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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, September 21, 2007

The President's Radio Address

September 15, 2007

Good morning. This week, General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker testified before Congress on the progress of America's strategy in Iraq, including the surge in forces. They agreed that our coalition faces formidable challenges. Yet they also said that security conditions are improving; that our forces are seizing the initiative from the enemy; and that the troop surge is working.

Because of this progress, General Petraeus now believes we can maintain our security gains with fewer U.S. troops. He's recommended a force reduction of 5,700 troops in Iraq by Christmas, and he expects that by July we will be able to reduce our troop levels in Iraq further, from 20 combat brigades to 15. He's also recommended that in December we begin a transition to the next phase of our strategy in Iraq, in which our troops will shift over time from leading operations to partnering with Iraqi forces, and eventually to overwatching those forces.

I have accepted General Petraeus's recommendations, and I have directed that he and Ambassador Crocker deliver another report to Congress in March. At that time, they will provide a fresh assessment of the situation in Iraq and of the troop levels we need to meet our national security objectives. The principle that guides my decisions on troop levels is "return on success." The more successful we are, the more troops can return home. And in all we do, I will ensure that our commanders on the ground have the troops and flexibility they need to defeat the enemy.

Anbar Province is a good example of the progress we are seeing in Iraq. Last year, an intelligence report concluded that Anbar had been lost to Al Qaida. But local sheiks asked for our help to push back the terrorists—and so we sent an additional 4,000 marines to Anbar as part of the surge. Together, local sheiks, Iraqi forces, and coalition troops drove the terrorists from the capital of Ramadi and other population centers. Today, citizens who once feared beheading for talking to our troops now come forward to tell us where the terrorists are hiding. And young Sunnis who once joined the insurgency are now joining the Army and police.

The success in Anbar is beginning to be replicated in other parts of Iraq. In Diyala, a Province that was once a sanctuary for extremists, is now the site of a growing popular uprising against the extremists. In Baghdad, sectarian killings are down, and life is beginning to return to normal in many parts of the city. Groups of Shi'a extremists and Iranian-backed militants are being broken up, and many of their leaders are being captured or killed. These gains are a tribute to our military, to Iraqi forces, and to an Iraqi Government that has decided to take on the extremists.

The success of a free Iraq is critical to the security of the United States. If we were to be driven out of Iraq, extremists of all strains would be emboldened. Al Qaida could find new recruits and new sanctuaries. And a failed Iraq could increase the likelihood that our forces would someday have to return and confront extremists even more entrenched and even more deadly. By contrast, a free Iraq will deny Al Qaida a safe haven. It will counter the destructive ambitions of Iran. And it will serve as a partner in the fight against terrorism.

In this struggle, we have brave allies who are making great sacrifices to defeat the terrorists. One of these Iraqis was a man named Sheikh Abdul Sattar. He was one of the tribal leaders I met on my recent visit to Iraq, who was helping us to drive Al Qaida out of Anbar Province. His father was killed by Al Qaida in 2004. And when we met Sheikh Sattar, he told me, quote, "We have suffered a great deal from terrorism. We strongly support the

democracy you have called for." Earlier this week, this brave tribal sheikh was murdered. A fellow Sunni leader declared, "We are determined to strike back and continue our work." We mourn the loss of brave Iraqis like Sheikh Sattar, and we stand with those who are continuing the fight.

If Iraq's young democracy can turn back its enemies, it will mean a more hopeful Middle East and a more secure America. So we will help the Iraqi people defeat those who threaten their future and also threaten ours.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 7:50 a.m. on September 14 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 15. In his remarks, the President referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and Jubeir Rashid, member, Anbar Salvation Council. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 14 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Presidential Determination on Major Drug Transit or Major Illicit Drug Producing Countries for Fiscal Year 2008

September 14, 2007

Presidential Determination No. 2007–33

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Presidential Determination on Major Drug Transit or Major Illicit Drug Producing Countries for Fiscal Year 2008

Pursuant to section 706(1) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2003 (Public Law 107–228)(FRAA), I hereby identify the following countries as major drug transit or major illicit drug producing countries: Afghanistan, The Bahamas, Bolivia, Brazil, Burma, Colombia, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, Guatemala, Haiti, India, Jamaica, Laos, Mexico, Nigeria, Pakistan, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, and Venezuela.

A country's presence on the Majors List is not necessarily an adverse reflection of its government's counternarcotics efforts or level of cooperation with the United States. Consistent with the statutory definition of a major drug transit or drug producing country set forth in section 481(e)(2) and (5) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended (FAA), one of the reasons that major drug transit or illicit drug producing countries are placed on the list is the combination of geographical, commercial, and economic factors that allow drugs to transit or be produced despite the concerned government's most assiduous enforcement measures.

Pursuant to section 706(2)(A) of the FRAA, I hereby designate Burma and Venezuela as countries that have failed demonstrably during the previous 12 months to adhere to their obligations under international counternarcotics agreements and take the measures set forth in section 489(a)(1) of the FAA. Attached to this report are justifications for the determinations on Burma and Venezuela, as required by section 706(2)(B). I have also determined, in accordance with the provisions of section 706(3)(A) of the FRAA, that support for programs to aid Venezuela's democratic institutions is vital to the national interests of the United States.

Although President Karzai has strongly attacked narcotrafficking as the greatest threat to Afghanistan, one third of the Afghan economy remains opium-based, which contributes to widespread public corruption, damage to licit economic growth, and the strengthening of the insurgency. The government at all levels must be held accountable to deter and eradicate poppy cultivation, remove and prosecute corrupt officials, and investigate and prosecute or extradite narcotraffickers and those financing their activities. We are concerned that failure to act decisively now could undermine security, compromise democratic legitimacy, and imperil international support for vital assistance.

In Afghanistan, one model for success can be drawn by comparing the marked differences in cultivation between the northern and southern provinces. Several northern provinces contributed to a decline in poppy cultivation resulting from a mixture of political will and incentives and disincentives, such as public information, alternative development, and eradication. Furthermore, several northern provinces with very low

amounts of poppy are well on their way to becoming poppy free.

Despite the significant progress made in Afghanistan since 2001, the country continues to face tremendous challenges. Our struggle to win hearts and minds, while confronting the insurgency, continues to directly hinge on our ability to help the Afghan government produce visible results. We need to encourage a firm belief among the Afghan people that their national government is capable of delivering an alternative to the preceding decades of conflict. Our reconstruction assistance is an essential instrument to achieve that goal.

Bolivian counternarcotics cooperation has been uneven. The Bolivian government has cooperated closely on interdiction, and operations and seizures have reached record levels. The government is on track to reach 5,600 hectares of eradication this year, surpassing its goal of 5,000 hectares.

However, these measures have been outstripped by replanting and expansion of cultivation in Bolivia, the world's third-largest producer of coca. The Government of Bolivia's policy of "zero cocaine, but not zero coca" has focused primarily on interdiction, to the exclusion of its other essential complements, especially coca crop eradication. We strongly encourage the Government of Bolivia to make its number one priority the reduction and eventual elimination of excess coca crops, a major source of illegal cocaine for the hemisphere, Europe, the United States, and increasingly, for Bolivian citizens. In the area of drug control policy development, we urge the Government of Bolivia to revamp its national drug control strategy to eliminate permissiveness in licit cultivation, to abolish the so-called "cato" exemption, and to tighten controls on the sale of licit coca. As a party to the three major United Nations drug conventions, we urge Bolivia to move quickly to adopt and implement a modern anti-money/counterterrorism financing law, and take concrete steps to strengthen and better enforce precursor chemical controls and its asset forfeiture regime.

The United States enjoys close cooperation with Canada across a broad range of law enforcement issues. We remain concerned that the production of high-potency, indoor-grown marijuana for export to the United States continues to thrive in Canada in part because growers do not consistently face strict legal punishment. The marijuana industry in Canada is becoming increasingly sophisticated, with organized crime groups relying on marijuana sales as the primary source of income and using profits to finance other illegal activities. The production of synthetic drugs such as MDMA/Ecstasy and methamphetamine, some of which are exported to the United States, appears to be on the rise in Canada. The Government of Canada has made a serious effort to curb the diversion of precursor chemicals that are required for methamphetamine production to feed domestic and U.S. illegal markets and has worked productively with the United States in joint law enforcement operations that disrupted drug and currency smuggling operations along both sides of the border.

The Government of Ecuador has made considerable progress in combating narcotics trafficking destined for the United States. However, a dramatic increase in the quantity of cocaine transported toward the United States using Ecuadorian-flagged ships remains an area of serious concern. Effective cooperation and streamlined maritime operational procedures between the U.S. Coast Guard and Ecuadorian Navy are resulting in an increase in the amount of cocaine interdicted. Building on that cooperation, we will work with Ecuador to change the circumstances that make Ecuadorian-flagged vessels and Ecuadorian citizenship so attractive to drug traffickers.

Guinea-Bissau is becoming a warehouse refuge and transit hub for cocaine traffickers from Latin America transporting cocaine to Western Europe. Narcotics traffic is becoming yet another hurdle for Guinea-Bissau as it emerges from civil conflict. International donors and organizations are working to encourage and assist Guinea-Bissau in its efforts to confront organized cocaine trafficking networks that would use the country for warehousing and transshipment. These efforts are certainly appropriate and should be supported and advanced to deter illegal drug activities in Guinea-Bissau.

India has an exemplary record on controlling its licit opium production and distribution process, despite formidable challenges to its efforts. The Government of India can be correctly proud of its diligent law enforcement agencies and the introduction of high-tech methods, including "Smart Cards" for each licensed opium farmer. Recently, Indian enforcement officials identified and destroyed substantial illicit opium poppy cultivation in areas thought to be free of illicit cultivation in the past. Indian officials will want to investigate the circumstances of this surprisingly large illicit cultivation to identify those behind this disquieting phenomenon and arrest, prosecute, and convict them.

Nigeria has made progress on many narcotics control and anti-money laundering benchmarks. There is reason to be hopeful. The Economic and Financial Crimes Commission has seized millions in the proceeds of crime, anti-money laundering efforts have been successful, and Nigeria is cooperating with the international community to improve its efforts against money laundering even more. Still necessary are procedural reforms to streamline extradition procedures. For many narcotics criminals no sanction is more effective than the fear they could face a court and jail time in the countries to which they have trafficked narcotics. Nigeria should also re-double its efforts to use its frequent apprehension of street criminals and couriers to identify and prosecute major drug traffickers.

You are hereby authorized and directed to submit this report under section 706 of the FRAA, transmit it to the Congress, and publish it in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 17.

Teleconference Remarks With Provincial Reconstruction Team Leaders and Brigade Combat Commanders in Iraq

September 17, 2007

Secretary Rice and Secretary Gates, General Pace, members of my national security team have just listened to some briefings from Provincial Reconstruction Teams in Iraq. I want to thank our fellow citizens for serving on the frontline of—in this war against extremists and radicals. I appreciate their dedication, and I appreciate the sacrifice of their families.

General Odierno just briefed us on an interesting statistic. He said that for the week of September 8–15, attack levels across Iraq are the lowest they have been since January of 2006, which, of course, is a time prior to the Samarra bombing. And when you couple that with the grassroots efforts that our PRT—Provincial Reconstruction Teams are making, you begin to get a sense of why I'm confident that we can succeed in Iraq, why I believe that the efforts that we're making toward making sure that an extremists like Al Qaida doesn't have safe haven from which to plot attacks and, at the same time, helping people realize the blessings of liberty, which will yield long-term peace, can happen, can succeed.

And so I told the folks there that, on behalf of a grateful nation, that we thank them for what they're doing. And I look forward to further discussions with those who actually see the progress that is taking place, with those who are living amongst the people and can report firsthand that the success that was reported on by General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker now happens on a—is happening on a daily basis.

Now, there's no question, we got more work to be done. But the question I always ask myself is, is the mission important to the security of the United States? And the answer is, absolutely. And can we be successful? And the answer to that is, yes, we can.

And I want to thank you all very much for seeing to it that we will be successful. Thank you for your time, and we ask for God's blessings on you.

Thank you.

NOTE: The teleconference began at 10:10 a.m. The President spoke from the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Raymond T. Odierno, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Corps—Iraq; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

Remarks on the Nomination of Judge Michael B. Mukasey To Be Attorney General

September 17, 2007

Good morning. I'm pleased to announce my nomination of Judge Michael Mukasey to be the 81st Attorney General of the United States. Judge, thank you for agreeing to serve.

The Attorney General serves as our Nation's chief law enforcement officer. The Attorney General has an especially vital role to play in a time of war, and when we face the challenges—and we face the challenge of protecting our people on a daily basis from deadly enemies, while at the same time protecting our freedom.

Judge Mukasey brings impressive credentials to this task. In 1987, he was nominated by President Ronald Reagan to the United States District Court of the Southern District of New York. It's one of the country's busiest and most respected trial courts. He sat on that court for more than 18 years, and he earned the reputation as a tough, but fair judge. For 6 of those years, he was the chief judge, and he was a sound manager and a strong leader. Throughout his time on the bench, Judge Mukasey was widely admired for his brilliance and his integrity.

Mike has experience in the Justice Department and private practice, as well as having served on the bench. He served 4 years as an Assistant United States Attorney in Manhattan, where he tried many cases and he developed expertise in the workings of the criminal justice system. He's also worked as a partner in a law firm, and he holds degrees from Columbia University and Yale Law School.

Some of Judge Mukasey's most important legal experience is in the area of national security. Judge Mukasey presided over the trial of the terrorist known as "the Blind Sheikh" and his codefendants in the conspiracy to destroy prominent New York City landmarks, including bombing of the World Trade Center in 1993.

Before the 9/11 attacks, this was one of the most important terrorism cases in our Nation's history, and the verdict in that case was affirmed on appeal. In affirming the convictions, the appeals court signaled out the judge for praise. I found it very interesting of—what they said. Here's what they wrote: "The Honorable Michael B. Mukasey presided with extraordinary skill and patience, assuring fairness to the prosecution and to each defendant, and helpfulness to the jury. His was an outstanding achievement in the face of challenges far beyond those normally endured by a trial judge."

When the World Trade Center was attacked again, Judge Mukasey quickly reopened his court, even though it was just blocks from Ground Zero. He recognized the importance of maintaining a functioning justice system in the midst of a national emergency. He and other judges in his district worked day and night to ensure that applications for warrants were processed, investigations could proceed, and the rule of law was upheld.

Judge Mukasey is clear-eyed about the threat our Nation faces. As a judge and a private lawyer, he's written on matters of constitutional law and national security. He knows what it takes to fight this war effectively, and he knows how to do it in a manner that is consistent with our laws and our Constitution. And when confirmed by the Senate as Attorney General, he will work to ensure that our law enforcement and intelligence officers have the tools they need to protect the United States and our citizens.

When he takes his place at the Department of Justice, he will succeed another fine judge, Alberto Gonzales. From his days as a supreme court justice in Texas to his years as White House Counsel and as Attorney General of the United States, this honorable and decent man has served with distinction. I've known Al and his family for more than a decade. He's a dear friend and a trusted adviser. I'm going to miss him, and I wish Al and Becky all the best.

With Mike Mukasey, the Justice Department will be in the hands of a great lawyer and an accomplished public servant. Mike has shown good judgment in the courtroom; he's shown good judgment outside the courtroom. After all, he married a teacher. And we welcome Susan here, as well as son Marc and daughter Jessica. Thank you all for coming. He's also brought his sister, Rhoda, and

brother-in-law, Norm. I want to thank you all for supporting Mike as he takes on this important responsibility for our country.

It's a pivotal time for our Nation, and it's vital that the position of Attorney General be filled quickly. I urge the Senate to confirm Judge Mukasey promptly. Until the judge is confirmed, Assistant Attorney General Paul Keisler will serve as Acting Attorney General. Accepting this assignment requires Peter—I said Peter—Peter Keisler. Accepting this assignment requires Peter to delay the departure date he announced earlier this month, and I appreciate his willingness to do so. Peter is the Acting Attorney General. Paul Clement, who agreed to take on this role, will remain focused on his duties as Solicitor General, so he can prepare for the Supreme Court term that begins just 2 weeks from today.

Judge, I'm grateful for answering our Nation's call to serve. I look forward to welcoming you as the next Attorney General of the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:31 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Omar Ahmed Ali Abdel Rahman (also known as "the Blind Sheikh"), former spiritual leader of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and former leader of the Al-Gama'a Al-Islamiyya terrorist organization. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Attorney General-designate Mukasey.

Remarks Following Discussions With Prime Minister Jose Socrates of Portugal

September 17, 2007

The President. Thank you for coming. It has been my honor to welcome the Prime Minister of a steady ally and a good friend to the Oval Office. Not only does Prime Minister Socrates represent a close friend; he also has got an important assignment, and that is to lead the EU right now. And so we had—we discussed our bilateral relations. I asked the Prime Minister, I said, "How would you frame our bilateral relations?" He said, "Good." Well, you know, I feel the same way. And I thank you for coming.

I do want to thank the people of Portugal for supporting your decision to help the people of Iraq and Afghanistan realize the blessings of freedom, and I appreciate that. I know those aren't easy decisions to make, but the people in those countries that believe that they should live in a free society and want to live in a free society appreciate your contributions as well.

And I thank you very much for the comprehensive dialog we've had on issues of common concern as the—in your role as the—at the EU. First, we discussed and confirmed that the transatlantic relations are very important for the United States and the EU. And the Prime Minister said he wants to work closely with the United States, and I said I want to work closely with the Prime Minister to keep the transatlantic ties very strong.

Secondly, we talked about issues like Darfur, Doha. We talked about Kosovo and the Middle East. And both of us are committing to working together to see if we can't solve those problems, or at least put them in a better position.

And so, Mr. Prime Minister, you're welcome here any time. I appreciate that you're setting such a good example for people in your own country and around the world by being an avid exerciser at the ripe old age of 50.

Prime Minister Socrates. Thank you.

President Bush. And you're welcome to come to the Oval Office again. Please.

Prime Minister Socrates. Thank you, Mr. President. It was a very sympathetic conversation with you. And thank you for the invitation and the opportunity to present to you what are the priorities for Europe in the months ahead. In particularly, we had the opportunity to discuss the transatlantic relation and importance to Europe on the relation with the United States. As a matter of fact, I don't see any strategic question for the world that don't demand, require the most—the better relations between Europe and United States.

And thank you also for the opportunity to discuss some of our more delicate matters

in the international agenda, mainly the question of Kosovo and the Middle West problem. I had the opportunity to tell the President how Europe—[*inaudible*]—the declaration on Middle East of the President Bush, the nomination of Tony Blair. And we are feeling that the peace process is moving, and it's very good for Middle East, of course, for Europe, and for the world.

Also, our discussions about Kosovo show that the cooperation between Europe and the United States is very important for safety and for stability in the world. And I guaranteed to the President that the first priority I have in my mind regarding Kosovo is, keep Europe united. And we will do my best in order to face the delicate problem, but important for Europe in order to show a strong and united Europe.

Well, thank you very much.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Thank you. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:10 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Prime Minister Socrates referred to Quartet Representative in the Middle East Tony Blair.

Remarks to Members of Military Support Organizations

September 18, 2007

The President. Thanks for coming. Laura and I are honored to welcome you here to the South Lawn. Welcome to the people's house. First, I'd like to thank Katy Benko for singing the national anthem. It's not only a beautiful morning to sing the national anthem; it's a beautiful setting in which to sing the national anthem. Katy's husband, Ryan, is deployed to Iraq. Katy, make sure you e-mail him and tell him how appreciative we are of your service, and tell him how appreciative all of us are of your voice.

Laura and I want to thank the members of our—my administration for joining us. Mr. Vice President, we're really thrilled you're here. Thank you for coming, sir. Secretary of State Condi Rice is with us today. Madam Secretary, appreciate you being here. Secretary Jim Nicholson of the Veterans Affairs Administration—thanks for coming, Jim.

For you veterans who are here, there is no more solemn obligation by your Government to make sure you have all it takes to—for your health care and for your support. I feel a very strong obligation, since it was my decision that committed young men and women into combat, to make sure our veterans who are coming back from Iraq and Afghanistan get all the help this Government can possibly provide.

I appreciate the Secretary of the Army, Pete Geren, for joining us; the Secretary of the Navy, Don Winter; General "Hoss" Cartwright, Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and his wife, Sandee. By the way, General Cartwright is a marine. I'm not playing to the crowd or anything. [*Laughter*]

I want to welcome members of this crowd who have lost a loved one in this war against terror. Our hearts go out to you. We love you. The best way to honor the sacrifices that your loved one made, as well as the sacrifice you have made, is to accomplish the mission, is to achieve the peace.

Laura and I welcome the families who have got a loved one overseas, whether it be in Iraq or Afghanistan, fighting these extremists and terrorists. The best way to honor your loved one is to make sure that he or she has the full support of the United States Government as you accomplish the mission that we have set out. By the way, for the loved ones here, I fully understand the best way to sustain a volunteer army is to make sure you're happy—[*laughter*]—is to make sure you've got good housing; to make sure that you've got good health care; to make sure that you understand that we know that you're in this fight along with your husband or wife or son or daughter. And that's exactly how this administration feels.

For the veterans who are here, for those of you who are veterans in Iraq and Afghanistan, thank you for volunteering in the face of danger. And for the people who aren't veterans yet, still remain on active duty, thanks for wearing the uniform of the greatest country on the face of the Earth. We're proud of you.

I want to thank our service organizations and those who have come together to support our families and our troops. I can't tell you how important it is for organizations like the

Vets for Freedom or the VFW or the American Legion and other groups, two of you—Gold Star Mothers, got you, okay, thank you—Blue Star Mothers, Gold Star Mothers, all the mothers, yes. Every day is Mother's Day as far as you're concerned, isn't it? [*Laughter*]

Audience member. Don't forget the dads.

The President. And the dads, yes. I knew this was going to happen. [*Laughter*] Yes, the wives, okay, fine. [*Laughter*] Everybody's supporting our troops. I want to thank you for doing it.

It's important people hear from you. It's important people hear your voice. And I want to thank you for organizing. I want to thank you not only for the grassroots support of our families; I want to thank you for going up to Capitol Hill. And here's the message I hope you deliver: The Commander in Chief wants to succeed, and the Commander in Chief takes seriously the recommendations of our military commanders. General Petraeus came back to the United States to deliver the recommendations he made to me. Inherent in his recommendations is, one, his belief we're succeeding; his belief we will succeed. And I ask the United States Congress to support the troop levels and the strategies I have embraced.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Thank you all. When the history books are finally written about this chapter in the war against extremists and radicals, they will recognize certain truths: One, that we recognize that if we were to retreat from the Middle East, the enemy would not be content to remain where they are, but they would follow us here. We recognize that the best way to protect our homeland is to defeat an enemy overseas so we do not have to face them here on the streets of America. And we recognized that liberty is powerful, that liberty will yield the peace that we want for generations to come. They will recognize that this generation of Americans did the hard work now, so that future generations could live in security and peace.

And so on this beautiful morning, we thank you for your steadfast resolve; we appreciate your support of those brave souls who have volunteered in the face of the danger. We ask for God's blessings on the families and our troops in harm's way. And we thank you from the bottom of our collective hearts. God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:07 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

Remarks Following a Visit to the National Security Agency at Fort Meade, Maryland

September 19, 2007

Good morning. I have just received a briefing from Director McConnell and Lieutenant General Alexander as well as other members of my national security team. I first want to thank the men and women who work out here for their dedication and their hard work. The work they're doing here is necessary to protect our country from an enemy who would like to attack us again. The people who work out here understand that the Federal Government has no more urgent responsibility than to protect the American people.

Every day, our intelligence, law enforcement, and homeland security professionals confront enemies who are smart, who are ruthless, and who are determined to murder innocent people to achieve their objectives. It is the job of Congress to give the professionals the tools they need to do their work as effectively as possible.

You don't have to worry about the motivation of the people out here; what we do have to worry about is to make sure that they have all the tools they need to do their job. One of the most important tools they use is the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, or FISA. The law provides a critical legal foundation that allows our intelligence community to monitor terrorist communications while protecting the freedoms of the American people. Unfortunately, the law is dangerously out of date.

When FISA was passed nearly 30 years ago, the legal protections were based on differences in the way that domestic and overseas communications were transmitted. New technologies have come into being since the

law was written. Technologies like the disposable cell phone or the Internet eliminated many of the differences. So one of the consequences of the way the law was originally drafted is that when technology changed, legal protections meant only for the people in the United States began applying to terrorists on foreign soil. As a result, our intelligence professionals reported that they were missing a significant amount of real-time intelligence needed to protect the American people. So earlier this year, Director McConnell sent Congress legislation to fix the problem.

In August, a bipartisan majority in Congress passed the Protect America Act. This law has helped close a critical intelligence gap, allowing us to collect important foreign intelligence and information about terrorist plots. The problem is, the law expires on February 1st—that's 135 days from today. The threat from Al Qaida is not going to expire in 135 days.

So I call on Congress to make the Protect America Act permanent. The need for action is clear. Director McConnell has warned that unless the FISA reforms in the Act are made permanent, our national security professionals will lose critical tools they need to protect our country. Without these tools, it'll be harder to figure out what our enemies are doing to train, recruit, and infiltrate operatives into America. Without these tools, our country will be much more vulnerable to attack.

Unfortunately, some in Congress now want to restrict the tools. These restrictions would impede the flow of information that helps us protect our people. These restrictions would reopen gaps in our intelligence that we had just closed. As I did in August, in evaluating any FISA bill, I will ask Director McConnell whether the legislation gives him what he needs to protect our Nation. The question I'm going to ask is, do our professionals have the tools necessary to do the job to protect the American people from further attack?

In addition to making the Protection America Act permanent, I urge Congress to take up other critical proposals included in the comprehensive FISA reform my administration submitted last April. It's particularly important for Congress to provide meaningful liability protection to those companies now facing multibillion dollar lawsuits only because they are believed to have assisted in efforts to defend our Nation following the 9/11 attacks. Additionally, without this protection, state secrets could be revealed in connection with those lawsuits and our ability to protect our people would be weakened.

At stake in this debate is more than a piece of legislation. The decisions Congress makes will directly affect our ability to save American lives. I look forward to working with Congress to enact this legislation as quickly as possible, so that our intelligence officials will continue to have the tools they need to keep the American people safe. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Keith B. Alexander, USA, Director, National Security Agency.

Statement on the Death of Parliament Member Antoine Ghanem of Lebanon

September 19, 2007

I strongly condemn today's horrific assassination of Lebanese Member of Parliament Antoine Ghanem. I extend my personal condolences to his family and the families of the innocent persons who were murdered alongside him in Beirut.

Since October 2004, there has been a tragic pattern of political assassinations and attempted assassinations designed to silence those Lebanese who courageously defend their vision of an independent and democratic Lebanon. Today's cowardly attack comes days before the Lebanese Parliament is scheduled to convene to elect a new President. The United States opposes any attempts to intimidate the Lebanese people as they seek to exercise their democratic right to select a President without foreign interference. We will continue to stand shoulder to shoulder with the Lebanese people as they resist attempts by the Syrian and Iranian regimes and their allies to destabilize Lebanon and undermine its sovereignty.

I call on the international community to support the Government of Lebanon in its efforts to bring to justice the perpetrators of

these violent attacks and to stand with the citizens of Lebanon who continue to struggle to protect their freedom.

Remarks on the Resignation of Mike Johanns as Secretary of Agriculture

September 20, 2007

President Bush. Good morning. Mike Johanns has informed me that he plans to return home to Nebraska, which means that his service as Secretary of Agriculture must come to an end. Mike has been an outstanding member of my Cabinet. I knew he would be when I asked him to become the Secretary of Agriculture. I've known him for a long time. I've admired the fact that he is not only a decent person and an honest person, but he's a person who can get some things done.

So I accepted his resignation, and Laura and I bid Mike and Stephanie a warm farewell. And I thank him from the bottom of my heart for leaving a State he loves to come here to Washington, DC, to work in an—to work as the Secretary of Agriculture. You know, Mike brought with him a lot of practical farm experience. After all, he was the proud son of a dairy farmer. He understands the importance of the land. He worked tirelessly on behalf of farmers and ranchers.

And Mike Johanns did an outstanding job as the Secretary of Agriculture. He brought focus and energy to the Department. He was a champion of renewable fuels. He expanded the Department's commitment to conservation. He worked endlessly to open up foreign markets for American beef. He provided timely assistance to farmers and ranchers devastated by natural disasters. I couldn't have asked for a better Secretary of Agriculture.

He worked hard to put in motion a good farm bill. I remember when Mike came here to the Oval, he said to me, he said, "What I'm going to do is, I'm going to travel the country and reach out to the stakeholders to lay the foundation for farm legislation." And that's exactly what he did. And I got feedback from all around America that Mike Johanns listened. He wisely shepherded the process in such a way that we've got a good farm bill in front of the Congress. He set the framework for success, and I'm confident we can get a good bill passed.

So I want to thank you for your good work getting this teed up.

Secretary Johanns. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. He's got a good team over at the Secretary of—at the Department of Agriculture. In other words, Mike understands that you've got to surround yourself with good folks. And so I feel very comfortable asking Chuck Connor, the Deputy Secretary, to serve as the Acting Secretary. And I want to thank Chuck for his good work.

Mike came by the White House here a couple of days ago, and he asked for my advice—and I appreciate it. Everybody likes to have their counsel sought. And during the discussion, he told me he was interested in continuing to serve America, but in a different role. And I asked him if this was something he was seriously considering. In other words, sometimes you get these rumors out there in the political process where somebody feels like they've got to say, yes, I'm interested. But no question in my mind that Mike loves Nebraska, and he's serious about going home and possibly serving the Nation in a different capacity.

And my answer was—to Mike was, I support you, and I encourage you to follow your heart. If it's Mike's decision and Nebraska's choice, he would make an outstanding Member of the United States Senate. There is no doubt in my mind.

And so I want to thank you for your service; thank you for your friendship; thank you for your commitment to America's farmers and ranchers and our country. And Laura and I wish you all the very best.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:27 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary Johanns.

The President's News Conference

September 20, 2007

The President. Good morning. In just 10 days, the State Children's Health Insurance Program, known as SCHIP, is set to expire.

This important program helps children whose families cannot afford private health insurance, but do not qualify for Medicaid to get coverage they need.

I have strongly supported SCHIP as a Governor, and I have done so as President. My 2008 budget proposed to increase SCHIP funding by $5 billion over 5 years. It's a 20-percent increase over current levels of funding. Unfortunately, instead of working with the administration to enact this funding increase for children's health, Democrats in Congress have decided to pass a bill they know that will be vetoed. One of their leaders has even said such a veto would be, quote, "a political victory."

As if this weren't irresponsible enough, Congress is waiting until the SCHIP program is just about to expire before getting a final bill passed. In other words, Members of Congress are putting health coverage for poor children at risk so they can score political points in Washington. The legislation would raise taxes on working people and would raise spending by between $35 to $50 billion. Their proposal would result in taking a program meant to help poor children and turning it into one that covers children in households with incomes of up to $83,000 a year.

The proposal would move millions of American children who now have private health insurance into Government-run health care. Our goals should be for children who have no health insurance to be able to get private coverage, not for children who already have private health insurance to be able to get Government coverage.

What I'm describing here is a philosophical divide that exists in Washington over the best approach for health care. Democratic leaders in Congress want to put more power in the hands of Government by expanding Federal health care programs. Their SCHIP plan is an incremental step toward the goal of Government-run health care for every American.

I have a different view. I believe the best approach is to put more power in the hands of individuals by empowering people and their doctors to make health care decisions that are right for them. Instead of expanding SCHIP beyond its original purpose, we should return it to its original focus, and that is helping poor children, those who are most in need. And instead of encouraging people to drop private coverage in favor of Government plans, we should work to make basic private health insurance affordable and accessible for all Americans.

My administration will continue working with Congress to pass a responsible SCHIP bill. In the meantime, Congress has an obligation to make sure health insurance for poor children does not lapse. If they fail to do so, more than a million children could lose health coverage. Health coverage for these children should not be held hostage while political ads are being made and new polls are being taken. Congress must pass a clean, temporary extension of the current SCHIP program that I can sign by September the 30th. And that's the date when the program expires.

I've instructed Secretary of Health and Human Services Mike Leavitt, who has joined us today, to work with States on ways to mitigate the damage that would result if Congress allows this program to lapse. Our goal in passing legislation should be getting something done for those in need, not getting nothing done so politicians in Washington can claim a political victory.

Mike Leavitt is going to answer questions, if you have any, after my press conference. You looked a little concerned as to whether or not I'd answer any questions. And now I'm happy to take any questions you have, starting with Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

National Economy/Federal Budget

Q. Mr. President, economists say that the Nation is at increasing risk of recession. What do you say?

The President. I say that the fundamentals of our Nation's economy are strong. Inflation is down. Job markets are steady and strong. After all, the national unemployment rate is 4.6 percent. Corporate profits appear to be strong. Exports are up. There is no question that there is some unsettling times in the housing market and credits associated with the housing market. And that's why I look forward to working with Congress to modernize the FHA loans so that people can refinance their homes and to change the Tax

Code so that if somebody renegotiates a loan, they don't have to pay a penalty, a tax penalty, in so doing.

I'm optimistic about our economy. I would be pessimistic, however, if the Congress has its way and raises taxes. I believe the worst thing that can happen now is to allow the Congress to do that which they have said they want to do, which is to raise the taxes on people, and—because I think taking money out of the hands of investors and consumers and small-business owners would weaken the economy.

And so, as I say, I'm optimistic. But I would be pessimistic if I thought Congress was going to get their way. And they're not; they're not going to raise taxes.

Q. Do you think there's a risk of a recession? How do you rate that?

The President. You know, you need to talk to economists. I think I got a B in Econ 101. I got an A, however, in keeping taxes low—[*laughter*]—and being fiscally responsible with the people's money. We've submitted a plan that will enable this budget to become balanced by 2012 so long as Congress learns to set priorities. And we can balance the budget without raising taxes.

Caren [Caren Bohan, Reuters].

Iran

Q. Thank you. The French Foreign Minister has raised the possibility of war with Iran. Is there a risk that the escalating rhetoric over Iran could increase the chances of war, and what would be your message to the U.N. next week regarding Iran?

The President. I have consistently stated that I'm hopeful that we can convince the Iranian regime to give up any ambitions it has in developing a weapons program, and do so peacefully. And that ought to be the objective of any diplomacy. And to this end, we are working with allies and friends to send a consistent message to the Iranians that there is a better way forward for them than isolation—financial isolation and/or economic sanctions.

I believe it's imperative that we continue to work in a multilateral fashion to send that message. And one place to do so is at the United Nations. We're also talking to different finance ministers about how we can send a message to the Iranian Government that the free world is just not going to tolerate the development of know-how in how to build a weapon or at least gain the ability to make a weapon.

And the reason why is, is because it's very important for us to take the threats coming out of the mouth of the President of Iran very seriously. He's a person that is, you know—constantly talks about the use of force to—on Israel, for example, and Israel is our very firm and strong ally.

I also—it's very important for the Iranian people to know that our—the United States recognizes the grand tradition and history of Iran and that we respect the people of Iran. We just believe that their Government has made choices that make it difficult for them to realize their dreams, to realize their full potential. The Iranian economy is suffering—some of it through mismanagement, some of it as a result of international pressures. And the people of Iran have got to know that some of the suffering that they're having inside their country is caused by their Government, its inability to work with the world in a responsible way regarding their desire to enrich uranium. So we'll keep the pressure on them, and again, the objective, of course, is to solve this peacefully.

David [David Gregory, NBC News]. Welcome back.

Israel and Syria

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Where have you been?

Q. I've been around.

The President. You've been doing those shows. [*Laughter*]

Q. Sir, Israeli opposition leader Netanyahu has now spoken openly about Israel's bombing raid on a target in Syria earlier in the month. I wonder if you could tell us what the target was, whether you supported this bombing raid, and what do you think it does to change the dynamic in an already hot region in terms of Syria and Iran and the dispute with Israel and whether the U.S. could be drawn into any of this?

The President. I'm not going to comment on the matter. Would you like another question?

Q. Did you support it?

The President. I'm not going to comment on the matter.

Q. Can you comment about your concerns that come out of it at all, about for the region?

The President. No. Saying I'm not going to comment on the matter means I'm not going to comment on the matter. You're welcome to ask another question, if you'd like to, on a different subject.

Iraq

Q. I'll ask you about Iraq. Efforts to curtail the deployment of troops is an ongoing debate right now. One of the things you spoke about in your address last week had to do with impatience with the Iraqi Government. And you spoke about that, but not in much detail. How is that dynamic changing, your level of frustration with the lack of political progress? And how long can Americans reasonably expect you to wait before you take some kind of action that really forces the Iraqi Government's hand to reach the goals of reconciliation that you set for them?

The President. In my speech, I made it clear that there has to be a change in security for there to be reconciliation. And I also said that progress will yield fewer troops. In other words—return on success is what I said.

There are two types of reconciliation, David. One is that reconciliation, that very visible reconciliation that happens through the passage of law. In other words, it's reconciliation that shows the Iraqi people that people from different backgrounds can get along and, at the same time, that Government can function. Clearly there needs to be work there. In other words, there needs to be the passage of law. For example, we strongly believe that an oil revenue sharing law will send a message to Sunni, Shi'a, and Kurd alike that there is an effort at the national level to achieve reconciliation.

Having said that, however, there is a functioning government. And the reason I bring—I guess my point is this, that in spite of the fact they haven't passed a law, there is the sharing of oil revenues on a relatively equitable basis. The other—and so we'll continue to work with the Government to insist and impress upon them the need for there to be the passage of law, whether it be Provincial election laws or de-Ba'athification law or the oil law.

There is local reconciliation taking place. I had a fascinating conversation in the Roosevelt Room earlier this week with members of Provincial Reconstruction Teams from around Iraq, who talked about how people are sick and tired of murder and violence and that they expect their local governments and their central Government to be more responsive to their needs. And local governments are beginning to respond.

Part of the reason why there is not this kind of instant democracy in Iraq is because people are still recovering from Saddam Hussein's brutal rule. I thought an interesting comment was made when somebody said to me—I heard somebody say, where's Mandela? Well, Mandela is dead because Saddam Hussein killed all the Mandelas. He was a brutal tyrant that divided people up and split families, and people are recovering from this. So there's a psychological recovery that is taking place. And it's hard work for them. And I understand it's hard work for them. Having said that, I'm not going to give them a pass when it comes to the central Government's reconciliation efforts.

I also said in my speech, local politics will drive national politics. And I believe that. I believe that as more reconciliation takes place at the local level, you'll see a more responsive central Government.

Yes. Axelrod [Jim Axelrod, CBS News].

Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates/ Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Your Defense Secretary, Robert Gates, was recently asked by New York Times columnist David Brooks if knowing what he knows now, invading Iraq was a good idea. And I believe your Defense Secretary answered, "I don't know." Does that represent daylight with you? Is that second-guessing? Have you spoken to the Defense Secretary? And does that change your mind at all?

The President. I think he made it pretty clear the removal of Saddam—I don't know about this column, but I know his previous statements, he said, getting rid of Saddam Hussein was the right decision. But I haven't talked to him about the column. If I had to

ask everybody in my Government to respond to columns and news stories, that's all I'd be doing, is talking to people in my Government.

I am absolutely convinced Secretary Gates knows that removing Saddam was the right thing, and I'm absolutely convinced he believes we will succeed in Iraq. And so I've got a lot of trust in the man. He's doing a fine job as the Secretary.

Martha [Martha Raddatz, ABC News].

Israel and Syria

Q. You won't comment on what the Israelis may or may not have done——

The President. That's an accurate statement. I hope you got that from my answer. Now you're afraid—yes, of course, now Gregory is worried I'm actually going to comment, see.

Q. That's what I'm hoping.

The President. Well, I'm not going to, so you might want to go to another subject.

North Korea

Q. I know you won't comment on that. But let's talk about whether or not you believe that North Korea is aiding Syria with a nuclear program.

The President. We have made it clear and will continue to make it clear to the North Koreans through the six-party talks that we expect them to honor their commitment to give up weapons and weapons programs. And to the extent that they are proliferating, we expect them to stop that proliferation, if they want the six-party talks to be successful.

In other words, whether it be the exportation of information and/or materials is an important part—it doesn't matter to us whether they do—in terms of the six-party talks, because they're both equally important, I guess is the best way to say it. In other words, we want—it does matter whether—let me rephrase that—it matters whether they are, but the concept of proliferation is equally important as getting rid of programs and weapons.

Q. So you believe they are aiding Syria?

The President. It's a general statement that we expect them not to be proliferating.

Race Relations/Situation in Jena, Louisiana

Q. Mr. President, thousands of people are marching today in Jena, Louisiana, in a racially charged case involving six black students for beating a white student. Also, not far from the White House recently, there was a noose that was found hanging from a tree at a college campus. You have worked very hard to bring blacks and Hispanics into your party, but the fallout from the immigration debate and even some Republican Presidential candidates' refusal to go to debates at Univision as well as Morgan State calls into question whether or not the state of race relations is deteriorating in this country and specifically in your party. Your thoughts?

The President. My advice to whoever will be our nominee is to reach out to the African American community as well as other communities, because I believe that we've got a very strong record when it comes to empowerment, when it comes to education or homeownership or small-business formation.

The events in Louisiana are—have saddened me. I understand the emotions. The Justice Department and the FBI are monitoring the situation down there, and all of us in America want there to be fairness when it comes to justice. We've got a good record to run on, and my advice to our candidate would be to run on it.

Q. Do you think this is a defining moment in race relations?

President Ahmadi-nejad of Iran's Upcoming Visit to New York City

Q. Mr. President, Iran's President, Ahmadi-nejad, says he wants to go to Ground Zero and place a wreath there. There is some objection to that in New York. What are your thoughts?

The President. My thoughts are that the local police will make the proper decision and that if they decide for him not to go—like it looks like they have—I can understand why they would not want somebody who is running a country who is a state sponsor of terror down there at the site.

Roger [Roger Runningen, Bloomberg News].

National Economy/Federal Budget

Q. Mr. President, back to the economy for a moment. The Fed took its half-point rate cut the other day. Do you think that was enough to stave off recession? And if not, are there other steps you're prepared to do financially?

The President. Roger, I do not comment on the decisions made by the Fed. I will comment on Ben Bernanke; I think he's doing a fine job. The White House and the Congress are responsible for fiscal policy. The worst decision the Congress could make would be to raise taxes during this period. We don't need to raise taxes in order to fund budget priorities. We have submitted a budget that shows we can get to balance by 2012 without raising taxes, and its one of the reasons I feel so strongly about—that's why I'm not going to let the taxes be raised.

Fletch [Michael Fletcher, Washington Post].

Situation in Jena, Louisiana

Q. What do you say to those who criticize you for not speaking out on the situation in Louisiana, particularly given your passionate remarks after Hurricane Katrina about race? People say you've fallen silent on this.

The President. As you know, this is an ongoing trial; there's litigation taking place. I feel strongly that there ought to be fair justice. And I just spoke out on it.

National Economy/Social Security Reform

Q. Mr. President, former Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld recently was asked if he missed you. He said, no. [*Laughter*]

The President. Wait a minute. I miss him.

Q. Alan Greenspan has come out with a book, a recent book, criticizing you for being fiscally irresponsible. And they're not the first former Government officials to come out and be critical of you. And I'm wondering two things. First, do you feel betrayed by some of these people who have served you and then have come out and criticized you? And then, more particularly, can you respond to Greenspan's criticism?

The President. My feelings are not hurt. You might have been a little selective in quoting Donald Rumsfeld, which I know you didn't mean to be, you know. I respect Secretary Rumsfeld; I believe he did a fine job. And I respect Alan Greenspan. I respectfully disagree with Alan Greenspan when it comes to saying that this administration didn't handle the fiscal issues we faced in good fashion. As a matter of fact, we did.

The deficit, as a percent of GDP, is low. It's lower than the 30-year average. We have submitted a plan to balance the budget. We dealt with a recession, a terrorist attack, and corporate scandals. And we did it by cutting taxes. The tax cuts worked. The economy recovered. People are working. Interest rates are low.

I'm a supply-sider. I believe supply-side economics, when properly instituted, enables us to achieve certain objectives. One, there's people finding work, and there's hope in the economy. Two, that supply-side economics yields additional tax revenues. And if we're smart about how we manage the fiscal budget, it leads to balance, and that's what we have done. We are fighting a war at the same time that we're headed toward balance. In other words, we're making sure our troops get the money they need and veterans get the benefits they need.

The former Chairman Greenspan and I spent a lot of time talking about the unfunded liabilities inherent in Social Security and Medicare. And he's concerned about those unfunded liabilities, as am I. And that's why I went in front of the Congress, in more than one occasion, talking about how to reform Social Security so that young people who are working aren't paying payroll taxes into a system that's going broke.

I'm not going to give up on entitlement reform, but it can require part—members of both parties to recognize we have a problem that ought to be solved now. It's time to—I thought it was time to come together a couple of years ago, and that wasn't the political will in Congress. And I'm not so sure we're going to find it now, but I'm going to keep trying because, like the Chairman, I understand that the biggest issue we've got with the deficit are those deficits inherent in these entitlement programs.

John [John McKinnon, Wall Street Journal].

Government of Dubai and NASDAQ Stock Market/Trade/U.S. Foreign Policy

Q. Mr. President, there's a deal taking shape this morning where the Government of Dubai would buy a share of—a stake in the NASDAQ stock market. And there is some concern being expressed on Capitol Hill about this. It's another deal involving, you know, people overseas that we might not trust. What's your reaction to it? And also, what's your level of concern about protectionism in general?

The President. My reaction is, is that we have a reform process in place that will be able to deal with this issue. In other words, we're going to take a good look at it as to whether or not it has any national security implications involved in the transaction. And I'm comfortable that the process will go forward.

John, I'm also—I am concerned about protectionism. I'm concerned about it because if the United States loses its confidence when it comes to trading, it will make it less likely our economy would grow. And I just told you, one of the underpinnings of our support is the fact that exports—for economic vitality is the fact that exports are up, and workers benefit when we're selling products overseas. And I believe these free trade agreements will be an interesting test of protectionism, whether protectionism is real.

We've got four trade agreements that we've negotiated that we want to get passed, and there's going to be some crucial votes coming up here pretty soon in the Congress. And we'll work hard to get all four trade agreements through. And if they don't get through, it is a sign that the protectionists are beginning to be on the ascendancy here in Washington, DC, and that would be a mistake. And for people who are deeply concerned about poverty around the world like I am, the best way to help lift people out of poverty is through free trade agreements. And that's why we're dedicated to the Doha round that Secretary Schwab is so actively engaged in—not Secretary Schwab, trade negotiator Schwab. And we're committed to reach an accord with these nations so that—because trade helps poor people realize a better life. And it's a proven fact.

I'm also worried about isolationism. Isolationism tends to run hand in hand with protectionism. You'll find isolationists are those who say it's not our business what happens overseas; it doesn't matter if there's a free society in the heart of the Middle East, as far as our long-term security and peace. I just strongly reject that. I think it does matter a lot that the United States is working with other nations to promote liberty and freedom because I believe liberty is a change agent. Liberty can help hostile parts of the world become peaceful parts of the world.

You know, our strategy in dealing with these extremists who still want to attack us is on the one hand, chase them and find them and bring them to justice, and on the other hand, help change the conditions that caused 19 kids to get on airplanes and come and kill nearly 3,000 citizens on our soil. The best way to do that is to be active with foreign policy. It's not to lose faith in values, but to actively promote universal values. And isolationists would say, it's not worth it, doesn't matter to the United States of America. Well, I think it does matter, and I think it matters a lot.

Herman [Ken Herman, Cox News], have you got a question?

2008 Presidential Elections

Q. Yes, sir, thank you.

The President. You're welcome.

Q. Mr. President, for Republicans seeking election next year are you an asset or a liability?

The President. Strong asset. [*Laughter*] Ann [Ann Compton, ABC News].

Q. Can I follow?

The President. No. [*Laughter*] I knew I made a mistake calling on you in the first place. [*Laughter*]

Q. He's known you a long time.

The President. Yes, he has.

Q. And you got an MBA?

The President. The problem is, I called him, and I've known him for a long time.

Q. You knew what you were getting into. [*Laughter*]

The President. Yes. Look, candidates who go out and say that the United States is vulnerable to attack and we're going to make

sure our professionals have the tools necessary to protect us are going to do well. Candidates who go out and say that helping these Iraqis realize the benefits of democracy are going to do well. Candidates who go out and say that it's very important for the United States to have clear principles when it comes to foreign policy, they'll do well. Candidates who say, we're not going to raise your taxes will do well.

Ann.

Taxes/SCHIP Legislation

Q. Quick follow, if I may, Mr. President? [*Laughter*]

The President. No, you may not. [*Laughter*]

Q. Mr. President, back to your grade point average on holding the line on taxes——

The President. Whew, I thought you were going to talk about the actual grade point average. [*Laughter*] I remind people that, like when I'm with Condi, I say, she's the Ph.D., and I'm the C student. And just look at who's the President and who's the adviser. But go ahead. [*Laughter*]

Q. If there is a tax increase on cigarettes to fund the SCHIP program, is that a tax increase you oppose?

The President. It does. We don't need to raise taxes. What I want is the Congress to be focused on making sure poor children get the health insurance they were promised. Instead, Congress has made a decision to expand the eligibility up to $80,000. That's not the intent of the program. The program was, find poor children and help them with health insurance. Their vision is, expand the eligibility so that people making up to 80 will be eligible for this program. I believe this is a step toward federalization of health care. I know that their proposal is beyond the scope of the program, and that's why I'm going to veto the bill.

Let's see, Mark [Mark Smith, Associated Press Radio].

Iraq/War on Terror

Q. Mr. President, in January, when you announced your troop surge, you said that its goal was to get all 18 Iraqi Provinces, the security for those Provinces into Iraqi hands by November of this year. The Pentagon is now telling Congress that's not going to happen until July at the earliest. Have the goalposts shifted once more?

The President. No, the goals are the same; achieving those goals have been slower than we thought. And the question is, one, whether or not it's worth it to try to achieve the goals. I believe it's worth it for the security of the country. And the reason why I believe it's for the security of the country is that if we were to leave before the job was done, extremist groups like Al Qaida would be able to gain safe haven. That's what they've said they want. They believe we won't have the will to hang in there and help this Iraqi Government succeed. And they want us out.

And so the goals of helping Iraqis provide their own security remain the same, and the goals are important toward achieving our objective, and our objective is important for the security of the country. I also believe that a democracy in the heart of the Middle East will be a major blow to extremists or radicals wherever they live in the Middle East. And just yesterday, we saw an attack on an anti-Syrian/pro-Lebanese democracy advocate. Now, I don't know who did that, but I do know it is typical of this war we're fighting in, when extremists kill innocent people in order to undermine democracies.

One of the things I feel passionately about is for the United States to recognize what a Middle East would be like if terrorists and extremists were—would have safe haven and were emboldened by a U.S. defeat. And that's why I'm—one, I believe we can succeed, and two, I know we got to succeed—and therefore, have listened carefully to our commanders and our diplomats as to whether or not they think we can succeed, and if so, what do they need to do it. And that's what I talked to the country about.

And so, Mark, yes, the goals are the same. And have we achieved them as fast? No, we haven't. But however, having not achieved them doesn't mean we ought to quit. It means we ought to work hard to achieve the goals, because the end result is the same, whether the goal is done in November or in July, and that is a country that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself and is an ally against these extremists and radicals;

a country which will deny safe haven to the folks who have sworn allegiance to the crowd that attacked us on September the 11th.

A couple of more, and then I'm going to let Leavitt come up here.

Blackwater USA Incident in Iraq

Q. A followup, sir?

The President. Yes, please.

Q. Thank you. You said earlier that people in Iraq are sick and tired of the violence. To what extent has the recent Blackwater incident frayed your relations with Prime Minister Maliki and his Government? And why are outfits like Blackwater above the law in Iraq?

The President. First of all, I have yet to speak to the Prime Minister about this subject. I'll see him in New York next week at the U.N.; I'm confident he'll bring it up. I also appreciate the fact that he's willing to work with the U.S. Government to set up a commission to find out what actually happened. The folks like Blackwater who provide security for the State Department are under rules of engagement. In other words, they have certain rules. And this commission will determine whether or not they violated those rules. And I'm looking forward to finding out what the results are.

Q. Any regrets about that incident and the fact that there were——

The President. Well, let's find out what the facts are first. Obviously, to the extent that innocent life was lost, you know, I'm saddened. Our objective is to protect innocent life. And we've got a lot of brave souls in the theater working hard to protect innocent life. And evidently, some innocent lives were lost. My thoughts and prayers go out to the families. I want to find out the facts about exactly what took place there in the theater, and that's exactly what we're about to find out.

A couple of more here. Wolffe [Richard Wolffe, Newsweek].

Oil Revenue Sharing in Iraq

Q. Thank you, sir.

The President. You looked asleep back there; that's why I was calling on you.

Q. You recently spoke just earlier about the importance of oil revenue sharing in Iraq. Recently, a company called Hunt Oil, run by one of your long-time supporters, Ray Hunt, signed a deal with a Kurdish regional government to drill for oil up there. That deal has come under intense criticism from the national Government in Baghdad. They say it undermines the discussions about oil legislation. What's your opinion of that kind of deal and how it impacts this long-stalled legislation?

The President. Our Embassy also expressed concern about it. I knew nothing about the deal. I need to know exactly how it happened. To the extent that it does undermine the ability for the Government to come up with an oil revenue sharing plan that unifies the country—obviously if it undermines it, I'm concerned.

Yes.

General David H. Petraeus

Q. Mr. President, thank you.

The President. Big Stretch [Richard Keil, Bloomberg News], he's back.

Q. What is your reaction to the MoveOn.org ad that mocked General Petraeus as General "Betray Us" and said that he cooked the books on Iraq? And secondly, would you like to see Democrats, including Presidential candidates, repudiate that ad?

The President. I thought the ad was disgusting, and I felt like the ad was an attack not only on General Petraeus but on the U.S. military. And I was disappointed that not more leaders in the Democrat Party spoke out strongly against that kind of ad. And that leads me to come to this conclusion: That most Democrats are afraid of irritating a left-wing group like MoveOn.org—or more afraid of irritating them than they are of irritating the United States military. That was a sorry deal. And it's one thing to attack me; it's another thing to attack somebody like General Petraeus.

All right. Leavitt is going to answer some questions if you have any for him. Make sure they're—tone them down a little bit; this is his first time in here. Martha, you and Gregory be polite on him. Thank you for your time.

Michael.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 10:46 a.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran; former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa; former Chairman of the Federal Reserve Alan Greenspan; Parliament Member Antoine Ghanem of Lebanon, who was assassinated in Lebanon on September 19; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq. A reporter referred to Minister of Foreign and European Affairs Bernard Kouchner of France.

Message on the Observance of Yom Kippur, 5768

September 20, 2007

For it is a Day of Atonement, on which expiation is made on your behalf before the LORD your God.

Leviticus 23:28

On Yom Kippur, the holiest day of the Jewish year, the faithful leave behind their daily concerns and gather together to draw near to God. This day is a time when Jews everywhere reflect on their lives, seek forgiveness, and find solace in God's merciful nature.

The Shofar's call signals our recommitment to our Creator and to each other. In the year ahead, may we all be reminded of the Almighty's steadfast love for His children and achieve the peace we all seek.

Laura and I send our best wishes for a blessed Yom Kippur.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Proclamation 8177—National POW/MIA Recognition Day, 2007

September 20, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America has been blessed by the brave men and women of our Armed Forces who have answered the call to defend our country and protect liberty around the world. On National POW/MIA Recognition Day, we honor a special group of patriots: those who have been prisoners of war and those who are still missing in action. We remain forever in their debt, and we renew our commitment to them and to their families never to rest until we have accounted for every missing service member.

To commemorate this day, the National League of Families POW/MIA flag is flown over the White House, the Capitol, the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, the Korean War Veterans Memorial, the World War II Memorial, and other locations across our country. This flag is an enduring symbol that reflects our solemn commitment to our courageous service members who have been imprisoned while serving in conflicts around the world and to those who remain missing. America will always remember these heroes, and we underscore our pledge to achieve the fullest possible accounting for every missing member of our Armed Forces.

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 Friday, September 21, 2007, as National POW/MIA Recognition Day. I call upon the people of the United States to join me in honoring and remembering all former American prisoners of war and those missing in action who valiantly served our great country. I also call upon Federal, State, and local government officials and private organizations to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

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

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., September 25, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on September 26.

Proclamation 8178—Family Day, 2007

September 20, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Families are the cornerstone of our Nation. On Family Day, we underscore our dedication to strengthening America's families and recognize the importance that the bonds between parents and children hold for the future of our country.

Parents and family members are the first and most important influence in a child's life. Families offer a stable and nurturing environment by providing love, guidance, support, and comfort. They help young people gain the skills they need to succeed in life and the courage and drive to realize their dreams. By caring for and spending time with their children, parents instill lifelong values and help build a better America.

My Administration is committed to supporting American families. We are working with faith-based and community organizations to promote healthy marriages, responsible fatherhood, and positive youth development. When children are connected to family, community, school, and places of worship, they are more likely to make good choices and reach their full potential.

Families help prepare children for the opportunities and challenges of the 21st century by encouraging them and insisting on high standards. Strong, loving families help young Americans grow into successful adults and build a Nation shining with optimism.

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 September 24, 2007, as Family Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day by engaging in activities that strengthen the bonds between parents and children.

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

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., September 25, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on September 26.

Notice—Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Persons Who Commit, Threaten To Commit, or Support Terrorism

September 20, 2007

On September 23, 2001, by Executive Order 13224, I declared a national emergency with respect to persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism, pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701–1706). I took this action to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States constituted by the grave acts of terrorism and threats of terrorism committed by foreign terrorists, including the terrorist attacks in New York, in Pennsylvania, and against the Pentagon committed on September 11, 2001, and the continuing and immediate threat of further attacks against United States nationals or the United States. Because the actions of these persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the United States, the national emergency declared on September 23, 2001, and the measures adopted on that date to deal with that emergency, must continue in effect beyond September 23, 2007. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing for 1 year the national emergency with respect to persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

George W. Bush

The White House,
September 20, 2007.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:35 a.m., September 20, 2007]

NOTE: This notice was published in the *Federal Register* on September 21.

Message to the Congress on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Persons Who Commit, Threaten To Commit, or Support Terrorism

September 20, 2007

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the national emergency with respect to persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism is to continue in effect beyond September 23, 2007.

The crisis constituted by the grave acts of terrorism and threats of terrorism committed by foreign terrorists, including the terrorist attacks in New York, in Pennsylvania, and against the Pentagon committed on September 11, 2001, and the continuing and immediate threat of further attacks on United States nationals or the United States that led to the declaration of a national emergency on September 23, 2001, has not been resolved. These actions pose a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency declared with respect to persons who commit, threaten to commit, or support terrorism, and maintain in force the comprehensive sanctions to respond to this threat.

George W. Bush

The White House,
September 20, 2007.

Message to the Senate Transmitting a Treaty Between the United States, the United Kingdom, and Northern Ireland Concerning Defense Trade Cooperation

September 20, 2007

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith for Senate advice and consent to ratification the Treaty Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland Concerning Defense Trade Cooperation, done at Washington and London on June 21 and 26, 2007. I transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State concerning this Treaty.

My Administration is prepared to provide to the Senate for its information other relevant documents, including proposed implementing arrangements to be concluded pursuant to the Treaty, relevant correspondence with the Government of the United Kingdom about the Treaty, and proposed amendments to the International Traffic in Arms Regulations.

This Treaty will allow for greater cooperation between the United States and the United Kingdom, enhancing the operational capabilities and interoperability of the armed forces of both countries. I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to this Treaty.

George W. Bush

The White House,
September 20, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 21.

Remarks Honoring 2006 and 2007 NCAA Championship Teams

September 21, 2007

Thank you all. Please be seated. It is a beautiful day to welcome champs to the White House. And I'm honored to stand with some of our country's finest student athletes—and look at some of our finest student athletes—and glad to give you an excuse to skip class. [*Laughter*] But I'm really glad to welcome you here and to congratulate you on being a champion.

I really enjoy a day like today. You didn't get to see, but I got to shake hands with athletes and coaches and people, some of whom have come a long way to be recognized here at the White House. And it is really a lot of fun to be with people who set high standards and work hard to achieve goals, which you've done.

And there are some others here who want to recognize you as well: Senator Lamar Alexander from Tennessee—thanks for coming, Lamar; Lisa Murkowski from Alaska; Senator Gordon Smith and Sharon from Oregon. We're sure glad you all are here. Zach Wamp from the State of Tennessee and Kim, proud you all are here as well. They are here because the States they represent happen to have teams who are champs as well.

I want to welcome all the team captains, the coaches, the school officials, and all the fans who have joined us. You're different—you've come from different schools, different sports, but you deserve to be called "champion."

The first champions I want to recognize are the Arizona State indoor track and field and outdoor track and field champs. I learned a new symbol. [*Laughter*] The women's track team from Arizona State claimed two national championships in 1 year. In the winter, the Sun Devils earned the indoor title; in the spring, the outdoor title. It makes Arizona State one of only three schools in NCAA history to win women's indoor and outdoor track and field championships in the same season. I congratulate Coach Kraft and all the athletes who've joined us today. Thanks for coming.

Coach Pat Casey and the Oregon State baseball team have joined us. Oregon State is here to celebrate two consecutive national championships in baseball. Earlier this summer, the Beavers won all five of their games in the College World Series. That is hard to do. You outscored your opponents 42–16. You trailed for only one inning. You took the lead and never looked back. And as a result, you're the first college baseball team to win back-to-back titles in 10 years. And I'm proud you're here, and congratulations on the job you're doing.

Speaking about repeat champs, the Duke women's golf team is with us today. The ladies of the golf team have now won three NCAA championships in a row and five overall. They're really hard to beat. This spring, the team played through wind and rain to win the championship tournament by 15 strokes. And I want to welcome Coach Brooks and the team here today. Coach Brooks picked up his 102d career win. This is the most in the history of NCAA women's golf. You've got a good coach; you've got good players. When you play hard, you end up right here at the White House. Congratulations, and thanks for coming.

How about the Johns Hopkins men's lacrosse team? Coach Pietramala and the team won a tough championship game. This is not the first time they've been here, by the way. They were here back in 2005. Everybody is going to remember—at least people who pay attention to lacrosse will remember that the Blue Jay team scored a goal in just 12 seconds in the game and hung on to win 12–11 in a tough game. This is the ninth men's lacrosse championship for Johns Hopkins. I congratulate you on carrying on a proud tradition at a fine university, and welcome to the White House.

Pat Summitt knows something about coaching. We're proud to welcome this soon-to-be, if not already, Hall of Fame coach and the ladies basketball team from the University of Tennessee. This team is upholding a long-time tradition for Tennessee women's basketball. After all, this is their seventh national title under Coach Summitt. Here's how the coach described the moment. She said, "To win anything, you have to be a tight team. They believed in each other and obviously had one goal: to cut down the nets."

They did, and we're proud to welcome you here to the White House. Thanks for coming.

Brown University women's crew is with us today. Brown University crew has a lot to celebrate in recent years. After all, they have won the NCAA title five out of the last nine seasons. These women know how to row. [*Laughter*] Brown is the winningest women's crew program in the history of the NCAAs. We wish their coaches all the very best as they deal with a personal problem. I'm sorry they're not here, but these women—if anybody can lift their spirits—because they performed brilliantly. I also appreciate the fact that we've got Academic All-Americans and National Scholar-Athletes on this team as well. Congratulations on achieving excellence on all fronts, and welcome to the White House.

Coach Robinson and others coach the mighty Golden Gophers of Minnesota in the University of Minnesota men's wrestling team—grapplers. This spring, you earned the third national title in team history. And I appreciate the fact that you train hard, work hard, and as we say in Texas, "out-wrastle 'em." [*Laughter*] Congratulations, and welcome to the White House.

Here's the final group of champs. From the great State of Alaska, the men and women's rifle team from the University of Alaska Fairbanks. It is safe to say, this team traveled the furthest to be here. You earned the trip. This is, by the way, the eighth time in 9 years that the Nanooks have been the NCAA champions in rifle. Interestingly enough, guess who they beat? West Point. Any time you outshoot West Point, you're really good at what you do. [*Laughter*] And so we welcome you to the White House, and thanks for coming.

As I explained to some of the teams, one of the reasons why I love to welcome people here is to remind you that you can be a champ on the field, and you can be a champ off the field, that because you're a champ on the field, you have a chance to inspire somebody to make right choices in life. You have the opportunity to set a good example. You don't know how many youngsters are looking at you, but there's a lot. People are wondering how champs behave. So by setting high standards and working hard to achieve them, you're influencing other people.

I also appreciate the fact that you're involved with raising money for cancer awareness or collecting toys and clothing for those in need. Some of the teams have supported the Special Olympics. A lot of the folks on these teams have volunteered in the communities in which they live. And I thank you for that. You're proving what I know is true, that you have to be a dedicated soul to get here in the White House—to get here to the White House when it comes to athletics, but it is that same dedication that makes you achieve excellence in sports that helps you be an excellent person in life.

And so we welcome you here. We thank you for coming. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:26 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Greg Kraft, track and field program head coach, Arizona State University; Dan Brooks, women's golf team head coach, Duke University; Dave Pietramala, men's lacrosse team head coach, Johns Hopkins University; and J Robinson, men's wrestling team head coach, University of Minnesota.

Proclamation 8179—Gold Star Mother's Day, 2007

September 21, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The gift of liberty is secured by heroes who have answered the call to serve when America needed them most. On Gold Star Mother's Day, we honor the mothers of the service men and women who have given their lives in the defense of our great Nation.

America's Gold Star Mothers are remarkable patriots who serve their communities by demonstrating good citizenship, providing support and services to our troops and veterans, and helping comfort the families whose loved ones have made the ultimate sacrifice. Their sense of duty and deep devotion to our country inspire our Nation, and we thank them for their compassion, determination, and strength. Though they carry a great burden of grief, these courageous

mothers help ensure that the legacy of our fallen heroes will be forever remembered. On this day, we offer our deep gratitude and respect to our Nation's Gold Star Mothers; we honor the sons and daughters who died while wearing the uniform of the United States; and we pray for God's blessings on them, their mothers, and their families.

The Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 115 of June 23, 1936 (49 Stat. 1895 as amended), has designated the last Sunday in September as "Gold Star Mother's Day" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in its observance.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Sunday, September 30, 2007, as Gold Star Mother's Day. I call upon all Government officials to display the flag of the United States over Government buildings on this solemn day. I also encourage the American people to display the flag and hold appropriate ceremonies as a public expression of our Nation's sympathy and respect for our Gold Star Mothers.

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

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., September 25, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on September 26.

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.

September 15

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

September 16

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC. Later, in the Family Theater, they hosted a screening of "The Kite Runner."

September 17

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a photo opportunity with 2007 Scripps National Spelling Bee champion Evan M. O'Dorney.

The President announced his designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the funeral of Prime Minister John Compton of Saint Lucia on September 18 in Castries, Saint Lucia: Alphonso R. Jackson (head of delegation); and Mary Martin Ourisman.

The President announced his intention to nominate Anita K. Blair to be Assistant Secretary of the Navy (Manpower and Reserve Affairs).

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael W. Hager to be Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Human Resources and Management).

The President announced his intention to nominate Keith Hall to be Commissioner of Labor Statistics at the Department of Labor.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael B. Mukasey to be Attorney General.

The President announced his intention to designate David H. McCormick as a member of the Board of Directors of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

The President announced that he has designated Peter D. Keisler as Acting Attorney General.

September 18

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Map Room, the President participated in an interview with Bret Baier of FOX News.

September 19

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister

Konstandinos Karamanlis of Greece to congratulate him on his September 17 reelection and to express his condolences for the loss of life during the August wildfires. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada. He then had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Fort Meade, MD, where, at the National Security Agency, he participated in a briefing on the implementation of Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) reforms. He then greeted National Security Agency employees.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he participated in an interview with Michael Barone of U.S. News and World Report, Tony Blankley of the Washington Times, David Brooks of the New York Times, Ron Kessler of NewsMax magazine, Charles Krauthammer of the Washington Post, William Kristol of the Weekly Standard, and Larry Kudlow, Kathryn Lopez, and Kate O'Beirne of the National Review. Then, in the Oval Office, he participated in a photo opportunity with the 2007 Boys and Girls Clubs of America Youth of the Year regional finalists.

September 20

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

September 21

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, at the historic Evermay house, the President attended a Republican National Committee luncheon.

The President announced that he has named Adam Belmar as Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of Communications for Production.

The President announced that he has named Spencer Geissinger as Deputy Assistant to the President for Advance and Operations.

The President declared a major disaster in Missouri and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding from August 19–21.

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 September 18

Anita K. Blair,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Navy, vice William A. Navas, Jr., resigned.

Michael W. Hager,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of Veterans Affairs (Human Resources and Management), vice Robert Allen Pittman, resigned.

Keith Hall,
of Virginia, to be Commissioner of Labor Statistics, Department of Labor, for a term of 4 years, vice Kathleen P. Utgoff, term expired.

Withdrawn September 18

Anita K. Blair,
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of the Air Force, vice Michael L. Dominguez, which was sent to the Senate on January 9, 2007.

Submitted September 21

Michael B. Mukasey,
of New York, to be Attorney General, vice Alberto R. Gonzales, resigned.

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 September 17

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Transcript of a background briefing by a senior administration official on the Attorney General nomination

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's annual report listing major illicit drug transit and drug producing countries

Fact sheet: Michael Mukasey: A Strong Attorney General

Released September 18

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Press Secretary on Global Positioning System (GPS) satellites

Released September 19

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Fact sheet: FISA 101: Why FISA Modernization Amendments Must be Made Permanent

Released September 20

Transcript of a press briefing by Health and Human Services Secretary Michael O. Leavitt on SCHIP legislation

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2358 and S. 377

Released September 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Transcript of a press briefing by Council on Environmental Quality Chairman Jim Connaughton, National Security Council Deputy National Security Adviser for International Economic Affairs Dan Price, and National Security Council Senior Director for Democracy, Human Rights, and International Organizations Michael Kozak on the United Nations General Assembly and the upcoming meeting by major economies on energy security and climate change

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's support for reauthorizing SCHIP

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Missouri

Acts Approved by the President

Approved September 20

H.R. 2358 / Public Law 110–82
Native American $1 Coin Act

S. 377 / Public Law 110–83
United States-Poland Parliamentary Youth Exchange Program Act of 2007