

Week Ending Friday, August 10, 2007

Remarks Following a Tour of the Interstate 35W Bridge Damage in Minneapolis, Minnesota

August 4, 2007

On behalf of the citizens of America, I bring prayers from the American people to those who suffered loss of life as a result of the collapse of the 35W bridge here in the Twin Cities. I bring the prayers of those who wonder about whether they'll ever see a loved one again.

First, I want to thank the Governor and the mayor and the Senators, Members of the Congress for working in a coordinated way to respond to this tragedy. I have met with the chief of police and the sheriff, rescue workers, people who represent men and women who are working as hard as they possibly can to save life and to find life, to go under these murky waters to find the facts.

And it's going to take a while, but I have been impressed by not only their determination but have been impressed by their compassion. I have met people that were on the bridge—I met a man who was on the bridge when it collapsed. His instinct was to run to a schoolbus of screaming children and to help bring them to safety.

We have an amazing country, where people's instinct, first instinct, is to help save life. There's—a lot of people's first instincts here in the Twin Cities was to save the lives of somebody who was hurting. And I know the people of this community thank their fellow citizens who did that.

I'm here with the Secretary of Transportation because our message to the Twin Cities is, we want to get this bridge rebuilt as quick as possible; that we understand this is a main artery of life here; that people count on this bridge and this highway system to get to work. There's a lot of paperwork involved with government. One of our jobs is to work with the Governor and the mayor and the Senators and the Members of the

Congress to cut through that paperwork and to see if we can't get this bridge rebuilt in a way that not only expedites the flow of traffic but in a way that can stand the test of time.

I make no promises on a timetable. I do promise that Mary Peters, the Secretary of Transportation, is going to be in charge of this project. I do promise she's going to listen to the local authorities to find out what the folks here need. I do promise that when she sees roadblocks and hurdles in the way of getting the job done, she'll do everything she can to eliminate them.

Out of these tragedies can come a better life. And I, having visited with the people here, believe that not only are they committed to a better life, not only are they committed to turning something ugly into something good, but it's going to happen.

So I'm proud to be with you. Thank you for your leadership. God bless the people of this part of the world. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:40 a.m. at the Lower Street Anthony Falls Lock and Dam, St. Paul District. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota; Mayor R.T. Rybak of Minneapolis, MN; Senators Norm Coleman and Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota; Timothy Dolan, chief, Minneapolis Police Department, MN; Richard W. Stanek, sheriff, Hennepin County, MN; and Gary Babineau, a truckdriver from Blaine, MN, who helped rescue schoolchildren trapped by the bridge collapse.

Statement on Senate Passage of Intelligence Reform Legislation

August 4, 2007

Last night the United States Senate passed legislation to give our intelligence professionals the legal tools and authority they need to keep America safe. I appreciate the hard work they did to find common ground to pass this critical bill. Today the House of Representatives has an opportunity to consider