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George W. Bush

The White House,
September 8, 2008.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance

September 8, 2008

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith the Hague Convention on the International Recovery of Child Support and Other Forms of Family Maintenance, adopted at The Hague on November 23, 2007, and signed by the United States on that same date, with a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, subject to the reservations and declaration set forth in the report of the Secretary of State. The report of the Secretary of State, which includes an overview of the Convention, is enclosed for the information of the Senate.

The United States supported the development of the Convention as a means of promoting the establishment and enforcement of child support obligations in cases where the custodial parent and child are in one country and the non-custodial parent is in another. The Convention provides for a comprehensive system of cooperation between the child support authorities of contracting states, establishes procedures for the recognition and enforcement of foreign child support decisions, and requires effective measures for the enforcement of maintenance decisions. It is estimated that there are over 15 million child support cases in the United States and that an increasing number of these cases will involve parties who live in different nations. United States courts already enforce foreign child support orders, while many countries do not do so in the absence of a treaty obligation. Ratification of the Convention will thus mean that more U.S. children will receive the financial support they need from both their parents.

The Department of State and the Department of Health and Human Services, which leads the Federal child support program, support the early ratification of this Convention. The American Bar Association and the National Child Support Enforcement Association have also expressed support for the Convention. Although some new implementing legislation will be required, the proposed Convention is largely consistent with current U.S. Federal and State law. Cases under the Convention will be handled through our existing comprehensive child support system, which involves both Federal and State law. The Departments of State and Health and Human Services have been working on preparation of the necessary amendments to Federal law to ensure compliance with the Convention, and that legislation will soon be ready for submission to the Congress for its consideration. The National Conference of Commissioners on Uniform State Laws has worked closely with the Departments of State and Health and Human Services to develop the necessary amendments to uniform State child support legislation.

The Convention requires only two contracting states for entry into force. No state has yet ratified the Convention. Early U.S. ratification would therefore likely hasten the Convention's entry into force. This would be in the interests of U.S. families, as it would enable them to receive child support owed by debtors abroad more quickly and reliably. I therefore recommend that the Senate give prompt and favorable consideration to the Convention and give its advice and consent to ratification, subject to the reservations and declaration described in the accompanying report of the Secretary of State, at the earliest possible date.

George W. Bush

The White House,
September 8, 2008.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 9.

Remarks at the National Defense University

September 9, 2008

Thank you, General, for your kind and short introduction. [*Laughter*] I am pleased to be back at the National Defense University again. It turns out this is my fifth visit as President. Every time I come here, I'm inspired and encouraged because of the brave men and women who work here. And I really do want to thank you for your warm hospitality.

Across the world, NDU students and faculty have served with valor in the war against these extremists and killers. On this campus, you're helping train the next generation of military and civilian leaders who will defend our Nation against the real and true threats of the 21st century. You've developed new ways for our military and civilian personnel to work together to meet the new challenges we face. I thank you for your patriotism; I thank you for your hard work; and I thank you for your devotion to protecting the American people.

I thank the Members of the Congress who have joined us, Congressman Randy Forbes of Virginia and Congressman Trent Franks of Arizona. Thanks for coming.

I'm going to be talking in a little while about a recommendation I have received from the Joint Chiefs. And I'm so pleased that the Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Cartwright is with us today. Thanks for coming, Hoss.

I thank the leadership of the NDU. Thanks for having me again. I appreciate the civilian personnel, U.S. Government civilians studying here. And I thank those who wear the uniform. You know, one of the great things about being the Commander in Chief is to be the Commander in Chief of people who have volunteered to serve our country in a time of danger. I'm incredibly impressed by our military, and I am thankful to our military families.

You know, last week, a remarkable event took place in Iraq. At a ceremony in the city of Ramadi, responsibility for security in Anbar Province was transferred to Iraqi civilian authorities. Iraqi forces are now leading security operations across Anbar, with American troops in an overwatch role. With this transfer of responsibility, the people of Anbar took charge of their own security and their own destiny. It's a moment of pride for all Iraqis, and it was a moment of success in the war on terror.

Two years ago, such a moment was unimaginable to most. Anbar was one of the most dangerous Provinces in Iraq; Al Qaida was in control of almost every major population center. They had largely succeeded in turning the region into a safe haven, which brought them closer to one of their goals: a place from which to launch new attacks against America, our allies, and our interests in the region. In 2006, a military intelligence report concluded the Province was lost, and Anbar was held up as proof of America's failure in Iraq.

Yet, something remarkable was happening. The tribes in Anbar were growing tired of Al Qaida's brutality. They wanted to live a normal life, and this presented us with an opportunity to defeat Al Qaida in Anbar. Last year, we sent 4,000 additional marines to Anbar as part of the surge. The surge showed America's commitment to security. It showed we were committed to helping the average citizen in Anbar live a normal life. And it helped renew the confidence of local leaders, the tribal sheikhs, who then led an uprising to take Anbar back from the terrorists. Together, local tribes, Iraqi troops, and American forces systematically dismantled Al Qaida control across the Province.

Today, Anbar is a Province transformed. Attacks in the Province have dropped by more than 90 percent. Casualties are down dramatically. Virtually every city and town in Anbar now has a mayor and a functioning municipal council. Provincial Reconstruction Teams are helping local leaders create jobs and economic opportunity. As security has improved, reconciliation is taking place across the Province. Today, Anbar is no longer lost to Al Qaida; it has been reclaimed by the Iraqi people.

We're seeing similar gains in other parts of Iraq. Earlier this year, the Iraqi Government launched a successful military operation against Shi'a extremist groups in places like Basra and Baghdad and al-Amarah. Iraqi forces are staying on the offense. They are