

of your generation is to lead the cause of freedom.

This is the last time I'll address a military academy commencement as a President. Over the past 8 years, from Annapolis to West Point to New London to Colorado Springs, I have looked out at the best young men and women our Nation has to offer, and I have stood in awe. And I stand in awe again today. Each of you is a volunteer who stepped forward to accept the burdens of war, knowing all the dangers you would face upon graduation. You willingly risk your lives and futures so that our country can have a future of freedom and peace. Our enemies say that America is weak and decadent and does not have the stomach for the long fight. Our enemies have never set foot on the campus of the United States Air Force Academy.

A nation that produces citizens of virtue and character and courage, like you, can overcome any challenge and defeat any adversary. So I'll leave this campus today filled with the confidence in the course of our struggle and the fate of our country because I've got confidence in each of you.

We see the strength and spirit of this class in a cadet named Erik Mirandette. In 2003, Erik felt a tug at his heart from the Almighty to take time off from the Academy and do humanitarian work in Morocco. After nearly 2 years there, Erik and his brother Alex and two childhood friends decided to ride across the African continent on dirt bikes. The last stop in their journey was Cairo, where a suicide bomber attacked them by exploding a bucket filled with nails. The blast killed Erik's brother, injured his two friends, and left Erik bleeding on the street. Doctors did not think he'd ever walk again. He never gave up his dream of coming back to this Academy. And 14 months ago, after surviving the blast, Erik returned to this campus. Today he begins his career as a proud officer in the greatest Air Force known to man.

He still has got dozens of nails in his body, but he has a fierce determination in his heart to protect his country, defeat the forces of terror. Erik puts it this way: "I'll live the rest of my life scarred inside and outside. But I've got a sense of calling. I want to prevent attacks on other good people."

Each of you gathered here this morning has answered that same call. I want to thank you for stepping forward to serve. The security of our citizens and the peace of the world will soon be in your hands—the best of hands. Be officers of character and integrity. Keep your wings level and true. Never falter; do not fail. And always know that America stands behind you.

Thank you. May God bless. And congratulations to the class of 2008.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. at Falcon Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of the Air Force Michael W. Wynne, who introduced the President; Gen. T. Michael Moseley, USAF, chief of staff, U.S. Air Force; Lt. Gen. John F. Regni, USAF, superintendent, U.S. Air Force Academy; Representative Doug Lamborn of Colorado; and President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan.

### **Statement on the Fifth Anniversary of the Proliferation Security Initiative**

*May 28, 2008*

Members of the international community are gathered in Washington, DC, today on the fifth anniversary of the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI). Since former Polish President Kwasniewski and I first announced the initiative on May 31, 2003, in Krakow, Poland, PSI partner nations have been taking cooperative action to stop the proliferation trade and to deny terrorists, rogue states, and their supplier networks access to weapons of mass destruction (WMD), their delivery systems, and related materials.

Five years ago, the world became aware that an international black market network, headed by A.Q. Khan, had for many years supplied a clandestine nuclear weapons program in Libya. Recently, the discovery of Syria's covert nuclear reactor demonstrated that proliferators are capable of pursuing dangerous objectives even as the world becomes more vigilant. And today, in violation of United Nations Security Council resolutions, Iran continues to enrich uranium and develop missile systems that could eventually deliver WMD. These proliferation activities undermine peace and security and remind

us of the continued need for cooperative action.

The PSI has responded to this challenge and achieved a solid record of success. Beginning in 2003 with only 11 states, the PSI has grown to more than 90 nations from every region of the world committed to conduct interdictions and deter those engaged in this dangerous trade. As a result of the collaborative efforts and training it sponsors, PSI is an increasingly effective tool to carry out real-world WMD-related interdictions, from shutting down front companies to disrupting financial networks, prosecuting proliferators, and stopping shipments of sensitive materials from reaching their intended destination.

I commend all PSI partners for the work they have undertaken and pledge continued U.S. leadership and support for the effort. I urge all responsible nations to join this global initiative to end WMD proliferation.

### **Memorandum on Potential Pearl Harbor National Monument**

*May 28, 2008*

*Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense and the Secretary of the Interior*

*Subject: Potential Pearl Harbor National Monument*

Pearl Harbor is well known as the site of Imperial Japan's attack on December 7, 1941. Its historical significance, however, both preceded the Japanese attack and spanned World War II, during which it served as the central base for our Pacific naval forces. While the USS *Arizona* Memorial serves as the final resting place for many of that battleship's brave crew members who lost their lives on December 7, 1941, other objects of historic and scientific interest in the area of Pearl Harbor and other sites in the Pacific remain outside this Memorial.

I have been advised that there are objects of historic and scientific interest at Pearl Harbor, including on Ford Island, and at other sites across the Pacific that may be appropriate for recognition and possibly protection through the designation of a National Monument under the Antiquities Act of 1906 (16 U.S.C. 431). These objects of historical and scientific interest may tell the broader

story of the war, the sacrifices made by America and its allies, and the heroism and determination that laid the groundwork for victory in the Pacific and triumph in World War II.

Accordingly, please provide to me your assessment, with relevant supporting information, of the advisability of providing additional recognition or protection to historic landmarks, historic sites, or other objects of historic or scientific interest at Pearl Harbor and other sites associated with the war in the Pacific and America's ultimate victory in the Pacific theater during World War II, through designation and management as part of a National Monument. Because much of the Pearl Harbor area lies within an active military base, and other World War II historic resources lie within areas of the Pacific that are of strategic importance to the United States, please consider in your assessment that any proposed actions should not limit the Department of Defense from carrying out the mission of the various branches of the military stationed or operating anywhere within the Pacific.

**George W. Bush**

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 29.

### **Proclamation 8262—Caribbean-American Heritage Month, 2008**

*May 29, 2008*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

Caribbean-American Heritage Month is an opportunity to show our appreciation for the many ways Caribbean Americans have contributed to our country.

Caribbean Americans have helped to shape our national fabric with their vibrant traditions and their unique history. They have brightened our lives with the spirit and vitality of their culture. Through strong leadership and pride in their heritage, they have enriched America. In all walks of life, they have contributed their many talents and added to our Nation's development and prosperity.