

**Message to the Congress on  
Extending Generalized System of  
Preferences Benefits to the Solomon  
Islands**

*April 17, 2008*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

In accordance with section 502(f)(1)(B) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (the “Act”), I am providing notification of my intent to add the Solomon Islands to the list of least-developed beneficiary developing countries under the Generalized System of Preferences (GSP) program. In Executive Order 12302 of April 1, 1981, the Solomon Islands was designated as a beneficiary developing country for purposes of the GSP program. After considering the criteria set forth in sections 501 and 502 of the Act, I have determined that it is appropriate to extend least-developed beneficiary developing country benefits to the Solomon Islands.

**George W. Bush**

The White House,  
April 17, 2008.

**Proclamation 8241—Small Business  
Week, 2008**

*April 17, 2008*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

**A Proclamation**

In communities across America, small business owners are working hard to turn their dreams into enterprises. Small Business Week is a time to celebrate the many achievements of small business owners, entrepreneurs, and employees, who contribute to the vitality and prosperity of our Nation and create new job opportunities for our citizens.

Small businesses are the backbone of the American economy, and my Administration is committed to fostering an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit can thrive. By keeping taxes low, we leave more money in the hands of Americans to save, spend, and invest. This year, we have also temporarily expanded incentives to help small busi-

nesses invest in new equipment and expand their enterprises. We have also expanded market access and opened new markets for American goods and services abroad, helping our small businesses compete in the global economy. To make health care more affordable and accessible, we continue to support Association Health Plans so small businesses can band together to get the same discounts that big companies receive.

The underpinnings of our economy are strong, competitive, and resilient enough to overcome the challenges we face, and in the long run, Americans can be confident that our economy will continue to grow. During Small Business Week and throughout the year, we recognize the determination and ingenuity of America’s workers and entrepreneurs who play a vital role in building a more prosperous future for our country.

**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 April 20 through April 26, 2008, as Small Business Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies, activities, and programs that celebrate the achievements of small business owners and their employees and encourage the development of new small businesses.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this seventeenth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand eight, 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, 8:40 a.m., April 21, 2008]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 18, and it will be published in the *Federal Register* on April 22.

**Remarks at the National Catholic  
Prayer Breakfast**

*April 18, 2008*

Thank you very much. Good morning. Thank you. Please be seated. Thank you for the gracious welcome. Austin, thanks for

your kind introduction. Thanks for giving me this unusual speaking opportunity. I understand that this program builds up to another speech. [Laughter] It's not every day you get to be the warmup act to the Holy Father. [Laughter] I am honored to be here. I do thank Austin for his leadership for the Catholic Prayer Breakfast. I thank the board of directors for having me. I thank Archbishop Gomez—*Tejano*—for being here. And I want to thank our—Bishop Finn, members of the clergy. Thank you for serving our country. Thank you for being men of faith.

I'm proud to be here with the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court, John Roberts. He's always looking for a free breakfast. [Laughter] I'm proud to be here with Members of the United States Senate and Congress. Thank you all for being here. Solicitor General Paul Clement is with us today, members of my administration, members of the diplomatic corps, and distinguished guests.

This has been a joyous week. It's been a joyous time for Catholics, and it wasn't such a bad week for Methodists either. [Laughter] You know, the excitement was just palpable. The streets were lined with people that were so thrilled that the Holy Father was here. And it was such a privilege to welcome this good man to the United States.

For those of you on the South Lawn ceremony—who saw the South Lawn ceremony live, it was—what an unbelievable—it was just such a special moment. And it was a special moment to be able to visit with the Holy Father in the Oval Office. He is a humble servant of God. He is a brilliant professor. He is a warm and generous soul.

He is courageous in the defense of fundamental truths. His Holiness believes that freedom is the Almighty's gift to every man, woman, and child on Earth. He understands that every person has value, or to use his words, "Each of us is willed; each of us is loved; [and] each of us is necessary."

The Holy Father strongly believes that to whom much is given, much is required. And he is a messenger of God's call to love our neighbors as we'd like to be loved ourselves.

I've seen how American Catholics are guided by these truths. One of the blessings of being the President is I get to see firsthand how people are motivated by the funda-

mental truths articulated by the Holy Father. I've watched you live out the Gospel through countless acts of compassion and courage. I've joined with you in striving to heed the Scriptures noble calling to see God's image in all mankind and to uphold the dignity of each human being on Earth.

Together, over the nearly 7½ years, we've worked to uphold the dignity of human life. Over the last years, my administration has put a stop to U.S. tax dollars funding foreign groups that perform or promote abortions. We've worked together to protect unborn victims of violence and to end the barbaric practice of partial-birth abortion. We have stood fast in our belief that promising medical advances can coexist with ethical medical practices. Last November, scientists discovered a way to reprogram adult skin cells to act like embryonic stem cells. This is a significant breakthrough, because science—scientists have found a path that can lead beyond the divisive debates of the past and extend the healing potential of medicine without destroying human life.

Together we've worked to strengthen America's lifelines of learning, including our Nation's Catholic schools. The Catholic Church has a proud educational tradition dating back centuries, and one of the Holy Father's priorities has been maintaining this tradition in the United States. Today, America's Catholic schools serve thousands of students, both Catholic and non-Catholic, in some of our Nation's poorest neighborhoods. They help minority students narrow the achievement gap. They prepare children for lives of character and purpose and success. And yet these schools are closing at an alarming rate. Nearly 1,200 Catholic schools have shut their doors since the year 2000.

In my State of the Union Address, I proposed a new \$300 million program called Pell Grants for Kids. And the reason I did so is cause I want to help low-income children in underperforming public schools be able to attend a private or parochial school of their choice. I am concerned about the loss of a major national asset, and that is the decline of Catholic schools, particularly in inner-city America. And to this end, next week we're having a White House Summit on Inner-City Children and Faith-Based Schools. And the

purpose of the summit is to highlight the lack of educational options facing low-income urban students. And we're going to bring together educators and clergy and philanthropists and business leaders, all aiming to urge there to be reasonable legislation out of Congress and practical solutions to save these schools and, more importantly, to save the children.

And some of the people trying to save America's Catholic schools are here at this prayer breakfast, and I can't thank you enough for your efforts.

Together we've worked to foster a culture of tolerance and peace. We believe that religion should be a source of understanding and grace, not a source of extremism and violence. On his visit and throughout his time as the Holy Father, the Pope has worked to foster interreligious dialog and to heal the wounds of religious conflict. I strongly support the Pope's call for religious freedom around the world. I share his concern for Christians in the Middle East and his desire to see a peaceful and independent Lebanon. I respect his scholarship, which demonstrates that faith and reason can coexist. And I join him in praying for a world at peace, where Christians and Muslims and Jews, believers and non-believers, can live side by side. And I thank all of you here who work to make this vision a reality.

Together we've worked to bring comfort to troubled souls. We believe that where hearts are burdened by destitution and disease and despair, we must answer with hope and love and faith. We know that [no] \* government program can answer the call like our armies of compassion can, but we also know that government programs can support and must support their work. And so I've been a strong believer in the faith-based and community-based effort to bring healing and hope to people who wonder whether or not there's a bright tomorrow.

I don't know if you really realize this, but in 2006, 3,000 direct Federal grants totaling more than \$2 billion were made to faith-based organizations, including many Catholic organizations. And the reason why is because Catholic organizations provide shelter to the

homeless in very effective and loving ways. They tutor at-risk youth. They help children of prisoners while, at the same time, they work tirelessly to help prisoners get back on their feet. These groups seek out our society's most vulnerable and fulfill Christ's promise that "the last shall be first."

Abroad, Catholic organizations are a vital part, an integral part of our effort to fight hunger and disease from Latin America to the continent of Africa. In these places, Catholic groups have a hand in what some call the "Lazarus effect," where whole communities that once lay dying are brought back to life.

Oftentimes, people ask me, why is it that you're so focused on helping the hungry and diseased in strange parts of the world? My answer is, we're a wealthy enough nation to take care of people at home and to help those abroad. It is in our moral interests that when we find people suffering, that we do all we can do to help ease the burden. It's in our national interests—[*applause*]<sup>o</sup>—and it's in our national interests that we defeat the ideologues of hate with an ideology of hope.

During these—as President, I've seen some of the great wonders of compassion as a result of our Catholic citizens. I've seen them here in Washington, with the Little Sisters of the Poor. Laura and I had the honor of visiting with the Little Sisters, and, you know, I was struck by how hard they worked to ask [for] \* money to care for the old and the sick so that the old and the sick don't have to beg for money.

I've seen the wonders of Catholic love on the gulf coast. I'm struck by the Catholic educators that, in the face of unprecedented disaster, worked night and day to provide good and stable schools for the children and provide comfort for, you know, people that were just wondering whether or not there was going to be a good tomorrow.

I've seen wonders on the Sea of Galilee during my recent trip to the Middle East. On a recent visit, my guides were joyful Catholic nuns who preserve the holy sites for all mankind, even as they struggle with the dangers to the region's Christian minority.

<sup>o</sup> White House correction.

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I've seen the wonders in Africa, in an emergency—in a hospital supported by PEPFAR. In February, I saw a 9-year-old girl who is HIV-positive who had lost both her parents to AIDS. And for the last year, Catholic Relief Services had been playing—had been paying for the girl to receive treatment at the clinic. I want to tell you what her grandmother said: “As a Muslim, I never imagined that a Catholic group would help me like that.” She went on to say, “I am so grateful to the American people.” And I am grateful for those who provide love and compassion in America and around the world.

This is a prayer breakfast. And this is a perfect place for me to say how much I appreciate the prayers of the people for me and Laura. I can't thank our fellow citizens enough for taking time out of their lives to lift us up for prayer. I have finally begun to understand the story of the calm and the rough seas, and I believe—I believe in my heart of hearts that it's because of the prayers of my fellow citizens.

And today, with the trust in the Lord's wisdom and goodness, I offer prayers of my own for each gathered in the room, for the safety and success of the Holy Father's visit, and for God's continued blessings on our great land. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:33 a.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to D. Austin Ruse, cofounder and member of the board of directors, National Catholic Prayer Breakfast; Pope Benedict XVI; Most Reverend Jose H. Gomez, Archbishop of San Antonio; and Most Reverend Robert W. Finn, Bishop of Kansas City—St. Joseph. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks at the America's Small Business Summit

April 18, 2008

Thanks for the warm welcome. I appreciate you being here in the Nation's Capital. I know most of you have come from out of town, which is good. It means you're brave souls to be here on tax week. [Laughter] The Holy Father was here as well, which is good,

because it will take a miracle to keep the IRS out of your pocket. [Laughter]

It's been a fabulous week, and I do welcome you here. And I want to thank you for being dreamers and doers. One of the reasons I spend a lot of time talking about our small business—small-business owners in America is because I truly believe you represent what makes America great, and it's the idea to have your own dreams, form your own businesses, create employment opportunities for citizens in the communities in which you live.

I grew up in Midland, and, gosh, I remember a lot of the—[applause]. There you go. I remember—it's not exactly the biggest city in America. On the other hand, it's the kind of place that you know the—you knew the local shop person or the—my friend Jackie Hanks's Uncle Brutus had the local grocery store. And it was just that—that fabric of the community was the small-business owners.

And so I'm so thrilled you're here. I really appreciate you giving me a chance to come and visit some—talk some policy with you. I appreciate Tom for introducing me—president and CEO of the U.S. Chamber. They do great work in Washington, DC, trying to make sure that there is no harm and that there is good policy in order to encourage people to invest and save.

I want to thank my friend Andy Card, who's here. Thanks for being here, Andy—my Chief of Staff in the first 4 years of the Presidency; did a fabulous job. He's a decent, honorable man, a guy I'm proud to call friend.

You know, this summit's occurring at a very trying time for our economy. You know that better than anybody else. We had—we've had a good run. I mean, we had 52 months of uninterrupted job growth, and that's a record. And now our economy has slowed. It's—businesses are being squeezed by high energy prices and high health care prices. Workers and families are anxious on a variety of fronts, including mortgage—making mortgage bills and higher price for food and gasoline. It's a tough time for America.

The—you know, we saw this coming. Last I can remember is talking to our team last year, and they said, there's a slowdown coming. And so we took some action. And I do