

Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, October 5, 2007

**Executive Order 13447—Further
2007 Amendments to the Manual for
Courts-Martial, United States**

September 28, 2007

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including chapter 47 of title 10, United States Code (Uniform Code of Military Justice, 10 U.S.C. 801–946), and in order to prescribe amendments to the Manual for Courts-Martial, United States, prescribed by Executive Order 12473, as amended, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. The second subparagraph of paragraph 4, of Part I, of the Manual for Courts-Martial, United States, as amended by section 2 of Executive Order 13262 of April 11, 2002, is amended by striking the third sentence.

Sec. 2. Parts II, III, and IV of the Manual for Courts-Martial, United States, are amended as described in the Annex attached and made a part of this order.

Sec. 3. These amendments shall take effect on October 1, 2007.

(a) Nothing in these amendments shall be construed to make punishable any act done or omitted prior to October 1, 2007, that was not punishable when done or omitted.

(b) Nothing in these amendments shall be construed to invalidate any nonjudicial punishment proceedings, restraint, investigation, referral of charges, trial in which arraignment occurred, or other action begun prior to October 1, 2007, and any such nonjudicial punishment, restraint, investigation, referral of charges, trial, or other action may proceed in the same manner and with the same effect as if these amendments had not been prescribed.

George W. Bush

The White House,
September 28, 2007.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:47 a.m., October 1, 2007]

NOTE: This Executive order and its attached annex were published in the *Federal Register* on October 2. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Memorandum on Assignment of
Specified Reporting and
Determination Functions Relating to
Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia,
and Certain Education Abroad**

September 28, 2007

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State, the
Secretary of Defense, and the Director of
National Intelligence*

Subject: Assignment of Specified Reporting and Determination Functions Relating to Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Certain Education Abroad

By virtue of the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby assign to the Secretary of State the functions of the President under sections 2041(d)(3), 2042(c)(1), 2042(d), and 2043(c)(1) of the Implementing Recommendations of the 9/11 Commission Act of 2007 (Public Law 110–53)(the “9/11 Act”) and section 7114(b)(6) of the Intelligence Reform and Terrorism Prevention Act of 2004 (Public Law 108–458), as amended. The Secretary of State shall consult with:

- (1) the Secretary of Defense in the performance of the functions in section 2041(d)(3) of the 9/11 Act; and
- (2) the Secretary of Defense and the Director of National Intelligence in the performance of the functions in section 2043(c)(1) of the 9/11 Act.

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

George W. Bush

The White House,
September 28, 2007.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., October 3, 2007]

NOTE: This memorandum was published in the *Federal Register* on October 4. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 8181—National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, 2007
September 28, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Breast cancer is the second leading cause of cancer-related deaths among American women. During National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we renew our commitment to fighting this disease, raising awareness, and supporting those affected by breast cancer.

Research has shown that several factors may increase the risk of developing breast cancer, including family history, age, genetics, and obesity. By making healthy lifestyle choices and exercising regularly, individuals can help reduce the risk of developing breast cancer. Mammograms, regular self-exams, and clinical breast exams are also vital because they can help doctors diagnose cancer before it has a chance to spread. When breast cancer is detected early, treatment is more effective, giving hope to patients and helping save lives.

My Administration is committed to strengthening our Nation's efforts against this devastating disease. Earlier this year I was pleased to sign the "National Breast and Cervical Cancer Early Detection Program Reauthorization Act," which will allow us to continue helping low-income and uninsured women gain access to vital cancer screening. In order to best detect and treat breast cancer, Federal agencies are collaborating with

national organizations, State health agencies, and other key groups to promote important disease education and prevention activities. Our Nation leads the world in medical research, and through the dedicated efforts of thousands of Americans, we can build a healthier and more hopeful future for our citizens.

During National Breast Cancer Awareness Month, we remember those living with breast cancer and their family and friends who provide them with love and support. Their courage and determination are an inspiration to us all. We also recognize the innovative, lifesaving work of doctors, researchers, and other medical professionals. Through their efforts to prevent, detect, and treat breast cancer, they are helping make a difference in the lives of our citizens. Until we find a cure for breast cancer, we will continue our Nation's fight against this disease.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the power vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 2007 as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month. I call upon Government officials, businesses, communities, health care professionals, educators, volunteers, and the people of the United States to continue our Nation's strong commitment to preventing, treating, and ultimately curing breast cancer.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth 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, 8:49 a.m., October 2, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 29, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on October 3.

Proclamation 8182—National Disability Employment Awareness Month, 2007

September 28, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

National Disability Employment Awareness Month is an opportunity to recognize the contributions and accomplishments of Americans with disabilities and to underscore our Nation's commitment to advancing employment opportunities for all our citizens.

Americans with disabilities strengthen our country's workforce, and their achievements help keep our Nation the world's economic leader. Landmark reforms such as the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 have helped to ensure that individuals with disabilities are better able to engage in productive work and participate fully in the life of our Nation. It is important that we continue to expand on these opportunities for Americans with disabilities by eliminating the barriers and false perceptions that hinder them from joining the workforce. By enhancing the workplace environment for people with disabilities, employers can help provide access to jobs that allow these individuals to demonstrate their potential and realize their dreams.

Since 2001, my New Freedom Initiative has helped promote the full participation of people with disabilities in all areas of society, including education, training, and employment. Programs such as "Ticket to Work" and services at One-Stop Career Centers have helped improve access to employment training and placement services for individuals who want to work. Throughout the Federal Government, we have worked to improve access to jobs for individuals with disabilities and to promote greater inclusiveness in the workforce. Individuals and employers can learn more about the Federal Government's disability-related programs by visiting DisabilityInfo.gov. We will continue to build on the progress that has been made for individuals with disabilities and will work to ensure that our Nation remains a place of opportunity for all Americans.

To recognize the contributions of Americans with disabilities and to encourage all citizens to ensure equal opportunity in the workforce, the Congress (36 U.S.C. 121) has designated October of each year as "National Disability Employment Awareness Month."

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 2007 as National Disability Employment Awareness Month. I call upon Government officials, labor leaders, employers, and the people of the United States to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth 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, 8:49 a.m., October 2, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 29, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on October 3.

The President's Radio Address

September 29, 2007

Good morning. Today I am signing emergency legislation to fund the Federal Government for the next 7 weeks. This legislation was necessary because Congress failed in its most basic responsibility to pass the spending bills that fund the day-to-day operations of the Government. There are 12 of these bills this year, and Congress did not complete a single one of them, so Congress had to send me a stopgap measure before the fiscal year ends this Sunday at midnight.

Congress's failure to pass these 12 spending bills is disappointing, but I do thank the Congress for passing this temporary measure and for passing it without any new spending, new policies, or new projects. It would have been wrong to deny essential Government services to the American people while Congress works through its annual spending bills.

I also appreciate the way this bill handles our disagreements over the State Children's Health Insurance Program. Congressional leaders have put forward an irresponsible plan that would dramatically expand this program beyond its original intent. And they know I will veto it. But it is good that they kept the program running while they try to work out a more responsible approach.

Congress now has more time to complete its work on its annual spending bills. Earlier this year, congressional leaders promised to show that they could be responsible with the people's money. Unfortunately, they seem to have chosen the path of higher spending. They have proposed spending increases that would add an extra \$205 billion on top of my administration's budget request over the next 5 years. There's only one way to pay for such a large spending increase, and that is to raise taxes on the American people. So it is no surprise that the same Members of Congress who are planning this big increase in Federal spending are also planning the biggest tax increase in American history.

If these Members get their way, the tax relief my administration delivered could be taken away from you. Let me explain what this would mean for an average taxpayer. If you have children, your taxes would rise by \$500 for each child. If you're a family of four making \$60,000 a year, your taxes would be more than \$1,800 higher. If you're a single mother with two children working to make ends meet, your taxes would go up by more than \$1,000. If you're a small-business owner working to meet a payroll, your taxes would increase by almost \$4,000. And if Congress allows our tax relief to expire, more than 5 million low-income Americans who currently pay no income taxes would once again have to pay taxes.

These are not the only taxes Congress wants to raise. They're proposing higher taxes on dividends and capital gains. They're proposing higher taxes on cigars and cigarettes. They're proposing to raise taxes on domestic oil and natural gas production. They're proposing new taxes on stock and bond transactions. And they refuse to make the Internet tax moratorium permanent. If this tax ban expires, it would open the doors for State

and local officials to impose new taxes on your access to the Internet.

At a time when many American families are dealing with rising mortgage rates, college costs, and health care expenses, it is wrong to take even more money out of your paychecks. Washington's elected leaders can do better. By working together, we can keep taxes low, help keep the economy growing, balance the Federal budget, and build on our record of fiscal discipline and greater economic opportunity for all Americans.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:35 a.m. on September 28 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on September 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 28 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to Public Law 110-92, approved September 29. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at an Armed Forces Farewell Tribute to General Peter Pace and an Armed Forces Hail in Honor of Admiral Michael G. Mullen at Fort Myer, Virginia

October 1, 2007

Mr. Vice President, Mrs. Cheney, Secretary Gates, members of the Cabinet, Members of Congress, members of the diplomatic corps, members of the finest military ever, that United States military, Secretary Rumsfeld, General Myers, members of the Pace and Mullen family, and distinguished guests: Today we pay tribute to an outstanding Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, and we welcome his distinguished successor.

Ceremonies like this are a storied military tradition. It is a time when families, friends, and comrades honor those who have fulfilled great duties to their nation. It is a time when we show admiration to those who step forward to assume new obligations. It's a time when we make generous use of words like "honor" and "character." Sometimes those words are used too often. In the case of the two men we celebrate today, those words cannot be used too much.

Admiral Mike Mullen comes to this post with a broad and unique range of talents and experience. Some of you may not know that his parents were highly regarded members of the Hollywood community, who worked for some of the greatest entertainers of the day. Many people are surprised when told about the Admiral's show business roots. After all, he's humble, well-grounded, and filled with common sense. [Laughter] Not exactly what one thinks about when they think of Hollywood values. [Laughter]

Admiral Mullen left California to attend the United States Naval Academy to pursue a career in military service. He soon found himself stationed on a destroyer on the gunline off the coast of Vietnam. During that tour, Admiral Mullen was part of operations so intense that the gun barrels on his ship glowed red. That was the beginning of a distinguished career.

The Admiral has commanded three ships, an aircraft carrier battle group, and the U.S. Second Fleet. He served as the commander of all U.S. naval forces in Europe and the NATO Joint Force Command. And later, as Chief of Naval Operations, he championed the construction of new types of vessels needed to deal with the threats of the 21st century.

Admiral Mike Mullen understands what's at stake in the war on terror. He was on duty at the Pentagon when Flight 77 made its doomed plunge. He felt the plane slam into the building. He saw the carnage and devastation. And like all who worked there that terrible day, he still carries the pain and the loss. Admiral Mullen was there when war reached America's shore, and he brings the talent, vision, and judgment needed to help us fight and win that war.

As Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Admiral Mullen will follow his strong belief that every member of our Armed Forces is, as he put it, "part of one team and one fight." He will continue to set a sterling example to our men and women in uniform. He will bring judgment and candor to decisions that may mean the difference between life and death for young Americans who are serving our Nation. He will demonstrate the same love of country and dedication to duty that

inspired his sons to follow him into military service.

Admiral Mike Mullen is a man of decency and honor, and I congratulate you on your new assignment. And I know your parents would be proud. And I thank you and Deborah and Jack and Michael for your service to our Nation.

As Admiral Mullen begins his service as Chairman, he is fortunate to have as an example the man we honor today. General Pete Pace is one of the most respected and accomplished military leaders I have ever known. He helped craft America's response to an unprecedented assault on our homeland. He helped liberate two nations from brutal tyrannies and helped bring freedom to millions of people. He began the process of transforming our military into a more efficient and effective force.

Yet these accomplishments do not begin to tell the full story of this remarkable man. That story begins in Teaneck, New Jersey, where General Pace grew up the proud son of an Italian immigrant. His dad worked two and sometimes three jobs to provide for his family. His mom attended church service every Sunday, and, according to the good General, still lights candles to pray that her children are happy, healthy, and safe.

General Pace was a good student and a good athlete. His mom said the General has been good at everything he's ever done. Some of you may think mothers are required to say only admiring things about their sons. Well, take it from me, it's not always the case. [Laughter]

General Pace's dad died before he could see his son reach the height of his career, yet he always knew that his son would be a success. His family believed in his potential, and they weren't the only ones. There's something about General Pete Pace that makes believers out of nearly everyone. That includes the men who served with him in Vietnam and whom he led during some of the most vicious urban combat in American military history. It includes the troops he led in Somalia, who looked to him for resolve and guidance during difficult times. It includes marines, who look with pride on the first of their ranks to lead the Joint Chiefs

of Staff. It includes two Secretaries of Defense, who relied on the General during tough and trying times. And it includes a President, who has counted on General Pace's candor and sound judgment during some of the most difficult times in our country's history.

During his service at the Pentagon, General Pete Pace has shown us many talents. He's shown an intellect sharpened by post-graduate studies at George Washington and Harvard. He's shown us great oratorical skills—this is a man who frequently speaks without notes. I really don't recommend this to everyone. *[Laughter]* He's shown a sharp wit. When a naval commander once made an edgy joke in front of the Secretary of Defense, the General stepped right in and gave the young officer some advice. He said, "Never let a promising career stand in the way of a good joke." *[Laughter]*

The most important attribute General Pete Pace has shown us is a quiet strength. It is a strength that has won the admiration of friends and peers. It is a strength built on the love and support of a strong and devoted wife, Lynne, and their family, Peter, Lynsey, and Tiffany. It is a strength that gave Pete solace in the tough and sometimes bitter world of Washington, DC. It helped him bring selflessness to a city filled with egos and a dignity to a political process that might have worn down lesser men. He now leaves active service with a distinguished team in place and a talented successor. And yet I also have the sense that General Pace is not going to end it all here. He's a man who has always put country first, and he will find new ways to serve.

General Pete Pace always understood what's important. It wasn't titles he received or honors bestowed, and it certainly was not the good graces of official Washington. What mattered most were the young men and women who serve our country and risk their lives for its honored cause. He kept a picture on his desk of the first marine who died under his command in Vietnam. He can still recite the names of all other marines who died under that first command. And because this is a man with a tender heart, sometimes it's hard for him to get through all the names without choking up a little bit.

Pete has devoted his life to those who wear our country's uniform. And they are devoted to General Pace. They're among the hundreds who've received his advice and friendship. They're among the thousands who lined up at military bases during his final tour to shake his hand and wish him well and say goodbye. They're among the millions whose names he will never know but who will always remember him. And they include that single soldier who came up to the General on his last visit to the war zone. He looked at General Pace with gratitude, respect, and pride and said, "Thanks for your service. We'll take it from here."

General Pace, throughout your life, you have led those troops to honorable achievements and into the pages of history. Because of your example, you can know that with courage, valor, and confidence, they will take it from here.

And so Godspeed to my friend General Pete Pace. Thanks for your courage. Thanks for your leadership. And thanks for your service to a country we love.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:47 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld; and Gen. Richard B. Meyers, USAF (Ret.), former Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Proclamation 8183—National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, 2007

October 1, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Families are indispensable to a stable society, and they should be a place of support to instill responsibility and values in the next generation. When a family member is abused, it can have long-term damaging effects on the victim that leave a mark on family, friends, and the community at large. Our society must continue to work to prevent domestic violence and help create a loving and stable environment for our children and grandchildren.

National Domestic Violence Awareness Month is an opportunity to renew our commitment to preventing domestic violence and to assisting those who suffer from its devastating effects. My Administration is dedicated to helping victims of domestic violence. The Family Justice Center Initiative, announced in 2003, continues to work towards eradicating domestic violence in our Nation. This program provides assistance and services for victims of domestic violence by bringing professionals, advocates, law enforcement, and organizations together at centers nationwide. In 2006, I signed legislation that reauthorized the Violence Against Women Act to fight domestic violence, dating violence, sexual assault, and stalking. We also are working with faith-based and community organizations to assist victims in need. In addition, the Department of Justice's Domestic Violence Transitional Housing Assistance Program provides access to transitional housing services while working to move victims of violence into permanent housing.

As we observe National Domestic Violence Awareness Month, we underscore our commitment to building an America where all citizens can live with dignity, work productively, and achieve their dreams. We encourage victims and their families and friends to seek assistance through Family Justice Centers and to contact the National Domestic Violence Hotline at 1-800-799-SAFE. Together, we can help prevent, recognize, and stop domestic violence in America.

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 the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 2007 as National Domestic Violence Awareness Month. I urge all Americans to reach out to those who have been abused and help educate people about the vital importance of ending domestic violence.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of October, 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, 9:09 a.m., October 3, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 4.

Proclamation 8184—Child Health Day, 2007

October 1, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Our Nation is committed to the health and well-being of our youth. On Child Health Day, we reaffirm our commitment to helping children develop good nutrition habits and active lifestyles, so that they can grow into healthy and productive adults.

Children today face many risks, such as alcohol and drug use, obesity, smoking, and other dangers. As parents and role models to America's youth, we have a responsibility to teach them about the importance of healthy behavior, daily exercise, and good nutrition.

My Administration supports programs that give parents, mentors, and teachers the resources they need to help and encourage children to maintain an active and healthy way of life. The National Youth Anti-Drug Media Campaign is working with the Partnership for a Drug-Free America to educate our young people about resisting the pressure to use drugs. Additionally, the Helping America's Youth initiative, led by First Lady Laura Bush, encourages our Nation's children to make healthy choices that lead to a better future. The HealthierUS initiative offers ways to improve lives, prevent and reduce the costs of disease, and promote community health and wellness. These nationwide initiatives provide the tools and resources to help children learn the importance of healthy living.

With hard work and dedication, parents can encourage good nutrition and healthy lifestyles so children can make the right choices, avoid risky behavior, and realize their full potential.

On this day it is also appropriate to recognize the important role the State Children's

Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) has played in helping poor children stay healthy. To preserve that role and ensure that poor children can get the coverage they need, SCHIP should be reauthorized.

The Congress, by a joint resolution approved May 18, 1928, as amended (36 U.S.C. 105), has called for the designation of the first Monday in October as “Child Health Day” and has requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim Monday, October 1, 2007, as Child Health Day. I call upon families, schools, child health professionals, faith-based and community organizations, and State and local governments to reach out to our Nation’s young people, encourage them to avoid dangerous behavior, and help them make the right choices and achieve their dreams.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of October, 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, 9:09 a.m., October 3, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 4.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Protocols to the Convention on the Prevention of Maritime Terrorism

October 1, 2007

To the Senate of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Protocol of 2005 to the Convention for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Maritime Navigation (the “2005 SUA Protocol”) and the Protocol of 2005 to the Protocol for the Suppression of Unlawful Acts against the Safety of Fixed Platforms Located on the Continental Shelf (the “2005 Fixed Platforms Protocol”)

(together, “the Protocols”), adopted by the International Maritime Organization Diplomatic Conference in London on October 14, 2005, and signed by the United States of America on February 17, 2006. I also transmit, for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Protocols.

The Protocols are an important component in the international campaign to prevent and punish maritime terrorism and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and promote the aims of the Proliferation Security Initiative. They establish a legal basis for international cooperation in the investigation, prosecution, and extradition of those who commit or aid terrorist acts or trafficking in weapons of mass destruction aboard ships at sea or on fixed platforms.

The Protocols establish the first international treaty framework for criminalizing certain terrorist acts, including using a ship or fixed platform in a terrorist activity, transporting weapons of mass destruction or their delivery systems and related materials, and transporting terrorist fugitives. The Protocols require Parties to criminalize these acts under their domestic laws, to cooperate to prevent and investigate suspected crimes under the Protocols, and to extradite or submit for prosecution persons accused of committing, attempting to commit, or aiding in the commission of such offenses. The 2005 SUA Protocol also provides for a ship-boarding regime based on flag state consent that will provide an international legal basis for interdiction at sea of weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems and related materials, and terrorist fugitives.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Protocols, subject to certain understandings that are described in the accompanying report of the Department of State.

George W. Bush

The White House,
October 1, 2007.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 2.

Presidential Determination on FY 2008 Refugee Admissions Numbers and Authorizations of In-Country Refugee Status

October 2, 2007

Presidential Determination No. 2008-1

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Presidential Determination on FY 2008 Refugee Admissions Numbers and Authorizations of In-Country Refugee Status Pursuant to Sections 207 and 101(a)(42), respectively, of the Immigration and Nationality Act, and Determination Pursuant to Section 2(b)(2) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act, as Amended

In accordance with section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (the “Act”)(8 U.S.C. 1157), as amended, and after appropriate consultations with the Congress, I hereby make the following determinations and authorize the following actions:

The admission of up to 80,000 refugees to the United States during FY 2008 is justified by humanitarian concerns or is otherwise in the national interest; provided, however, that this number shall be understood as including persons admitted to the United States during FY 2008 with Federal refugee resettlement assistance under the Amerasian immigrant admissions program, as provided below. The ceiling shall be construed as a maximum not to be exceeded and not a minimum to be achieved.

The 80,000 admissions numbers shall be allocated among refugees of special humanitarian concern to the United States in accordance with the following regional allocations; provided, however, that the number of admissions allocated to the East Asia region shall include persons admitted to the United States during FY 2008 with Federal refugee resettlement assistance under section 584 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act of 1988, as contained in section 101(e) of Public Law 100-202 (Amerasian immigrants and their family members):

- Africa 16,000
- East Asia 20,000
- Europe and Central Asia . . 3,000
- Latin America/Caribbean . . 3,000
- Near East/South Asia 28,000
- Unallocated Reserve 10,000

The 10,000 unallocated refugee numbers shall be allocated to regional ceilings as needed. Upon providing notification to the Judiciary Committees of the Congress, you are hereby authorized to use unallocated admissions in regions where the need for additional admissions arises.

Additionally, upon notification to the Judiciary Committees of the Congress, you are further authorized to transfer unused admissions allocated to a particular region to one or more other regions, if there is a need for greater admissions for the region or regions to which the admissions are being transferred. Consistent with section 2(b)(2) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as amended, I hereby determine that assistance to or on behalf of persons applying for admission to the United States as part of the overseas refugee admissions program will contribute to the foreign policy interests of the United States and designate such persons for this purpose.

Consistent with section 101(a)(42) of the Act (8 U.S.C. 1101(a)(42)), and after appropriate consultation with the Congress, I also specify that, for FY 2008, the following persons may, if otherwise qualified, be considered refugees for the purpose of admission to the United States within their countries of nationality or habitual residence:

- a. Persons in Vietnam
- b. Persons in Cuba
- c. Persons in the former Soviet Union
- d. In exceptional circumstances, persons identified by a United States Embassy in any location

You are authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress immediately and to publish it in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session in West Hempfield Township, Pennsylvania

October 3, 2007

The President. Thanks for the warm welcome. Sit down. Thanks for coming. It's great to be back in your county again. Marion, I appreciate the invitation. I'd like to share some thoughts with you, and then I'd like to answer some of your questions if you got time—because I do. [*Laughter*]

I really appreciate the Lancaster Chamber of Commerce for giving me an opportunity to explain why I have made some of the decisions I have made. My job is a decision-making job. And as a result, I make a lot of decisions. And it's important for me to have an opportunity to speak to you and others who would be listening about the basis on which I have made decisions, to explain the philosophy behind some of the decisions I have made. And so I'm looking forward to your questions, and I thank you for giving me the opportunity to come and share them with you.

I'm sorry Laura is not with me. She's, by far, the better half of the Bush family. [*Laughter*] And she's a—she really is a remarkable woman. She—when I married her, she didn't like politics or politicians. [*Laughter*] And now she's the First Lady of the United States. And she's come to realize what I understand: It doesn't take much to be able to put influence—to influence somebody in a positive way. And so she cares deeply about issues like malaria. She believes, like I believe, that we can eliminate the scourge of malaria and save lives all around the world. She cares deeply about literacy. She cares deeply about making sure women have got good information to—when it comes to healthy choices with their life so they don't suffer from heart ailment. She cares a lot about women in Afghanistan. She cares a lot because she's got a big heart. And I'm sure proud to call her wife, and I think the country is lucky to have her as the First Lady.

I appreciate—I want to thank Tom Baldrige, the president of the chamber, and the officers of the chamber and the president-elect of the chamber and all the folks who make the chamber work.

I do want to contradict Marion, which is a little—shouldn't be doing in the first thing I say, but she said that because of me, you're growing. No, it's because of you you're growing. See, it's because of the entrepreneurship and small-business owners and hard-working people in Lancaster County that you're growing.

I'm going to spend a little bit of time talking about what is the proper relationship between the Federal Government and the risk-takers in society. But I just want to make sure you understand what I know, and that is, prosperity occurs because people work hard and dream dreams and work to fulfill those dreams. And so I congratulate you on the economic vitality of this region, Marion. Thank you for trying to give me credit where it's not due.

I also want to thank the Chryst family for welcoming us to this facility. This is—Jay is the dad. He's expanded his business, and he wisely turned it over to his daughter—[*laughter*—Dana.

So I asked the Chrysts—I said, “How are you organized, from a tax perspective?” Dana said, “We're a subchapter S.” And the reason I bring that up to you is, I'm going to talk a little bit about tax policy here in a minute, and when you cut individual income taxes, you cut taxes on a small business that's organized as a subchapter S corporation. And so I talk about tax cuts; I want you to be thinking about tax cuts not only for yourself but tax cuts for small-business owners.

Expansion of this business has provided people new opportunity employments—new employment opportunities here in Lancaster County. You know, when you give a man more money in his pocket—in this case, a woman more money in her pocket to expand a business, it means they build new buildings. And when somebody builds a new building, somebody has got to come and build the building. And when the building expanded, it prevented additional opportunities for people to work. Tax cuts matter. I'm going to spend some time talking about it. I want to thank you for giving us a chance to come and use you all as an example—and also, the hall works.

I do want to thank Senator Arlen Specter for being here today. Mr. Senator, you didn't

need to come. I'm honored you're here, and I'm sure the people of this county are honored you're here too. Thanks for coming.

Finally, I appreciate the Congressman from this district, Congressman Joe Pitts. I appreciate you being here, Congressman; thank you. *[Applause]* Sounds like you packed the audience with some of your family. *[Laughter]*

Right before I walked in here, I had a chance to talk to some State troopers and thank them for their service to the community. These folks were first on the scene at the West Nickel Mines Amish School tragedy. I am constantly amazed that our country produces people—decent, honorable people who are willing to serve. These folks had the ultimate challenge, which is to bring comfort to a hurting community. I thank you for what you've done; I thank you for what you're doing; and I thank you for what you will do. I am honored to be in the presence of the troopers who were there first on the scene. Thanks for coming.

I appreciate so very much Krist Blank joining us today. Mr. Blank, I'm honored you are here. I will tell you that, like a lot of Americans, I was deeply troubled when, you know, I found out that mothers and dads were grieving for the loss of their daughter. And I also was—my soul and spirits were lifted when I read the stories about the forgiveness and compassion that the Amish community showed toward the shooter's family. It was a remarkable statement of love and strength and commitment for people who had suffered so mightily to say to, you know, a widow and her children that we're able to overcome our grief and express our deep love for you. And so I want to thank you, sir, and your community for being such great examples of the compassion of the Lord. And I'm honored you're here.

Knowing him, he's sorry I even talked that way, see? He's a remarkable guy who told me something interesting. He said, "I'm praying for you, Mr. President." This is not going to be a church service, I promise you. *[Laughter]* But I will tell you that the prayers of the people matter a lot; they really do. And it's one of the most inspiring—*[applause]*.

I want to talk a little bit about the environment necessary to continue economic growth. The job of this Government is not to try to create wealth. The job of the government is to create fiscal policy such that people feel inspired or confident in risking capital. In other words, the job of government is to create an environment that encourages entrepreneurship. One of the issues that we're going to be facing in Washington, DC, is how to spend your money. In other words, what do we do with the good money that we've—the good money we've collected? How do we spend it?

And there's a difference of opinion in Washington, DC, right now. I've submitted my budget, the core principle of which is that we will do what it takes to defend our homeland and make sure our troops have what it takes to do their jobs and keep your taxes low by not raising them. And we showed the way forward on how to get the balance in the year 2012. In other words, you got to be fiscally responsible, set priorities with your money, and keep your taxes low.

The principle is, is that tax cuts inspire investment, encourage consumption and savings. In other words, the more money you have, as opposed to the government having, the more likely it is the local economies will grow. That's why I brought up the example of the SCHIP corporation. When we cut taxes on everybody who pays taxes, we cut taxes on small businesses too. And one of the principles on which I'm making decisions is, I'd rather the Chrysts spending their money than the government spending their money. See, I think they know how to spend their money in such a way that their business will grow.

Now, there's a different approach in Washington. And folks have suggested that we increase spending. As a matter of fact, a 5-year budget that's submitted by the current leadership of the Congress increases spending by \$205 billion over 5 years, which would—and so you say, "That's fine; sounds good; all these programs sound wonderful." Except how you going to pay for it? That's the question I ask. How are you going to pay for the promises? And the answer is raising taxes. And I think they're wrong to raise taxes on

the American people. I know we don't need to raise taxes on the American people.

This economy has got in some difficulties when it comes to the housing markets, and the last thing we now need to do is raise taxes. See, taking money out of the economy at a time when the housing market is adjusting could exacerbate economic difficulties. And the role of government is to try to create an environment so that small businesses flourish and families can realize opportunities and dreams and consumerism remains strong.

And so what you're going to see me making decisions this year is when they spend—they try to increase taxes on you, I'll use the prerogative given to me under the Constitution, and I'm going to veto the tax bills. I'm going to—[*applause*].

I just vetoed a bill today, and I want to explain to you why. It's called SCHIP—Children's Health Insurance policy. First of all, the intent of the SCHIP legislation passed previous to my administration is to help poor children's families buy the children health care, or get them on health care. That's what it is intended to do. Poor children in America are covered by what's called Medicaid. We spend about—this year—about \$35.5 billion on poor children's health insurance. So the first point I want to make to you is, a lot of your money is being spent to make sure poor children get help, medical help.

In other words, when they say, "Well, poor children aren't being covered in America," if that's what you're hearing on your TV screens, I'm telling you there's \$35.5 billion worth of reasons not to believe that. And by the way, that Medicaid expenditures only accounts for children of the poor; it doesn't account for the mothers and fathers. So a lot of your money does go to help poor families with health insurance.

The SCHIP program was supposed to help those poor families, the children of poor families have the ability to get health insurance for their children. I strongly support the program. I like the idea of helping those who are poor be able to get health coverage for their children. I supported it as Governor, and I support it as President of the United States.

As a matter of fact, my budget—the budget request I put in said, let's increase the spending to make sure that the program does what it's supposed to do: sign up poor children for SCHIP. The problem is, is that the current program—and by the way, there's about half a million children who are eligible who aren't signed up. So I said, why don't we focus on the poor children rather than expand the program beyond its initial intent.

I want to tell you a startling statistic, that based on their own States' projections—in other words, this isn't a Federal projection; it's the States saying this is what's happening—States like New Jersey, Michigan, Minnesota, Rhode Island, Illinois, and New Mexico spend more money on adults in the SCHIP program than they do on children. In other words, the initial intent of the program is not being recognized, is not being met.

It is estimated by—here's the thing, just so you know: This program expands coverage, Federal coverage, up to families earning \$83,000 a year. That doesn't sound poor to me. The intent of the program was to focus on poor children, not adults or families earning up to \$83,000 a year. It is estimated that if this program were to become law, one out of every three person that would subscribe to the new expanded SCHIP would leave private insurance.

The policies of the Government ought to be, help poor children and to focus on poor children. And the policies of the Government ought to be, help people find private insurance, not Federal coverage. And that's where the philosophical divide comes in. I happen to believe that what you're seeing when you expand eligibility for Federal programs is the desire by some in Washington, DC, to federalize health care. I don't think that's good for the country. I believe in private medicine. I believe in helping poor people—which was the intent of SCHIP, now being expanded beyond its initial intent. I also believe that the Federal Government should make it easier for people to afford private insurance. I don't want the Federal Government making decisions for doctors and customers.

That's why I believe strongly in health savings accounts or association health plans to

help small-business owners better afford insurance for their workers. That's why I believe we ought to change the Federal Tax Code. You're disadvantaged if you work for a small business and/or an individual trying to buy insurance in the marketplace—disadvantaged relative to somebody working for a large company. If you work for a large company, you get your health insurance after tax. If you buy insurance, you have to pay—no, you buy your insurance after taxes as an individual; you get your insurance pre-tax when you're working for a large corporation. You're at a disadvantage if you're an individual in the marketplace.

So I think we ought to change the Tax Code. My view is, is that every family ought to get a \$15,000 deduction off their income taxes, regardless of where they work, in order to help people better afford insurance in the marketplace.

So I want to share with you why I vetoed the bill this morning. Poor kids, first—secondly, I believe in private medicine, not the Federal Government running the health care system. I do want Republicans and Democrats to come together to support a bill that focuses on the poor children. I'm more than willing to work with Members of both parties from both Houses, and if they need a little more money in the bill to help us meet the objective of getting help for poor children, I'm more than willing to sit down with the leaders and find a way to do so.

So thanks for giving me a chance to discuss one of the many decisions I make as your President. Decisionmaking requires a couple of things—and then I'll answer some questions—one, having a vision, having a set of beliefs, set of principles by which one makes decisions. You know, if you're constantly trying to make decisions based upon the latest poll or focus group, your decisionmaking will be erratic. You got to have a core set of beliefs. I believe you spend your money better than the government spends. I believe that the system works better when there's more money in your hands.

And foreign policy—I believe in the universality of freedom. I believe that a gift—I believe there's an Almighty, and I believe a gift of the Almighty to each man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth is freedom.

That's what I believe. And I believe it's in the interest of the United States of America to help people become free. That's how you yield the peace we all want. We want people to live in free societies.

And if you believe in the universality of freedom, it's in the interest of this country to act. That doesn't mean military operations. But it does mean, for example, relieving suffering. I also believe in the admonition, "To whom much is given, much is required." A lot has been given to the United States. I believe it's in our interests to help relieve needless deaths when it comes to mosquito bites around the world. I believe it's in our interests to help relieve the suffering of HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa. It's in our interests to do so. It's part of the belief system that says, you know, that we have obligations and duties to ourself.

No, by relieving suffering overseas, not only do you lift the moral sights of our country, but it recognizes the reality of the world in which we live. When there's despondency, despair, and hopelessness overseas, it can affect the security of the United States of America. And so I—what I'm telling you is that I made a lot of decisions when it comes to your security and the peace of the world. And I did so based upon certain fundamental principles.

Secondly, it's important to delegate. There's a lot of action in Washington, DC, believe me, and I've got a lot of decisions to make. And so I delegate to good people. I always tell Condi Rice, "I want to remind you, Madam Secretary, who has the Ph.D., and who was the C student." [Laughter] "And I want to remind you who the adviser is and who the President is." [Laughter] I got a lot of Ph.D. types and smart people around me who come into the Oval Office and say, "Mr. President, here's what's on my mind." And I listen carefully to their advice. But having gathered the device, I decide, you know, I say, "This is what we're going to do." And it's "Yes, sir, Mr. President." And then we get after it, implement policy.

It's a joy to be your President. It's not only an honor, it's a joy, because I truly believe the decisions I am making will yield the peace we want and the prosperity that we all desire. So now I'll be glad to answer some

questions from you if you got any. If not, I can keep on blowing hot air until the time—*[laughter]*—until the time runs out.

Yes, sir.

President's Decisionmaking/Progress in Iraq

Q. *[Inaudible]*—follow opinion polls. You don't govern by opinion polls. And I really respect that—*[inaudible]*.

The President. Okay, thank you, sir. Yes, those same polls will tell you that they're worried about catastrophe in the Middle East affecting the security of the United States. In other words, you pretty well—look, I'm not going to argue polls with you, but I will tell you this, sir—first of all, if we have a troop in harm's way, they're going to have the best—they're going to have what's necessary to—so they can do their job.

And secondly, we are bringing troops home. General David Petraeus announced that he wasn't going to replace 2,200 marines that were in Anbar Province, and the reason why he didn't feel like he needed to replace them is because they were successful. They had done their job. Reconciliation is taking place. Normal people are beginning to step forward and say, "We want to live in peace." Al Qaida, that thought they were going to have Anbar as a safe haven, has been rejected by the local populace. And he believes, as do the Iraqis, that we can maintain security without 2,200 troops.

We're going to bring another brigade home by Christmas. So that's 5,700 troop reduction. General Petraeus, in his testimony, recommended to me—a recommendation I accepted—that we can get down to 15 brigades by July. That's 20 from 15.

And the reason I tell you this, sir, is, I want to make a couple of points. One, if I didn't think the mission was necessary for our security, I wouldn't have our troops there. Secondly, if I didn't think we could succeed, I wouldn't have our troops there. I cannot look in the eye of a mother or father whose son or daughter is in combat and not believe that we can succeed, and it's necessary.

Secondly, I believe that it is very important for the Commander in Chief to take the advice of his military commanders very seriously. In my position, sir, I don't want our

troops feeling like I'm making decisions based upon politics when their lives are at risk. I want our troops knowing that I'm making decisions on the considered judgment of our military, all aimed at accomplishing an objective, which is for a country in the heart of the Middle East to be able to govern, sustain itself, and serve as an ally against these extremists and radicals.

Let me give you my worldview on this. Like you, I'd like them home. I really do. But my decisions have been based on my—or at least my belief that what we're seeing is one of the—a great ideological struggle between forces of ration—rational behavior, decent people, lovers of liberty, versus radicals who have a belief system, and they're willing to murder the innocent to achieve—to advance their objectives. That's how I view it. I don't think you're a religious person if you murder the innocent to achieve political objectives. I think you're a person who is manipulative and cynical and willing to kill in the name of religion; I don't think you're religious.

Secondly, a lot of my decisionmaking has been influenced by what happened on September the 11th, 2001. I vowed that day that I would do everything in my ability to protect you, and that I would—I wouldn't tire—I can't remember my exact words, but I would stay on the job. And that's exactly what I have been doing.

On the one hand, we're pursuing radicals and extremists through sharing of intelligence and through special operations and through working alliances to bring them to justice before they come and kill again. And I would remind you that the people that have sworn allegiance to Usama bin Laden in Iraq wanted Anbar Province as a safe haven from which to launch further attacks on the United States. And one of the great successes of this conflict has not only been to liberate 25 million people from the clutches of a brutal tyrant but to make sure that Anbar Province wasn't a safe haven for those who swore allegiance to Usama bin Laden.

But in the long run, the way to defeat ideological people is with a better ideology. And there's no better ideology than one based upon liberty. If you believe in the universality of liberty, then it shouldn't surprise you when

12 million people in Iraq went to the polls. They said, we've been given a chance to express our individual desires. And they went to the polls to vote.

We have been through these kind of conflicts in our history. We went through the conflict against communism and fascism. These wars play out differently. This war is really hard for the American people to understand because the enemy uses asymmetrical warfare. They use hundred-dollar weapons to destroy half-a-million-dollar vehicles—which has got to, as a taxpayer, concern you. I understand that. I understand it.

But the struggle is just as intense today as it was in the forties and the fifties. I must have told this story hundreds of times, that one of the most amazing aspects of my Presidency was my relationship with the Prime Minister of Japan, Prime Minister Koizumi. What's amazing about it is that when my dad was 18, he signed up to fight the Japanese; they were the sworn enemy of the United States of America. Thousands of people died in that conflict. They attacked America—the last time we were attacked, by the way, prior to September the 11th was Pearl Harbor. And 60 years later, I'm sitting at the table with the Prime Minister of Japan talking about peace, talking about how to help young democracies thrive in this ideological struggle, both of us knowing full well that the ultimate defeat of extremism in the name of an ideology that is dark is freedom—is the light of freedom. And the amazing thing is, is that what happened was that Japan's form of government changed.

Liberty is transformative. Our one-time enemy is at the table talking about peace. And the same thing is going to happen in the Middle East. And it's going to be tough to get there, and it's hard work. But you—I've got faith in the transformative power of liberty. I believe that people want to be free. I believe a gift of the Almighty to each man, woman, and child is freedom. And I believe, when given the chance, people want to be free. And I firmly believe freedom yields the peace we want.

And so, sir, to answer your question, it's important we succeed, and it's important we support our troops. Thank you.

Yes, sir. I appreciate the question. Yes, they'll get it for you. I'm not going to read it right now. Go ahead.

Agriculture/Alternative Fuel Sources/ Energy

Q. Thank you. Hello. First, I appreciate you being here and being in this kind of forum to answer questions.

The President. Thank you.

Q. It helps me to have a better understanding of you as a person—

The President. I hope so.

Q. —so thank you very much. Thanks. I have two questions, if I could. One is, can you talk about the farm bill and how it's going to help local farmers in this area? And then would you also talk about global warming and how the U.S. is being a leader in a worldwide effort to combat global warming? Thank you.

The President. Thank you. Thanks, great question. First, on the farm bill—I believe it's in the interest of local farmers to have markets available to them. In other words, a core principle of any good farm policy is for the administration to work to open up markets. If you're good at something—and we're really good at farming—we want to be in a position to sell that which you grow, overseas.

Secondly, I believe very strongly that programs that encourage overproduction are programs that need to be seriously evaluated. In other words, I'd rather you selling into existing markets than producing where there be no market. In other words, it's a combination—look, I'm a safety-net person for farmers. I just want to make sure the safety net is a actual safety net, not a incentive for overproduction.

Thirdly, I strongly believe in the conservation title inherent in the farm bill, the last farm bill. This is a CRP program which says to farmers, look, we want to help you set aside part of your land that may not be good for farming, but would be good for habitat, soil conversation. It's really one of the—I think one of the great accomplishments of this administration is to work with the farm community to have an advanced CRP program.

And that's kind of the inherent principles. The marketplace has worked for farmers. I

also believe—this is going to answer your global warming question as well—it’s in the Nation’s interest to diversify away from hydrocarbons. Probably comes as a shock to you from a guy from Texas saying that. But it’s—dependence on oil creates national security issues. There’s too many people who have got oil that may not like us.

Secondly, we import about 60 percent of our oil from overseas—fortunately, most of it from—a lot of it from Canada and Mexico. But it doesn’t take much to disrupt an oil market, and therefore, we got an economic issue when it comes to dependency on oil. One terrorist attack on a major oil facility could cause the world price of oil to go up. There are new big consumers of hydrocarbons in the marketplace. China and India, as they’re growing their economies, are creating additional demand relative to supply. And therefore, the price of gasoline goes up here in Lancaster County as these economies grow. And finally, dependency upon oil creates an environmental issue.

And so therefore, one of the strategies that we’re putting in place is—and this happens to be beneficial for farmers—is, why don’t we grow our way out of dependency on oil? Why don’t we use, initially, corn as the feedstock for an ethanol industry that has gone from about a billion gallons a year when I first became President to over 6 billion gallons a year?

In other words—and so what I’m beginning to tell you is—what I am—not beginning, what I am telling you is that we have a comprehensive strategy to deal with energy security and environmental quality at the same time. And the interesting dynamic that has taken place in the environmental debate is the two issues have now come—come front and center at the same time. In other words, you can solve one, you can solve the other.

Now, in terms of the environment, my—I gave a speech the other day in front of the major economies of the world. And the reason I asked the major economies of the world to come to the table is because there is no solution for global warming unless all the major economies, or the growing economies of the world come to the table. You can’t have a—one of the reasons I was against Kyoto was not because I’m not—don’t sup-

port, you know, good quality environmental policy. I didn’t think it made sense to have policy that didn’t include all the major economies, like China.

And so why don’t we try this approach—why don’t we make sure that China comes to the table on this issue? And step one is, we’ll sit around the table and agree on a common goal about what the reductions of greenhouse gases ought to be over the first half of the next century. Because if you can get somebody to sign on to a goal, you then get somebody to recognize there’s a problem and then obligate them to come up with a solution. So that’s part of the strategy.

Here at home there are three aspects of our economy that affect greenhouse gases. First, automobiles—and I just described to you the policy that I think is good to address our reliance upon oil, which also affects that aspect of our economy that—where there’s a lot of emissions, and that’s the automobiles. We can’t rely upon corn forever for ethanol. There are a lot of hog growers and cattle growers around that get a little nervous when the price of corn is going up the way it is. And so your Government is spending a fair amount of money, of your money, to research cellulosic ethanol. And that’s a fancy word for using corn chips or switch grass to be able to be the feedstock for new ethanol production.

And smart people tell me we’re pretty close. So some day it’s very conceivable that the farmers around here are going to be growing switch grass. And then you become energy producers. Or you can imagine if we can use wood chips as a source to be able to produce ethanol; then all of a sudden you got a lot of the places that grow pine trees become a part of the energy mix. It’s very conceivable that we can reduce our energy, our gasoline usage by 20 percent over the next 10 years. As a matter of fact, I’ve asked Congress to put that into law, not as a voluntary standard, but a mandatory standard.

Secondly, electricity—and so—you know, the real question on this environmental issue is, can we have policies in place that enable us to grow our economies and, at the same time, protect the environment? And technology will enable us to do that. That was

the other message I talked about at this conference. You don't have to shut down your economy in order to protect the environment.

Technology will enable us, for example, to generate electricity from coal, but have zero emissions. That's where we're headed. So we're spending a couple of billion dollars of your money on clean coal technology. The dream is to have a coal-fired plant that produces zero emissions. And the smart people tell me that's coming.

And by the way, on automobiles, just—you got me stuck on something I'm interested in—automobiles, you're going to be driving your car with a battery, and so the first 40 miles—this is going to be helpful for urban dwellers—the first 40 miles will be driven on a battery charge. I feel like it's coming pretty quick, and your deal doesn't have to look like a golf cart, you know; it's going to look like a car—[laughter]—or a pickup truck, you can drive a pickup truck. [Laughter] Well, they drive them in Texas. [Laughter] You get your first 40 miles—I'm not quite through. And it's a long answer, I'm sorry. It's called filibustering. [Laughter]

The other thing is, is that we got to promote nuclear power. I am convinced that the plant designs today are safe. I know we have got to do research on how to burn down the spent fuel in order to make people comfortable that we can deal with the waste in a smart way. If you're an environmentalist and concerned about greenhouse gases, you got to be for nuclear power. Nuclear power enables the developed world and the developing world to generate, get a—get cheap electricity without one iota of greenhouse gases.

And so we're talking to countries like China and India about a help—how to help them develop a civilian nuclear power industry. And so the question that's got to be on your mind—I'm certain it is—“How they going to get the fuel? Do you really want a lot of people enriching?” Well, there's a Nuclear Suppliers Group that does produce fuel—we're one of them. And so my vision is, if you want to have your nuclear power-plant, fine. The Nuclear Suppliers Group will provide you the fuel and will collect the spent fuel. And hopefully, as this new technology

comes, we'll reprocess the spent fuel in a way that reduces the amount of spent fuel and the toxicity of the fuel.

And finally, there's—the third aspect of greenhouse gases here at home is how do you—you've got to build your buildings better, and building codes matter when it comes to the construction of buildings. And so there's the three-part strategy. Then the question is, who develops the strategy for each country? Well, my attitude is, we can develop our own strategy. See, we'll set the goal, work with other nations to set the goal, and we'll develop a strategy. We'll develop a strategy that meets the needs of the American economy. We'll develop a strategy that the American people are comfortable with, all aiming to achieve the international goal.

And anyway, it's a great question. I appreciate you asking it.

Yes, little guy, you got one?

Border Security/Immigration Reform

Q. Do you have any further plans on preventing illegal immigration?

The President. Illegal immigration? Yes, I do. He said, do I have any plans to prevent illegal—further plans. One is to double the Border Patrol. Two is to modernize the border. You know—I know you've haven't ever been down there—or maybe you have. I used to live close to the border, and it is an expansive territory, and it's hard to enforce. And you can't have a Border Patrol agent every quarter-mile. You've got to have infrastructure, as well, to leverage the presence of Border Patrol.

And so we're modernizing it. We're getting some fencing and some automobile routes—you get on the Arizona border; you can't tell what's border and what's not border. I mean, it's just desert. But we're beginning to clearly define the border, and we're beginning to have much more effective enforcement on the border.

The second aspect of the immigration policy that discouraged a lot of our Border Patrol and, frankly, discouraged a lot of Americans and made them believe that the Government wasn't serious about enforcing the border is, oftentimes, we would find somebody trying to sneak into our country illegally and then release them. And the old policy was,

check back in with your immigration court. The problem is, they weren't interested in checking back in with the immigration court; they were interested in working. And so it was called catch-and-release. We've ended that.

One of the things we did with the Congress over the last couple of years is increase the number of detention facilities and beds. So somebody gets caught sneaking into our country illegally will be held in detention, particularly if they're from a Central American country, for example. And they're being shipped home now, which sends a message back to Central America that it's not a free ride anymore. In other words, there is a cost of trying to come into the country.

Thirdly—so it's modernization, increased manpower, and better policy in terms of enforcing law.

Now, I'm going to tell you my position on this, just so you know loud and clear. I don't think you can fully enforce the border like Americans expect unless you recognize that people are willing to do whatever it takes to sneak in here to do jobs Americans aren't willing to do. And therefore, I believe, as an integral part of border security, that we say to somebody, "You can come here on a temporary basis to pick peaches or to work in a chicken factory." In other words, there's a lot of jobs Americans aren't willing to do, but somebody else is willing to do it because they want to put food on the table for their families. And until we have a rational, temporary guest-worker program, people are going to sneak in.

I used to remind people, family values don't stop at the Rio Grande River. You got people who are worried about putting food on the table and are willing to get in the bottom of an 18-wheeler in 100-degree temperature because they're going to come and do a job many Americans don't want to do. And so I fully believe that if you want to enforce the border and be humane, have a temporary-worker program. Give people a chance to come with a tamper-proof ID card that says, you going to come for a limited period of time to do a job that somebody else isn't doing.

That, by the way, relieves the pressure off the employers. If you're a small-business

owner—[*applause*]*—*well, there's somebody who's worried about it. If you're running a nursery here in Lancaster County and somebody shows up to work, you're not in much of a position to determine whether or not that Social Security card somebody gives you is forged or not. And believe me, there is a whole forgery network around this immigration issue, just like there's a whole smuggling network around this immigration issue.

And so it's—anyway, I put up an idea, and we tried to get it through Congress; it didn't work. And so in the meantime, however, this border security initiative is still going on down there on the border. I'm constantly in touch with the person in charge. I said, "Here's what you said you're going to do; are you're doing it?" That's one of the jobs of the President, is to hold people to account. I'm interested in results. I said, "You're going to come in and check in with me on a regular basis to show me what's happening." And it's amazing what happens—I'm sure you do this in your businesses—you say, "You show up and give me an accounting of what's taken place." Well, the same thing works in government. And so I'm watching carefully, and we're implementing the will of the United States Congress on the border security.

Yes, sir.

Federal Utilities

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Thank you.

Q. Recently, the Federal Government implemented the National Electric Transmission Corridors Project, whereby the Federal Government can step in and not only identify corridors where we need to increase transmission capabilities along the east coast or the west coast, for example, but oversee, if you will, what the State says. In other words, if a State is holding up the project, the Federal Government can come in and say, "No, this is where it's going to go, and this is how we're going to do that." Recently, when the Federal Government has identified some of these corridors, the States' Governors have come out against some of these corridors because they don't want to lose control. I'm just wondering what your opinion is on that.

The President. It's a—the issue, as well as whether or not the Federal Government has the right of eminent domain to put certain Federal systems in place over the objections of State and landowners—and I support it on a limited basis, so long as it achieves a national objective. And I think having modern communications and electricity wires is in the national interest.

Yes, ma'am.

Federal and Private Programs

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Well, you raised your hand. [Laughter] You didn't mean it? You want a little chance to collect the thoughts, you know? I mean, we're talking national TV here, you know? [Laughter]

Q. I actually wrote it down so I wouldn't get flustered.

The President. Yes—it didn't work. [Laughter] It's just the President.

Q. Exactly. Thank you for picking me. I work for the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank. And in the last two of your budgets, you have attempted to eliminate the commodity supplemental food programs. It's okay. We can talk about that.

The President. Yes. [Laughter]

Q. Now, with—

The President. I did? Anyway—[laughter].

Q. Yes, sir, you did.

The President. I'm going to call the man responsible right when I get home. Anyway, go ahead.

Q. Your Secretary of Agriculture came to visit us, and we asked him about it too.

The President. And what did he say?

Q. Not a lot. [Laughter]

The President. Why did you ask that question? [Laughter] Anyway.

Q. With a half a million seniors who rely on this food—and the food stamp benefit for seniors who live in poverty isn't—it comes nowhere near this benefit that they receive—how do we make sure that our seniors have the food that they need?

The President. Yes.

Q. And what I would say is, you know, I mean, I just want to make this program for my food bank.

The President. Well, where do you get most of your food from in the food bank? Private donations, right?

Q. Well, we're fortunate, yes.

The President. Yes. That's the way it ought to be. Food banks ought to be supported through the generosity of individuals. And—anyway, keep going. So the program that we're—

Q. But I mean, for the supplemental—commodity supplemental food program, there's nothing to replace it with. Food stamps aren't going to work, and we're talking about folks who live in poverty—elderly folks who live in poverty.

The President. Right.

Q. They already made all the mistakes which they can't fix—

The President. Yes, look, if somebody is poor, we want to help them.

Q. Exactly.

The President. And the fundamental question is, what's the proper balance between Federal help and private help? And when it comes to food banks, look, I don't know the program. Maybe I shouldn't make this admission; maybe I should try to bull my way through. I don't know the program; I'm sorry. I'll be glad to look into it. But just from a philosophical perspective, one of the wonderful things about the country is, when there's a need, the average citizen steps up and helps fill the need through private charity. And your program, I suspect, really functions well because the food bank is a dear cause for people. People say, "How can I love my neighbor?" Well, one way to love your neighbor is the food bank.

And the truth of the matter is, I suspect that if seniors are suffering here in Lancaster County and you put out the call, people are going to help. And so I would—I will get your budget—yes, leave your name. I'll get your budget question answered, because you'll be maybe surprised, not surprised—I don't know all the budget lines. [Laughter] I tend to try to have the big picture. But it's big picture for you, and I understand it. Thank you for your question. I will seriously find out for you.

Yes, ma'am.

Middle East/War on Terror/Spread of Democracy

Q. Thank you very much. It's truly an honor to have a President come to our country.

The President. Thank you.

Q. I just wanted to ask you specifically, relating to Israel and Palestine, what, in your opinion, will it really take to ever have peace? And is it that really possible?

The President. That's a great question. What will it take to have peace in the Middle East? And first, it'll take a firm rejection of extremism and a rejection of people who use terror as a weapon to achieve their political objectives. This ideological struggle that I just described to you is taking place throughout the entire Middle East.

Secondly, I believe that in order for there to be peace, there needs to be a Palestinian democracy committed to living side by side with an Israeli democracy in peace. And so I've advanced this vision. First of all, I believe it can happen. There's nothing worse than a leader saying, "I don't think it's going to happen, but we'll try." I do believe it can happen. I do believe there can be peace. I understand how difficult it is because there are people who can't stand the thought of a democracy in their midst, because they have a different vision of government. This is what you're seeing playing out in Iraq. This is what is playing out in Afghanistan. Isn't it amazing that two of the youngest democracies on the face of the Earth are being challenged by murderers and terrorists? They have a different vision of government.

Thirdly, this is being played out in Lebanon. A struggling democracy is having to deal with extremist groups funded by parties in the region that worry about the advent of democracy. And so my strategy has always been to lay out a vision that I believe can work, and work toward that vision. And so we're doing that in the Middle East.

Now, first, in order for there to be peace in the Middle East, there has to be a commitment by the leaders of the parties to work toward two democracies living side by side in peace. The United States can't impose a solution. We can't make the leader of a democracy—force the leader of a democracy to make a decision that is not in the interest

of the people of that democracy. So one of the interesting breakthroughs has been that the Israelis have come to believe, and rightly so, that it's in their long-term interest that we work toward a Palestinian democracy. Otherwise, the demographics will overwhelm the Israeli democracy.

And so the leadership—this isn't—they didn't say, "Hey, good idea; let's have Palestinian democracy," because I said it. They have said this because it's in their interest. And so does President Abbas believe it's important and necessary. But the problem is, is that we have got to do two things. One, we've got to make this hope real for the Palestinians. In other words, they've heard a lot of rhetoric, but they really haven't seen a state begun to emerge from the rhetoric. So there's got to be hope.

And so one of the things Condi and I are working on is to see if we can't get the two parties to agree on what a state would look like so that the average Palestinian says, "Wait a minute. I'm sick and tired of this violence; I'm not going to support those who espouse radicalism and violence in order to achieve an objective, because here's a different vision." And in the meantime, we're trying to help this Palestinian democracy have the institutions in place—a security institution, an economic institution, an actual functioning government—that will inspire not only their own people but inspire the Israelis to eventually trust their judgment that a Palestinian state on her border will yield the peace. And it's hard—it can happen.

But we have to be firm in our rejection of extremists and radicals. And what happens in Iraq, for example, matters in the Palestinian Territory. What happens in Lebanon matters around the Middle East. And the truth of the matter is, Iran is using Hizballah in Lebanon and is worried about democracy in the Middle East—can't stand the thought of a democratic government on our border—is creating issues of peace.

And one of the reasons I answered the man's question that I did about the need to succeed is because there would be nothing worse for world peace if the Iranians believed that the United States didn't have the will and commitment to help young democracies survive; that if we left before the job was

done, there would be chaos. Chaos would embolden not only the extremists and radicals who would like to do us harm, but it would also embolden Iran. And what you don't want is somebody—is to have a nuclear arms race taking place in the Middle East.

And so our objective with Iran is to peacefully deal with the issue and convince the Iranians to give up their nuclear weapons ambitions for the sake of peace. And that requires more than one voice speaking to them. It requires the international community understanding the stakes of what a nuclear-armed Iran could mean. I'm kind of getting out of the lane here on the question but—anyway, I wanted to share this with you.

All of these democracy movements and freedom movements are related to the larger issues that you're reading about in your newspapers. The Iranian issue, the Iraqi issue, they're all interrelated. And that's why it's really important for the United States to stay engaged and to promote democracy for the sake of peace.

See, 50 years—the time between when my dad fought and Koizumi came into the office, 50 years is really—or 60 years is not all that long—unless, of course, you're 59. [*Laughter*] But anyway, it's just not all that long. And I've told people, this is the first chapter of freedom's march in the 21st century, against these radical ideologues. It's the first chapter. We're in for an ideological struggle that's going to take awhile.

And my commitment is, let's make sure that first chapter that's written is one that'll yield the peace we want. Let's make certain when we look back at this generation that they say, "They didn't shirk their duty; they did the hard work so future children can live in peace." And it's difficult. It's a difficult work. It's hard to do the hard things now. And so—and the American people are—you know, they don't like war. He's got to know, I don't like it either. But I also understand the challenges.

And anyway, there's a part of an answer for a strategy that I believe is going to work. I really do.

Yes.

Education

Q. [*Inaudible*]

The President. A college education—if you're a poor student, you just got to—you got help because I signed a bill that increased the amount and size of Pell grants. I believe strongly that Pell grants is one good way of helping families afford higher education. I believe in tax incentives to help families save for higher education. I believe in student loans to help families afford higher education.

My view is this, that if you work hard and you want to go to college, you can find all the help you want. Now, some people don't like repaying loans, but that's part of life. If we can borrow some of your money—if somebody's going to borrow some of your money, they ought to repay your money. No, I think if you really look hard, you'll find there's a lot of help.

The best thing we can do, by the way, to make sure that higher education is relevant—this isn't exactly your question—but to make sure it works in America is to make sure our children can read and write and add and subtract. And I want to spend a little time talking to you about a subject that may be controversial for some. It's called the No Child Left Behind law. See, it's an old trick—you talk about education; I segue into something I want to talk about. [*Laughter*]

Here's the law. As Governor of Texas, I was deeply concerned about schools in my State that were simply moving children through the system without being able to tell parents or officials or taxpayers whether or not that child could meet standards. And so what ended up happening is, is that I would go to a school, and they'd say, "Well, we've inherited kids who can't read"—from the elementary school, for example. So I decided to try to do something about it. And step one was to say, if you're going to take our money, taxpayers' money, you need to measure. There needs to be a standard. You need to show us whether or not, for example, children are reading at grade level by the third grade.

And I took this—and the standards started improving education results. I mean, we actually—using the word "result" wasn't something that we could use before we measured. We were guessing. Now we're measuring in our State.

And so I took this attitude to Washington, DC. We're spending a lot of your money on poor kids in Federal education, which I support. But I don't support the notion of not knowing whether or not that child can read. And so therefore, we said, "You design the tests." In other words, I said, "You design the tests, not the Federal Government." I believe in local control of schools, but I just believe in strong accountability. I believe in saying to a school district, "You better get it right, and you're going to measure to show us whether or not you're getting it right." And I also believe that in early grades, when we find somebody who can't read up to grade level, we ought to spend additional money to help that child get up to speed now, before it's too late.

And so the No Child Left Behind Act says, we trust you to run your schools the way you want to run them, but you show us whether or not a child can read, write, and add and subtract. Guess what happens generally in some of the schools—in my State, at least, they used to—guess who was penalized by a system that didn't measure? African American inner-city kids, you know—they're hard to educate; let's just move them through. That's unacceptable to America. And it was certainly unacceptable to me as Governor and me as President. I believe every child can learn, and I expect schools to teach every child how to learn.

And so to answer your question on college, you can find help to go to college; you sure can. But my advice is doing what I'm sure you're doing, which is studying hard now so that college is relevant to you later. And so I thank you for your question.

Yes, sir.

Presidential Election/President's Family

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Yes, I will.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. I'll veto it. Yes.

Q. Mr. President, I have a lot of respect for the job you do—

The President. Why don't you just leave her right there, then? [Laughter]

Q. After saying you're still having fun, I have even more respect for you.

The President. Thank you.

Q. But my question is a little bit lighter, I guess. Two things: One, are you able at this point to support any of the Presidential candidates coming up?

The President. No.

Q. All right. [Laughter] Then my next question—I have recently watched the interviews with your daughters, and you have to be very proud of them.

The President. Thank you.

Q. I'm proud of my daughter. My question is, would you rather see your daughters go into business or politics?

The President. I'd rather them do whatever they want to do. And I—what I want them to do is, I want them to understand that when they can—when they love a neighbor or when they help somebody in need, that they're really helping themselves. I want them to understand there is a certain responsibility in our society to reach out. So when Jenna told me she's a school teacher, I was very proud of that. Or when Barbara went down and worked in a AIDS—pediatric AIDS clinic in South Africa, I was very proud of that. And yes, I love my daughters. And one of the hardest things I've done is, I've put them in the spotlight. And that was—I really wrestled with the decision to run for President because, of all the candidates, I understand what it means to be a son or a daughter of a President.

And so it's been a blessing to see them grow up. And I'm real proud of them.

Yes. No, you're second.

Immigration Reform

Q. Mr. President, it's a pleasure to have you here. My question, it brings the immigration issue a little closer to home. Recently, the mayor of Hazleton came to Lancaster City and spoke about his views regarding penalties for landlords and others who support illegal immigrants. The city of Lancaster passed an ordinance that rejected that sort of thinking. I'd like your thoughts about that position, please.

The President. I think that—one of the reasons I was strongly in favor of comprehensive immigration reform is so that would preempt local governments from taking a variety of actions which creates a confusing mosaic around the country. Obviously, you know,

State—local governments can do what they want to do. But I believe the reason they feel like they need to do that is because the Federal Government hasn't acted with a comprehensive immigration reform bill. And one of the consequences of the Federal Government not being able to act in a focused, concerted way is that people felt obligated to respond locally.

And so Congress needs to—you know, I don't know whether they're going to bring the issue up again. I was deeply disappointed that we couldn't get the bill going. I really felt like a comprehensive bill would, as I say, prevent this notion of city governments responding to immigration in a variety of different ways. Same thing is happening in Texas, in some places. And so it's a—anyway, we'll keep trying to get it done. I'm going to tell you something: The country needs to address this thing in a comprehensive fashion.

Yes, sir. Oh, I'm sorry, ma'am. When you're getting over 60, sometimes your mind slips. [Laughter]

War on Terror/Progress in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, my question is, are you disappointed in Americans condemning the Iraqi war now, since—

The President. Do what now?

Q. I said, are you disappointed in the Americans that condemn the Iraqi war now, since after—right after 9/11 it seemed like we were all ready to go to war over it?

The President. I'm not—listen, people don't like war. I'm not disappointed in America at all. I love America. And I fully understand, you know, that people just are anxious about seeing death on their TV screens. I also understand that, you know, the enemy understands that. And so these spectacular bombings of innocent people are meant to achieve a couple of objectives: one, shake the will of those inside Iraq or wherever they kill—Afghanistan, Indonesia, the Philippines—all aiming to disquiet societies that live under the democracy. But they're also smart people. They know that these spectaculars will get on our TV screens.

And they understand the goodness of America. They may not view this as a strong characteristic of our society, which is that we

respect human rights and human dignity and human life—that may be viewed as a weakness in their perspective. But for me, it's a strength. And they know that we'll recoil from these kinds of deaths. And so it's a—I'm not surprised, ma'am, that this war has created anxiety in our society. You know, like everybody else, I wish it would, you know, be over. But I want it over having accomplished our objectives, which is, as I told you, to write a solid chapter in this long ideological struggle so that 50 years from now, when people look at the decisionmaking, they say, "I understand where he's coming from, and it was worth the sacrifice—which is peace."

We live in a society, in a way, where things—people have expectations that things ought to happen quite quickly. To come from a tyrannical society that really didn't know the habits of democracy and be given the challenge and the responsibility of governing a democracy is hard work. And I'm not making any excuses, but I'm telling you it's hard. There's no basis for which these folks inside Iraq have governed, except for somebody else's experience, not their own experiences. And I talk to these leaders a lot. And the first thing I'm looking for in them is courage—do they have the courage necessary to stand up in the face of these attacks by extremists; do they have the capacity to reach out to each other?

And what's happening in Iraq is that as security has improved at the local level, local folks just—average citizens stand up and say, "We want more." It is wrong to assume that the average mom in Iraq is willing to accept violence. The average mom in Iraq wants what you want, which is your child growing up in peace. The average mom in Iraq wants something better for her child than what was under the tyranny of Saddam Hussein.

And so it's a—what's happening there is, is as I said in my speech the other night, local politics will affect national politics; reconciliation is taking place at the local level, and people who are learning how to run a democracy are beginning to respond. And anyway, I'm not disappointed in America at all. I love America, and I really love the people.

Yes. I think that was your question, wasn't it? Okay. The answer was so long, I lost track.

What you got, buddy?

Iran/North Korea

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Okay, I'll ask you a question. What grade are you in?

Q. I'm in 10th grade.

The President. Tenth, fabulous.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Atta boy. [Laughter]

Q. I would like you to help me understand why you consider that—[inaudible]—refuse to negotiate directly with—[inaudible].

The President. Appreciate that.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Great question. He says, why won't I sit down with the Iranian leaders; why won't there be direct negotiations with Iran? In order for diplomacy to work, the other side needs as much or more from you as you need from them. We have started negotiations with a leader and a form of government we don't agree with, called North Korea.

And let me give you this case study. I was concerned about the North Korean weapons programs. I was concerned that they didn't honor agreements from the past, and so therefore, I said, we're not going to continue the bilateral negotiations that I inherited—because I felt very strongly that those negotiations were non-consequential. In other words, there was no consequence if somebody decided to just go ahead and ignore what we'd agreed to. Negotiations just for the sake of negotiations oftentimes send wrong signals. Negotiations to achieve consequences are worth doing.

And so my first objective was to put the discussion, potential discussions in the position that if Kim Jong Il decided to say one thing and do another, there would be some consequences. And the most consequential move would be that countries in the neighborhood, such as China, would become—would try to affect North Korean policy. In other words, to get China at the table was an objective, so that when we spoke to North Korea, they would hear more than one voice—the United States. They had heard the voice of the United States for the previous 6 years and didn't honor their obligations, we felt. But maybe they would change

their behavior if they heard the voice of other countries. In other words, five of us got together and said, "Here's what we expect you to do, and in return for you doing this in a verifiable way, you will end up getting this. But if you decide to make a promise and not honor that promise, then there will be consequences." We had already sanctioned North Korea, so we were pretty much non-consequential on the diplomatic front. But China hadn't, for example.

And so step one was to try to make sure that any discussions we had were able to achieve objectives, and in this case—this example was one where we were willing to discuss it, but we want to make sure that we set it up in such a way that when it came time for North Korea to dismantle its programs, we would, one, be able to verify it, and two, we would be able to keep them at the table and keep them progressing. And that's where we are today. In other words we've—and it takes awhile to get all this in place.

You know, in Iran, we're dealing with a country where the leader has said that he wants to destroy Israel. My belief is that the United States will defend our ally, Israel. This is a leader who has made very provocative statements, and we have made it clear, however, in spite of that, that we're willing to sit down with him, so long as he suspends his program—his nuclear weapons program. In other words, it's his choice, not mine anymore.

So I believe that's the best way to achieve an objective without undermining our credibility, without sending the wrong signal to people. And so it's—each case matter is different. And so if your question is, will you ever sit down with them? We've proven we would with North Korea. And the answer is, yes, just so long as we can achieve something; so long as we are able to get our objective. And I guess what I'm telling you is, it takes time to get things in place so that there will be results.

And, actually, that's a great question for a guy your age. I never would have thought of it. [Laughter]

Yes.

Cooperation With Congress/President's Decisionmaking

Q. [*Inaudible*]*—*thank you, Mr. President—*[inaudible]*—Lancaster.

The President. Okay.

Q. What do you see as your goal as leader of the country in depolarizing Congress and getting more win-wins out of Congress and less vetoes from you?

The President. Yes. You know, probably the most disappointing thing about my experience in Washington is the harshness of the discourse, is the zero-sum attitude. And I've tried to do my part by holding people with respect and to—you know, talking about people in such a way that it doesn't degrade the process. I want this little guy to look at Washington and say, "Wow, this is something I may aspire to."

First of all, I'm not so sure there's much that we can do at this point in time. The war has been divisive; I understand that. The politics is coming around the corner here in 2008, and people are going to be posturing a lot. Maybe it's—part of it's, I guess, my stubbornness over taxes. I'm just not going to raise your taxes, I just want to make that clear. And so therefore, if the definition of "common ground" is, raise taxes, there are just some redlines for me—no, I'm not suggesting you suggested that.

I'll still try to do my best to treat people with respect. It's the best thing a President can do, it seems like to me. And the other leaders ought to be doing the same thing. If you disagree with a person, don't make it personal. Don't feel like you have to tear the other person down in order to make a political point.

And I got to go, I hate to tell you. You're paying me too much money to be sitting here talking. [*Laughter*]

I want to conclude by, one, thanking you for coming. I hope you get a better sense of why I made the decisions I make and who I am as a person. You know, it's a—oh, I don't know what people think when they're looking on the TV screen. The only thing I can do is just to tell you what's in my heart and to let you know the principles by which I decide things, my great optimism about the future. I'm an optimistic guy. And the reason I'm optimistic is because I believe in the

greatness of the country, and I believe the values of America are so real.

I told somebody behind stage, this has been a joyous experience, being the President. My buddies in Texas just simply don't think I'm telling them the truth. [*Laughter*] But it is. It is a joyous experience to try to solve problems. It's a joyous experience to represent a country full of decent and honorable and caring people.

And I thank you for giving me a chance to come. And I ask for God's blessings on you and our country. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:37 a.m. at Jay Group, Inc. headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Marion McGowan, chairman, Tom Baldrige, president, and Jim Smucker, chairman-elect, Lancaster County Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Jay Chryst, founder, and Dana Chryst, chief executive officer, Jay Group, Inc.; Krist Blank, Amish church leader; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority; Chairman Kim Jong Il of North Korea; and President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran. The President also referred to H.R. 976, the "Children's Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007." An audience member referred to Mayor Louis J. Barletta of Hazelton, PA.

Statement on the Agreement Announced at the Six-Party Talks in Beijing

October 3, 2007

I welcome the agreement announced today at the six-party talks in Beijing. Today's announcement reflects the common commitment of the participants in the six-party talks to realize a Korean Peninsula that is free of nuclear weapons.

In September 2005, we agreed on a joint statement that charted the way forward toward achieving a nuclear weapons-free peninsula. In February 2007, the participants in the six-party talks announced a set of first steps toward implementing that agreement. Today's announcement maps out additional steps toward our ultimate goal of full and verifiable denuclearization.

Under the agreement reached today, North Korea has committed that by the end

of 2007, it will provide a complete and correct declaration of all its nuclear programs, nuclear weapons programs, materials, and any proliferation activity. North Korea will get started on its commitment to disable all its existing nuclear facilities by disabling the core nuclear facilities at Yongbyon by the end of the year. North Korea also committed not to transfer nuclear materials, technology, or know-how beyond its borders.

The other parties—including the United States—are providing economic and energy assistance to North Korea. Such assistance is being provided as North Korea carries out its commitments.

I commend Secretary Rice, Ambassador Hill, and our negotiating team for their hard work and dedication to this important effort, which will help secure the future peace and prosperity of the Northeast Asian region.

Message to the House of Representatives Returning Without Approval the “Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007”

October 3, 2007

To the House of Representatives:

I am returning herewith without my approval H.R. 976, the “Children’s Health Insurance Program Reauthorization Act of 2007,” because this legislation would move health care in this country in the wrong direction.

The original purpose of the State Children’s Health Insurance Program (SCHIP) was to help children whose families cannot afford private health insurance, but do not qualify for Medicaid, to get the coverage they need. My Administration strongly supports reauthorization of SCHIP. That is why I proposed last February a 20 percent increase in funding for the program over 5 years.

This bill would shift SCHIP away from its original purpose and turn it into a program that would cover children from some families of four earning almost \$83,000 a year. In addition, under this bill, government coverage would displace private health insurance for many children. If this bill were enacted, one out of every three children moving onto gov-

ernment coverage would be moving from private coverage. The bill also does not fully fund all its new spending, obscuring the true cost of the bill’s expansion of SCHIP, and it raises taxes on working Americans.

Because the Congress has chosen to send me a bill that moves our health care system in the wrong direction, I must veto it. I hope we can now work together to produce a good bill that puts poorer children first, that moves adults out of a program meant for children, and that does not abandon the bipartisan tradition that marked the enactment of SCHIP. Our goal should be to move children who have no health insurance to private coverage, not to move children who already have private health insurance to government coverage.

George W. Bush

The White House,
October 3, 2007.

Remarks Following Discussions With Parliament Member Sa’ad Hariri of Lebanon

October 4, 2007

President Bush. It is my honor to welcome the honorable Sa’ad Hariri here to the Oval Office. Sa’ad is the majority leader in the Lebanese Parliament.

I told this courageous leader that the United States strongly supports the success of democracy in Lebanon; that we respect your country, and that we understand the obstacles that you face. First, I was very impressed by the response of the Government and Prime Minister Siniora in dealing with the extremists and radicals, impressed by his willingness to have the Lebanese forces work for security in Lebanon, and so impressed that I asked Admiral Fallon to go to Lebanon to assess how we can further help the Government and the forces protect themselves from radical elements who are willing to use violence and terror to achieve objectives.

We talked about the upcoming Presidential election, and I am deeply concerned about foreign interference in your elections. It is—the message has been sent to nations, such as Syria, that they should not interfere

in the election of the President. The international community has spoken, and we expect Syria to honor those—that demand.

Sa'ad Hariri suffered incredible tragedy when his good father was assassinated, killed in Lebanon. And as a result of that cold-blooded murder, the international community has demanded accountability. That tribunal is taking too long to get started. The international community must work more quickly to stand up this tribunal so people will be held to account. And not only that, this tribunal will send a clear message that there will be justice delivered for not only the murder of your dad but for the murder of others that have taken place on the streets of Beirut.

You know, I admire your courage. This is a tough time.

Mr. Hariri. Thank you.

President Bush. And I appreciate the fact that you care enough about the people of Lebanon that you're willing to work hard for peace and democracy and freedom. And I reiterate what I told you, is that the United States is more than just an admirer; we want to help you as best as we possibly can.

So I welcome you here to the Oval Office.

Mr. Hariri. Thank you. I thank you, Mr. President, for the political and all the support that you have given Lebanon, from the international tribunal, from helping the security forces also, and fighting those terrorists in Lebanon. Also, we in Lebanon have a very important constitutional Presidential election that we don't want any foreign interference in this Presidential election.

We've had Members of our Parliament being killed. We ask—I ask Mr. President that this action is taken by terrorists that want to finish our democracy. We will stay resolved; we will stay focused on our democracy. We will not let those who want to destroy our democracy succeed. We have paid very dear blood, from my father to Mr. Antoine Ghanem lately, who were willing to pay the price to preserve our democracy. And we shall preserve our democracy with our country.

Thank you, Mr. President.

President Bush. Welcome. Glad you're here. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:01 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Fuad Siniora of Lebanon; Adm. William J. Fallon, commander, U.S. Central Command; and former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri of Lebanon, who was assassinated on February 14, 2005. Mr. Hariri referred to Parliament Member Antoine Ghanem of Lebanon, who was assassinated on September 19.

Statement on Senator Pete V. Domenici's Decision Not To Seek Reelection

October 4, 2007

For over three decades, the citizens of New Mexico have turned to Pete Domenici for leadership on issues that matter to their families, their communities, and their country. He earned the respect and trust of his constituents, which is why they elected him to serve in the United States Senate longer than any other New Mexican in history.

A proud son of Italian immigrants, Pete has devoted much of his life to serving the State and the country that he loves. In Washington, he has won the respect of his peers as a skilled and determined legislator. He championed clean nuclear power and helped secure the passage of the Energy Policy Act of 2005, the first national energy plan in more than a decade. As chairman of the Senate Budget Committee, he was a leader in efforts to lower taxes, balance the budget, and reduce Washington spending. And he has been a tireless advocate for our men and women in uniform. Senator Domenici has helped improve the lives of millions of Americans and made our country safer.

Pete is a man of intellect and compassion. I have valued his counsel and friendship, and I look forward to working with him as he serves out the remainder of his term.

Laura and I are grateful for Pete's service to our Nation. As he nears retirement, we pray for his health and well-being, and we send Pete, his wife Nancy, and their family our best wishes.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Mortgage Forgiveness Debt Relief Legislation

October 4, 2007

In August, I proposed a comprehensive plan to help homeowners avoid foreclosures and stay in their homes. As part of this plan, I pledged to work with Congress in a bipartisan way to temporarily reform a provision of the Federal Tax Code to make it easier for homeowners to refinance their mortgages during this time of market stress. Today a bipartisan majority of the House of Representatives passed legislation to help people stay in their homes and move this process forward. I applaud the House's efforts. I urge the Senate to swiftly consider this legislation and make it temporary.

NOTE: The statement referred to H.R. 3648.

Proclamation 8185—German-American Day, 2007

October 4, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Generations of German Americans have helped shape our national culture and advance our legacy of freedom. On German-American Day, we recognize the many contributions that Americans of German descent have made to our vibrant country.

German immigrants, in search of a brighter future, were among the first pioneers to settle in Jamestown. Since then, German Americans have influenced our society in all walks of life and helped expand our democratic heritage and our deeply held belief in individual liberty. The leadership and strong spirit of German Americans have helped shape our country and advance the great blessings of our Nation.

German-American Day is also an opportunity to honor the strong ties between the United States and Germany and to celebrate our friendship. On this day, we underscore our commitment to working together to pro-

mote peace and making the world a more hopeful place.

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 October 6, 2007, as German-American Day. I encourage all Americans to celebrate the many contributions German Americans have made to our Nation's liberty and prosperity.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of October, 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, 8:55 a.m., October 5, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on October 9.

Proclamation 8186—Columbus Day, 2007

October 4, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In 1492, Christopher Columbus set sail on a journey that changed the course of history. On Columbus Day, we celebrate this voyage of discovery and honor an Italian explorer who shaped the destiny of the New World.

Christopher Columbus' bold journey across the Atlantic opened new frontiers of exploration and demonstrated the power of perseverance. His journeys inspired other risk-takers and dreamers to test the bounds of their imagination and gave them the courage to accomplish great feats, whether crossing the world's oceans or walking on the moon. Today, a new generation of innovators and pioneers continues to uphold the finest values of our country—discipline, ingenuity, and unity in the pursuit of great goals.

As we look back on the contributions of the great explorer from Genoa, we also celebrate the many contributions that generations of Italian Americans have made to our

Nation. Their service to America and ties to family, faith, and community have strengthened our country and enriched our culture.

In commemoration of Columbus' journey, the Congress, by joint resolution of April 30, 1934, and modified in 1968 (36 U.S.C. 107), as amended, has requested that the President proclaim the second Monday of October of each year as "Columbus Day."

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 8, 2007, as Columbus Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I also direct that the flag of the United States be displayed on all public buildings on the appointed day in honor of Christopher Columbus.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of October, 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, 8:55 a.m., October 5, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on October 9.

Proclamation 8187—Leif Erikson Day, 2007

October 4, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On Leif Erikson Day, we commemorate the enduring legacy of a brave explorer and honor the significant contributions of Nordic Americans who continue to enrich our culture and our way of life.

Leif Erikson, a son of Iceland and grandson of Norway, led a determined crew across the Atlantic more than 1,000 years ago and became one of the first Europeans known to reach North America. The courage of these pioneers helped open the world to new exploration and important discoveries. Today, Nordic Americans help strengthen our country, and their determination and op-

timism make America a more hopeful land. Our Nation continues to benefit from strong ties with Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden, and we are grateful for their continued friendship.

To honor Leif Erikson and to celebrate our citizens of Nordic-American heritage, the Congress, by joint resolution (Public Law 88-566) approved on September 2, 1964, has authorized the President to proclaim October 9 of each year as "Leif Erikson Day."

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 9, 2007, as Leif Erikson Day. I call upon all Americans to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs to honor our rich Nordic-American heritage.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of October, 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, 8:55 a.m., October 5, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on October 9.

Proclamation 8188—Fire Prevention Week, 2007

October 4, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

During Fire Prevention Week, we reaffirm our commitment to raising awareness about fire safety and prevention, and we salute our country's firefighters who perform heroic acts to keep their fellow citizens safe.

Fires injure or kill thousands of people each year. Americans can help reduce the devastating effects of fires with careful planning and by installing smoke alarms and fire extinguishers in their homes and workplaces. This year's theme, "Practice Your Escape Plan," highlights the importance of creating a fire escape plan and knowing the routes

to quickly exit a burning building. By taking these special precautions, lives can be saved.

America's firefighters demonstrate the true meaning of heroism by taking great risks to safeguard our communities. During Fire Prevention Week, we honor our selfless firefighters and underscore the importance of fire safety. We also pay special tribute to those who have fallen in the line of duty. Our country is grateful for their service and sacrifice, and we pray for God's comfort and strength for their loved ones.

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 October 7 through October 13, 2007, as Fire Prevention Week. On Sunday, October 7, 2007, in accordance with Public Law 107-51, the flag of the United States will be flown at half staff on all Federal office buildings in honor of the National Fallen Firefighters Memorial Service. I call on all Americans to participate in this observance through appropriate programs and activities and by renewing their efforts to prevent fires and their tragic consequences.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of October, 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., October 9, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on October 10.

Remarks at the Iftaar Dinner

October 4, 2007

Thank you all for coming. Please be seated. *Ramadan Mubarak*. Laura and I are pleased to have you here for our seventh Iftaar dinner. Tonight we celebrate traditions of Islamic faith, which brings hope and comfort to more than a billion people. For Muslims around the world, the holy month of Ramadan is a special time of prayer and fasting. It is a time for charity and service to

those less fortunate. It's a time to celebrate Islam's learned and vibrant culture, which has enriched civilization for centuries.

Ramadan is also a good time for Americans of all faiths to reflect on the values we hold in common—including love of family, gratitude to the Almighty, devotion to community, and a commitment to religious liberty. The freedom of worship is central to the American character. It's the first protection in the Bill of Rights. It holds together the fabric of American society, supporting every individual's right to practice his or her beliefs without fear.

Today, our world is at war with violent extremists who seek to tear the fabric of our society and stop the advance of freedom in Muslim societies around the world. They attack holy sites, destroy mosques and minarets, and kill innocent men, women, and children—including Muslims who do not share their radical views. They believe that by spreading chaos and violence they can frustrate the desire of Muslims to live in freedom and peace. We say to them, you don't represent Muslims, you do not represent Islam—and you will not succeed.

America is standing with mainstream citizens across the broader Middle East. We stand with nearly 12 million Iraqis who voted for a democratic future for their children. We're standing with Afghan people, as they defend their young democracy against the Taliban and Al Qaida. We're standing with the Lebanese people, who raised the banner of a Cedar Revolution to reclaim their freedom and independence. We're standing with all who seek the blessings of liberty and the peace that freedom brings.

Americans have a history of standing with Muslims facing suffering and hardship—and it's a proud history. Our country defended Muslims in Bosnia and Kosovo after the breakup of Yugoslavia. We supported Kuwait after it was invaded by Saddam Hussein. Americans came to the aid of victims of devastating earthquakes in Pakistan, India, and Iran. Americans responded with urgency and compassion to the wreckage of the tsunami in Indonesia and Sri Lanka and Thailand. We're rallying the world to confront the genocide in Sudan and deliver humanitarian aid for those in dire need. And we support

the establishment of a Palestinian democracy to live side by side with Israel in peace.

As you break your Ramadan fast at this Iftaar dinner, let us renew our faith in the universality of freedom. Let us celebrate the millions of Muslims that we are proud to call American citizens. And let us honor the many Muslim nations that America is proud to call friends.

Laura and I are grateful you're here. Thank you for coming. We wish you a blessed Ramadan. And now I ask the Imam to say the blessing.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:16 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Cmdr. Abuhena M. Saifulislam, USN, Navy Chaplain Corps.

Interview With Elie Nakouzi of Al Arabiya

October 4, 2007

Mr. Nakouzi. Mr. President, it's nice to see you. It's nice to meet you. And how are you doing?

The President. Welcome. Come on in the Oval Office. I'm doing great. Thank you. I welcome you here. And I thank you for the opportunity to talk to you about some of the decisions that I have made right here in this Oval Office. I'm honored you've come.

President's Decisionmaking

Mr. Nakouzi. Actually, I want to tell the people of the Middle East that this is the place where big decisions are made. This is the office. But here it comes to my mind that how hard it is on you, Mr. President, to take like—a big decision like war, for example—is it that easy to take a decision such like war—

The President. No, it's the hardest decision a President can make. And when I campaigned for office, I never really thought about the decision to put men and women in harm's way. I never thought that that would happen. Circumstances changed, of course, and I had to make some very difficult decisions about how to protect our homeland and take action necessary to—the actions that I think will yield the peace.

And so whether it be in Afghanistan or Iraq, I was—I have made those decisions. And I will tell you they're hard decisions, because I understand the consequences. One of the hardest things for me is to meet with a mother. I met with a mother yesterday in Pennsylvania who lost her son in combat. And you know, those can be very tearful and emotional moments, and I understand that. And my—the only thing I try to do is provide as much comfort as I can and to assure the mom, in this case, that I thought the decision was necessary for peace, and necessary for our security, and that I valued the fact that her son would volunteer, and that I vowed to honor that sacrifice by achieving our objectives.

Anyway, this is the room where I make the decisions.

War on Terror

Mr. Nakouzi. But would these moments—I mean, these emotional moments, would they make you reconsider or rethink about what's going on in our area now?

The President. Not really. As a matter of fact, I leave most of the meetings reassured that the loved one, in this case, fully understanding what we were doing. See, I believe that, one, it's noble to liberate 25 million people from a tyrant; two, that we cannot allow Iraq to be a safe haven for people who have sworn allegiance to those who have attacked us. In other words, I believe we must defeat the extremists there so we don't have to face them here at home. And three, I believe the spread of liberty will yield peace. And I believe the Middle East is plenty capable of being a part of the world where liberty flourishes. That's what I believe people want.

And so I leave those meetings saddened by the fact that a person has pain in her heart—and yesterday she had pain in her heart—but encouraged by the fact that her son died for a noble cause and a necessary cause. And that's exactly what she told me.

Islam/Religious Freedom

Mr. Nakouzi. Actually, I want to thank you again, Mr. President, for giving us the opportunity to talk for the first time to the Arab world, to address them with the big concerns. I know we have a great deal of

questions. I know you have a very tight schedule—

The President. Sure. I want to show you the Rose Garden, one of the most famous areas—

Mr. Nakouzi. It's a great chance for me. I heard, Mr. President, also, that you are receiving an Iftaar—

The President. Yes, I am.

Mr. Nakouzi. —in the White House, which is, of course, a Muslim ritual

The President. It is.

Mr. Nakouzi. But I want to tell you—and I hope this doesn't bother you at all—that in the Islamic world, they think that President Bush is an enemy of Islam—

The President. Sure.

Mr. Nakouzi. —that he wants to destroy their religion, what they believe in. Is that in any way true, Mr. President?

The President. No, it's not. I've heard that, and it just shows—to show a couple of things: One, that the radicals have done a good job of propagandizing. In other words, they've spread the word that this really isn't peaceful people versus radical people or terrorists; this is really about the America not liking Islam.

Well, first of all, I believe in an almighty God, and I believe that all the world, whether they be Muslim, Christian, or any other religion, prays to the same God. That's what I believe. I believe that Islam is a great religion that preaches peace. And I believe people who murder the innocent to achieve political objectives aren't religious people, whether they be a Christian who does that—we had a person blow up our—blow up a Federal building in Oklahoma City who professed to be a Christian. But that's not a Christian act to kill innocent people.

Mr. Nakouzi. Exactly.

The President. And I just simply don't subscribe to the idea that murdering innocent men, women, and children—particularly Muslim men, women, and children in the Middle East—is an act of somebody who is a religious person.

We are having an Iftaar dinner tonight—I say, “we”—it's my wife and I. This is the seventh one in the 7 years I've been the President. It gives me a chance to say *Ramadan Mubarak*. The reason I do this is, I want

people to understand about my country. In other words, I hope this message gets out of America. I want people to understand that one of the great freedoms in America is the right for people to worship any way they see fit. If you're a Muslim, an agnostic, a Christian, a Jew, a Hindu, you're equally American.

And the value—the most valuable thing I think about America is that—particularly if you're a religious person—you can be free to worship, and it's your choice to make. It's not the state's choice, and you shouldn't be intimidated after you've made your choice. And that's a right that I jealously guard.

Secondly, I want American citizens to see me hosting an Iftaar dinner.

Mr. Nakouzi. That's a strong message for the Americans.

The President. It is a strong message. I want to remind your listeners that one of the first things I did after September the 11th is, I went to the local mosque. And I did because I wanted to send a message that those who came to kill Americans were young terrorists, and they do not reflect the views of the vast majority of peaceful people in the Middle East; and that our—precisely the message I was trying to send, the war is not a struggle against Muslims, the Muslim religion; it is a struggle of honorable, peaceful people throughout the world against the few who want to impose their vision.

[At this point, there was a change in location, and the interview resumed as follows.]

War on Terror/Progress in Iraq/Spread of Freedom

Mr. Nakouzi. Actually, Mr. President, we are talking about these terrorists and what's going on in the world right now. Are you also a man of war, as some try to describe, President Bush?

The President. Oh, no, no, I believe the actions we have taken will make it more likely peace happens. I dream it will be—the last thing I want to be is a President during war. Now, remember, we got attacked. And I responded, after careful deliberation, in an attempt to make sure that—with a strategy of protecting ourselves. We can't allow these people that attacked us to have safe haven. We must not give them an opportunity to

strike us again. And therefore, it's important to keep the pressure on.

On the other hand, the ultimate way for peace is for people to realize the great blessings of liberty. And what's interesting—and what has taken place ought to be hopeful to people in the Middle East—is that two young democracies have sprung up where people, when given a chance, voted. See, I believe there is a universal God. I believe the God that the Muslim prays to is the same God that I pray to. After all, we all came from Abraham. I believe in that universality. And I believe a gift of that Almighty to every man, woman, and child is freedom; I really do. And I think people, if given a chance, will seize freedom. And it's liberty and free societies, not—they don't have to look like America—an Iraqi democracy is going to be Iraqi; it's going to reflect Iraqi traditions and Iraqi history.

There are some universal aspects to liberty: One, people can vote; people can express their opinion; people can be in a free press; people ought to be allowed to go to the town square and protest against their government without fear of reprisal. And when given that opportunity, 12 million Iraqis went to the polls.

War on Terror/Iraq

Mr. Nakouzi. So, excuse me, Mr. President, what you're trying to say is, sometimes a decision of war—you have to take a decision of war in order to achieve peace.

The President. That's exactly right.

Mr. Nakouzi. And that's what happened in Iraq.

The President. First of all, yes. I was very concerned about the dictator in Iraq. He was an enemy of the United States of America. He had ties to terrorists—I'm not saying those who attacked us on September the 11th, but I am saying ties to terrorists. He had a lot of money that he was willing to spend on weapons of mass destruction. We didn't find the weapons, but he certainly had the knowledge. And in my judgment, over time, he would have been able to develop those weapons, and they would have been—one thing the Middle East doesn't need is a nuclear arms race.

Former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq

Mr. Nakouzi. Yes, we're going to discuss this.

The President. Well, this guy doesn't—the man, Saddam Hussein, had capability; but remember, there's also a human condition. I believe in human rights. I believe every life has value, whether it be an American life or a life of a person in the Middle East. And this brutal guy killed hundreds of thousands of his own people. And he was unbelievably brutal to neighbors and, as well, to Iraqis. And there's—liberation is a powerful—to me, liberating people is a powerful step toward peace. I wish we didn't have to do this militarily. I was hoping that diplomacy would work. I gave diplomacy a lot of chance to work.

Mr. Nakouzi. But it didn't.

The President. It did not work. So the choice was his, not mine. He had the choice as to whether or not this issue would be resolved peacefully. See, that's the interesting thing that has been turned around. And so I don't regret the decision. As a matter of fact, I feel it was the right decision to this day. And now the question is, will America keep its commitment to the millions of Iraqis who want this society to work? And the answer to that is, yes, we will.

Iraq

Mr. Nakouzi. And here, Mr. President, I would love to ask—I mean, for the Iraqis now, they know and they keep on listening to the news. Sometimes we tell them we want to withdraw the troops. And now we're talking about the partition of Iraq, which is very, very bad news for the Iraqis.

The President. Yes, it is.

Mr. Nakouzi. I know you refused this. You want the unity of Iraq. But what if this Iraqi—what if, in the next administration, another President comes to the office and believes in the partition of Iraq? What's going to happen then?

The President. I don't think it will happen. I don't think it's going to happen.

Progress in Iraq

Mr. Nakouzi. How do you guarantee?

The President. Well, first of all, an American President must understand that Iraq is a sovereign nation operating under its own Constitution. And I'm very confident that the will of Iraq will prevail. And I know there's some noise out of here about partition. But most folks who follow this issue don't support partition, and they don't think it's a good idea.

What Iraq is going to have to do is get the proper balance between the central Government and the Provinces—the very same thing we've been worried about here in America for years. What is the right road between the States and Washington? So that's a constant discussion. But that's what they're going to have to do in Iraq as well. And they're going to need the security situation such that they're able to have an honest political discourse.

So our step one was to help them secure their neighborhoods—and it's working—and make sure these radicals, such as Al Qaida and some of these Shi'a groups, many of whom—which are criminal, aren't able to have their way with this society. And now we'll work toward helping these folks have the important discussion about what should be the role of Baghdad, or what should be the role of the Provincial governments. And when they get that right, when they get settled out, then I think you'll see a much more unified country.

And it's going to be very hard for an American President or any other outside country to dictate to the Iraqis, "Here's what your government must look like," because the Iraqis will show over time that they're capable of making these decisions themselves, and they are making hard decisions right now, by the way.

Spread of Freedom/Iraq

Mr. Nakouzi. I know that your message, your deep message was—to the Arab world—was democracy, freedom, human rights. And you've said too many times that the first message is democracy, is that you have rights, you people of the Middle East, to be free. But now, is democracy still a priority? Because all we hear now in Iraq is, let's achieve security; let's achieve stability.

Is democracy in the Middle East on hold now, waiting for security first?

The President. Well, first of all, no. I strongly believe in the freedom movement. It's ingrained in my soul. It comes from my belief that freedom is universal. And I believe freedom is ingrained in everybody's soul, and if just given a chance, they'll reach for it.

Now, in Iraq, in order for the Government to have breathing space, to be able to do the hard work of reconciliation so that the dreams of the average citizen in Iraq can be realized—which is a free society—there's got to be security. And so security is really a step, an important step, in the freedom movement.

You can't make the decisions if you're worried about getting blown up. And what the enemy wants to do, the enemy of a free Iraq, they want to create enough chaos and confusion inside Iraq that causes people to doubt. And they want, by the way, to kill enough innocent people that causes the American people to lose their patience and determination to help freedom movements.

Not every freedom movement requires military action. But freedom movement does require U.S. commitment to helping reformers and just the average citizen realize the blessings of a free society.

And so the freedom movement is the front and center of our foreign policy because I understand that the peace that we want—listen, we all want peace, except for those who are trying—

Mr. Nakouzi. "Except for those," exactly.

The President. But peace will succeed as more and more people become free.

[At this point, there was a change in location, and the interview resumed as follows.]

Iran

Mr. Nakouzi. Mr. President, we have moved from the Oval Office to the beautiful garden, and here I would like to ask you question that go through the minds of the Arab world. Our world is going through very difficult days.

Let me start with what people expect of me, which is Iran. Mr. President, have you made the decision to strike Iran, as some are saying, or trying to say that you will not leave

your administration and office before you strike Iran militarily?

The President. I have made the commitment that I would continue to work with the world to speak with one voice to the Iranians, to the Iranian Government, that we will work in ways that we can to make it clear to you that you should not have the know-how on how to make a weapon, because one of the great threats to peace and the world would be if Iranians showed up with a nuclear weapon. It would give them an opportunity to blackmail or threaten or possibly follow through with their stated objective, which is the destruction of Israel.

I, of course, said all options are on the table, but I made a pledge to the American people, we will work diplomatically to solve the problem. And that's why you see us at the United Nations working with the EU countries and China and Russia to send that clear message; and that we're going to continue to impose sanctions and make it harder for the Iranian Government to operate in the world until they change their mind, until they come to a new way forward. I have said that if they suspend their nuclear program, we will be at the table. But they have so far refused to do that.

I've also spoken to the Iranian people. And I want to make it clear to the people of Iran that the United States respects Iran, respects the people, respects the proud tradition, and that the Government of Iran has taken decisions that make it harder for them to live their lives. It's the decisions of the Government of Iran that have led to the isolation of the country. And that if this Government would only be responsible, would listen to the world, would not continue its weapons program—the idea of being able to have the capacity to make a weapon—then there's a better way forward for the Iranian people.

Iran

Mr. Nakouzi. But, Mr. President, is there a redline, either a timeline or redline—I hear from analysts that Iran wants today, or at least trying today to buy time in order for you to wait—to lose the time that you can make a big decision, such as going to war. In your judgment, is there a timetable? Is

there a ceiling that if negotiations would fail, a decision to go to war would be made?

The President. The Iranian regime must understand that I'm dedicated to the proposition that they should not continue their desire to enrich, as will be people that follow me in office. There is universal concern about Iranian ambition here in America. This is not a party issue, an issue between one party or the other. When the Iranian President announces to the world that he's going to destroy an ally or announces to the world that he will end up defying the world—that—no matter who the President is, there is going to be a continued focus and effort to achieve this issue, to resolve this issue.

Further Military Action in Iraq

Mr. Nakouzi. This issue, before I move to Iraq, which also, a lot of Iraqis are waiting for this—is there—there are some leaking to the press, and particularly the Arabic press—is it true that you have issued orders, Mr. President, to your senior generals in the American military to prepare for a major and precise strike that could happen during the end of January or February?

The President. I would call that empty propaganda. Evidently, there's a lot of gossip in parts of the country—world that try to scare people about me, personally, or my country or what we stand for. And that kind of gossip is just what it is: It's gossip; it's baseless gossip.

Progress in Iraq

Mr. Nakouzi. Mr. President, we have talked about Iraq. And you have tried to give us a message to assure the Iraqi people—when we were in the garden together—that you do not believe in the partition or the division of Iraq. And this is a very controversial issue in Iraq. And it is scary to even some of the leadership in Iraq. Just to continue and follow up with that issue, did we reach what we reached because of American mistakes or because of Iraqi mistakes and the Iraqi Government?

The President. I think, first of all, the successes in Iraq have been really quite extraordinary. One, the people of Iraq no longer have to live under a dictatorship—a brutal dictatorship. Secondly, the Iraqi people

wrote and ratified a modern Constitution. Thirdly, there is a government that is in place that is beginning to take on the responsibilities of governing. For example, quite a few billions have been spent in the Provinces by the central Government—that doesn't get any focus, but there is a functioning government; there is revenue sharing; there is money to the Provinces.

There is still work to be done, no question about it. But the biggest problem facing Iraq was because killers, bombers decided to murder innocent people in order to stop progress. So what I tell people is, is that the reason why there hasn't been smooth progress—and by the way, it's hard to transition from a dictatorship to a Iraqi democracy—but the main problem has been not the Iraqis or not the United States, but it's been the fact that people have murdered.

For example, what I find appalling is that Al Qaida bombed a holy site, a Muslim holy site; that there have been bombs in markets where innocent people are shopping and young children get destroyed by Muslim—people who profess to be Muslims. Their hearts are so hardened that they're willing to kill innocent people.

And so the task is to deny these people their ability to blow up the innocent. And that's exactly what's happening because of Iraqi bravery and Iraqi forces and a commitment by the Government to deal with murderers. See, I believe murderers murder, and it doesn't matter whether you're a Shi'a murderer or a Sunni murderer or a Christian murderer, you're a murderer. And the role of a state is to protect the innocent people from those murderers. And that's what you're seeing taking place in Iraq. But in the meantime, government is beginning to function better.

But people shouldn't be surprised that it's not instant democracy. First of all, the leaders never have had any practice with democracy, and they're learning to get along after years of tension and resentment. I support Prime Minister Maliki strongly, and I support the Presidency Council strongly. I just had President Talabani in to the Oval Office the other day. And the reason I do is because—I look for courage and commitment. And these leaders are courageous men, and

they're committed to a free Iraq. Has it been perfect progress? No. Is there more work to be done? You bet there's more work to be done. But are things better—getting better over time? Yes, they are. And that's what's important for the American people to know. And what's important for the Iraqi people to know is that we're going to support them, is that they've got our help because we want them to succeed. We want them to realize their dreams.

Iraqi Leadership

Mr. Nakouzi. Mr. President, so the words that were said attributing to the White House or the American position about disappointment in Prime Minister Maliki is not true? You are not disappointed in Prime Minister Maliki and this Iraqi Government yet?

The President. I strongly support Prime Minister Maliki. Again, there's a lot of gossip here, as well as overseas. One of the jobs that I have to continue to do is constantly repeat what—the position of my Government. And the position of my Government is that Prime Minister Maliki is a good man who is working hard, and we strongly support him.

But it's not just Prime Minister Maliki that we support; we also support President Talabani or Vice President Al-Mahdi or Vice President Hashimi. We support those who are committed to peace and committed to the welfare of the Iraqi people. And we support those who are willing to take on these extremists, the few who are murdering innocent people in order to create chaos and confusion inside of Iraq. Again, I repeat, the situation is not perfect, but our country is not perfect. And I'm proud of the courage of the Iraqi citizens.

The Iraqis have been through a lot of bloodshed and violence, and yet they're still strong in their desire to achieve. The Iraqis will be successful.

Lebanese Elections

Mr. Nakouzi. Mr. President, let's move to Lebanon. And a lot of Lebanese are waiting. You have met with Mr. Sa'ad Hariri today, and they are all talking about the upcoming elections in Lebanon that could or could not happen. Does President Bush have

a specific, preferred candidate in Lebanon that you wanted to support for the Presidency of Lebanon? Is there going to be elections in Lebanon that will take place?

The President. No, I have no specific candidate, and I told that to Sa'ad Hariri. I have a deep desire to help the Lebanese democracy succeed. I am deeply concerned about foreign interference into the Presidential election. I am concerned that neighboring countries will try to create instability so that this democracy doesn't succeed, just like I'm deeply concerned that there's been murder on the streets of Beirut, including Sa'ad Hariri's dad, and that the international community must follow through in an expeditious way—must follow through quickly in holding—in having an international tribunal, so that those who murdered—so that the facts come out and those who murdered would be held to account.

There's just too many Parliamentarians who are trying to work for a peaceful Lebanon being assassinated. And we need to know who is doing that assassinations. And when they're found out, they need to be held to account; there needs to be a consequence. And the international community has been too slow in getting the international tribunal moving.

Thirdly, I told Sa'ad Hariri that I sent one of our top military men into Lebanon to help them modernize their armed forces. And the reason I felt comfortable doing that is because Prime Minister Siniora showed courage and had—as did the Lebanese forces when they went out to rout out some extremists who were causing chaos or trying to cause chaos in Lebanon. And yet it became apparent to me that this military was full of courageous people but didn't have the modern equipment necessary to defend the country from extremists and/or extremists who had been funded from outside influence.

This is a very difficult situation. I'm hopeful that, obviously, the Presidency will be resolved and that a unified government can move forward. Sa'ad Hariri shared with me the strategy of the March 14th coalition, and I was more than willing to listen. I assured him and I assure the Lebanese people that we want to help you succeed.

Syrian Involvement in Lebanon

Mr. Nakouzi. Mr. President, are we able to say today, for example, to the Lebanese people—and we know that the United States is the most powerful constituency in Lebanon—can we say to the Lebanese people that you, specifically, Mr. President, will prevent any foreign interference in Lebanon that could be imposed from the outside and have a President that is being promoted by outside force?

The President. I think maybe that's a promise that I'm not sure I could keep, because the one thing that we did was, we worked with France to pass a U.N. resolution to get Syria, Syrian presence, visible presence, out of Lebanon. However, I suspect that there's still a lot of Syrian influence in Lebanon that is not helpful. And one way to make it clear to the Asad Government that we don't appreciate this is for the United States to—is to analyze the sanctions we've placed on the Government and think about other ways to continue to send a message and to work with our friends, particularly in Europe, to send the same message. In other words, there has to be a consequence for continued involvement.

And the other thing is, is that I think it's going to be an important signal to send—is this tribunal. The international community said we ought to have a tribunal. I'm frustrated, frankly, by the pace at which the tribunal is lingering—it's not moving. There needs to be a definitive moment where the evidence is laid out, and if it's clear evidence—in other words, if somebody's guilty, they ought to be held to account so that murder is not—so that there's this clear signal that murder is not going to be accepted. The brave souls of Lebanon who are being killed—Sa'ad Hariri's dad was one, blown up, murdered. Why? Because he supported democracy. Lebanese democracy is for freedom.

And that ought to send a clear message to people throughout the world that it is so important for those of us who live in free societies to support brave people who are promoting liberty. This man wanted nothing more than the Lebanese mom to be able to raise her child in peace. And yet somebody ordered or somebody followed through with

coldblooded murder to deny those dreams for the Lebanese people. And the same thing is happening in Iraq, and it's unacceptable behavior.

And the United States is firm in its desire to help the average citizen in the Middle East live in peace. It just so happens a peaceful Middle East will make America more secure. So we have common interests. And that's really what I want the people in the Middle East to hear, that each issue is an issue that's got difficult problems, but there's an inter-connection. Extremists want to stop freedom, though. And we want—we want you to live in peace. And we respect your religion, and we respect your humanity. And our desire for you is to realize your full potential, God-given potential.

Peace in the Middle East

Mr. Nakouzi. Mr. President, of course I cannot conclude this interview without asking the most important question, that is the issue of Palestine. Is President Bush convinced, truly convinced inside, that it is possible yet to achieve peace between Israel and Palestine? Can we achieve the two states, living side by side, and not as two enemies but two friends? Is it possible or is it difficult or impossible to achieve?

The President. I believe in my soul, in my heart, that not only is it necessary that there be two states living side by side in order to achieve peace, but it's possible. I'm very optimistic we can achieve a two-state solution.

First, Prime Minister Olmert and President Abbas are committed to a two-state solution and are making progress. We've done a lot of dialog between the two men, and they are making progress. And they're making progress that—I believe—where the average Palestinian and average Israeli will begin to see what a vision looks like; in other words, something to work for, something that's more tangible than just a Rose Garden speech by the President or hopeful comments by others—something real.

Secondly, that—you know, we're hosting an international conference that will be attended by interested parties—the Arab League, you know, important Arab League group will be there; a committee will be

there from the Arab League. And it's an opportunity for there to be a serious—substantive discussions about the way forward and a two-state solution. A lot of it is going to be empower both parties, give them confidence to follow through on the vision.

I also want you to know that I fully understand the two-state solution is a part of a comprehensive peace in the Middle East, and that our strategy is to get all concerned countries to the table; to get this comprehensive peace moving forward in a way that is tangible and real, so people can see it. In other words, I'm not interested in just a photo opportunity, and I don't think anybody else is going to be interested in that. I really want to see if we can advance the progress.

Step one was for there to be a commitment by Israel and the Palestinians to this peace. And step two is a commitment to the road-map. In other words, nobody is going to want—have a state that becomes a launching pad for attack. The Palestinians—the average Palestinian doesn't want that, and surely the Abbas Government doesn't, and Israel can't stand that.

And so we've got—we got to work a lot with the Palestinians to help their security forces—and we are—and to help the President and the Prime Minister with economic aid, tangible economic aid so the average Palestinian can see a better life ahead, can realize there's something better than violence. And so I am very optimistic about it, about the prospects for peace.

War on Terror

Mr. Nakouzi. Steven told me that time is over, Mr. President. Could you just—a few seconds, if you allow me. And since I wanted to go ask you that question when we, after—20 days after commemorating September 11th, I said, when I meet President Bush, I'm going to ask him a question. This massacre that happened on 9/11, it is very difficult for any Arab who lives in the Arab world that can imagine what happened to innocent American people on that day.

I would like to know what was your reaction the first time when you heard that 15 Saudi Muslims were among the hijackers who committed this crime and this terrorist act? How did that affect your relationship

with the Kingdom—which plays a major role in the region—and particularly Crown Prince Abdallah—now King Abdallah—who is a personal friend of yours?

The President. King Abdallah is a personal friend of mine, and I respect him. You know, I have seen murder before in my own country. I have seen evil people take innocent life. And when that's happened, I haven't condemned everybody else around.

I will give you an interesting story. I was in a community yesterday—a gunman came and killed five young Amish girls—this is last year. And the gunman was killed. The Amish community, which is a religious community here in America, went and reached out to the wife and children of the gunman in compassion and love. And I'm not saying I was that—you know, I hope I could be that compassionate. It was a great act of compassion.

And the reason I tell you that is, my reaction on September the 11th was, I vowed to find the killers—those who ordered the killing—and bring them to justice. On the other hand, never did it enter my heart and my mind to be embittered toward a group of people, innocent people, who had nothing to do with the murderer. In other words, I was focused on the individuals and their commanders, not citizens in the Middle East, of any country, particularly Saudi Arabia.

In other words, my first reaction was not, look, the Saudis are bad people. My first reaction was, evil people came and killed, and we'll react to protect ourselves. And we'll react to protect ourselves in two ways. One is to work with concerned governments, including Saudi Arabia, to find those few that are willing to murder us. And those same murderers that came to the United States would very much like to murder the leaders in Saudi Arabia. And so there's a lot of common ground throughout the world to rout out people and to bring them to justice.

And the long term—these people believe something. There's an ideology behind their views, and the ideology basically is very different from one based upon freedom. Their ideology is, you can't worship the way you see fit. And if you don't worship the way they want you to worship, you'll be publicly beaten, or you'll be killed, or you'll be in prison. They don't believe, for example, young girls

ought to be educated. I strongly disagree with that. I think one of the great potentials of the Middle East is women. And I certainly know, as a father, that I want my little girls to be—you know, have a good education, which they did. And I'm confident other fathers want the same thing in the Middle East, even though we may not speak the same language or share the same religion.

And so my reaction was—tough reaction to make sure we find those who ordered the killing and bring them to justice and to keep the pressure on them so they don't do it again—and I believe they want to do it again. But on the other hand, I have this sense of a possibility based upon something that's worked throughout the world, and that is, people being able to realize dreams through liberty.

This isn't the first time that societies have had to make choices. This isn't the first time where people made the focused effort to become a free society. And it won't be the first time when a part of the world has gone from one that's been tense and full of unspeakable tragedy to one of peace.

And that's where we're headed; we're headed to peace. And I can't thank you enough for the opportunity to speak on a free channel to people throughout the Middle East. Our country is a loving country. It's hard for me to believe that people can't look at America and say, "Wow, what a compassionate group of people"—because we are. And yet I understand the images of my country have been distorted. And I understand people say things about me personally that simply aren't true. And so I appreciate the chance to come and talk to you directly and to talk to your viewers directly about what's in my heart and about the fact that my country is a country of peace.

Mr. Nakouzi. Mr. President, on behalf of myself and Al Arabiya TV, I would like to thank you very much for this opportunity. You were very generous with us on time; I know you have a very hectic schedule.

Thank you very much for this opportunity. And I hope to meet with you again when you also are in a position to achieve some of our democracy in our region. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The interview began taping at 11:35 a.m. in the Oval Office and continued on the Colonnade and in the Map Room at the White House, for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki, President Jalal Talabani, and Vice Presidents Adil Abd Al-Mahdi and Tariq al-Hashimi of Iraq; Parliament Member Sa'ad Hariri and Prime Minister Fuad Siniora of Lebanon; President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel; President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) and Prime Minister Salam Fayyad of the Palestinian Authority; and King Abdallah of Saudi Arabia. Portions of Mr. Nakouzi's remarks were in Arabic, and an English translation was provided. This transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 5. A tape was not available for verification of this interview.

Remarks on the National Economy and Homeland Security

October 5, 2007

I want to thank members of my economic team for coming into the Oval Office this morning to bring some good news here for America's families and America's working people. The—last month, our economy added 110,000 new jobs. And that's good news for people here in our country. It's an indicator that this economy is a vibrant and strong economy.

The folks briefed me on the fact that they are—numbers for July and August were revised—the job numbers, job creation numbers. And this economy added 118,000 new jobs in July and August as well. This means—with these revisions, it means that we've had 49 consecutive months of job creation. And that's the longest uninterrupted job growth on record for our country.

You know, I am really pleased with the economic news, but I don't take good news for granted. I understand people are worried about their mortgage payments or concerned about sending their child to college. I know that people are concerned whether or not they're going to have enough money to meet their needs. And so my call to the United States Congress is, keep taxes low. If you want this economy continue to grow and if you want to reinforce the fact that we've

got—entrepreneurship is strong and people are working, don't raise taxes.

And I'm looking forward to working with the Congress to set priorities on how we spend the people's money. But I also am going to make it very clear to people in Congress that we're not going to raise the taxes on the working people.

And so I'm real pleased. I thank you all for coming in to bring this good news to me. It's—this good news is a real tribute to the hard-working Americans, the people out there working hard to put food on the table. And it's a tribute to the entrepreneurial spirit of the country.

I want to say something else. There's been a lot of talk in the newspapers and on TV about a program that I put in motion to detain and question terrorists and extremists. I have put this program in place for a reason, and that is to better protect the American people. And when we find somebody who may have information regarding an—a potential attack on America, you bet we're going to detain them, and you bet we're going to question them, because the American people expect us to find out information, actionable intelligence so we can help them, help protect them. That's our job.

Secondly, this Government does not torture people. You know, we stick to U.S. law and our international obligations.

Thirdly, there are highly trained professionals questioning these extremists and terrorists. In other words, we got professionals who are trained in this kind of work to get information that will protect the American people. And by the way, we have gotten information from these high-value detainees that have helped protect you.

And finally, the techniques that we use have been fully disclosed to appropriate Members of the United States Congress. The American people expect their Government to take action to protect them from further attack. And that's exactly what this Government is doing, and that's exactly what we'll continue to do.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:54 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

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 29

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

October 1

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Fort Myer, VA.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

October 2

In the morning, the President had breakfast with Vice President Dick Cheney, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs Christopher R. Hill, Under Secretary of Defense for Policy Eric S. Edelman, White House Chief of Staff Joshua B. Bolten, and National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley to discuss the six-party talks. Later, he had an intelligence briefing. Then, in the Oval Office, he met with President Jalal Talabani of Iraq.

The President declared a major disaster in Texas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Tropical Storm Erin from August 14–20.

October 3

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Lancaster, PA, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Kennedy Kulish.

In the afternoon, the President met with family members of a soldier killed in the war on terror. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

October 4

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President announced the designation of the following individuals as members of the Presidential delegation to attend the Vilnius Energy Security Conference on October 10–11 in Vilnius, Lithuania: Jeffrey Clay Sell (head of delegation); John A. Cloud; and Karen Alderman Harbert.

October 5

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the evening, at the Hay-Adams Hotel, the President and Mrs. Bush attended a reception to celebrate the publication of Jenna Bush's book, "Ana's Story: A Journey of Hope."

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia to the White House on October 18.

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Joseph Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the White House on October 26.

The President announced his intention to nominate Gus P. Coldebella as General Counsel at the Department of Homeland Security.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

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 29

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.J. Res. 43, H.J. Res. 52, and H.R. 3668

Released September 30

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 3625

Released October 1

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Released October 2

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Texas

Released October 3

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Transcript of a press gaggle by Counselor to the President Edward W. Gillespie

Released October 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Released October 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Bush To Meet with Congolese President Kabila

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit by President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of the Republic of Liberia

Fact sheet: September 2007 Marks Record 49th Consecutive Month of Job Growth

**Acts Approved
by the President**

Approved September 29

H.R. 3668 / Public Law 110–90
TMA, Abstinence Education, and QI Programs Extension Act of 2007

H.J. Res. 43 / Public Law 110–91
Increasing the statutory limit on the public debt

H.J. Res. 52 / Public Law 110–92
Making continuing appropriations for the fiscal year 2008, and for other purposes

Approved September 30

H.R. 3625 / Public Law 110–93
To make permanent the waiver authority of the Secretary of Education with respect to student financial assistance during a war or other military operation or national emergency