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This is the first ball. Ready? You want to put it on the tee? Play ball.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:55 p.m. at the Ghana International School. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Ambassador to Ghana Pamela E. Bridgewater; and Jimmie Lee Solomon, executive vice president, baseball operations, Major League Baseball.

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by President John Agyekum Kufuor of Ghana in Accra

February 20, 2008

Mr. President, Mrs. Kufuor, and all the distinguished guests here: Thank you for your warm welcome. And I would like to take this opportunity to thank the good people of Ghana for the wonderful welcome Laura and I received. I don't think I have been to a country where the people have been more friendly, more open. We appreciate so very much your hospitality, and I really appreciate the George Bush Motorway. [*Laughter*] The next time I come and ride on the George Bush Motorway, I promise that we will not shut the highway down. [*Laughter*]

President Kufuor is a close friend. He has earned my respect, and he's earned the respect of leaders all across the world. He is an accomplished man with a good mind and a good heart.

We first met in 2001; we were new Presidents. And here we are, nearly 7 years later, and we're fixing to leave office. [*Laughter*] But we both vow, we will finish strong with our heads held high.

In the remaining months, we will work to strengthen the partnership between our two nations. The ties that bind the United States and Ghana are as long as they are deep. Last year, Ghana commemorated the 50th anniversary of its independence. And when you claimed your liberty in 1957, the United States of America was by your side. Richard Nixon and Martin Luther King, Jr., were among the notable Americans who were here when the Union Jack was replaced by the red, yellow, and green of the Republic of Ghana. Four years later, 51 idealistic young Americans arrived in your beautiful country as Ghana became the first nation to host volunteers from the Peace Corps.

This long tradition of friendship and cooperation continues today. Today, Ghana and the United States are working to strengthen democracy and good government. Together we're harnessing the power of global trade to alleviate poverty. And, Mr. President, rest assured, I will work to complete the Doha round. Together we're working to preserve peace, combat disease, and help ensure that all of Ghana's citizens can give their children what we all want for our children, a more hopeful future.

And so, Mr. President, I want to thank you for your friendship. I thank you for your leadership. I thank you for your kindness. And I offer a toast to you, your gracious wife, and to the noble people of Ghana. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:58 p.m. in the State Banquet Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Theresa Kufuor, wife of President Kufuor. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Kufuor.

Remarks on Arrival in Monrovia, Liberia

February 21, 2008

President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf of Liberia. Let me say how pleased we are to welcome President Bush, Mrs. Bush, Secretary Rice, and all the members of this delegation. It is a great honor for Liberia to receive them. And they've received a very warm welcome from the Liberian people, from our young people, from our students, who lined the route and waved and showed flags. We're just so pleased and honored. Thank you, President Bush, for making this trip.

President Bush. Madam President, thanks. I've been looking forward to coming here ever since you extended the kind invitation to me. I do want to thank the people of Liberia for the warm welcome that we have received. I loved all the smiles and the enthusiasm along the route.

Most importantly, I want the people of Liberia to know, Madam President, the United States stands with you. We want to help you recover from a terrible period. We want you