Curbeam and Joan Higginbotham. And I really mean that literally. See, these are astronauts who went into space with the crew of the space shuttle in early December. Their job was not much of a job, just to rewire the International Space Station. *[Laughter]* It sounds complex—*[laughter]*—and it is. It

was one of the most challenging missions in NASA's history.

They did their job and, thankfully, came home. And in doing so, I suspect they've earned more frequent flier miles than anybody here. [*Laughter*] I really appreciate the fact that they are furthering humanity's path of discovery, and I appreciate the fact that you say loud and clear, our country is unlimited in its opportunities for people from all walks of life. We're really proud you're here. Thanks for coming.

Tyrone Flowers is with us. His is an interesting story, one that speaks to a good heart, I suspect, a gracious and glorious God as well. You see, he was a basketball star, and he was headed for college and perhaps a scholarship. He was living the dream of a lot of folks. And he got shot, and he's paralyzed.

The interesting thing about this good man is, a lot of people would have either quit or sought revenge. But not him. He took a different path and found a different calling. He went to a community college. He earned a bachelor's degree. And then he became a lawyer—nothing wrong with that. [*Laughter*] Fourteen years ago, he and his wife founded a group called Higher M-Pact. Higher M-Pact has this goal: to help today's high-risk urban youth become tomorrow's leaders. That is a noble goal. It is a necessary goal, and it's a goal that I suspect is more likely to be achieved because this good man has decided to turn a horrific act into an act of love. And we welcome you and thank you.

So as you can see, this is a little different kind of speech. It's one where all I had to do was just simply talk about the accomplishments and lives of some of our citizens, and their stories speak a lot louder and a lot clearer than I could have. This is a—I always tell people, the strength of this country lies in the hearts and souls of our citizens. The strength of the African American community has always lied in the hearts and souls of our citizens, people who refuse to allow adversity to diminish the spirit and extinguish the drive to make America live up to its promise.

And that's what we're honoring today—ordinary citizens who do unbelievably fine things. I can't think of any better way to celebrate African American History Month. And

our call and our need is to continue to remember, promise belongs to everybody. And our call for this country is never to rest until equality is real, opportunity is universal, and every citizen can realize his or her dreams in the greatest country on the face of the Earth.

And now it's my honor to introduce the Jackson High School Black History Tour Group. Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:30 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Tony Dungy, head coach, National Football League Indianapolis Colts; Lovie Smith, head coach, National Football League Chicago Bears; Doris Kearns Goodwin, member, Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Advisory Committee; Dewey Parker, husband of Judge Janice Rogers Brown; civil rights leader Dorothy I. Height; Mike Norris, former pitcher, Major League Baseball Oakland Athletics; and Renee Flowers, wife of Tyrone J. Flowers, founder, Higher M-Pact.

Remarks Following a Meeting on Voluntarism

February 13, 2007

I just had a fascinating discussion with members of my administration and some of our citizens who deeply care about the future of the country. Laura and I want to thank you all for joining us. We had two people who actually study the importance of voluntarism to the—for the health of the country.

A couple points I'd like to make. One, we are a nation of people who take time out of their lives on a regular basis to help a fellow citizen realize the full potential of America. We've got a lot of people volunteering in the country, and one of my calls is for people to do more of it. And there's plenty of opportunities to find out where you can volunteer. You can go, for example, on the usafreedomcorps.gov web page and you can find programs close to you that will give you an opportunity to follow your heart.

Secondly, I fully recognize there's an important role for government in our society, but I also want our fellow citizens to know, there's a really important role for you. If

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

a sense of normalcy—in other words, that they're able to get a better sense that this Government of theirs will provide security. People want to live in peace; they want to grow up in a peaceful environment. And the decision I made is going to help the Iraqi Government do that.

When General Petraeus' nomination was considered 3 weeks ago, the United States Senate voted unanimously to confirm him, and I appreciated that vote by the Senators. And now Members of the House of Representatives are debating a resolution that would express disapproval of the plan that General Petraeus is carrying out. You know, in recent months, I've discussed our strategy in Iraq with Members of Congress from both political parties. Many have told me that they're dissatisfied with the situation in Iraq. I told them I was dissatisfied with the situation in Iraq. And that's why I ordered a comprehensive review of our strategy.

I've listened to a lot of voices; people in my administration heard a lot of voices. We weighed every option, and I concluded that to step back from the fight in Baghdad would have disastrous consequences for people in America. That's the conclusion I came to; it's the conclusion members of my staff came to; it's the conclusion that a lot in the military came to.

And the reason why I say "disastrous consequences," the Iraqi Government could collapse; chaos would spread; there would be a vacuum, into the vacuum would flow more extremists, more radicals, people who have stated intent to hurt our people. I believe that success in Baghdad will have success in helping us secure the homeland.

What's different about this conflict than some others is that if we fail there, the enemy will follow us here. I firmly believe that. And that's one of the main reasons why I made the decision I made. And so we will help this Iraqi Government succeed.

And the first step for success is to do something about the sectarian violence in Baghdad so they can have breathing space in order to do the political work necessary to assure the different factions in Baghdad—factions that are recovering from years of tyranny—that there is a hopeful future for them and their families. I would call that political

breathing space. And by providing this political breathing space—in other words, giving the Maliki Government a chance to reconcile and do the work necessary to achieve reconciliation—it'll hasten the day in which we can change our force posture in Iraq.

A successful strategy obviously—a successful security strategy in Baghdad requires more than just military action. I mean, people have to see tangible results in their lives. I mean, they have to see something better. They not only have to feel secure where they live, but they've got to see positive things taking place.

The other day, the Iraqi Government passed a \$41 billion budget, 10 billion of which is for reconstruction and capital investment. There's a lot of talk in Washington about benchmarks. I agree—"benchmarks" meaning that the Iraqi Government said they're going to do this—for example, have an oil law as a benchmark. But one of the benchmarks they laid out, besides committing troops to the Iraqi security plan, was that they'll pass a budget in which there's \$10 billion of their own money available for reconstruction and help. And they met the benchmark, and now, obviously, it's important they spend the money wisely.

They're in the process of finalizing a law that will allow for the sharing of all revenues among Iraq's peoples. In my talks with Members of Congress, some have agreed with what I'm doing; many who didn't—they all, though, believe it's important for the Iraqi Government to set benchmarks and achieve those benchmarks. And one benchmark we've all discussed was, making it clear to the Iraqi people that they have a stake in the future of their country by having a stake in the oil revenues. And so the Government is in the process of getting an oil revenue law that will help unify the country.

The Iraqi Government is making progress on reforms that will allow more of its citizens to reenter political life. Obviously, I'm paying close attention to whether or not the Government is meeting these benchmarks, and will continue to remind Prime Minister Maliki that he must do so.

We've given our civilians and commanders greater flexibility to fund our economic assistance money. Part of the strategy in Baghdad is to clear and then to hold and then to build. We've been pretty good about clearing in the past; we haven't been good about holding—"we" being the Iraqis and coalition forces. So we spent time today talking to General Petraeus about the need—his need and his understanding of the need to hold neighborhoods so that the people themselves in the capital city feel more secure.

But also part of the strategy is to make sure that we build. And so we're giving our commanders flexibility with reconstruction money that they have at their disposal. We're also sending more PRTs, Provincial Reconstruction Teams, into Iraq. We're trying to speed up their arrival into Iraq so that the Iraqi people see tangible benefits from the Government that they elected under one of the most progressive Constitutions in the Middle East.

Later this week, the House of Representatives will vote on a resolution that opposes our new plan in Iraq—before it has a chance to work. People are prejudging the outcome of this. They have every right to express their opinion, and it is a nonbinding resolution. Soon Congress is going to be able to vote on a piece of legislation that is binding, a bill providing emergency funding for our troops. Our troops are counting on their elected leaders in Washington, DC, to provide them with the support they need to do their mission. We have a responsibility, all of us here in Washington, to make sure that our men and women in uniform have the resources and the flexibility they need to prevail.

Before I'm going to take some questions, I'd like to comment about one other diplomatic development, and that took place in the Far East. At the six-party talks in Beijing, North Korea agreed to specific actions that will bring us closer to a Korea Peninsula that is free of nuclear weapons. Specifically, North Korea agreed that within 60 days, it will shut down and seal all operations at the primary nuclear facilities it has used to produce weapons-grade plutonium. It has agreed to allow international inspectors to verify and monitor this progress. It is com-

mitted to disclosing all of its nuclear programs as an initial step toward abandoning these programs.

In exchange, five other parties at the table—that would be China, Russia, Japan, South Korea, and the United States—have got commitments. We will meet those commitments as this agreement is honored. Those commitments include economic, humanitarian, and energy assistance to the people of North Korea.

This is a unique deal. First of all, unlike any other agreement, it brings together all of North Korea's neighbors in the region as well as the United States. The agreement is backed by a United Nations Security Council resolution. That resolution came about—the sanctions came about as a result of the resolution because of a unanimous vote on the Security Council.

This is good progress. It is a good first step. There's a lot of work to be done to make sure that the commitments made in this agreement become a reality, but I believe it's an important step in the right direction.

And with that, I'll be glad to take your questions, starting with you, Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Russia-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, on Russia—is the Vladimir Putin who said, “The United States is undermining global security and provoking a new arms race,” the same Vladimir Putin whose soul you looked into and found to be trustworthy? Has he changed? Are U.S.-Russian relations deteriorating?

The President. I think the person who I was referring to in 2001 is the same strong-willed person. He is a person with whom I have had agreements and disagreements throughout the course of my Presidency and his. We've disagreed on the utility of NATO. I've tried to convince Vladimir that NATO is positive; it's a positive influence; that democracies on your border are good things to have. Democracies tend not to fight each other. And I firmly believe NATO is a stabilizing influence for the good, and that helps Russia. Evidently he disagrees with that assessment; part of his speech was expressing concerns about NATO.

There's a lot we can work together on, and that's what's important for American people to understand. We know that we've got common goals that make sense for both our peoples. Two such goals are Iran, convincing the Iranians to get rid of its nuclear weapons. And Russia's leadership on this issue is very important to getting a Chapter VII resolution out of the United Nations. And by the way, they were constructive, in terms of the resolution I just described about North Korea. In other words, where we have common interests and we work together on those common interests, we can accomplish important things for the security of our own people as well as the security of the world.

And secondly, Russia and the United States work very closely on proliferation concerns. We're both concerned about the proliferation of technologies that could end up hurting our people and other people in the world.

And so there's—it's a complicated relationship. It's a relationship in which there are disagreements, but there's also a relationship in which we can find common ground to solve problems. And that's the spirit I'll continue to work with Vladimir Putin on.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Iran/War in Iraq

Q. Thank you, sir. General Pace says that these bombs found in Iraq do not by themselves implicate Iran. What makes you so certain that the highest levels of Tehran's Government is responsible?

The President. Yes——

Q. And how can you retaliate against Iran without risking a war?

The President. What we do know is that the Qods Force was instrumental in providing these deadly IEDs to networks inside of Iraq. We know that. And we also know that the Qods Force is a part of the Iranian Government. That's a known. What we don't know is whether or not the head leaders of Iran ordered the Qods Force to do what they did.

But here's my point: Either they knew or didn't know, and what matters is, is that they're there. What's worse, that the Government knew or that the Government didn't know? But the point I made in my initial

speech in the White House about Iraq was, is that we know they're there, and we're going to protect our troops. When we find the networks that are enabling these weapons to end up in Iraq, we will deal with them. If we find agents who are moving these devices into Iraq, we will deal with them. I have put out the command to our troops—I mean, to the people who are commanders that we'll protect the people—the soldiers of the United States and innocent people in Iraq and will continue doing so.

Now, let me step back on Iran itself. We have a comprehensive strategy to deal with Iraq [Iran].^{*} There's a variety of issues that we have with Iraq [Iran].^{*} One, of course, is influence inside of Iraq. Another is whether or not they end up with a nuclear weapon. And I believe an Iran with a nuclear weapon would be very dangerous for world peace, and have worked with other nations of like mind. And it turns out, there's a lot of countries in the world that agree with that assessment. After all, we did get a Chapter VII resolution out of the United Nations that included EU-3 as well as Russia and China. That's a positive development.

The message to the Iranian people is, is that your leaders are making decisions that are isolating you in the world, thereby denying you a brighter future. And I believe Iran is a unbelievably vital nation. It's got a great history; it's got wonderful traditions; it's got very capable, smart people. There is—I believe there's also a desire to not be isolated from the world. And our policies are all aimed at convincing the Iranian people there's a better way forward, and I hope their Government hears that message.

Yes, anyway, that's a long answer to a short question, and now you're trying to get to me to another one, aren't you? Gregory [David Gregory, NBC News].

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Excuse me, David. David.

Q. Thank you, sir. I'd like to follow on Iran. Critics say that you are using the same quality of intelligence about Iran that you used to make the case for war in Iraq, specifically about WMD that turned out to be

^{*} White House correction.

wrong, and that you are doing that to make a case for war against Iran. Is that the case?

The President. I can say with certainty that the Qods Force, a part of the Iranian Government, has provided these sophisticated IEDs that have harmed our troops. And I'd like to repeat: I do not know whether or not the Qods Force was ordered from the top echelons of Government. But my point is, what's worse, them ordering it and it happening or them not ordering it and it's happening? And so we will continue to protect our troops.

David, our strategy is comprehensive in order to resolve problems that will affect our own peace and the peace in the world. And the biggest problem I see is the Iranians' desire to have a nuclear weapon. And as you know, we've been dealing with this issue ever since you've been covering me and pretty much ever since I've been the President. And we've made it very clear to the Iranians that if they would like to have a dialog with the United States, there needs to be a verifiable suspension of their program. I would hope that they would do that. I would like to be at the—have been given a chance for us to explain that we have no desire to harm the Iranian people.

But my focus is on making sure that this weapon is dealt with—the program is dealt with in a constructive, peaceful way. And we'll continue to work toward achieving our common objectives with other nations in the world in a peaceful way.

Sheryl [Sheryl Stolberg, New York Times].

Q. —using faulty intelligence to provoke Iran?

The President. Well, no, I heard your question, and I told you, I was confident that the Qods Force, a part of the Iranian Government, was providing weaponry into Iraq. And to say it is provoking Iran is just a wrong way to characterize the Commander in Chief's decision to do what is necessary to protect our soldiers in harm's way. And I will continue to do so.

Bret [Bret Baier, FOX News].

Six-Party Talks

Q. Mr. President, on the North Korea deal, the former U.N. Ambassador, John Bolton, yesterday said, quote, "It's a bad, dis-

appointing deal, and the best thing you can say about it is that it will probably fall apart." This is from a man you repeatedly praised for his judgment and leadership at the United Nations. His main criticism is that the financial pressure led North Korea back to the table, and now it's being released. How do you respond to that?

The President. I strongly disagree—strongly disagree with his assessment. I have told the American people, like the Iranian issue, I wanted to solve the North Korean issue peacefully, and that the President has an obligation to try all diplomatic means necessary to do so. I changed the dynamic on the North Korean issue by convincing other people to be at the table with us, on the theory that the best diplomacy is diplomacy in which there is more than one voice—that has got an equity in the issue—speaking.

And so we had a breakthrough as a result of other voices than the United States saying to the North Koreans, "We don't support your nuclear weapons program, and we urge you to get rid of it in a verifiable way." Perhaps the most significant voice that had been added to the table was China. But the South Korean voice was vital, as was the Japanese and Russian voices as well. So the assessment made by some that this is not a good deal is just flat wrong.

Now, those who say the North Koreans have got to prove themselves by actually following through in the deal are right—and I'm one. This is a good first step. It will be a great deal for the North Korean people if their Government follows through with the agreement, which, by the way, started in September of 2005. The agreement that we announced the other day was a continuation of the initial agreement in September of 2005. And for those who say that, "Well, this is an interesting moment, and now it's up to the North Koreans to do that which they say they will do," I couldn't agree more with you.

And the first phase is to shut down and seal their facility, their main weapons manufacturing facility, and then disclose their programs. And for that, they'll receive some help from the South Koreans—the equivalent of 50,000 tons of fuel.

And the second phase is to disable and abandon their facilities. In other words, this is a phased approach that will enable all of us to say to our respective populations, we're watching carefully and that there's a opportunity for the North Koreans to prove that this program can work.

If they do the second phase, there is a—there will be about the equivalent of a million tons—minus the 50,000 tons—available of food, economic assistance, and fuel. I am particularly interested in helping get food to the North Korean people. Now, that's not going to happen until there's some verifiable measures that have been taken.

The financial measures that you're speaking about are really a separate item, because it has everything to do with—it's a banking issue that our Treasury Department is analyzing to determine whether or not funds were illicitly moved through the bank.

Let's see, yes, sir.

Iran/War in Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I want to follow up on Iran one more time. You saying today that you do not know if senior members of the Iranian Government are, in fact, behind these explosives—that contradicts what U.S. officials said in Baghdad on Sunday. They said the highest levels of the Iranian Government were behind this. It also—it seems to square with what General Pace has been saying, but contradicts with what your own Press Secretary said yesterday.

The President. Can I—let me explain it to you, Ed [Ed Henry, Cable News Network]—I can't say it more plainly: There are weapons in Iraq that are harming U.S. troops because of the Qods Force. And as you know, I hope, that the Qods Force is a part of the Iranian Government. Whether Ahmadinejad ordered the Qods Force to do this, I don't think we know. But we do know that they're there, and I intend to do something about it. And I've asked our commanders to do something about it. And we're going to protect our troops.

Q. But given some of those contradictions, Mr. President—

The President. There's no contradiction that the weapons are there and they were provided by the Qods Force, Ed.

Q. What assurances can you give the American people that the intelligence this time will be accurate?

The President. Ed, we know they're there; we know they're provided by the Qods Force; we know the Qods Force is a part of the Iranian Government. I don't think we know who picked up the phone and said to the Qods Force, "Go do this," but we know it's a vital part of the Iranian Government.

What matters is, is that we're responding. The idea that somehow we're manufacturing the idea that the Iranians are providing IEDs is preposterous, Ed. My job is to protect our troops. And when we find devices that are in that country that are hurting our troops, we're going to do something about it, pure and simple.

Now David says, "Does this mean you're trying to have a pretext for war?" No, it means I'm trying to protect our troops. That's what that means. And that's what the family members of our soldiers expect the Commander in Chief and those responsible for our troops on the ground. And we'll continue do so.

Yes, ma'am. You're not a "ma'am." Martha [Martha Raddatz, ABC News].

Situation in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, do you agree with the National Intelligence Estimate that we are now in a civil war in Iraq? And also, you talk about victory, that you have to have victory in Iraq; it would be catastrophic if we didn't. You said again today that the enemy would come here, and yet you say it's not an open-ended commitment. How do you square those things?

The President. You know, victory in Iraq is not going to be like victory in World War II. And it's one of the challenges I have, to explain to the American people what Iraq will look like in a situation that will enable us to say, we have accomplished our mission.

First, the—Iraq will be a society in which there is relative peace. I say "relative peace" because if it's, like, zero car bombings, it never will happen that way. It's like—I mean, the fundamental question is, can we help this Government have the security force level necessary to make sure that the ethnic

cleansing that was taking place in certain neighborhoods has stopped?"

Look, there's criminality in Iraq as well as the ethnic violence. And we've got to help the Iraqis have a police force that deals with criminals. There is an Al Qaida presence in Iraq, as you know. I believe some of the spectacular bombings have been caused by Al Qaida. As a matter of fact, Zarqawi—the terrorist Zarqawi, who is not an Iraqi, made it very clear that he intended to use violence to spur sectarian—car bombings and spectacular violence—to spur sectarian violence. And he did a good job of it.

And so there—and then there's this disaffected Sunnis, people who believe that they should still be in power in spite of the fact that the Shi'a are the majority of the country. And they're willing to use violence to try to create enough chaos so they get back in power.

The reason I described that is that no matter what you call it, it's a complex situation, and it needed to be dealt with inside of Iraq. We've got people who say "civil war"; we've got people on the ground who don't believe it's a civil war. But nevertheless, it is—it was dangerous enough that I had to make a decision to try to stop it, so that a government that is bound by a constitution, where the country feels relatively secure as a result of a security force that is evenhanded in its application of security; a place where the vast resources of the country—this is a relatively wealthy country, in that they've got a lot of hydrocarbons—is shared equally amongst people; that there is a federalism that evolves under the Constitution, where the local Provinces have got authority as well; and where people who may have made a political decision in the past and yet weren't criminals can participate in the life of the country; and is an ally in the war on terror—in other words, that there is a bulwark for moderation as opposed to a safe haven for extremism. And that's what I would view as successful.

Q. Do you believe it's a civil war, sir?

The President. I can only tell you what people on the ground, whose judgment—it's hard for me, living in this beautiful White House, to give you an assessment—firsthand assessment. I haven't been there. You have; I haven't. But I do talk to people who are

and people whose judgment I trust, and they would not qualify it as that. There are others who think it is. It is, however, a dangerous situation, thereby requiring action on my part.

Listen, I considered several options—one, doing nothing—and that if you don't believe the situation was acceptable, then you should do something. And I didn't believe the situation was acceptable.

Secondly, I could have listened to the advice of some and pulled back and hoped for the best. I felt that would be extraordinarily dangerous for this young democracy, that the violence in Baghdad could escalate mightily and then spill out across the country, creating chaos, vacuums into which extremism would flow—or make the decision I made, which is to reinforce the troops that were on the ground, to help this Iraqi Government and security force do what they're supposed to do.

Sir. You dropped?

Q. Bad hands. [Laughter]

The President. Yes.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Modern guy, you know—you got the Blackberry and everything there.

Military Families/U.S. Armed Forces

Q. I'd like to ask you about troop morale.

The President. Yes.

Q. As you know, a growing number of troops are on their second, third, or fourth tour in Iraq. There have been a growing number of reports about declining morale among fighting men. I spoke personally to an infantry commander—tough guy, patriot—who says more and more of the troops are asking, questioning what they're doing here. Does this come as a surprise to you? Are you aware of this? Is it a minority opinion; is it a growing opinion; and does it concern you?

The President. I am—what I hear from commanders is that the place where there is concern is with the family members, that our troops, who have volunteered to serve the country, are willing to go into combat multiple times, but that the concern is with the people on the homefront. And I can understand that. And I—and that's one reason I go out of my way to constantly thank the

family members. You know, I'm asking—you're obviously talking to certain people—or a person. I'm talking to our commanders. Their job is to tell me what—the situation on the ground. And I have—I know there's concern about the homefront. I haven't heard deep concern about the morale of the troops in Iraq.

Q. Would a commander tell you that? Would he—[*inaudible*]—because you're the President of the United States?

The President. Yes, they'd tell me that. Sure, absolutely. Just like they told me that they thought they needed extra troops to do the job. Sure.

Listen, I want our troops out of there as quickly as possible. But I also want to make sure that we get the job done, and I made the decision I made in order to do so.

Jim [Jim Gerstenzang, Los Angeles Times].

Iran/Diplomacy

Q. You spoke positively about the role of diplomacy in North Korea, and you obviously gave it a long time to work. Where does diplomacy fit in, in terms of Iran, and do we have any leverage if we try diplomacy there?

The President. Well, I guess you could call getting the EU-3, China, and Russia on the same page on a Chapter VII resolution successful diplomacy. I thought that was diplomacy. And it took a long time to get there. I mean, we're working hard to send a concerted message to the Iranians, a focused, unified message that the world believes you should not have a nuclear program. And so this is a multilateral approach to try to get the Government to alter its course on a nuclear weapons program.

I can't think of any more robust diplomacy than to have more than one party at the table talking to the Iranians. And we did so through the United Nations at this case. If they want us at the table, we're more than willing to come, but there must be a verifiable suspension of this weapons program that is causing such grave concern.

We'll continue to work with other nations. Matter of fact, I believe that it is easier for the United States to achieve certain diplomatic objectives when we work with other nations, which is precisely why we adopted

the strategy we did in dealing with the Iranians.

Sheryl.

U.S. Congress/Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Mr. President, it seems pretty clear where this Iraq vote in the House is headed. Your Press Secretary has said repeatedly that Members of Congress ought to watch what they say and be concerned about the message that they're sending to our enemy. I'm wondering, do you believe that a vote of disapproval of your policy emboldens the enemy? Does it undermine your ability to carry out your policies there? And also, what are you doing to persuade the Democratic leadership in Congress not to restrict your ability to spend money in Iraq?

The President. Yes, thanks. A couple of points: One, that I understand the Congress is going to express their opinion, and it's very clear where the Democrats are, and some Republicans; I know that. They didn't like the decision I made. And by the way, that doesn't mean that I think that they're not good, honorable citizens of the country—just have a different opinion. I considered some of their opinions and felt like it would not lead to a country that could govern itself, sustain itself, and be an ally in the war on terror—one.

Secondly, my hope, however, is that this nonbinding resolution doesn't try to turn into a binding policy that prevents our troops from doing that which I have asked them to do. That's why I keep reminding people, on the one hand, you vote for David Petraeus in a unanimous way, and then the other hand, you say that you're not going to fund the strategy that he thought was necessary to do his job, a strategy he testified to in front of the Senate. I'm going to make it very clear to the Members of Congress, starting now, that they need to fund our troops, and they need to make sure we have the flexibility necessary to get the job done.

Secondly, I find it interesting that there is a declaration about a plan that they have not given a chance to work. Again, I understand; I understand. The other part of your question?

Q. It emboldens the enemy—

The President. Oh, yes. The only thing I can tell you is that when I speak, I'm very conscious about the audiences that are listening to my words. The first audience, obviously, is the American people. My second audience would be the troops and their families. That's why I appreciate the question about whether or not—about the troop morale; it gave me a chance to talk to the families and how proud we are of them.

Third, no question, people are watching what happens here in America. The enemy listens to what's happening; the Iraqi people listen to the words, the Iranians. People are wondering; they're wondering about our commitment to this cause. And one reason they wonder is that in a violent society, the people sometimes don't take risks for peace if they're worried about having to choose between different sides, different violent factions. As to whether or not this particular resolution is going to impact enemy thought, I can't tell you that. But I can tell you that people are watching the debate.

I do believe that the decision I made surprised people in the Middle East. And I think it's going to be very important, however, that the Iraqi Government understand that this decision was not an open-ended commitment, that we expect Prime Minister Maliki to continue to make the hard decisions he's making.

Unlike some here, I'm a little more tolerant of a person who has been only in government for 7 months and hasn't had a lot of—and by the way, a Government that hasn't had a lot of experience with democracy. And on the other hand, it's important for him to know, and I believe he does know, that the American people want to see some action and some positive results. And listen, I share that same desire.

The faster that the Maliki Government steps up security in Baghdad, the more quickly we can get to what Baker-Hamilton recommended, and that is embedding and training over the rise in presence, protection of the territorial integrity of Iraq, and a strong hunt for Al Qaida and terrorists who would try to use that country as safe haven. I thought the Baker-Hamilton made a lot of sense, their recommendations. We just weren't able to get there if the capital was

up in flames. And that's why I made the decision I made.

Yes, Peter [Peter Baker, Washington Post].

CIA Employee Identity Leak Investigation

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Sir, we've now learned through sworn testimony that at least three members of your administration, other than Scooter Libby, leaked Valerie Plame's identity to the media. None of these three is known to be under investigation. Without commenting on the Libby trial, then, can you tell us whether you authorized any of these three to do that—

The President. Not going to talk about it.

Q. —or were they authorized without your permission?

The President. Yes, thanks, Pete. I'm not going to talk about any of it. Thank you.

Q. They're not under investigation, though, sir?

The President. Peter, I'm not going to talk about any of it.

Q. How about pardons, sir? Many people are asking whether you might pardon somebody—

The President. Not going to talk about it, Peter. [Laughter] Would you like to think of another question? Being the kind man that I am, I will recycle you. [Laughter]

John [John McKinnon, Wall Street Journal].

Economic Sanctions/Iran

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Do you like that one—"recycling" him? [Laughter]

Q. That took care of one of my questions as well, sir, but—

The President. If that's the case, sit down. Next question. [Laughter]

Q. A lot of our allies in Europe do a lot of business with Iran, so I wonder what your thoughts are about how you further tighten the financial pressure on Iran, in particular, if it also means economic pain for a lot of our allies?

The President. Yes. It's an interesting question. One of the problems—not specifically on this issue, just in general—that—let's

put it this way: Money trumps peace, sometimes. In other words, commercial interests are very powerful interests throughout the world. And part of the issue in convincing people to put sanctions on a specific country is to convince them that it's in the world's interest that they forgo their own financial interest.

And, John, that's why sometimes it's tough to get tough economic sanctions on countries. And I'm not making any comment about any particular country, but you touched on a very interesting point.

And so therefore, we're constantly working with nations to convince them that what really matters in the long run is to have the environment so peace can flourish. In the Iranian case, I firmly believe that if they were to have a weapon, it would make it difficult for peace to flourish. And therefore, I'm working with people to make sure that that concern trumps whatever commercial interests may be preventing governments from acting. I make no specific accusation with that statement. It's a broad statement. But it's an accurate assessment of what sometimes can halt multilateral diplomacy from working.

Let's see here. Ann [Ann Compton, ABC Radio].

Iraq/2008 Presidential Election

Q. Thank you. Iraq is not only being debated in Congress, but it's going to be debated in the Presidential election that's coming ahead. Is that debate—is there a chance that that is going to hurt your progress in Iraq? And is it appropriate, at some point, perhaps, for the Government to brief the Presidential candidates so they have a better understanding of what it is you're trying to do?

The President. Thank you for that question. I thought for a minute you were going to try to get me to comment on the Presidential race. And I'd just like to establish some ground rules here with those of you who are stuck following me for the next little less than 2 years: I will resist all temptation to become the pundit in chief and commenting upon every twist and turn of the Presidential campaign. As much as I like politics and am intrigued by the race—it's very

similar to how I deftly handled Baker's question—I won't comment.

Secondly, I remember a Member of Congress came to me before one of my speeches—I think it was the Iraq speech as opposed to the State of the Union speech—and said, "You'd better be eloquent in order to convince the American people to support this plan." He didn't say "articulate"; he said "eloquent." [Laughter] And my point to the person was, what really matters is what happens on the ground. I can talk all day long. But what really matters to the American people is to see progress—which leads to your point, Martha, and that is, progress can best be measured by whether or not the people can see noticeable changes of security inside the capital city. In this case, the Baghdad security plan has got to yield peace in certain mixed neighborhoods, for example.

And so therefore, to the extent that it affects votes, speeches, perceptions, elections, what really is going to matter is what happens, ultimately. And that's all I really care to comment about it. You know, it's—

Q. Do you think you could win reelection—

The President. I'm not running. [Laughter] And I know that's going to disappoint some of you. But, anyway, that's pundit-in-chief-type questions, so I'm not going to answer those. Pundit in chief—trying to get me to be pundit in chief. No.

Let's see here. Hutch [Ron Hutcheson, McClatchy].

Support for Troops in Iraq

Q. Morning.

The President. Yes, thanks.

Q. I think I'd like to follow on Sheryl's question about undermining the troops.

The President. Yes.

Q. Do you have to support the war to support the warrior? I mean, if you're one of those Americans that thinks you've made a terrible mistake, that it's destined to end badly, what do you do? If they speak out, are they by definition undermining the troops?

The President. No, she actually asked "the enemy," not "the troops." But I'll be glad to answer your question. No, I don't think so at all. I think you can be against

my decision and support the troops; absolutely. But the proof will be whether or not you provide them the money necessary to do the mission.

I said early in my comment—my answer to Sheryl was that somebody who doesn't agree with my policy is just as patriotic a person as I am. And your question is valid. I mean, can somebody say, "We disagree with your tactics or strategy, but we support the military"—absolutely, Ron, sure. But what's going to be interesting is if they don't provide the flexibility and support for our troops that are there to enforce the strategy that David Petraeus, the general on the ground, thinks is necessary to accomplish the mission.

Michael [Michael Allen, Politico]. Michael, who do you work for? [Laughter]

Bipartisan Cooperation in Congress/ Legislative Agenda

Q. Mr. President, I work for politico.com.

The President. Pardon me? Politico.com?

Q. Yes, sir. Today. [Laughter]

The President. Do you want a moment to explain to the American people exactly what—[laughter].

Q. Mr. President, thank you for the question. [Laughter]

The President. Quit being so evasive. [Laughter]

Q. You should read it.

The President. Is it good? You like it?

Q. David Gregory endorsed—

The President. David Gregory likes it. I can see the making of a testimonial. [Laughter] Anyway, go ahead, please.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You spoke hopefully about your ability to work with Democrats, their willingness to work with you in this new world. I wonder how that's going so far, what you've learned about how they think, and does the current debate constitute grounds for divorce?

The President. Interesting way to put it. First of all, I think they're patriotic people who care about our country—back to Hutch's penetrating comment—or question. I do. I was very appreciative of the reception I got at the State of the Union. It was a cordial, respectful reception that gave me a chance to talk about what I believe. I was also very grateful for the reception I received

at the Democratic retreat that I went to there in Virginia.

You know, my impression of the meeting there was that we share a lot in common. We're people that actually put filing papers down and ran for office; we're willing to put our families through the grind of politics; we wanted to serve our country, that we care deeply about what takes place in Washington, America, and the world.

My hope is, is that we can get positive pieces of legislation passed, because I think there's a lot of expectation that the difference of opinion on Iraq would make it impossible for us to work on other areas. I disagree with that assessment. And I hope I'm right, and the best way to determine whether I'm right is, will I be able to sign legislation that we have been able to work on?

One such piece of policy is a balanced budget. There seems to be agreement that we should have a balanced budget. I laid out one way forward to achieve that balance, and it shows that we can balance the budget without raising taxes and do so in a 5-year horizon. And I would like to work with the Democrat leadership as well as, obviously, my Republican folks, to get it done.

Secondly, an interesting opportunity is immigration. As you know, I strongly believe that we need to enforce our borders and that—and have taken steps to do so. But I also believe that in order to enforce the borders, we need a temporary-worker program so that people don't try to sneak in the country to work, that they can come in an orderly fashion, and take the pressure off the Border Patrol agents that we've got out there, so that the Border Patrol agents don't focus on workers that are doing jobs Americans aren't doing but are focusing on terrorists and criminal elements, gun runners, to keep the country—both our countries safe—Mexico and the United States safe.

I also know that we need to deal with the people who are here—the 12 million people who are here illegally. I have said multiple times that we can't kick them out of our country. It doesn't make any sense to me to try to do that, and I don't think—maybe some feel that way, but I don't feel that way. But I also don't believe we should give them automatic amnesty—automatic citizenship,

which I view as amnesty. And we look forward to working with Democrats and Republicans to have a comprehensive immigration plan.

Energy is an opportunity for us to work together. We've done a lot of work in the past on promoting alternative sources of energy. America has done more than any nation in the world in promoting alternatives and renewables, all aiming to make sure our economy grows, that we have energy independence, and that we're good stewards of the environment. And I look forward to working with the Democrats on the energy independence initiative I laid out.

One such initiative was the mandatory fuel standards that relies upon alternative fuel to power automobiles. Ethanol is the first and most notable place where we can start, but we also need to spend monies to develop technologies that will enable us to make energy out of products other than corn—switch grass or wood chips, for example.

The problem with relying only on corn is that—by the way, when your demand for corn stays high, the price tends to go up, and your hog farmer gets disgruntled with the alternative energy plan. And therefore, what's going to matter is that new technologies come on line as quickly as possible to take the pressure off of corn ethanol—or corn, as a result of being used in ethanol, and we can work with Congress to do that. That's an area we can work.

Health care—I got a letter the other day from a group of Republican and Democrat Senators talking about the desire to work on health care. And they liked some of my ideas. But my only point is, is that there's an opportunity for us to work together to help the uninsured have private insurance so they can be—so they can get good health care. And there's an opportunity to work together there.

The Governors are coming into town soon. And I'm going to have Secretary Leavitt describe to them the affordable grants program that is a part of our comprehensive approach, including rewriting the Tax Code.

Finally, No Child Left Behind needs to be reauthorized. I fully understand that if you read your newspaper articles—which I do, sometimes—and listen carefully, you'll hear

voices in both parties saying they don't like No Child Left Behind—it's too much testing, or we don't want to be held to account, or whatever they say. The bill is working. It makes a lot of sense.

There's an income gap in America that I talked about when I went to Wall Street. And what's clear to me is that our kids have got to have education so that in this global economy, the jobs of the 21st century stay here at home. And it starts with good education. And therefore, I will argue vociferously that No Child Left Behind Act needs to be reauthorized—it's working; it's an important piece of legislation—and will reach out to Democrat Members, as well as Republican Members, to get this bill reauthorized.

And so there's a lot of areas, Mike. I'd say it's a little early in the process. This is a 2-year term. We've got time to work together to get important pieces of legislation done. And I like the start. As a matter of fact, this afternoon I've got members of both parties, both Chambers coming down to visit about how we can continue to work together to get some legislation done.

As I told the Democrats, and as the Democrats have made clear to me in my visits, that neither of us are going to abandon our principles, that I don't expect them to change their principles, and they shouldn't expect me to. But there's ways for us to work together to achieve legislative successes for the common good. That's what the American people want to see, and that's what I believe we can do. Is it going to take work? Yes, it's going to take work, but it's okay. That's why you pay us all this money.

Richard [Richard Wolffe, Newsweek].

Iran

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Last question, then I've got to go have lunch with Bob Gates, Secretary of the Defense.

What are you looking at there? Checking the time? For the viewer out there—you're getting a big—timekeeper and everything. [Laughter]

Q. I don't mean to interrupt. [Laughter]

The President. I just thought he was looking at the watch because he was getting bored. I wasn't sure, you know?

Q. I'm never bored.

The President. Remember the debates?

Q. Yes.

The President. Yes. [*Laughter*]

Q. Mr. President, Republican and Democratic Presidents before you sat down for face-to-face talks with the Soviet Union, a nation that was clearly hostile, tyrannical, and had a huge nuclear arsenal. Why do you think that face-to-face talks between yourself and the leadership of Iran would be any more compromising for you?

The President. Richard, if I thought we could achieve success, I would sit down, but I don't think we can achieve success right now. And therefore, we'll want to work with other nations. I think that we're more likely to achieve our goals when others are involved as well. I really don't want to put the situation—listen, let me put it this way: I want to make sure that in the Iranian issue that the whole world stays engaged, because I believe that's a more effective way of convincing the Iranians that—to give up their nuclear weapons ambitions. That's why.

Look, I know this is a world in which—and I'm not suggesting you're this way—but this is a world in which people say, "Meet; sit down and meet." And my answer is, "If it yields results, that's what I'm interested in." And so I believe the strategy that—and by the way, I remember this during the North Korean issue, debate. People kept saying, "Well, all you've got to do is sit down with the guy." And I kept saying, "Well, I think it's going to be more effective if we have other people at the table with us saying the same thing, so that just in case he decides not to honor the agreement, there will be other people saying the same thing I'll say, which is, 'You said one thing; you did another.' " It will make it easier for us to send that message that the world, pretty well united in solving this problem peacefully.

And so that's why I made the decision I made. It sounds tempting for somebody to say, "All you've got to do is sit down with the people." I'm in a little different position in that I'm trying to achieve certain objectives. And we are making progress on the Iranian issue. If you step back to early on in the process, there was doubt as to whether or not the world would come together, some-

times because of the reason John mentioned—in other words, the conflicting interests. And I believe we are making good progress toward solving this issue peacefully.

And we'll continue to try to solve the issue peacefully. It's an important issue whether or not Iran ends up with a nuclear weapon. It's one of these issues that people are going to look back and say, "You know, how come they couldn't see the impending danger? What happened to them?" You've heard me say that often about what would happen if we don't—if we were to abandon our efforts in the Middle East for stability and peace through forms of government that are more likely to defeat an extremist ideology that would like to be able to prevail.

And it's a—at any rate, that's why I made the decision I made. Presidents have to weigh different options all the time. Look, I fully understand there are some who are—don't agree with every decision I make. I hope the American people understand I make those decisions because I believe it's going to yield the peace that we all want.

Listen, thank you for your time. Enjoyed it very much.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:01 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Corps—Iraq; Lt. Gen. Abboud Gambar, commander, Iraqi Army; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; President Vladimir Putin of Russia; President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran; and Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea. Reporters referred to Gen. Peter Pace, USMC, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; White House Press Secretary Tony Snow; and I. Lewis Libby, former Chief of Staff to the Vice President.

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia

February 14, 2007

President Bush. Madam President, thanks for coming. This is the second Oval Office visit I've had with the first democratically elected woman President from Africa.

Now, the first time we met you were wondering whether or not it was possible to achieve your dreams, and you asked for our help. I was impressed by your spirit at the last meeting.

This meeting, there is no doubt in your mind that you can achieve your dreams. And I am impressed by your confidence but, more importantly, your deep concern for the people of Liberia. And so I pledge our ongoing help to you and your Government. I thank you very much for setting such a good example for not only the people of Liberia but for the people around the world, that new democracies have got the capability of doing the hard work necessary to rout out corruption, to improve the lives of the citizens with infrastructure projects that matter. And we want to help you; we really do.

Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and the President worked out an agreement that I hope other nations follow, and that is, we effected debt relief for Liberia. And I call upon other nations that have got debt with this vital country to follow our lead and to give this country a chance to succeed.

Secondly, today we're announcing an initiative where the Treasury Department is providing monies so that the IMF and other international bank—lending institutions will be able to have the confidence in going forward to help relieve obligations of Liberia. And the reason this is important is, you want to give this young country a chance to succeed by eliminating some of the interest obligations and burdens so that there is room to grow.

And so, Madam President, I love your spirit. We spent a lot of time talking about education. If anybody who understands the importance of education, it's the President. She understands that her country has got vast potential; it's got resources, but the biggest potential of all is the people. And we want to help you. Really glad you came back. I'm thrilled to call you friend.

President Johnson Sirleaf. Mr. President, I'm just so pleased for this extraordinary opportunity to meet you a second time in one year. We came back this time to report on progress, to tell you in this first year of our administration, with the strong support of your Government—led by yourself, per-

sonally—we've been able to set our goals. We've identified the four areas in which we want to concentrate our effort, and that's peace and security, economic revitalization, governance and the rule of law, and infrastructure.

And under each of these areas we've achieved important first steps. We've set the country on the way to recovery, and now we're back here to tell you that we're about to embark on the next phase. And the next phase is to do even more: get our kids back in school, to create jobs for our people, to open up our economy, restart our mines and our forestry sector and our agriculture, get our refugees and our displaced persons back into their villages and in their communities, on their farms, producing for self-sufficiency.

All of those things are beginning to happen. Our kids are back in school, our enrollment has increased by 40 percent. And now, as he told you, we just need to get this debt off our backs. And that's the last thing you've done for us. And Secretary Rice was just exceptional in taking the leadership yesterday in our forum. And once she did that, others are beginning to follow. And you've just made a great call to all of them to tell them to follow. And we think it's going to happen. If we get the 3.7 external billion debt off us, we can then access resources, we can expand the progress we've made, we can accelerate the implementation of all of our programs.

And so we're just so pleased about that. We thank you for what is being done in the security sector reform, the training of our new army, the professionalization of our police force. All of that will enable us to consolidate the peace and then really begin to deliver to the Liberian people. We're fighting corruption; we're starting to put people in court; we've created a code of conduct for public officials, anticorruption policy and strategy.

All of these things would not have happened, Mr. President, if we didn't have your strong support and the support of your colleagues in the Government and also on the Hill. We're thankful that we enjoy bipartisan support on the Hill. And we're meeting a lot of them in these 2 days. And they've just been there for us and giving you the support

that you need from there to enable you to continue to support us.

We want you to know, Liberian people are very thankful; Liberian people are resolved never to go to war again. They want the simple things in life: send their children to schools, have jobs, be able to give their families a square meal at the end of the day, be able to get around. And we want you to know that those things are happening. We thank you for how—what you have done to put us on this path.

President Bush. Thank you, Madam President. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:18 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on the Second Anniversary of the Death of Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri of Lebanon

February 14, 2007

On the second anniversary of the assassination of former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri, the United States reaffirms its support for a free and democratic Lebanon that is able to chart its own course. The United States joins the Lebanese people in demanding the truth behind Prime Minister Hariri's murder and calling for the establishment of a special tribunal for Lebanon to bring to justice those who murdered Rafiq Hariri and others who stood for Lebanese sovereignty and independence.

Our thoughts and prayers are with the victims of yesterday's bus bombings outside Beirut. The evil perpetrators of these attacks will not silence the Lebanese people's demands for justice and democracy in an independent Lebanon.

The Lebanese people's greatest tribute to Rafiq Hariri, Minister Basil Fuleihan, and others who gave their lives for a free Lebanon would be to come together across sectarian divides to build the free, stable, and prosperous Lebanon that Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri dedicated his life to create.

Executive Order 13425—Trial of Alien Unlawful Enemy Combatants by Military Commission

February 14, 2007

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the Military Commissions Act of 2006 (Public Law 109–366), the Authorization for Use of Military Force (Public Law 107–40), and section 948b(b) of title 10, United States Code, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment of Military Commissions. There are hereby established military commissions to try alien unlawful enemy combatants for offenses triable by military commission as provided in chapter 47A of title 10.

Sec. 2. Definitions. As used in this order:

- (a) “unlawful enemy combatant” has the meaning provided for that term in section 948a(1) of title 10; and
- (b) “alien” means a person who is not a citizen of the United States.

Sec. 3. Supersedure. This order supersedes any provision of the President's Military Order of November 13, 2001 (66 *Fed. Reg.* 57,833), that relates to trial by military commission, specifically including:

- (a) section 4 of the Military Order; and
- (b) any requirement in section 2 of the Military Order, as it relates to trial by military commission, for a determination of:
 - (i) reason to believe specified matters; or
 - (ii) the interest of the United States.

Sec. 4. General Provisions. (a) This order shall be implemented in accordance with applicable law and subject to the availability of appropriations.

(b) The heads of executive departments and agencies shall provide such information and assistance to the Secretary of Defense as may be necessary to implement this order and chapter 47A of title 10.

(c) This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by any party against the United States, its

departments, agencies, entities, officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

George W. Bush

The White House,
February 14, 2007.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., February 16, 2007]

NOTE: This Executive order will be published in the *Federal Register* on February 20.

**Presidential Determination on
Waiving Prohibition on United States
Military Assistance With Respect to
Chad**

February 14, 2007

Presidential Determination No. 2007-13

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Presidential Determination on
Waiving Prohibition on United States
Military Assistance With Respect to Chad

Consistent with the authority vested in me by section 2007 of the American Servicemembers' Protection Act of 2002, (the "Act"), title II of Public Law 107-206 (22 U.S.C. 7421 *et seq.*), I hereby:

- Determine that Chad has entered into an agreement with the United States pursuant to Article 98 of the Rome Statute preventing the International Criminal Court from proceeding against U.S. personnel present in such country; and
- Waive the prohibition of section 2007(a) of the Act with respect to this country for as long as such agreement remains in force.

You are authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 15.

**Remarks to the American Enterprise
Institute for Public Policy Research**

February 15, 2007

Thank you all. Thank you, Mr. President. [Laughter] That's got kind of a nice ring to it. [Laughter] Chris, thanks for inviting me. I appreciate the chance to come and share some thoughts with the men and women of AEI. I admire AEI a lot; I'm sure you know that. After all, I have been consistently borrowing some of your best people. More than 20 AEI scholars have worked in my administration. A few have returned to the fold; you're going to have to wait 2 more years to get another one to return to the fold. Dick Cheney is occupied. [Laughter] He sends his best.

I appreciate what the AEI stands for. This institute has been a tireless voice for the principles of individual liberty, free enterprise, limited government, and a strong national defense. And no one embodied these principles better than the late Ambassador Jeane Kirkpatrick. She was a professor, author, diplomat, Presidential adviser, and a key architect in our victory in the cold war.

In 2003, I had the honor of asking her to lead the U.S. delegation to the U.N. Human Rights Commission in Geneva. And I would like to share with you what she told that commission. She said, "[America's] national policy is to assert that all human beings are born free; all human beings are equal in inherent rights and human dignity." That's the policy of the Bush administration as well. I believe in the universality of freedom, and I believe that this country—this grand country of ours has an obligation to help people realize the blessings of freedom. I appreciate so very much that Jeane Kirkpatrick was such a well-spoken advocate for that basic truth. I am proud to join you in paying tribute to her life and the legacy of a great American stateswoman.

I appreciate the board of directors of the AEI for giving me this forum. Thanks for trying to stay on the leading edge of thought as well. It's really important that ideas be conceived, circulated, and embraced. I want to thank Members of the Congress who have joined us today—there they are. Good, yes. [Laughter] All friends—Pete King from New

York, Trent Franks from Arizona, Mario Diaz-Balart from Florida, and fellow Texan Mike McCaul. Thanks for coming; appreciate you being here. I thank the members of the diplomatic corps who have joined us; proud you're here. Thanks for taking time out of a busy schedule to come and hear this address. I appreciate members of the United States Armed Forces who have joined us. I thank the dignitaries and friends of the AEI and members of my administration who have joined. Don't linger—[*laughter*—]—get back to work. But thank you for being here. [*Laughter*] I fully expect you to stay awake for the entire address. [*Laughter*]

As scholars and thinkers, you are contributing to a nationwide debate about the direction of the war on terror. A vigorous debate is healthy for our country—it really is—and I welcome the debate. It's one of the true hallmarks of a free society, where people can get up and express their beliefs in an open forum. Yet 5 years into this war, there is one principle of which every member of every party should be able to agree on—in other words, after all the debate, there is one thing we all ought to be able to agree on, and that is: We've got to fight the terrorists overseas so we don't have to face them here at home again.

We're acting on that principle. Since the attacks of September the 11th, we have been on the offense. I believe the best way to do our duty in securing the homeland is to stay on the offense. And we're not alone. That's what our fellow citizens have got to understand. We're not in this fight against extremists and murderers alone.

Recently in the Philippines, that country's special forces conducted raids in which they killed two top leaders of an Al Qaida-affiliated terrorist organization—a group that we believe was responsible for kidnapping four American citizens and killing two of them. In Tunisia, authorities recently broke up a terrorist cell that was planning to attack the American and British Embassies. In Spain, police captured several fugitives wanted for aiding the escape of terrorists responsible for the Madrid train bombings. In the past year, nations including Denmark, Italy, France, Indonesia, Jordan, Malaysia, Turkey, Canada, and Britain have broken up terrorist cells.

The enemy is active, and so are those of us who love freedom. It's in the interests of the United States to encourage other nations not to relent and not to give in, but to keep the pressure on those who try to have their way by murdering the innocent. And that's exactly what we'll continue to do.

This war against the terrorists, this war to protect ourselves, takes place on many fronts. One such front is Iraq. We're on the offense in Iraq, as we should be, against extremists and killers. I recently announced a new strategy for Iraq. It's a plan that demands more from the Iraqi Government. Not only do we demand more from the Iraqi Government, but so do—the Iraqi people demand more from the Iraqi Government. They want to live in peace. It's important for our fellow citizens to understand, a mother in downtown Baghdad wants her child to be able to walk the streets peacefully, just like mothers here in America want their children to be able to go to a playground and play peacefully.

I made Baghdad the top security priority. In other words, it's important, in order to achieve our objective, that the capital city of this grand country be secure. And I sent reinforcements to our troops so they can accomplish that mission. I spent a lot of time with members of my administration thinking about the way forward in Iraq. And we listened to a lot of opinions and a lot of different ideas. In the end, I chose this course of action because it provides the best chance for success.

And the reason why I mention success is, it's important for us to succeed. It's important for us to help this young democracy fight off the extremists so moderation can prevail. It's important for us to stand with this young democracy as they live—as they try to build a society under the most modern Constitution written in the Middle East, a Constitution approved by millions of their citizens.

One of the interesting things that I have found here in Washington is, there is strong disagreement about what to do to succeed, but there is strong agreement that we should not fail. People understand the consequences of failure. If we were to leave this young democracy before the job is done, there would be chaos, and out of chaos would become

vacuums, and into those power vacuums would flow extremists who would be emboldened, extremists who want to find safe haven.

As we think about this important front in the war against extremists and terrorists, it's important for our fellow citizens to recognize this truth: If we were to leave Iraq before the job is done, the enemy would follow us home.

Our new commander in Iraq, General David Petraeus, is now on the ground in Baghdad. I visited him by secure video yesterday. He reports that coalition troops are arriving on schedule. He says the Iraqi Government is following through on its commitment to deploy three additional army brigades in the capital. Prime Minister Maliki has said, "Part of our strategy is to put more Iraqis in the fight in the capital city to achieve our objective," and he's doing that. So far, coordination between Iraqi and coalition forces has been good—they are beginning joint operations to secure the city by chasing down the terrorists and insurgents and the criminals and the roaming death squads. They're doing what the Iraqi people want in Baghdad—they want a peaceful life.

The initial signs of progress are encouraging. Yet it's important for us to recognize that this is the beginning of what will be a difficult operation in the Iraqi capital. Our troops are risking their lives. As they carry out the new strategy, they need our patience, and they need our support. When General David Petraeus' nomination was considered 3 weeks ago in the United States Senate, the Senators voted unanimously to confirm him to his new position, and I appreciate that affirmation, that strong statement for this good general.

Now the House is debating a resolution that disapproves of our new strategy. This may become the first time in the history of the United States Congress that it has voted to send a new commander into battle and then voted to oppose his plan that is necessary to succeed in that battle.

Members of Congress have every right to express their opinion, and I fully expect them to do so. The resolution they're now debating is nonbinding. Soon the Congress is going to vote on a piece of legislation that is bind-

ing—a bill to provide emergency funding for our troops. Our men and women in uniform are counting on their elected leaders to provide them with the support they need to accomplish their mission. We have a responsibility—Republicans and Democrats have a responsibility to give our troops the resources they need to do their job and the flexibility they need to prevail.

As we implement a new strategy in Iraq, we are also taking new steps to defeat the terrorists and extremists in Afghanistan. My administration has just completed a top-to-bottom review of our strategy in that country, and today I want to talk to you about the progress we have made in Afghanistan, the challenges we face in Afghanistan, and the strategy we're pursuing to defeat the enemies of freedom in Afghanistan.

It wasn't all that long ago that we learned the lessons of how terrorists operate. It may seem like a long time ago—5 years is a long time in this day and age of instant news cycles—but it really isn't all that long ago, when you think about the march of history. In Afghanistan, we saw how terrorists and extremists can use those safe havens, safe havens in a failed state, to bring death and destruction to our people here at home.

It was an amazing turning point in the history of our country, really, when you think about it. It was a defining moment for the 21st century. Think about what I just said, that in the remote reaches of the world, because there was a failed state, murderers were able to plot and plan and then execute a deadly attack that killed nearly 3,000 of our citizens. It's a lesson that we've got to remember. And one of the lessons of that September the 11th day is that we cannot allow terrorists to gain sanctuary anywhere; we must not allow them to reestablish the safe haven they lost in Afghanistan.

Our goal in Afghanistan is to help the people of that country to defeat the terrorists and establish a stable, moderate, democratic state that respects the rights of its citizens, governs its territory effectively, and is a reliable ally in this war against extremists and terrorists. Oh, for some that may seem like an impossible task. But it's not impossible if you believe what Jeane Kirkpatrick said, and that freedom is universal; that we believe

all human beings desire to live in freedom and peace.

Over the past 5 years, we've made real progress toward the goal I just described. In 2001, Afghanistan was a totalitarian nightmare—a land where girls could not go to school, where religious police roamed the streets, where women were publicly whipped, where there were summary executions in the Kabul soccer stadium, and where the terrorists operated freely—they ran camps where they planned and trained for horrific attacks that affected us and other nations.

Today, 5 short years later, the Taliban have been driven from power, Al Qaida has been driven from its camps, and Afghanistan is free. That's why I say, "We have made remarkable progress." Afghanistan has a democratically elected President named Hamid Karzai. I respect him. I appreciate his courage. Afghanistan has a National Assembly chosen by the Afghan people in free elections.

Under the Taliban, women were barred from public office. Today, Afghanistan's Parliament includes 91 women. President Karzai has appointed the first woman to serve as a Provincial Governor.

Under the Taliban, free enterprise was stifled. Today, the Afghan economy has doubled in size since liberation. Afghanistan has attracted \$800 million in foreign investment during that time.

Under the Taliban, there were about 900,000 children in school. Today, more than 5 million children are in school—about 1.8 [million]* of them are girls.

Under the Taliban, an estimated 8 percent of Afghans had access to basic health care. Today, the United States has built or renovated 681 health clinics across the country. Now more than 80 percent of Afghans have access to basic health coverage—health care.

Under the Taliban, Afghans fled the country in large numbers, seeking safety abroad. Today, more than 4.6 million Afghan refugees have come home, in one of the largest return movements in history.

In today's Afghanistan, people are free to speak their minds, they're free to begin to

realize dreams. In today's Afghanistan, there's a NATO Alliance that is taking the lead to help provide security for the people of Afghanistan. In today's Afghanistan, the terrorists who once oppressed the Afghan people and threatened our country are being captured and killed by NATO forces and soldiers and police of a free Afghanistan. Times have changed. Our work is bringing freedom. A free Afghanistan helps make this country more secure.

We face a thinking enemy, and we face a tough enemy. They watch our actions; they adjust their tactics. And in 2006, this enemy struck back with vengeance. As freedom began to spread, an enemy that cannot stand the thought of a free society tried to do something about it, tried to stop the advance of this young democracy. It's not the only place in the world where the enemy struck back in 2006. They struck back in Iraq. They struck in Lebanon. This should be a lesson for our fellow citizens to understand—where these group of people find freedom, they're willing to resort to brutal tactics.

It's an interesting enemy, isn't it—an enemy that can't stand the thought of somebody being able to live a peaceful life, a life of hope, an optimistic life. And it's an enemy we've got to take seriously.

Across Afghanistan last year, the number of roadside bombs almost doubled, direct fire attacks on international forces almost tripled, and suicide bombings grew nearly fivefold. These escalating attacks were part of a Taliban offensive that made 2006 the most violent year in Afghanistan since the liberation of the country.

And so the fundamental question is, how do you react? Do you say, "Maybe it's too tough? Let's just kind of let this young democracy wither and fade away." Do we forget the lessons of September the 11th? And the answer is, absolutely not.

And so the Taliban offensive that was launched was turned back by incredible courage of the Afghan soldiers and by NATO forces that stood strong. You see, I believe the Taliban felt that they could exploit weakness. I believe that they said to themselves, "If we can—we'll test NATO and cause NATO leaders to turn their back on this young democracy." After the fierce battles

* White House correction.

throughout the year 2006, the Taliban had failed in their objective of taking and holding new territory.

In recent months, the intensity of the fighting has died down—that's only natural. It does every year when the snow and ice set in there in Afghanistan. But even in these winter months, we stayed on the offense against the Taliban and Al Qaida. This January, NATO reconnaissance units observed a major Taliban incursion from Pakistan—with about 150 Taliban fighters crossing the border into the Paktika Province. So NATO and Afghan forces launched a coordinated air assault and ground assault, and we destroyed the Taliban force. A large number of enemy fighters were killed; they were forced to retreat, where they were engaged by Pakistani troops.

Just 2 weeks ago, NATO launched an air strike against Taliban fighters who had seized the town of Musa Qala in Helmand Province—a key Taliban commander was brought to justice.

The snow is going to melt in the Hindu Kush Mountains, and when it does, we can expect fierce fighting to continue. The Taliban and Al Qaida are preparing to launch new attacks. Our strategy is not to be on the defense, but to go on the offense. This spring, there is going to be a new offensive in Afghanistan, and it's going to be a NATO offensive. And that's part of our strategy—relentless in our pressure. We will not give in to murderers and extremists.

And we're focused on five key goals that I want to share with you. First, the United States and our allies will help President Karzai increase the size and capabilities of the Afghan security forces. After all, for this young democracy to survive in the long term, they'll have their own security forces that are capable and trained. We don't have to teach them courage. These folks understand courage. They're willing to fight for their country. They're willing to defend this young democracy. And so it's in our interest and the interest of NATO countries to provide training so they have more strong fighters—so we're going to increase the size of the national police from 61,000 to 82,000 by the end of 2008. And we'll help them develop new spe-

cialties: new civil order brigades; counter-narcotics; and border surveillance.

We're going to increase the Afghan Army. Today, it's 32,000—that's not enough to do the job in this vast country—to 70,000 by the end of 2008. It's one thing to get them trained and one thing to get them uniforms, but they're also going to have to have ways to move around their country. So we're going to add Commando battalions, a helicopter unit, combat support units. In other words, we're going to help this young democracy have a fully integrated security force that will respond to the commands of the elected officials.

Capable troops need intelligence. This is a war that requires good intelligence on all fronts. So the United States and our allies will work with Afghanistan's leaders to improve human intelligence networks, particularly in the areas that are threatened by the Taliban. Together with the Afghan Government and NATO, we created a Joint Intelligence Operations Center in Kabul—so all the forces fighting the terrorists in Afghanistan have a common picture of the enemy. That may sound simple to those of us who have gotten used to sophisticated systems to protect ourselves. This is important innovation in Afghanistan.

America and our allies are going to stand with these folks. That's the message I want to deliver to the Afghanistan people today. Free debates are important, but our commitment is strong: We will train you; we will help you; and we will stand with you as you defend your new democracy.

The second part of our strategy is to work with our allies to strengthen the NATO force in Afghanistan. Today, Afghanistan is NATO's most important military operation. Isn't it interesting that NATO is now in Afghanistan? I suspect 20 years ago, if a President stood in front of AEI and said, "I'll make a prediction to you that NATO would be a force for freedom and peace outside of Europe," probably never would have invited the person back. [Laughter] Today, NATO is in Afghanistan. And I thank the leaders of the NATO countries for recognizing the importance of Afghanistan in our own security and enhancing the security of our own countries.

For NATO to succeed, member nations must provide commanders on the ground with the troops and the equipment they need to do their jobs. Many allies have made commitments of additional forces and support, and I appreciate those commitments, but not nearly as much as the people in Afghanistan appreciate them. Norway, Lithuania, and the Czech Republic have all agreed to send special operation forces to Afghanistan. Britain, Poland, Turkey, and Bulgaria have agreed to additional troops. Italy has agreed to send aircraft. Romania will contribute to the EU police mission. Denmark, Greece, Norway, and Slovakia will provide funding for Afghan security forces. Iceland will provide airlift. The people of Afghanistan need to know that they've got a lot of friends in this world who want them to succeed.

For NATO to succeed, allies must make sure that we fill the security gaps. In other words, when there is a need, when our commanders on the ground say to our respective countries, "We need additional help," our NATO countries must provide it in order to be successful in this mission.

As well, allies must lift restrictions on the forces they do provide so NATO commanders have the flexibility they need to defeat the enemy wherever the enemy may make a stand. The alliance was founded on this principle: An attack on one is an attack on all. That principle holds true whether the attack is on the home soil of a NATO nation or on allied forces deployed on a NATO mission abroad. By standing together in Afghanistan, NATO forces protect our own people. And they must have the flexibility and rules of engagement to be able to do their job.

Third, the United States and our allies will help President Karzai improve Provincial governance and develop Afghanistan's—and to help develop Afghanistan's rural economy. Many Afghans in remote regions fight with the Taliban simply because there are no other jobs available. The best way to dry up Taliban recruits is to help Afghanistan's Government create jobs and opportunity. So NATO is operating 25 Provincial Reconstruction Teams across the country. These teams are made up of civilian and military experts. They are helping the Afghan Government extend its reach into distant regions; they're im-

proving security; and they're helping to deliver reconstruction assistance. In other words, I just described military operations that are necessary, but in order for these young democracies to survive, there's got to be more than just military. There has to be political development and tangible evidence that a government can provide opportunity and hope. And these Provincial Reconstruction Teams do just that.

These teams will help build irrigation systems, improve power production, provide access to microcredit. The idea is to encourage entrepreneurship, job formation, enterprise. These teams will undertake new efforts to train Provincial and local leaders. We take democracy for granted. Democracy hasn't exactly been rooted deeply in the Afghan history. It takes awhile for people to understand how to function as an elected official. It takes help for people to understand the obligations to respond to the people. And these teams will train Provincial and local leaders.

Another key element to bringing stability to Afghanistan is building roads. Lieutenant General Eikenberry, who served with distinction in Afghanistan, just finished his tour; he was the senior commander there. He said, really, something very interesting that caught my attention, he said, "Where the roads end in Afghanistan, the Taliban begin." And so in order to help the security of this country, the international community has stepped up its road-building campaign across Afghanistan. So far, the United States and other nations have completed construction of more than 4,000 miles of roads—that sounds like a lot, and it is a lot. We're also talking about a big country.

Much of the ring road—we call it the ring road—that links Provincial capitals to Kabul is pretty well complete. And that's important, because, first of all, road building brings jobs to young men who might be recruited by the Taliban. But roads enable people to get commerce to centers of trade. In other words, roads promote enterprise. Enterprise provides hope. Hope is what defeats this ideology of darkness. And so we're going to build another 1,000 roads [1,000 miles of roads] * in 2007. It's an important effort, and

* White House correction.

our allies need to follow through on their commitments to help this young democracy have a road system that will enable it to flourish and survive.

Fourth, the United States and our allies will help President Karzai reverse the increase in poppy cultivation that is aiding the Taliban. After a decline in 2005, Afghanistan saw a marked increase in poppy cultivation last year. This is a direct threat to a free future for Afghanistan. I have made my concerns to President Karzai pretty clear—not pretty clear, very clear—and that in order for him to gain the confidence of his people and the confidence of the world, he's got to do something about it, with our help.

The Taliban uses drug money to buy weapons—they benefit from this cultivation—and they pay Afghans to take up arms against the Government. And so we're helping the President in a variety of ways to deal with the problem. First, he has established what's called a Central Narcotics Tribunal in Kabul. One way to deal with the drug problem is for there to be a push back to the drug dealers, and a good way to push back on the drug dealers is, convict them and send them to prison. He has improved the Afghan Eradication Force—this is mobile units that can deploy across the country to help governors in their eradication efforts.

We're supporting him. We're supporting him through direct aid on these mobile units, and we're supporting him to expand alternative livelihood programs. I mean, look, these poppy growers are trying to make a living. And the idea is to provide these farmers with credit and seeds and fertilizer and assistance to bring their products to market. So the strategy to eliminate poppies is to encourage the Government to eradicate and to provide alternative means for a livelihood and to help have the roads so that when somebody grows something somebody wants to buy in Kabul, there's a road to be able to take the product along to the markets.

It's important, and we're going to stay focused on the poppy issue. And when the President and his Government is able to make progress on it, it will really inspire countries who want to help to do more.

Finally, we're going to help President Karzai fight corruption. And one place where

he needs help is in the judicial system. There's nothing more discouraging when justice is not fair. And Afghans too often see their courts run by crooked judges. It's important to have the confidence of the people in a free society. Crooked judges makes it hard to earn that confidence.

And so we're—President Karzai, to his credit, has established a Criminal Justice Task Force that is now after public corruption. This task force has 400 prosecutors, [prosecutions] * and there are ongoing investigations. The United States, Britain, and Norway are providing full-time prosecutors, judges, police, and defense attorneys to mentor their Afghan counterparts, and I appreciate our own citizens going over there. Must be neat, really—I guess “neat” isn't a sophisticated word, but it must be heartening to be somebody who's helping this young democracy develop a judicial system that is worthy. And I cannot—thank our citizens for taking time out of their lives to go.

The United States has built or renovated 40 judicial facilities; we've distributed more than 11,000 copies of the Afghan Constitution; we've trained more than 750 Afghan judges and lawyers and prosecutors. The United States and Italy have helped the Afghan Government establish a National Legal Training Center in Kabul. The international community is helping this new Government build a justice system so they can replace the rule of the Taliban with the rule of law.

Now, there's another part of our strategy I want to share with you, and that is to help President Musharraf defeat the terrorists and extremists who operate inside of Pakistan. We're going to work with Pakistan and Afghanistan to enhance cooperation to defeat what I would call a common enemy. Taliban and Al Qaida fighters do hide in remote regions of Pakistan—this is wild country; this is wilder than the Wild West. And these folks hide and recruit and launch attacks.

The President understands our desire to work with him to eliminate this kind of action. People say, “Well, do you think President Musharraf really understands the threat of extremists in his midst?” I said, “Yes, I do.” You know how I know? They've tried

* White House correction.

to kill him. Al Qaida has launched attacks against the President of this country. He understands. He also understands that extremists can destabilize countries on the border or destabilize countries from which they launch their attacks. And so he's launched what they call a frontier strategy, and that is to find and eliminate the extremists and deliver better governance and economic opportunity.

We're helping him in these efforts. It's in our interest to help him. We provided him—we've helped him equip his security forces that are patrolling the border regions with Afghanistan. We're funding construction of more than 100 border outposts, which will provide their forces with better access to remote regions of this part of the country. We've given him high-tech equipment to help the Pakistani forces locate the terrorists attempting to cross the border. We're funding an air wing, with helicopters and fixed-wing aircraft, to give Pakistan better security, better swift response, and better surveillance.

President Musharraf is going to be able to now deal with this problem. Bob Gates went out and visited with him recently—had a good response. He's an ally in this war on terror, and it's in our interest to support him in fighting the extremists.

I also had an interesting meeting at the White House last September—and that is, I hosted a private dinner with President Musharraf and President Karzai, right there in what's called the Family Dining Room. It was a fascinating discussion. Clearly there are different histories and different anxieties about the way forward. We did reach some agreements, however—that it's in all our interests for people to work together, for example, to improve intelligence sharing. It's in our interest to expand trade between these two countries. In other words, on the one hand, it's in our interest to work closely on security for security operations, but it's also in our mutual interest—all three of our interests—to provide different alternatives for people to choose from.

Remember, I said earlier that oftentimes, people support the Taliban—or sometimes, they support the Taliban in Afghanistan because it's the only job they can find. If that's the case—and I believe it's true—we need

to help these folks provide an economy that gives hope. And so one way we can do this is what we call reconstruction opportunity zones that exist on both sides of the Pak and Afghan border. These zones will give residents the chance to export locally made products to the United States, duty free. That's our contribution. Got a vast market, wealthy country with a lot of consumers, and it's not going to take much to provide hope if we can get little manufacturing enterprises set up, local entrepreneurs to be able to manufacture goods and sell them here in our country. It's a tiny contribution for us and a major contribution for providing the conditions necessary for stability.

Well, I'm going to continue to work with both the leaders. It's a useful role for the President of the United States to be in constant contact with both Presidents, to remind them of the great obligations we have to fight the extremists and to help people realize dreams.

So our strategy in this country is robust and important. A lot of attention here in the United States is on Iraq. One reason I've come to address you is, I want to make sure people's attention is also on Afghanistan. I'm asking Congress for \$11.8 billion over the next 2 years to help this young democracy survive. I've ordered an increase in U.S. forces in Afghanistan. We've extended the stay of 3,200 troops now in the country, for 4 months, and we'll deploy a replacement force that will sustain this increase for the foreseeable future.

These forces and funds are going to help President Karzai defeat common enemies. Success in Afghanistan is important for our security. We are engaged in a long ideological struggle between the forces of moderation and liberty versus the forces of destruction and extremism. And a victory for the forces of liberty in Afghanistan will be a resounding defeat in this ideological struggle. It's in our national interest that we succeed, that we help President Karzai and the people of Afghanistan succeed. And I'm confident—I'm confident that with persistence and patience and determination, we will succeed.

And the biggest source for success is the Afghan people themselves. They want their

freedom. Freedom is universal. Jeane Kirkpatrick was right—people around the world, regardless of their faith, their background, or their gender, want to be free. There is tangible evidence in Afghanistan: 8 million people went to the polls to choose their President in a free election. We take it for granted. But eight million people said, “We want to be free.” Imagine how far that society has come from the days of the Taliban. There’s courage in that country. People are showing faith in freedom and courage to defend that freedom.

I want to tell you an interesting story about an Afghan security officer at Camp Phoenix near Kabul. This fellow has worked at this base for 4 years—nearly 4 years. His job was to guard the front gate and screen cars before they are allowed to approach a U.S. military checkpoint. He is very popular with our troops—people who have gotten to know him like him a lot. They appreciate his courage and his personality, and they call him “Rambo.” [Laughter] Must have been a lot for the Afghan citizen to be called “Rambo,” but that’s what they call him.

One day Rambo was on duty, a car loaded with explosives tried to crash through the front gate—they were attempting to get to our troops. This fellow did not hesitate; he jumped in the car, and he prevented the terrorist from exploding the device. He saw somebody who was about to harm our citizens, our troops—he then jumps into the car and stops the attack. A U.S. Army sergeant then responded, helped him pull the guy out of the car.

One of our U.S. soldiers who was there said this, he said, “He saved our lives. I promised him I’d name my first-born son after him.” The guy is hoping for a boy. [Laughter]

It’s a human story. It’s a story that speaks of courage and alliance, respect for life. To me, it’s a story that says, these people in Afghanistan want to do what is necessary to survive and succeed, and it’s in our interest to help them.

I am really proud that our Nation helped liberate the 25 million people of that country. We should be proud to stand alongside the people of Afghanistan, the newly liberated Afghanistan. And I know we’re all proud of

the men and women who have helped liberate that country—the men and women who wear our uniform who helped liberate that country and continue to make the sacrifices necessary.

I thank you for giving me a chance to come and talk about a strategy for success, a strategy that is part of our efforts to make sure that a generation of Americans, beyond our generation, will look back and say, “They did their duty to protect the homeland, and as a result, we can live in peace.”

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:05 a.m. at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Christopher DeMuth, president, American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; Lt. Gen. Karl W. Eikenberry, USA, commander, Combined Forces Command—Afghanistan; President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan; Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; and Jamal “Rambo” Udin, Afghan security officer. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Congressional Action on Fiscal Year 2007 Appropriations Legislation

February 15, 2007

I am pleased that the final bill for the Fiscal Year 2007 appropriations process complies with the overall spending limits that I set. That means for the third year in a row, domestic discretionary spending will be below inflation. However, I remain concerned that the bill, in many cases, reflects the wrong spending priorities. In particular, the bill shifts funding needed for our Armed Forces to unrequested domestic programs. The Congress should work to address these priorities without adding to the deficit.

I am pleased this legislation makes progress on earmarks, but there is more to do. As the Congress takes up the 2008 budget, it should continue to take steps to improve transparency for all earmarks, provide the option of an up-or-down vote for each earmark, and reduce the number and cost of earmarks by at least half.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.J. Res. 20, which was assigned Public Law No. 110-5.

Memorandum on Assignment of Functions Relating to the Transfer of a Ship to the Government of Greece
February 15, 2007

Memorandum for the the Secretary of Transportation and the Secretary of State

Subject: Assignment of Functions Relating to the Transfer of a Ship to the Government of Greece

By the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, and section 1019 of the John Warner National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2007 (Public Law 109-364) (the "Act"), I hereby assign to the Secretary of Transportation the functions of the President under section 1019 of the Act. The Secretary of Transportation should consult the Secretary of State as appropriate in the performance of such functions.

The Secretary of Transportation is authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:24 a.m., February 16, 2007]

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 16, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on February 20.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Martin Torrijos Espino of Panama

February 16, 2007

President Bush. *Senor Presidente, bienvenidos a la Casa Blanca.* I'm glad you're here.

President Torrijos Espino. Thank you, President.

President Bush. I always enjoy my discussions with you. You're a visionary leader who cares deeply about the people of Panama.

I can remember very fondly my visit to your country. I remember going to the Panama Canal, and I was impressed by the operations, impressed by the scope of the Canal. And you told me that, for the good of the world, "We're going to build an adjunct to the Canal." And I said, "Well, that's an ambitious agenda." And then, sure enough, as you sit here now, you tell me it's going to come to be. So I congratulate you on having a vision, and I congratulate you on being a leader.

I'm impressed by the economic statistics that we talked about. You told me that you care deeply about your people and you want them working, and they're working. The unemployment rate is down. Commerce is beginning to expand. And that's positive news for Panama; it's positive news for Central America; and it's also good news for us in America.

I appreciate so very much your desire to work out any differences we have on a free trade agreement. I am committed to a Panamanian free trade agreement because I believe it's in the interest of the United States that we have a free trade agreement with your vital country. And I assure you that we'll work in good faith to get an agreement done, and I will call upon the United States Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, to support this deal that will help both nations.

We had an interesting discussion about biofuels. I reminded the President that I said in the State of the Union Address that the United States is committed to having about 35 billion gallons of alternative fuels as a part of our fuel mix within a 10-year period of time. Biofuels means ethanol, or biofuels means fuel derived from palm.

It just so happens, Panama has got the capacity to make a lot of biofuels. And I believe your capacity to make biofuels and our desire to use biofuels will make an interesting match as we work to become less dependent on oil and better stewards of the environment.

And so I appreciate so very much your vision on that issue as well. I'm looking forward to working with you. And once again, *bienvenidos aqui*.

President Torrijos Espino. *Gracias, Presidente.* Thank you.

I'm very pleased and recognize your commitment for pushing the free trade agenda and trying to finish the free trade agreement with Panama and the rest of the Latin American countries. And also, I'm very satisfied to know that Latin America is still a very important part of your international agenda, with your trip that's coming next—and, of course, all the cooperation that we can have in research of biofuels will help all of our countries be less dependent on oil, have more opportunity for our economies to grow.

So it's been, as always, a very sincere and a very fruitful meeting with you, President.

President Bush. *Gracias, amigo. Gracias.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:50 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 United States Ambassador-Designate to Iraq Ryan C. Crocker

February 16, 2007

The President. I just had a lengthy conversation with our nominee to be the Ambassador from the United States to Iraq. I've gotten to know Ambassador Ryan Crocker during my time as President because he's been—fulfilled a very important mission for the United States, and that is the Ambassador to Pakistan, where he served ably and served well. And I'm confident I picked the right man to be our new Ambassador in Iraq.

The Ambassador will follow General David Petraeus into Iraq. So now we've got a new military commander and a new head of our diplomatic mission there. These are two competent individuals who will help us implement our new strategy in the country of Iraq. And that new strategy has said that we're going to help this young Iraqi Government be able to sustain itself and defend itself by enforcing security in the capital city.

I was telling the Ambassador that I had a visit today with Prime Minister Maliki via secure SVTS. I was pleased that he's meeting benchmarks that he had set out for his Government. One of the benchmarks was to move Iraqi troops into the city of Baghdad—troops that will be complemented by our own

troops. He is meeting those obligations. A second such benchmark is that he would change the rules of engagement so that criminals, regardless of their religion, would be brought to justice in equal fashion. He is meeting that benchmark. Thirdly, he passed a budget, of which \$10 billion is available for reconstruction. He said he would do that; the budget has been passed; he has met that benchmark. And that's good news for the Iraqi people, and it should give people here in the United States confidence that this Government knows its responsibilities and is following through on those responsibilities.

And so the Ambassador heads into a really important assignment, carrying a message of hope to the Iraqi people that the United States wants them to succeed, and a message of urgency to the Iraqi Government that our patience is not unlimited and that we expect that Government to perform. And as I said, I was able to tell the Prime Minister how much—how closely we're watching, that we've got a good, new man coming as Ambassador, and that we appreciate the fact that he's beginning to meet the benchmarks that he set out for his people.

Mr. Ambassador, Godspeed, and thank you.

Ambassador-designate Crocker. Thank you, sir. Pleased to have your confidence.

The President. Thank you.

By the way, we're looking forward to quick Senate confirmation. He's had his hearing. And of course, when I call him "Ambassador," it's not Ambassador to Iraq—it's Ambassador-designee to Iraq—but Ambassador now in Pakistan. And the Senate needs to confirm him as quickly as possible so he can join General Petraeus and do the job.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:43 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

Proclamation—275th Anniversary of the Birth of George Washington

February 16, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Two hundred seventy-five years after the birth of George Washington, we honor the life and legacy of a surveyor from Virginia who became Commander of the Continental Army, a major force at the Constitutional Convention, and the first President of the United States of America.

Remembered by the Congress as “first in war, first in peace, and first in the hearts of his countrymen,” George Washington dedicated his life to the success of America. During the Revolutionary War, Washington’s small band of hungry soldiers faced the professional army of a great empire, and his unshakable vision for a new democracy proved a powerful inspiration to his troops. Knowing that the outcome of their struggle would determine “the destiny of unborn Millions,” Washington led his often ragged forces beyond incredible hardships into battle and on to victory with strength, steadfastness, and a quiet confidence.

The triumphant General treasured his brief time at home, but his devotion to duty and belief in the promise of a more perfect Union lured Washington from Mount Vernon. He presided over the Constitutional Convention with wisdom, diplomacy, and humility and helped form the working model of our democracy. When the Constitution was ratified, America again turned to a beloved and proven leader, electing George Washington as the first President of the United States.

As we celebrate the life of George Washington and his contributions to the American experiment, we can also take pride in our stewardship of the Republic he forged. Today, he would see in America the world’s foremost champion of liberty—a Nation that stands for freedom for all, a Nation that stands with democratic reformers, and a Nation that stands up to tyranny and terror. On his 275th birthday, George Washington would see an America fulfilling the promise

of her Founders, honoring the durable wisdom of our Constitution, and moving forward in the world with confidence, compassion, and strength.

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 February 22, 2007, as the 275th Anniversary of the Birth of George Washington. I encourage all Americans to join me in honoring the Father of our Country with appropriate civic and service programs and activities in remembrance of George Washington and with gratitude for all he gave for his country.

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

George W. Bush

NOTE: At the time of publication, this proclamation had not been received by the Office of the Federal Register for assignment of a proclamation number.

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.

February 10

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

February 11

In the evening, in the East Room, the President presented the Ford’s Theatre Lincoln Medal to historians David Herbert Donald and Doris Kearns Goodwin. Later, he and Mrs. Bush attended a performance in honor of the Ford’s Theatre Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Celebration.

February 12

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he participated in a signing ceremony for the 2007 Economic Report of the President. Then, in the Library, he participated in an interview with Steve Scully of C-SPAN.

The President announced his intention to nominate Lt. Gen. Dell L. Dailey, USA, to be the Coordinator for Counterterrorism with the rank and status of Ambassador at Large at the Department of State.

The President announced his intention to nominate Ford M. Fraker to be Ambassador to Saudi Arabia.

The President announced his intention to nominate W. Craig Vanderwagen to be Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response at the Department of Health and Human Services.

February 13

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President went to the YMCA Anthony Bowen and toured the facility. Later, he returned to the White House.

February 14

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President declared a major disaster in Washington and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm, landslides, and mudslides on December 14–15, 2006.

February 15

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the State Dining Room, the President met with members of the Congressional Black Caucus.

February 16

In the morning, the President had a video teleconference with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq. He then had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Adm. William J. Fallon,

USN, incoming combatant commander, U.S. Central Command.

The President announced his intention to nominate Bijan R. Rafiekian to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States.

The President announced his intention to nominate Eli Whitney Debevoise II to be U.S. Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

The President announced his intention to appoint J. Anthony Poleo as a member of the Committee for Purchase from People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled (Department of Defense).

**Nominations
Submitted to the Senate**

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted February 12

Carol D'Amico, of Indiana, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the National Board for Education Sciences for a term expiring November 28, 2010 (reappointment).

Perry R. Eaton, of Alaska, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development for a term expiring May 19, 2012, vice A. David Lester, term expired.

Ford M. Fraker, of Massachusetts, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia.

David C. Geary, of Missouri, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the National Board for Education Sciences for a term expiring November 28, 2010, vice Roberto Ibarra Lopez, term expired.

Eric Alan Hanushek, of California, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the National Board for Education Sciences for a term expiring November 28, 2010 (reappointment).

Janis Herschkowitz, of Pennsylvania, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the National Consumer Cooperative Bank for a term of 3 years, vice Rafael Cuellar, term expired.

Marylyn Andrea Howe, of Massachusetts, to be a member of the National Council on Disability for a term expiring September 17, 2008, vice Glenn Bernard Anderson, term expired.

Sonya Kelliher-Combs, of Alaska, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development for a term expiring May 19, 2008, vice Michael A. Naranjo, term expired.

Zalmay Khalilzad, of Maryland, to be Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations during his tenure of service as Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations.

Zalmay Khalilzad, of Maryland, to be the Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and the Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations.

Brenda L. Kingery, of Texas, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development for a term expiring May 19, 2012, vice John Richard Grimes, resigned.

Julie E. Kitka, of Alaska, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development for a term expiring May 19, 2012, vice Katherine L. Archuleta, term expired.

Kristine Mary Miller, of Colorado, to be a member of the Board of Trustees of the Institute of American Indian and Alaska Native Culture and Arts Development for a term expiring May 19, 2010, vice D. Bambi Kraus, term expired.

Lonnie C. Moore, of Kansas, to be a member of the National Council on Disability for a term expiring September 17, 2008, vice Marco A. Rodriguez, term expired.

David George Nason, of Rhode Island, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the National Consumer Cooperative Bank for a term of 3 years, vice Michael Scott, resigned.

Nguyen Van Hanh, of California, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the National Consumer Cooperative Bank for a term of 3 years, vice Alfred Plamann, term expired.

W. Craig Vanderwagen, of Maryland, to be Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response, Department of Health and Human Services (new position).

Cynthia Allen Wainscott, of Georgia, to be a member of the National Council on Disability for a term expiring September 17, 2008, vice Barbara Gillcrift, term expired.

Ellen C. Williams, of Kentucky, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2014 (reappointment).

Withdrawn February 12

Ellen C. Williams, of Kentucky, to be a Governor of the United States Postal Service for a term expiring December 8, 2016 (reappointment), which was sent to the Senate on January 9, 2007.

Submitted February 15

Timothy D. DeGiusti, of Oklahoma, to be U.S. District Judge for the Western District of Oklahoma, vice Timothy D. Leonard, retired.

Richard Sullivan, of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of New York, vice Michael B. Mukasey, retired.

Submitted February 16

Eli Whitney Debevoise II, of Maryland, to be U.S. Executive Director of the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development for a term of 2 years, vice Robert B. Holland III, resigned.

Bijan Rafiekian, of California, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Export-Import Bank of the United States for a term expiring January 20, 2011 (reappointment).

**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 February 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Transcript of a press briefing by Council of Economic Advisers Chairman Edward P. Lazear on the 2007 Economic Report of the President

Fact sheet: The Economic Report of the President

Released February 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Fact sheet: Five Years of USA Freedom Corps: Celebrating American Service

Released February 14

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Washington

Released February 15

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 434

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.J. Res. 20

Fact sheet: Increasing Support To Help the People of Afghanistan Succeed

Released February 16

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary on House of Representatives passage of a nonbinding resolution on Iraq

**Acts Approved
by the President**

Approved February 15

H.R. 434 / Public Law 110-4
To provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and Small Business Investment Act of 1958 through July 31, 2007, and for other purposes

H.J. Res. 20 / Public Law 110-5
Making further continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2007, and for other purposes