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Weekly Compilation of

Presidential Documents

Monday, August 25, 2008
Volume 44—Number 33
Pages 1137–1151

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Editor's Note: The President was at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, on August 22, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* is published pursuant to the authority contained in the Federal Register Act (49 Stat. 500, as amended; 44 U.S.C. Ch. 15), under regulations prescribed by the Administrative Committee of the Federal Register, approved by the President (37 FR 23607; 1 CFR Part 10).

Distribution is made only by the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* will be furnished by mail to domestic subscribers for $80.00 per year ($137.00 for mailing first class) and to foreign subscribers for $93.75 per year, payable to the Superintendent of Documents, Government Printing Office, Washington, DC 20402. The charge for a single copy is $3.00 ($3.75 for foreign mailing).

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Week Ending Friday, August 22, 2008

The President's Radio Address

August 15, 2008

Good morning. For more than a week, the people of the nation of Georgia have withstood assault from the Russian military. The world has watched with alarm as Russia invaded a sovereign, neighboring state and threatened a democratic government elected by its people. This act is completely unacceptable to the free nations of the world.

The United States and our allies stand with the people of Georgia and their democratically elected Government. We insist that Georgia's sovereignty and territorial integrity be respected. And Moscow must honor its pledge to withdraw its invading forces from all Georgian territory.

Earlier this week, I directed a series of steps to demonstrate America's solidarity with the Georgian people and to help bring about a peaceful resolution of the conflict. On Thursday, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice was in France, where she conferred with President Sarkozy about the diplomatic effort that the French Government is leading on behalf of the European Union.

Yesterday she was in the Georgian capital of Tbilisi, where she conveyed America's support for Georgia's democratic Government. And next week, Secretary Rice will travel to Brussels, where she will meet with the foreign ministers of our NATO allies and EU officials to continue our efforts to rally the free world in defense of a free Georgia.

Secretary of Defense Robert Gates is overseeing a mission by the United States military to provide humanitarian aid for the people of Georgia. In recent days, U.S. cargo planes carrying humanitarian supplies have arrived in Georgia. In the days ahead, we will continue using U.S. aircraft and other assets as needed to deliver more humanitarian and medical supplies. Russia has agreed to let in all forms of humanitarian assistance, and Russia must keep open all lines of communication and transport, including seaports, airports, roads, and airspace for civilian transit and the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

Some Americans listening today may wonder why events taking place in a small country halfway around the world matter to the United States. In the years since it gained independence after the Soviet Union's collapse, Georgia has become a courageous democracy whose people are making the tough choices that are required of free societies.

Since the Rose Revolution in 2003, the Georgian people have held free elections, opened up their economy, and built the foundations of a successful democracy. Georgia has sent troops to Afghanistan and Iraq to help others achieve the liberty that they struggled so hard to attain. To further strengthen their democracy, Georgia has sought to join the free institutions of the West. The people of Georgia have cast their lot with the free world, and we will not cast them aside.

Georgia's emergence as a young democracy has been part of an inspiring and hopeful new chapter in Europe's history. Europe has moved beyond the world wars that killed millions of people and the cold war that divided its citizens between two superpowers. For the first time in memory, Europe is becoming a continent that is whole, free, and at peace. And it is essential that America and other free nations ensure that an embattled democracy seeking to stand with us remains sovereign, secure, and undivided.

Russia's actions in Georgia raise serious questions about its role and its intentions in the Europe of the 21st century. In recent years, Russia has sought to integrate into the diplomatic, political, economic, and security structures of the West. The United States has supported those efforts. Now, Russia has put its aspirations at risk by taking actions in Georgia that are inconsistent with the principles of those institutions.

To begin to repair the damage to its relations with the United States, Europe, and other nations and to begin restoring its place in the world, Russia must act to end this crisis.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:30 a.m. on August 15 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 16. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 15. In his address, the President referred to President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, in his capacity as President of the European Council. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in Crawford, Texas

August 16, 2008

Situation in Georgia

Good morning. I just had a briefing by my national security team on the latest updates—on the latest developments in Georgia, and there is some progress to report.

First of all, I want to thank Secretary of State Rice for her trip, and thank you for coming back here to Crawford to give me a firsthand briefing.

She went to Tbilisi, met with President Saakashvili and his team. And during that time, the President signed the six-point peace plan negotiated by President Sarkozy on behalf of the European Union. President Medvedev of Russia has now signed on to the terms of this agreement. And that's an important development; it's a hopeful step.

Now, Russia needs to honor the agreement and withdraw its forces, and of course, end military operations.

Secretary Rice will soon travel to Brussels, where she will meet with the foreign ministers of our NATO allies and EU officials to continue to rally the free world in the defense of a free Georgia.

This morning, also, I was briefed by Secretary Gates on the U.S. military's humanitarian mission to help the Georgian people recover from the trauma they have suffered. In recent days, military flights have landed in Georgia to provide relief supplies, and more will be arriving in the days ahead.

A major issue is Russia's contention that the regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia may not be a part of Georgia's future. But these regions are a part of Georgia, and the international community has repeatedly made clear that they will remain so. Georgia is a member of the United Nations, and South Ossetia and Abkhazia lie within its internationally recognized borders. Georgia's borders should command the same respect as every other nation's.

There's no room for debate on this matter. The United Nations Security Council has adopted numerous resolutions concerning Georgia. These resolutions are based on the premise that South Ossetia and Abkhazia remain within the borders of Georgia and that their underlying conflicts will be resolved through international negotiations. These resolutions are based on the premise that South Ossetia and Abkhazia are to be considered a part of the Georgian territory, and that to the extent that there's conflicts, they will be resolved peacefully.

These resolutions reaffirm Georgia's sovereignty and independence and territorial integrity. Russia itself has endorsed these resolutions. The international community is clear that South Ossetia and Abkhazia are part of Georgia, and the United States fully recognizes this reality.

We will continue to stand behind Georgia's democracy; we will continue to insist that Georgia's sovereignty and independence and territorial integrity be respected.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:06 a.m. at the Bush Ranch. In his remarks, he referred to President Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia; and President Nicolas Sarkozy of France, in his capacity as President of the European Council.

Memorandum on Assignment of Function Under Sections 1001(a) and (b) of the America COMPETES Act To Convene a National Science and Technology Summit and Submit a Report to the Congress Detailing the Results of the Summit

August 18, 2008

Memorandum for the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy

Subject: Assignment of Function Under Sections 1001(a) and (b) of the America COMPETES Act To Convene a National Science and Technology Summit and Submit a Report to the Congress Detailing the Results of the Summit

By the authority vested in me as President of the United States by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, I hereby assign to you the function of the President under sections 1001(a) and (b) of the America COMPETES Act (Public Law 110–69).

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 19. An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Statement on the Death of President Levy Patrick Mwanawasa of Zambia

August 19, 2008

Laura and I are saddened to hear of the passing of Zambian President Levy Mwanawasa. President Mwanawasa was a champion of democracy in his own country and throughout Africa. As President of Zambia, President Mwanawasa launched a sweeping anticorruption campaign and dedicated himself to improving the welfare of all Zambians. As Chairman of the Southern African Development Community, President Mwanawasa worked tirelessly to uphold the values of good governance, speaking out against human rights abuses and threats to democracy when many others were silent.

On behalf of the United States, we extend our sincere condolences to President Mwanawasa's wife, his family, and all Zambians during this difficult time.

Remarks to the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Convention in Orlando, Florida

August 20, 2008

Thank you all very much. Thank you for the warm welcome. And I am proud to address the Veterans of Foreign Wars. I spoke to you when I was a Presidential candidate, and this is the fifth time that I have spoken to your national convention as your President. And every time I've been honored to meet with members of the VFW, I come away from these meetings with my—inspired by your love of country, by your devotion for duty, and for the example you set for those who wear the uniform today.

I also appreciate the fact that you're here in spite of the weather. [*Laughter*] Tropical Storm Fay set a challenge for this convention, but your members were wise enough to hang around. I do want to thank the citizens—the officials of the State of Florida for working hard to make sure that people were ready to address the storm. We watched this very carefully, and I must say that the people of this State worked hard to make sure that this convention and other lives were saved. We appreciate the work of the local officials. And of course, we'll continue to monitor the storm as it moves through the area.

I do want to thank my friend George Lisicki for his leadership as your national commander. He's done a fine job on behalf of the VFW. I know firsthand; I've had him to the Oval Office. He's not afraid to speak his mind; I listen. And I know you're proud of the job he has done. And I'm also—[*applause*]. And I want to thank his wife, Gloria, for putting up with him. [*Laughter*]

I do want to thank Bob Wallace, the executive director of the VFW. He has worked very hard to represent you, and he's done so in fine fashion.

I'm proud to be here with Glen Gardner, incoming national commander-in-chief of the VFW, and his wife, Jean. I've known Glen for a long time; I admire him. I told him I'm fixing to retire, so I'm not going to be around to work with him. But no doubt in my mind he'll do a fine job on behalf of the VFW.

I want to thank Virginia Carman, national president of the Ladies Auxiliary. Dixie Hild is the incoming national president of the Ladies Auxiliary. I want to thank the rest of the leadership for letting me come by to visit with you.

I met an interesting person here today, a woman named Keela Carr. When I go to a city, I like to herald people who are volunteering on behalf of the country. Keela has walked from California to Washington, DC, to thank the veterans for their service to the United States of America. And I'm proud to have met Keela Carr. And I want to thank you for doing what you're doing, Keela.

And I want to thank the members of the Armed Forces that are here today. There is no greater honor than being the Commander in Chief of the United States military, and I'm proud to be in your presence.

America owes the men and women of the VFW a debt that can really never be repaid. You fought for our freedoms, and then when you came home, you volunteered to continue to serve this Nation. Together with your Ladies and Men's Auxiliaries, members of this organization donate 13 million hours of community service every year. You mentor youth groups; you sponsor blood drives. You send packages to the military units deployed overseas; you provide vital services to your fellow veterans at home. In the VFW, we see the best of the American spirit, and America honors your service in and out of uniform.

When the history of the last 8 years is finally written, it will show how closely and effectively my administration and the VFW have worked together on behalf of Americans' veterans. My budget includes nearly $94 billion for the Department of Veterans Affairs, which means we have nearly doubled the funding for veterans since I took office.

We've worked together to modernize and expand VA facilities and got $5.5 billion of taxpayers' monies in the budget to do so. The VFW and my administration have worked hard to expand grants to help homeless veterans in all 50 States and the District of Columbia, because we strongly believe no veteran who served in distant lands should have to live without shelter in the land they fought to defend.

We believe that combat-injured and severely disabled veterans deserve to receive both their military retired pay and their VA disability compensation. I was the first President in more than 100 years to sign concurrent receipt legislation.

We have worked effectively and diligently to provide for those returning home from the frontlines today. My administration implemented recommendations from Senator Dole and Secretary Shalala to help our wounded warriors build lives of hope and promise and dignity. We're investing hundreds of millions of dollars to develop new treatments for conditions like traumatic brain injuries and Posttraumatic Stress Disorder.

Earlier this year, I was pleased to sign a piece of legislation that the VFW has long championed, a GI bill for the 21st century.

We also owe something to your brothers-in-arms who never returned home. We will always cherish the memories of those who made the ultimate sacrifice. We will never stop searching until we can account for every missing soldier, sailor, airman, coastguardsman, and marine.

Over the past 7½ years, I have seen the VFW's devotion to our men and women in uniform. I have been impressed, I have been inspired by your support of the military. You understand that our men and women in uniform deserve our full support because they are defending America in our Nation's first war in the 21st century. That war reached our shores on September the 11th, 2001, a day that you have not forgotten, and neither have I. On that day, 19 men armed with box cutters brought killing and carnage to our homeland. We're at war against determined enemies, and we must not rest until that war is won.

This war cannot be won, however, if we treat terrorism primarily as a matter of law enforcement. Law enforcement is an essential part of our strategy, but our strategy cannot be limited to law enforcement alone.

After the world—first World Trade Center attack in 1993, our law enforcement community succeeded in tracking down several of the killers, prosecuting them, and putting them into jail. But 8 years later, Al Qaida terrorists came back to finish the job. The lesson is this: In order to do our duty, our solemn duty, which is to protect the homeland from further harm, we must keep the pressure on the enemy; we must keep the extremists on the run. In order to do so, we must use all assets of national power, including the United States military.

So in this war, with your strong support, we are taking the fight to the enemy. Over the past 7 years, America and our allies have captured or killed hundreds of Al Qaida leaders and operatives in more than two dozen countries. We'll continue to battle the terrorists overseas so we do not have to face them here at home.

We're on several fronts in this war on terror. A major front is Afghanistan, where we removed a dangerous regime that harbored the terrorists who plotted the September the 11th attacks. Because we acted, the Afghan people have been liberated. A nation that was once a training ground for terrorists has become an ally in the war on terror. We built a strong coalition of nations including every member of the NATO alliance to help the Afghan people defend their young democracy. And we will ensure that that country never becomes a safe haven again for terrorists who seek to launch attacks on America or our allies.

Another front in the same war against the extremists is Iraq. We removed a brutal dictator who murdered his own people, who paid the families of suiciders, who invaded his neighbors, who was an enemy of the United States, who repeatedly defied the United Nations. Because we acted, the dictator is gone; 25 million Iraqis are free. Removing Saddam Hussein was right then, and it is right today.

In 2006, as you well know, the situation in Iraq was deteriorating. Some back in Washington said the war was lost. They were willing to give up on the mission; they were willing to leave a struggling democracy to its own fate. But failure in Iraq could have spread chaos across the region, emboldened Iran, emboldened the terrorists, and given them a new base from which to launch operations against America and allies. I believe this would have been a disaster for America, and so do the men and women of the VFW.

Early last year, after consultations with our commanders—and the Commander in Chief must always listen to the commanders and not the latest opinion poll—I ordered a surge of forces into Iraq. I remember briefing the leaders of the VFW on my decision. Since the surge began, violence in Iraq has dropped; civilian deaths and sectarian killings are down. Slowly but steadily, political and economic progress is taking place. Iraq's a rising democracy; Iraq's an ally against these extremists. And our troops have become home—begun to come home under our policy of return on success. We all look forward to the day when even more of our troops come home. And the VFW understands that the only way to bring them home is with victory.

To ensure that we have the capabilities to prevail in Iraq and Afghanistan, or wherever the terrorists make their stand, we've transformed the United States military. Our branches of the military are working together better than ever. We've more than doubled funding for our Special Operations Command so our forces can hunt the terrorists no matter where they hide. We've increased the number of unmanned aerial vehicles in our arsenal. We're moving American forces from cold war garrisons in Europe and Asia so they can deploy rapidly anywhere in the world. We're going to increase the size of our ground forces. We'll make our troops more lethal and more agile so they can remain on the offense against the enemy. America's future leaders must remember that the war on terror will be won on the offense, and that's where our military must stay.

We're keeping the pressure on the enemy. And as we've done so, we've defended this homeland. Nearly 7 years have passed without another attack on our soil. This is not for the lack of trying by the terrorists. Our intelligence and law enforcement professionals have worked with our allies to stop major Al Qaida attacks, including a plot to blow up transatlantic flights from London

and a plan to strike the tallest skyscraper in Los Angeles. We owe these fine professionals our thanks, and we owe them something more: the tools necessary to be able to do their job.

Since 9/11, we've given American defenders what they need. We formed a new Department of Homeland Security. We overhauled the Nation's intelligence community. We shifted the FBI's focus from investigating terrorist attacks to preventing terrorist attacks. We passed the PATRIOT Act, which tore down the wall that once prevented law enforcement and intelligence officers from sharing vital information. We created a new National Counterterrorism Center. We established a program at the CIA to interrogate key terrorist leaders captured in the war on terror. We worked with Congress to pass legislation that allows our intelligence professionals to quickly and effectively monitor terrorist communications.

We have used all these tools to stop new attacks. And I'm pleased to report to the American people that these tools will be available for future administrations to protect the American people for years to come.

And in this war, we're countering the terrorists' dark and hateful ideology by offering a more hopeful vision, and that's one based on freedom. On September the 11th, we saw how the terrorists exploit hopelessness and despair to recruit young men for their evil plots against America. We learned that our Nation's security depends on combating the conditions that give rise to terror by aiding the rise of free societies. We're engaged in the great ideological struggle of our time, between the forces of freedom and the forces of tyranny. So we, America and our allies, will support young democracies. We're standing with brave democratic reformers.

Over the past 7 years, we've seen liberty on the march; seen citizens in Afghanistan and Iraq establish representative governments after decades of tyranny. We've seen the people of Lebanon take to the streets and demand their independence. We've seen citizens of the former Soviet republics stand up for their right for free and fair elections.

One of the most inspiring chapters of history was written by the Georgian people during the Rose Revolution of 2003. In the years that followed, the Georgian people have held free elections; they've established a democratic form of government. Georgia's also sent troops to Afghanistan and Iraq to help others realize the blessings of liberty. Georgia has stood for freedom around the world, and now the world must stand for freedom in Georgia.

For nearly 2 weeks, the world has watched Georgia's young democracy come under siege. Russian forces invaded the country in a disproportionate response to a long-simmering conflict in Georgian regions of South Ossetia and Abkhazia. The world has come together to condemn this assault. Yesterday Secretary Rice met with members of the NATO alliance to discuss the ongoing situation. Our countries agreed that Russia must honor its commitment to withdraw its troops from Georgia and to return to the status quo before the hostilities began on August the 6th.

The alliance is considering seriously the implications of Russia's actions for the NATO-Russia relationship. The alliance determined that business as usual cannot continue with Russia. And the alliance agreed to help Georgia by sending NATO teams to assess the country's needs, and by forming a new NATO-Georgia Commission.

The United States of America will continue to support Georgia's democracy. Our military will continue to provide needed humanitarian aid to the Georgian people. South Ossetia and Abkhazia are part of Georgia. And the United States will work with our allies to ensure Georgia's independence and territorial integrity.

The people in this room understand the benefits of liberty because you fought to defend it and bring it to others. As young men, many of you battled the forces of Nazi Germany and the Empire of Japan on the battlefields of World War II. In those days, it would have been hard for you to imagine that the enemies you were fighting would become some of America's closest allies. Six decades later, Germany and Japan are strong democracies; they are two of our closest allies.

In your own lifetimes, you have seen firsthand the power of liberty to transform societies and yield the peace we all want. I believe, and people in this hall believe, that the

power of freedom is unstoppable. I believe it because I believe in an Almighty that has given every man, woman, and child on the face of the Earth freedom. And I know freedom yields the peace we want. If America maintains our confidence in our ideals, is willing to take the lead, freedom will once again prevail. And we'll be able to look at a generation of Americans coming up and say, "We did our duty; we defended America and laid the foundation of peace for generations to come."

We can also be confident, in every generation, freedom has found brave defenders in the men and women of our Armed Forces. You know, through the years, I've received a lot of heartfelt letters from our military families. One of them was from a woman in Texas named Sue Stoner. Sue's husband is a decorated Air Force veteran of Vietnam and the Gulf war. Last year during a trip to Fort Hood, the couple witnessed their 6-year-old granddaughter Mikayla do something that every American should do as well. The little girl bounded over to a wounded stranger in Army fatigues and said, "I just wanted to say thank you for serving our country." As Mikayla's proud grandmother tells it, the soldier leaned forward on his walker and said, "Sweetheart, I did it for you."

Every one of you put on the uniform for the same reason. You risked your life, you sacrificed so Americans like Mikayla could grow up in freedom. We will always honor your service. We will never forget your sacrifice.

This is the last time I will address a veterans convention as the Commander in Chief. Over the past 70 years—7½ years, I've been honored to get to know many of your members. I've relied on your counsel. I have benefited from your wisdom. I have been extremely grateful for your prayers.

I know you share with me a deep love for America and an awesome pride in those who defend her. When I meet with our troops, they always inspire me with their sense of duty and honor. They are America's finest citizens. I am confident that our troops will always be able to count on the fellowship and the support and the love of the men and women of the VFW. May God bless you, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:46 a.m. at the Orange County Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to former Senator Bob Dole and former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala, Cochairs, President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors.

Remarks on Gulf Coast Reconstruction in New Orleans, Louisiana

August 20, 2008

Thank you all. Thank you for the warm welcome. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. General, thank you for the kind introduction. Who would have thought that 3 years after the storm, the President can come and say, New Orleans, Louisiana, is on its way back as a stronger and better city.

I'm proud to be here at Jackson Barracks, built by my predecessor, President Andrew Jackson. [*Laughter*] He built it to protect the city of New Orleans. And that's exactly what the folks housed in this facility have done and will continue to do. So first, I want to pay homage to the Louisiana National Guard. I thank you for what you did during the rescue efforts. Even though your own homes were destroyed, you went out to save people and their homes. And the people of Louisiana—[*applause*].

I think the message here today is: Hope is being restored; hope is coming back. I'm going to spend some time here in New Orleans, and then I'm heading over to Gulfport, Mississippi—same message. And I'm, frankly, not surprised. I'm not surprised that hope is marching in, because I understand the nature of the people who live here in this community and these communities. I have seen people when their spirits were at a low ebb, but never did they give up. And now, I've seen incredible progress is being made.

Oh, there's still work to be done. This isn't, like, a farewell address—you know, George Bush came and he said he's through. No, we're—there's still more work to be done. But I do think it's important to take stock of the moment and to remind people how far this community has come.

Laura Bush sends her best. She's spent a lot of time down here, and so have I. The librarians in this part of the world are especially grateful; after all, the Laura Bush Foundation has helped refurbish a lot of school libraries up and down the gulf coast. She sends her very best. I know she would say what I'm about to say: It's amazing to come into a crowd like this, and look around and see so many familiar faces, people that we have come to admire, and frankly, after all this business is over, people that we'll say are our friends. Maybe it's because of the tragedy that struck that we formed a close bond; I don't know. But I can tell you that we have made a lot of good friends in the gulf coast region. And even though I'm headed for retirement in about 6 months, that's not to say I'm going to forget who my friends are in this part of the world.

I do want to thank the Governor for joining us, Governor Bobby Jindal. He's a—[*applause*]. It should not surprise you that on the helicopter ride here, Jindal had a few agenda items. [*Laughter*] That's what Presidents have come to expect. And I appreciate the way he laid them out in logical form with a—in a very respectful tone.

I'm also proud to be here with the mayor of this great city. The mayor and I have had some quality time. [*Laughter*] We have come to know each other. I remember when I first flew down here, there was the mayor at the end of the steps of Air Force One. I said, "How you doing, Mayor?" He said, "I'm hungry, and I haven't had a bath." I said to the steward on Air Force One, "Fix the man up with a meal, and turn on the hot water in the shower."

And I appreciate you, Mayor. I appreciate the fact that you decided to run for office again. You said to the people of this part of the world, "There is unfinished business, and I intend to be a part of the finished business." And the people listened, and they put you back in office. And I'm proud to be with you, Ray. Thanks for coming.

We've got a lot of people from the delegations, the Federal delegations. William Jefferson is with us. Congressman, I'm proud you're here. Thank you for coming.

The one thing you learn when you're in this part of the world is you better pay attention to the parish presidents. [*Laughter*] Right, Ray? You are one. But so is Aaron Broussard, of Jefferson Parish. I'm proud to see you, Aaron. I'll never forget my first time when we came to see you. We were in, like, a community center or something. And I think you were in Bermuda shorts. [*Laughter*] Or they may have been spandex shorts. [*Laughter*] But nevertheless, you were focused; you were intense; and you got the job done for the people of your parish. I really appreciate you coming.

Billy Nungesser of Plaquemines Parish is here. Billy, thanks for working hard. The Governor says that Billy says, "We're through with the recovery. We're moving on. There's still projects to be done, but Plaquemines Parish is heading into the future with confidence."

I'm proud to be here with the parish president from St. Bernard's Parish, Craig Taffaro. Craig, I'm honored you're here. He's the first to admit he's got his hands full. But I want to thank you for your leadership, and thank you for agreeing to take on the issues and the problems. You could have easily have ducked the responsibility that comes with elected office. It would have been much easier to say, "We'll just let somebody deal with the next 4 years; I think I'll show up later on." But you came in and you've taken the lead, and we appreciate it.

I want—proud to be here with General Landreneau. General, it's good to see you again. Thank you for your time. I said thanks to Hunt Downer; that would be General Downer. I appreciate—[*applause*].

Don Powell was the first man down here to work with the local officials to try to make sure this recovery was coordinated, that the money was well spent, that the money was focused in the proper direction. He did a fine job. He decided he wanted to go back to the promised land; that would be the State of Texas. [*Laughter*] And so, I asked General Doug O'Dell to take his place. He's a tough-nosed, no-nonsense guy who cares deeply about the people down here. General, thanks for coming. I'm proud you're here.

So, the next two men I'm going to introduce are people that you came to know well, and people I came to know well too; people I admire a lot. First, the Commandant of the

United States Coast Guard, Admiral Thad Allen. And the man who came up with a new phrase in American lexicon, which was: "Don't stay stuck on stupid"—General Russ Honore; thank you. U.S. Army, retired—what's it like? [*Laughter*] Yes.

At the airport, I had the honor of saying hello to the Saints quarterback, Drew Brees, and running back Deuce McAllister. By the way, as you may know, Laura and I were at the Olympics. No finer citizen of the United States and of this part of the world than Chris Paul of the Hornets.

And thank you all for coming. I appreciate you being here a lot. It's hard to believe that it was 3 years ago that Katrina, in essence, wiped out a lot of this city. I mean, just flooded it and just destroyed a lot of hopes and a lot of dreams. Eight hundred thousand people across the gulf coast area left their homes; that's a lot. Eight hundred thousand people figured out how to leave, and headed into—all across America. Never before has our Nation seen such destruction by nature, never before. And a lot of folks, I'm confident, wondered whether or not there would be a brighter tomorrow.

In the midst of all the flood water, people were saying, "Oh man, can we possibly have a good future here?" And yet, the good future is here. I'm—not to be a "told you so," but I was in Jackson Square, and I predicted that New Orleans would come back as a stronger and better city. That's the prediction I made. I also pledged that we'd help. And $126 billion later, 3 years after the storm, we've helped deliver $126 billion of U.S. taxpayers' money. [*Applause*] And I thank you for applauding on that statement, but I know you're applauding the American taxpayer. A lot of people around the country care deeply about the people down here. And so it was—you know, it was money that we were happy to spend.

The money is mainly in the hands of State and local governments, helping to rebuild. And there's a lot of work to be done; I fully understand that. And as Bobby made clear and the mayor made clear, there's some ongoing projects that they want to make sure the Federal Government pays attention to—and we will. I make no promises; this isn't a chance for me to come and try to be a typical politician and make you a promise I don't intend to keep. I hope by now people understand that when I say something, we're going to get it done, but I am judicious about saying things. And so, I told Bobby and told the mayor, we're open-minded, and we'll listen very carefully to make sure that this recovery continues on.

There are people hurting—I fully understand that—people waiting to get back in their home, wondering whether a brighter day is possible. Yet, a brighter day is coming. And I want to talk about some of the hopeful progress that's being made. I think it's important for our citizens around the country to understand, there is hopeful progress here. We see hopeful signs in the work to protect New Orleans from future storms. The Army Corps of Engineer [Engineers] * has repaired 220 miles of levees. That's important. You cannot rebuild these communities unless you're confident that the levee system will work in the future. The corps is upgrading the flood walls so they're stronger than before Katrina.

We're on track to meet our goal of a 100-year flood plain protection by the year 2011. I know there were some doubts about whether or not the corps would be able to get the job done. I can remember clearly, on one of my visits—maybe it was the year after the storm—people say, "Oh yeah, sure, he's just saying this, and they don't intend to do it." Well, we intended to do it, and the corps is working hard.

Governor Jindal requested that Louisiana be allowed to pay the State's share of the levee improvement costs over 30 years, instead of 3. I listened very carefully to what—[*applause*]. I listened very carefully to what he had to say. I didn't think Louisiana ought to choose between rebuilding flood walls and completing other projects that are vital to recovery, so I granted the Governor's request. [*Applause*]

Thank you. This is not supposed to be self-congratulatory. [*Laughter*] I'm congratulating you.

There is hopeful signs of progress as housing is restored. Louisiana's Road Home program has put nearly $7 billion into the hands

* White House correction.

of more than 115,000 homeowners. Federal dollars are increasing affordable housing throughout New Orleans. And as we rebuild, the strategy is not to repeat the mistakes of the past, but to move toward a vibrant mixed-income neighborhood system. Each week, hundreds of families are moving out of their temporary housing, and they're heading into permanent, long-term structures. And that's hopeful. Do more people need to move out? Absolutely. But has progress been made? Absolutely.

We see hopeful signs of progress in the growth of the economy. New Orleans sales tax revenues are at nearly 90 percent of their pre-storm levels. Think about that. Three years after the devastating storm, sales tax are at 90 percent of where they were prior to the storm. Employment increased by 8,000 jobs last year. The Port of New Orleans is a bustling center of commerce and trade; Louisiana exports now exceed pre-Katrina levels.

The present city's tourism industry is on the rebound. The mayor was telling me tourism is back. People are coming here with confidence that they're going to have a good experience. That's the reason why we had the North Americans' Leaders' summit here; I wanted the President of Mexico and the Prime Minister of Canada to get a flavor, a taste of what New Orleans is all about. And they did.

The health care system is improving. The Department of Health and Human Services has provided more than $2.6 billion to care for the poor and uninsured, to offer mental health services, and to support primary care clinics and hospitals. The Federal Government is helping to recruit doctors and nurses and other health care professionals. We want to make sure the people of New Orleans have the care that is necessary for this population to grow. And we're working with the Governor to build a system of community-based clinics that encourages good preventative care and eases the strain on the city's emergency rooms.

There's hopeful progress when it comes to reducing crime. No question about it, there needs to be a lot of effort, Chief, and I know you're working hard to reduce crime. It's essential that folks get after the crime problem here in New Orleans. Everybody knows that. And we want to help. There is a role for the Federal Government to help the local police force deal with crime. And so there's—Federal funds are given to local police and sheriffs, essential equipment like cars, computers, and radios. Agents—Federal agents are working the streets alongside the New Orleans police. Federal resources are helping the police department rebuild its crime lab and resolve its forensics backlog.

Violent crime is a problem. But I was told, over the last 6 months, there is notable improvements. My only point to the people of New Orleans is we'll continue to help you solve your crime problem.

We're seeing hopeful signs of progress when it comes to education in New Orleans. More than 80 public schools in the city have reopened. That's good; that's really good. You can't have a vibrant city unless you got your schools up and running. About half now are charter schools, to give greater access to—give parents better options. High schools that once struggled are being transformed into career-oriented academies. In other words, there's a lot of innovation here in New Orleans. Rather than repeat mistakes of the past, people said, "Let's come together and let's innovate. Let's make this school system—" [*applause*].

I find it interesting that Teach for America is focused on New Orleans; that they're recruiting a lot of really bright kids from around the country to come here and help the youngsters of this part of the world achieve educational excellence. By the way, because of accountability measures that have been put in place, I'm able to report to the people in Louisiana and around the country that test scores across this city have improved significantly.

More restaurants are now open in New Orleans than before the storm. Isn't that interesting? [*Laughter*] You can get some good food here too. As I mentioned, I saw the Saints football stars; they're now going to start a new season in a refurbished Super Dome.

Religious institutions are opening up. Places of worship that were closed are now opening their doors. Musicians are returning

this season to Mahalia Jackson Theatre. Earlier this year, New Orleans celebrated the return of another sweet sound, the streetcars on St. Charles Avenue. This city is coming back.

As we think about the future, it's important to remember some of the great acts of compassion that took place. I think about the folks who came from across the country here to volunteer—14 million hours. Isn't that amazing? Brothers and sisters in need, and total strangers came to say, "What can I do to help you?"

I think about the citizens across the country who donated $3.5 billion to total strangers to help. I think about the people here in Jackson Barracks that went out of their way to serve. And I think about all the citizens we've met, and I'm just going to cite three, but they're extraordinary examples of what took place.

First, Daryn Dobson. See, he was studying at Stanford Business School. Like, what would be a natural thing, being at Stanford Business School, is stay out there in Silicon Valley and try to be a part of the high-tech boom, the next wave of technology. That would have been very tempting for—but he felt the need to come back to New Orleans to help—or come to New Orleans to help. And so, he joined what's called the Idea Village. It's a program to support the city's entrepreneurs and to help stimulate economic growth. It's a incubator for good ideas. This bright man decided, instead of trying to seek his own personal wealth, to come here and help people realize the blessings of entrepreneurship, all aiming to add value and to create jobs here in New Orleans.

I appreciate so very much, Daryn, the briefings that you gave me and Laura. And I appreciate the fact that you're back here in New Orleans, serving. Thanks for coming.

Okay. Then there's Leah Chase. Some of you might have heard of Dooky Chase. Dooky Chase, for those people listening, is a New Orleans institution. It's been around for several decades, as has Leah. [*Laughter*] The flood waters left her restaurant completely ruined. She saw her whole life washed away, and she wasn't sure where she was going to find the strength to go on. And she found that strength, though, in her faith, in her family, and her friends and neighbors. The community held fundraisers here in New Orleans to help her rebuild. I found it interesting that high school students from all over the country came to help her rebuild. I found it amazing that friends in Indiana donated new chairs for a dining room. And I'm here to testify the food is awesome. [*Laughter*]

And finally, Doris Hicks. She is the principal of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Charter School of Science and Technology of the Lower Ninth Ward. We had a chance to visit her school. After Katrina, the flooding at MLK was so bad that they found fish on the second floor of the high school. That's high water. She was told she couldn't open until 2010. Somebody said, "We're pessimistic." I guess they didn't understand her spirit. They said, "You won't be open until 2010." But she didn't appreciate that. She said that this community needed this school up and running. It's open today. I'm told families are moving into the community so they can return to that school, and she puts it, "There's no other place like Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and there's no other place like New Orleans." Well, first of all, there's not many—[*applause*]—and there is no other place like New Orleans and its surrounding parishes.

This is an important part of our country. This is a part of our country that was flat on its back and is now standing up and headed for the future. I have been so honored to work with you. As I told you, I'm sprinting to the finish, and so I'm not through, but I thought around this third anniversary of a tragic event, it makes sense to come by and say, here's what's happened; here's where you're headed. It's an awesome example of courage and determination, desire, and I am here to honor you all.

I appreciate the citizens of New Orleans and the citizens of south Louisiana showing what is possible in the face of unspeakable tragedy. I thank you for staying with it. I thank you for allowing me to come by and see you once again. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. at Jackson Barracks. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. Huntington "Hunt" B. Downer, Jr., Assistant Adjutant General, Louisiana National Guard,

who introduced the President; Mayor C. Ray Nagin of New Orleans, LA; Billy Nungesser, president, Plaquemines Parish; Maj. Gen. Bennet C. Landreneau, Adjutant General, Louisiana National Guard; former Federal Coordinator for Gulf Coast Region Recovery and Rebuilding Donald E. Powell; Maj. Gen. Douglas V. O'Dell, Jr., USMC (Ret.), in his capacity as Federal Coordinator, Office of Gulf Coast Rebuilding; Chris Paul, point guard, New Orleans Hornets; President Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa of Mexico; Prime Minister Stephen Harper of Canada; and Warren J. Riley, superintendent, New Orleans Police Department.

Statement on the Death of Representative Stephanie Tubbs Jones

August 20, 2008

Laura and I are saddened by the death of Chairwoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones.

As a proud lifelong resident of Ohio's 11th District, she devoted her career to serving her community at both the State and national levels. She was an effective legislator who was dedicated to helping small businesses, improving local schools, expanding job opportunities for Ohioans, and ensuring that more of them have access to healthcare. After making history as the first African American woman elected to Congress from Ohio, the Congresswoman worked to expand the rights of all Americans. Our Nation is grateful for her service.

Our thoughts and prayers are with her son Mervyn Leroy Jones II and the rest of her family.

Remarks Following a Dinner With Elected Officials and Community Leaders in Gulfport, Mississippi

August 20, 2008

The President. Governor, thank you for coming.

Governor Haley Barbour of Mississippi. Thank you, sir.

The President. I thank the United States Senators—Senator Wicker, Senator Cochran—Congressman Taylor, mayors, supervisors—county supervisors, small-business owners, high school teacher. Thank you all very much for giving me a chance to come and visit with you.

I have brought—you know, a member of my administration, United States Marine General—retired—O'Dell is here to listen to people. We still understand there are issues, but I do want to say something about the progress. I remember what it looked like right after the storm. I remember what it looked like in the first anniversary right after the storm. I remember what it looked like last year, Governor. And things have improved a lot.

Are there still people wondering about their future? Absolutely. Do they still have other issues to deal with, like cleaning out some of the bureaucracy so that the housing issue can get solved quicker? Absolutely. But things are better here on the gulf coast of Mississippi.

And one reason they're better is because you've had strong leadership, and the other reason—at the State and local level. And the other reason is because people refused to give in to the storm. People picked up their lives and decided that this is where their home was going to be and made something out of these communities.

I remember going to the schools right after the storm hit and seeing the determination of the teachers and principals about how—whether they had to be in a trailer or in a old building, they were going to teach these kids. And the spirit of southern Mississippi is real, and it's alive. And the leaders here around the table know better than me what I'm talking about.

So, I appreciate you giving me a chance to come. I told people that I'm almost through, but I'm sprinting to the finish. This is the not the farewell dinner. [*Laughter*] But this is an opportunity to come and listen to what's on people's minds, with the idea of continuing to work with the elected officials to solve problems and make sure this is even better 6 months from now than it is today.

At any rate, I want to thank you. Food's good here too. [*Laughter*] I appreciate your time, Governor. Thank you.

Governor Barbour. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:28 p.m. at Vrazel's Fine Food. In his remarks, he referred to Sen. Roger F. Wicker of Mississippi; and Maj.

Gen. Douglas V. O'Dell, Jr., USMC (Ret.), in his capacity as Federal Coordinator, Office of Gulf Coast Rebuilding.

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.

August 16

In the morning, at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, the President had an intelligence briefing followed by a briefing on the situation in Georgia.

August 18

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He then had a video teleconference briefing on Tropical Storm Fay with Secretary of Homeland Security Michael Chertoff and Federal Emergency Management Agency personnel.

August 19

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing, in which he was briefed on the deaths of 10 French soldiers who were killed in an ambush on August 18 in Kabul Province, Afghanistan. He was then briefed on the current situation in Georgia and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice's meeting with NATO allies in Brussels, Belgium.

The President announced that Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao will replace Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as head of the Presidential delegation attending the closing ceremony of the Olympic games in Beijing, China, on August 24.

The President announced his intention to nominate James X. Dempsey to be a member of the Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board.

The President announced his intention to designate James A. Williams as Acting Administrator of the General Services Administration.

August 20

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Orlando, FL. He then traveled to the Orange County Convention Center, where he presented the President's Volunteer Service Award to Keela Carr, who recently walked across the country to thank and raise support for U.S. military personnel.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to New Orleans, LA. He then traveled to Jackson Barracks, headquarters for the Louisiana National Guard, where he toured the facilities. Later, he traveled to Gulfport, MS.

In the evening, the President met with Leslee Morrow Curry and Krysten and Trevor Curry, wife and children of Gulfport Police Officer Robert J. Curry who was killed on August 14 in a motorcycle accident. He then returned to the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX.

August 21

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with former President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan to wish him well and thank him for his cooperation in the war on terror. He then had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Syed Yousuf Raza Gilani of Pakistan to express his condolences for the loss of life due to the terrorist attacks in Dera Ismail Khan on August 19 and in Wah on August 21 and to discuss the war on terror and U.S. economic assistance. Later, he had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, the President met with Counselor to the President Edward W. Gillespie.

The President declared an emergency in Florida and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local response efforts due to the emergency conditions resulting from Tropical Storm Fay beginning on August 18 and continuing.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael Young to be a member of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members

of the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts: Herbert V. Kohler, Jr.; Carl H. Lindner III; Marilyn Carlson Nelson; Robert Frank Pence; David Rubenstein; Shirley W. Ryan; and Marc I. Stern.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation: John L. Berrey; Bill Haslam; Mark A. Sadd; and John Williams.

The President announced his intention to designate David Kelly as Acting Administrator of the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration at the Department of Transportation.

August 22

In the morning, the President had a video teleconference with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to discuss her trip to Baghdad, Iraq. He then had a video teleconference with his national security advisers, who briefed him on the current situation in Iraq. Later, he had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq. He then had a telephone conversation with President Nicolas Sarkozy of France to express his condolences for the deaths of the 10 French soldiers who were killed on August 18 in Kabul Province, Afghanistan, and to discuss President Sarkozy's trip to Afghanistan and the situation in Georgia.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Bush will welcome President John Agyekum Kufuor of Ghana and his wife, Theresa, for a state visit on September 15.

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 August 16

Transcript of remarks by Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice on the situation in Georgia

Released August 18

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Council Press Secretary Gordon Johndroe

Released August 19

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Council Press Secretary Gordon Johndroe

Advance text of the President's remarks on gulf coast reconstruction in New Orleans

Released August 20

Transcript of a press gaggle by National Security Council Press Secretary Gordon Johndroe and Paul Conway, chief of staff to the Federal Coordinator for Gulf Coast Rebuilding

Excerpts from the President's remarks to the Veterans of Foreign Wars national convention in Orlando

Fact sheet: Rebuilding the Gulf Coast

Fact sheet: Protecting America From Terrorism

Released August 21

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Council Press Secretary Gordon Johndroe

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Florida

Released August 22

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Council Press Secretary Gordon Johndroe

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary: Visit by President John Kufuor of the Republic of Ghana

Acts Approved by the President

NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.