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as long we live, we will carry with us dad's other lessons: That integrity and honor are worth more than any title or treasure, and that the truest strength can come from the gentlest soul.

George H.W. Bush has the deep love of his family, the admiration of his friends, and the thanks of a grateful nation. So today we are faced with the—[*applause*]. So what do you give a guy who has been blessed and has just about everything he has ever needed? Well, an aircraft carrier. [*Laughter*] The ship that bears our dad's name is more than 95,000 tons of aluminum and steel. She will carry nearly 6,000 of the finest sailors and marines in the world. She represents the craftsmanship of many skilled builders and thousands of hours of preparation. And so I congratulate all of you on this tremendous achievement.

This ship is a fitting tribute to a generation of men with whom my dad was privileged to serve. She's also a tribute to a new generation of American soldiers and sailors and Coast Guard men and women, airmen and marines who have stepped forward to defend the United States America. Again our troops are facing down a brutal enemy. Again they are making America and the world safer. And again they will come home in victory.

People often ask what I treasure most about being the President. Nothing comes close to the honor of being your Commander in Chief. Every day, I'm amazed by the skill and courage of our men and women in uniform. And as we send the USS *George H.W. Bush* into service, I know you will do credit to the sailors who served before you and the good man for whom this ship is named. I ask that God protect this ship and let her know only victory and peace. And I ask God's continued blessings on our wonderful Nation.

Thank you.

[*At this point, Secretary of the Navy Donald C. Winter gave brief remarks.*]

***The President.*** I hereby place the United States Ship *George H.W. Bush* in commission. May God bless and guide this warship and all who shall sail in her.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:43 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Tim Kaine of Virginia; Adm. Gary Roughead, USN, Chief of Naval Operations; and Capt. Kevin O'Flaherty, USN, commanding officer, USS *George H.W. Bush*. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of former President George H.W. Bush. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Interview With Brit Hume of FOX News

*January 7, 2009*

***Mr. Hume.*** Mr. President, thank you for doing this.

***President Bush.*** Yes, sir.

***Mr. Hume.*** Welcome back to FOX News Sunday.

***President Bush.*** Thank you, sir.

### *Last Days in Office*

***Mr. Hume.*** Less than 2 weeks to go, how do you feel?

***President Bush.*** You know, I've got mixed emotions. I'm going to miss being the Commander in Chief of the military. Earlier the past week, I had the honor of having a military parade that said goodbye to the Commander in Chief, and it was an emotional moment for me and Laura.

***Mr. Hume.*** Why?

***President Bush.*** Just because I've got such great respect for the men and women who wear the uniform. And I've been through a lot with them. I have called upon them to do hard tasks. I have met with the families of the fallen. I have been to Walter Reed to see the wounded. And I have been incredibly inspired by their courage, their bravery, their sacrifice.

And I'm going to miss all the folks who have made our life so comfortable here in the White House.

On the other hand, I am looking forward to going back to Texas. I love Texas. I love my wife. And I'm excited about the next chapter in my life. And so all three of those things, you know, are the sweet part of the—what's going to take place on January the 20th.

***Reflections on the President's Time in Office***

***Mr. Hume.*** People who come to see you here and meet with you, from the outside, are continually taken by surprise by your evident good humor and good mood and the fact that with low poll ratings and various troubles besetting the country and all you've been through, that you're not down——

***President Bush.*** Yes.

***Mr. Hume.*** ——that you're fine. And everybody remarks on it. How do you explain that?

***President Bush.*** Well, I'm better than fine. I am proud of the accomplishments of this administration. I am thankful for the people that have worked so hard to serve our country. I know I gave it my all for 8 years. And I did not sell my soul for the sake of popularity. And so when I get back home and look in the mirror, I will be proud of what I see.

***President's Principles***

***Mr. Hume.*** You have said that you did not compromise your principles in the interest of popularity. How would you describe those principles?

***President Bush.*** Well, one principle is I believe in the universality of freedom; that there is an Almighty, and a gift of that Almighty to every man, woman, and child is freedom. And therefore, it's incumbent upon those of us with influence to act upon that principle.

And I'll give you a classic example. During the darkest days of Iraq, people came to me and said, "You're creating incredible political difficulties for us." And I said, "Oh, really, what do you suggest I do?" Their suggest—some suggested, retreat, pull out of Iraq. But I have faith that freedom exists in people's souls, and therefore, if given a chance, democracy—an Iraqi style democracy could survive and work. I didn't compromise that principle for the sake of trying to bail out my political party, for example.

***Presidential Powers***

***Mr. Hume.*** Talk to me about the Presidency as you found it, its powers, its prerogatives, and how you feel you're leaving it.

***President Bush.*** My Presidency was defined by the attack on the country, and therefore, used the powers inherent in the Constitution to defend this country.

***Mr. Hume.*** Did you find them intact?

***President Bush.*** I found—yes, I did find the Presidential powers intact. I have at times used those powers in ways that people had not anticipated. For example, the idea of, within the law, being able to have our folks question known killers about their intention. Now, many of the decisions I made are being adjudicated. And of course, I have lived by, and future Presidents will live by, the decisions of the Supreme Court. But as a wartime President, what remained intact, by the way, was the Constitution——

***Mr. Hume.*** Right.

***President Bush.*** ——which we have honored.

***Checks and Balances in Government***

***Mr. Hume.*** It has been argued that what you sought to do is actually expand the powers of the Presidency, or in the eyes of some—perhaps in the eyes of the Vice President—to restore them. How do you see that?

***President Bush.*** I see the relationship between the Presidency and the judiciary and the legislative branch as constantly changing throughout the history of the country. And the key thing that's important is that there still be checks and balances. And so however I interpreted the Constitution, I kept in mind what the Constitution said the legality of what my decisions were. But I also fully understood the checks and balances inherent in our system.

***Presidential Powers***

***Mr. Hume.*** Now, you've spoken of the tools that you believe you put in place and which your successor will now inherit.

***President Bush.*** Yes.

***Mr. Hume.*** How worried are you, if at all, that those tools will be eroded, relinquished in the—because some of them have been——

***President Bush.*** Slightly criticized. [*Laughter*]

***Mr. Hume.*** Well, to say the least.

***President Bush.*** I would hope that the team that is—has the honor of serving the

country will take a hard look at the realities of the world and the tools now in place to protect the United States from further attack. I would hope they would take a sober assessment, and I believe they will.

***Mr. Hume.*** And what will they find?

***President Bush.*** Well, they will find that with a considerable amount of care and concern for civil liberties, for example, that I have put in place procedures that will enable the professionals to better learn the intentions of Al Qaida, for example. They will realize, I think, when they really study the issue carefully, that we have gone from an administration that was accused of not connecting dots to an administration that is connecting dots, you know, linking pieces of information to better protect the country, with the civil liberties of our citizens in mind.

### *Intelligence Gathering Program/War on Terror*

***Mr. Hume.*** Now, the enhanced interrogation techniques, as some call them—torture, as others call them——

***President Bush.*** Yes.

***Mr. Hume.*** ——are being argued over to this hour. Some are saying you never get any good information by rough stuff, and others have said, more than once, that if we hadn't used these techniques, we wouldn't have had vital information and attacks could have been or would have been carried out on this country. Your view of that.

***President Bush.*** My view is that the techniques were necessary and are necessary to be used on a rare occasion to get information necessary to protect the American people. One such person who gave us information was Khalid Sheikh Mohammed. He was the mastermind of the September the 11th, 2001, attacks that killed nearly 3,000 people on our soil.

And I'm in the Oval Office, and I am told that we have captured Khalid Sheikh Mohammed, and the professionals believe he has information necessary to secure the country. So I ask what tools are available for us to find information from him, and they gave me a list of tools. And I said, are these tools deemed to be legal? And so we got legal opinions before any decision was made. And I think when people study the history of this particular episode——

***Mr. Hume.*** Well, what happened?

***President Bush.*** ——they'll find out we gained good information from Khalid Sheikh Mohammed in order to protect our country.

***Mr. Hume.*** Well, how good and how important? And what's the——

***President Bush.*** We believe that the information we gained helped save lives on American soil.

***Mr. Hume.*** Can you be more specific than that?

***President Bush.*** Well, I have said in speeches and, as a matter of fact, when this program was leaked to the press, I actually gave a speech that said to the American people, yes, we're doing this. And—but I also emphasized we were doing it within the law.

Look, I understand why people can get carried away on this issue. But generally, they don't know the facts. And by the way, one of the interesting things that did take place is before anything happened on this particular program that we did brief Members of Congress.

***Mr. Hume.*** Yes.

***President Bush.*** We had an obligation to share information with the legislative branch. And all I can tell the American people is we better have tools in place that are legal and that can help us protect the American people from an enemy that still exists.

And my concern is not for President-elect Obama, because I'm confident that he understands the nature of the world and understands the need to protect America. But I am concerned that America, at some point in time, lets down her guard. And if we ever do that, the country will become highly vulnerable.

***Mr. Hume.*** Well, how badly would it hurt, in your view, if this—these enhanced interrogation techniques that some call torture were abandoned and were not used?

***President Bush.*** Yes, well, obviously, I feel like it would be a problem because these are tools that we have in place. I do want to—you know, I firmly reject the word "torture."

***Mr. Hume.*** I understand that.

***President Bush.*** Everything this administration did was—had a legal basis to it; otherwise, we would not have done it.

Secondly, everything we did was in consultation with professionals in our Government who understand, you know, how to use techniques in a way that gets information with—you know, within the law, necessary to protect the American people.

And I just can't imagine what it would be like to be President without these tools available and we captured a known killer who might have had information about the next attack on America.

***Mr. Hume.*** Right.

***President Bush.*** See, what some don't understand, evidently, is that we're at war. And it's a different kind of war, where an enemy uses asymmetrical warfare and they lie in wait and find a soft spot, ready to attack again. And they're willing to kill as many innocent people as they can to advance their agenda.

### *Central Intelligence Agency*

***Mr. Hume.*** Right. Speaking of professionals, in the intelligence area, how do you view the selection of Leon Panetta to head the CIA?

***President Bush.*** I really don't feel comfortable commenting upon President-elect Obama's supposed choices, in this case. My only advice would be to recognize that the CIA is full of incredibly bright, hard-working, decent professionals who have got one thing in mind, and that is to serve the United States.

***Mr. Hume.*** And yet this administration, to some extent, has been bedeviled by intelligence leaks believed to have come from the CIA. They seem—and there has been a degree of tension, I think it's probably an understatement to say, between the administration—or the White House, at least, and the CIA.

***President Bush.*** No, I don't think so, Brit. I think that there have been disappointing moments when information came out of the Agency that—but the relationship has been fabulous up and down the line with the CIA.

***Mr. Hume.*** Really?

***President Bush.*** Oh, yes. I would say—I go out there quite frequently, and—or I have gone out there fairly often, I guess, is the best way to put it. And 99 percent of the people out there are anxious to help the administration do its job in a good way. And you can't stop leaks. And you don't know how many people were leaking, but I can assure you the vast majority of people in the CIA were very cooperative and have my highest respect.

I meet with the CIA every day of my Presidency, except for Sundays, since I've been President, at the same time: 7:30 on Saturday, 8 o'clock on every other day. And I will tell you that it is a fascinating experience to be briefed by CIA analysts. It's like taking a geopolitical course, international affairs course, every single day of the Presidency.

### *President-Elect Barack Obama*

***Mr. Hume.*** You've had now some further occasions to meet with Barack Obama and get to know him a little bit better, a man you really didn't know. How did you—how did your interaction with him go?

***President Bush.*** It was a very straightforward——

***Mr. Hume.*** How did you find him?

***President Bush.*** How did I like him? I liked him.

***Mr. Hume.*** Were you—other than——

***President Bush.*** He's obviously—listen, the man is obviously a charismatic person.

***Mr. Hume.*** Right.

***President Bush.*** And the man is able to persuade people that they should trust him, and he's got something—he's got a lot going for him.

And I was—you know, wish him all the best. The reason we had the dinner, or the lunch—we call them dinners in Texas—the lunch at the White House was so that he could hear from the current President and former Presidents that we want him to succeed. And he is an engaging person, and I am very impressed by the priority he places on his family.

### *Republican Party's Future*

***Mr. Hume.*** Now, your political family, the Republican Party——

***President Bush.*** Yes, sir.

***Mr. Hume.*** ——what do you think is its likely fortunes going forward? How have you left it? What does it need to do?

***President Bush.*** I think—look, I mean, obviously, we got whipped in 2008. And there will be a new wave of leadership arriving on the scene.

I can remember the '64 elections, the Goldwater—the Johnson landslide against Barry Goldwater, and we were—everybody said the party was wiped out. And then a whole new wave of Republicans ran, including George H.W. Bush, who got elected to the United States Congress from the Seventh Congressional District. Same thing will happen. But it's very important for our party not to narrow its focus, not to become so inward-looking that we drive people away from a philosophy that is compassionate and decent.

And I would—my call for our party is to be open-minded about——

***Mr. Hume.*** About what?

***President Bush.*** Well, different people's opinions. We shouldn't have litmus tests as to whether or not you can be a Republican.

***Mr. Hume.*** Right.

***President Bush.*** And we should be open-minded about big issues like immigration reform, because if we're viewed as anti-somebody—in other words, if the party is viewed as anti-immigrant, then another fellow may say, "Well, if they're against the immigrant, they may be against me." We've got to be a party for a better future, and for hope.

***Mr. Hume.*** You got—do you see new ideas out there that have not been a part of your own agenda or those of your Republican predecessors that might reignite the party's fortunes?

***President Bush.*** You know, look, I think that we shouldn't change our philosophy.

***Mr. Hume.*** Right.

***President Bush.*** We may want to change our messaging. We definitely want to change messengers. We need a new group of leaders. You know, but the idea of keeping taxes low——

***Mr. Hume.*** Do you see them emerging? Do you see any—do you see any emerging who you could identify?

***President Bush.*** Well, I had one in mind——

***Mr. Hume.*** Who's that?

***President Bush.*** ——but he evidently didn't agree with his older brother.

***Mr. Hume.*** You're speaking, of course, about Jeb——

***President Bush.*** That would be Governor Jeb Bush.

***Mr. Hume.*** Right.

***President Bush.*** But listen, there will be, you know, leaders. I mean, there's a lot of bright young guys and women in our party that will emerge. And parties go through cycles. There have been parts—times in our political history when the Democrats have felt like there was no future for them. And, you know—and so I'm optimistic about it. I don't want the party to feel like it's got to sell its soul on defending the country; that freedom is transformative; that we've got to be compassionate conservatives; that tax—low taxes make sense; that the military needs to be supported. I mean, there's a lot of just basic tenets to our party that make a lot of sense to the average person.

### *Post-Presidency Agenda*

***Mr. Hume.*** You have indicated that you've found this job to be fascinating; everybody does. It's probably the most interesting job in the world. Now you go from doing the most interesting job in the world to being out on your own. How do you feel about that? What do you think your life is going to be like, just sort of day to day? Will you be more time in Dallas, more time at your ranch? How do you expect to spend your time?

***President Bush.*** Yes, it's an interesting question. And I've begun to think about that, because I can remember with a great sense of anticipation coming to Washington, DC, to be the President of the United States. And I have the same sense of anticipation heading out of political life, but without the sense of gravity.

***Mr. Hume.*** Right.

***President Bush.*** And so I don't—I'm going to be fairly footloose for a while. I'm confident Laura will have enough tasks for me to keep me busy. But I imagine I'll spend a fair amount of time in Dallas working on the policy center that will be associated with

a library on the SMU campus. And I'm excited about that, because I do want to continue to promote not a political party, not my personality or my record, but a set of values that I think are very important for the country.

And, you know, I plan on writing a book.

***Mr. Hume.*** Do you?

***President Bush.*** I do.

***Mr. Hume.*** A history of your Presidency?

***President Bush.*** You know, I'm not quite exactly sure what it's going to be, but I'm toying with the idea of maybe describing the toughest decisions I had to make as President and the context in which I made them, because one of the things that——

***Mr. Hume.*** How soon will we see this book, do you think?

***President Bush.*** That's the kind of question I better not answer, because——

***Mr. Hume.*** Well, do you feel some urgency about getting it done?

***President Bush.*** Well, I'll say 2 years and it will be 4.

***Mr. Hume.*** Got it.

***President Bush.*** I don't know. I mean, yes, I'd like to get it done. I am a type A personality that—you know, I require things to do. And I bet once I get going on this book, I'll be able to get 'er done. But it's—what's evident to me is that it is very hard for people to remember what life was like a mere 4 or 5 years ago. And it's going to be very important for me to recreate the environment in which I had to make certain decisions, particularly the environment right after September the 11th, 2001.

***Mr. Hume.*** Right. Mr. President, thank you for this. Please bear with us, we need to take a break. And when we return, we will have a special visitor. Stay with us.

[*At this point, there was a pause in the interview. It then began again as follows.*]

### *President's Relationship With His Father*

***Mr. Hume.*** Well, we're pleased now to be joined not only of course by President Bush, the current President Bush, but by his father. Mr. President 41, welcome.

***Former President George H.W. Bush.*** Thank you, Brit.

***Mr. Hume.*** I believe this is the first time you two gentlemen have ever been interviewed together.

***Former President Bush.*** I think so. It may be the first time we've been asked to be interviewed. I don't know. [*Laughter*]

***Mr. Hume.*** Well, we're delighted to have you. Thank you very much.

***Former President Bush.*** No, that's not true, but we've just gone our separate ways on these interviews.

***Mr. Hume.*** In some sense, it has at least seemed that during your son's Presidency, that while you guys obviously were in touch—your family matters, much to discuss—that apart from that, there wasn't a lot of give and take. Is that true?

***President Bush.*** Well, that's all it takes for give and take. I mean, you don't need—if you mean, am I calling up dad—I mean, "George, here's what you got to do now on Iraq," or something; no, I didn't do that. And we sometimes would talk about policy. But I was determined to stay out of his way and avoid speculation of what's the old guy think. I mean, you don't need that.

***Mr. Hume.*** Well, now it can be told. [*Laughter*] Discuss if you will, both of you, the extent of your consultations on policy and political matters as—while you were President—the frequency of it.

***President Bush.*** See, the interesting thing is that a President has got plenty of advisers, but what a President never has is someone who gave him unconditional love. And therefore, when I talked to my dad, I was more interested in the father-son relationship. You got a lot of people who can give you advice, but you rarely have people who can pick up the phone and say, "I love you, son," or, "Hang in there, son," and be—and provide the kind of comfort that a President needs on occasion.

### *The Presidency and Public Opinion*

***Mr. Hume.*** You have said that when your father was President, particularly toward the end—a rough year politically, in 1992—that that hurt you more than it seemed to hurt him. Is that true?

***President Bush.*** Well, I said that being the son of a President was a lot harder than being the President.

***Mr. Hume.*** And how about being the father of the President?

***Former President Bush.*** Tough at times, only when you see criticism you know is very unfair. But I didn't—I tried not to speak up; it might just exacerbate the problem for him. But when I saw things I knew were grossly unfair in the press, in the print, anywhere, it hurt. It hurt Barbara, and it hurt me. But it's better not to go forth and sally forth and try to take the offense——

***President Bush.*** And by the way, I——

***Mr. Hume.*** Well, did it hurt you more than the criticism that you took as President?

***Former President Bush.*** I think it hurt more, yes.

***Mr. Hume.*** Do you feel that way too, that it hurt you more than——

***President Bush.*** Absolutely. Gosh, I was furious. I got the reputation——

***Mr. Hume.*** ——about stuff about him?

***President Bush.*** Yes. I got the reputation of being slightly hot-headed at times and, you know, it was an accurate characteristic, because I was ready to duke it out when I saw people say things that were unfair about dad. And the other thing that's interesting is, though, I can remember calling he and mom and saying, "Don't worry about me." In other words, I knew that they were taking on, you know, the anxiety, and I knew what it was like to have somebody you love being hammered in the press.

And so I spent a fair amount of time, as I recall, calling them and saying, "Look, don't worry about me, things are going to be fine, my spirits are good, Laura is doing great." And, you know, I think people sit out there and say, "They must have had some kind of, you know, relationship that is kept very clinical and very advisory, touched up." But this is a loving relationship. This is—you know, he's the head of a fabulous family, and whether it be me as the President, or Jeb as the Governor, or Neil, Marvin, and Doro, dad's phone calls are not, you know, you must do this or that; his phone calls are, I love you, and it's very powerful.

### *President's Legacy*

***Mr. Hume.*** Now, your son's race is days away from having been run. How do you regard his Presidency?

***Former President Bush.*** Very positively. And I think history will——

***Mr. Hume.*** Why?

***Former President Bush.*** Well, because you make a tough decision, and stay with it. I mean, he's been tested unlike any other President with this 9/11. So he passed the test.

***President Bush.*** He's going to be judged great too. He was a—he was almost too humble to be President. And when history finally gets objective, they will be able to say a lot of positive things about George Bush. I cannot worry. You know, I tell people I'm still reading biographies of George Washington or analyses of his Presidency. And if they're still writing about the first guy, the 41st guy and the 43d guy simply don't need to worry about it.

***Former President Bush.*** We won't be around to worry about it, that's for sure. [*Laughter*]

***President Bush.*** Yes.

### *Former President Bush's Health*

***Mr. Hume.*** Now, I see you getting along—getting around now on a cane, and—is that a condition that's going to get better, in your judgment? Are you going to be—is this a remnant from one of your hip operations, or what do you got going there?

***Former President Bush.*** This is what they call old age.

***Mr. Hume.*** I understand about that myself. [*Laughter*]

***Former President Bush.*** No, it's—no, no pain, no hip—I think I have an imbalance that came from a back operation.

***Mr. Hume.*** Oh.

***President Bush.*** Let me ask you something. Is it true that you said publicly that you're going to jump out of the airplane again?

***Former President Bush.*** True. But that doesn't take anything but just going up there with some big—strapped on to some big Golden Knight or someone, and it's a thrill.

***President Bush.*** You're going to have trouble convincing mother of that. [*Laughter*]

***Former President Bush.*** No, I won't.

***Mr. Hume.*** What about you? What do you think about that? Do you want him to do that?

***President Bush.*** I think he's a nut to jump out of an airplane at age 70, 75, 80, and 85. I find it—actually, I think it's cool.

***Former President Bush.*** I told you the reasons, though. You don't want to sit around just because you're an old guy, drooling in the corner. [*Laughter*] And secondly, you want to send a message out to around the world, actually, because of the prominence of the Presidency, that you can still do stuff. Old guys can still do stuff, get involved in things.

***President Bush.*** You can drool and jump at the same time. [*Laughter*]

***Former President Bush.*** That's right. [*Laughter*]

### *Post-Presidency Agenda*

***Mr. Hume.*** Now, you're in Houston. You've chosen Dallas.

***President Bush.*** Yes.

***Mr. Hume.*** What's up with that?

***President Bush.*** Well, I want to be close to SMU. And that's where our policy center/library/archives are going to be.

***Mr. Hume.*** You okay with that?

***Former President Bush.*** And they had a Dallas connection——

***Mr. Hume.*** Did you hope that he'd come to Houston?

***Former President Bush.*** What?

***Mr. Hume.*** Did you hope that he'd move to Houston when—

***Former President Bush.*** No, I never thought he would move to Houston.

***President Bush.*** Plus, Houston is 2 hours away from—I mean, Dallas is 2 hours away from Crawford. And I plan on spending some time down there in Crawford.

***Former President Bush.*** And Laura had some Dallas connections, so it made sense.

***President Bush.*** Yes.

### *Central Intelligence Agency*

***Mr. Hume.*** Now, I want to ask you a little bit about the intelligence agency situation. After all, you came as an outsider to intelligence.

***Former President Bush.*** Total outsider.

***Mr. Hume.*** You weren't an intelligence professional. And now you got the building out there named after you. So obviously, it could work. Your thoughts about, not to the Panetta nomination or the Panetta selection specifically, but about the general idea of what it takes to be the—to run the intelligence agency effectively?

***Former President Bush.*** Well, I heard what the President said in his interview with you, and I agree with that, that there's so many outstanding people there. And so I went in there at a time the Agency was under tremendous fire; the Pike report, the Church report, and they were just decimating the morale of the Agency. So I viewed my job not to learn all the trade craft, but to defend the quality and the character of the Agency and the people there. And that was perhaps an easier assignment than knowing all about every intrigue of intelligence.

But all I hope is that whoever goes out there goes with confidence in the CIA and the people around CIA. They're good people; more Ph.D.'s than many universities and many different disciplines. And everybody just thinks it's kind of a James Bond operation.

And so I think that whoever assumes that job—and I have had great confidence in the President's pick—will express confidence in the Agency and the people that make it up.

### *Relationship Between Past, Present, and Future Presidents*

***Mr. Hume.*** Talk a little bit, if you will, about this relationship among people who are in or have been in this remarkable job; it's a pretty exclusive club. And I know you had a lunch this week to bring them together with the President-elect. But what is that atmosphere like among former Presidents? Are all the old political differences aside? Is that all over with?

***Former President Bush.*** Yes, I think so. And I think everyone—every member of that club realizes there can only be one President; he's not going to be turning to you every day saying, "What will I do now?"

You read a lot of kind of intellectual books, but what we need is the advice—formalize the advice of former Presidents. He doesn't need a lot of advice from former Presidents.

And he needs to—the current President needs to have good people around him who will help him pursue the goals he's set out.

And so I don't think there's much to it except collegiality and the idea that you want to be out there if he needs support.

### *President-Elect Obama's Administration*

***Mr. Hume.*** Now, you've watched this range of appointments that Barack Obama has announced; your take on it, your feeling about it?

***President Bush.*** I've been impressed.

***Mr. Hume.*** Why?

***President Bush.*** Well, because, one, he showed decisiveness. Two, he has picked people that are capable and competent people. And I think he's had a very good transition. And frankly, I think Josh Bolten, my Chief of Staff, and the people that work here in the White House have also had a good transition, because they have reached out to the President-elect's team at all levels. And the message is, we want there to be a seamless move from us leaving and you coming in, and we want you to succeed.

And so I've been very pleased with what I've seen over the last—since the election.

***Mr. Hume.*** Do you agree with that?

***Former President Bush.*** Yes, totally. Totally. And if I didn't, I wouldn't tell you—same policy. [*Laughter*]

***Mr. Hume.*** Well, what—look, you—this is very like you, and like you as well, to refrain from comment on the other public—political figures, the incoming President and so on. Why?

***Former President Bush.*** Well, why be out there looking like you're carping and criticizing and know everything? I mean, I've heard what the President said about President Obama—President-elect Obama. I feel the same way; support him where you can, and don't go out there criticizing and carping. You look small yourself for one thing, but that's not the main reason; the main reason is he needs support. And if it's something you disagree with violently, sit on the sidelines and shut up.

***President Bush.*** There will be plenty of opportunities for people to carp, trust me. I mean, this is a job that——

***Former President Bush.*** Oh, yes, I know there will.

***President Bush.*** ——and dad knows as well as anybody, it's—you'll get plenty of opinions when you're the President, and you'll get plenty of flattering statements, and you'll get your fair share of not so complimentary comments.

I also remember what it was like to have people disappoint you. I mean, you'll be getting—you'll be picking up the newspaper and reading comments from people that you just say, well, I just can't believe that that person would be so kind of not respectful of their own office, much less yours, to call those kind of names. And that—to me that has been the biggest disappointment in the political process up here; there has been this kind of bitterness by a few people to the point where they don't want to have a logical discussion or a civil discussion about policy, they just want to tear you down. And——

***Mr. Hume.*** Do you think that's gotten worse since your days in the White House?

***Former President Bush.*** I don't know that it's gotten worse, but it's offensive, very offensive. And I always—I'll agree with the President that when you have somebody you have your own trust in, and that person for his own gain—thinks it's for his own gain—goes out and gives kind of "here's the inside story," "here's what they're saying, but here's what's really happening," playing the leak game. It's just horrible. And every administration has that. But I think President George Bush here has been lucky; there hasn't been that many of them.

***President Bush.*** Yes.

***Former President Bush.*** And I think we were pretty lucky.

### *Advice From Former President Bush*

***Mr. Hume.*** When you left this office, it was reported at least that it was—it took a while, you had a period of adjustment, and it was tough for you at first. And then, obviously, you hit your stride and found your life. And how was that? And what advice do you have for your son as he embarks on a similar experience?

***Former President Bush.*** Well, looking back lo those many years, I don't remember it being extraordinarily difficult. I mean, I

felt unfulfilled agenda, for example; I felt things I'd like to have done.

But once you got back to Texas, it wasn't difficult at all; you just start in a new life. And part of mine was to build around our library at Texas A&M in just the way he's looking forward to having his library. You get a lot of strength from there; you bring a lot of people there to talk. So it's not that difficult.

***President Bush.*** His advice was come back to Texas. But he didn't need to give it, because that's exactly where we're headed.

***Former President Bush.*** Yes, people hover around the Potomac River, whether Senators or Congressmen that have been defeated. They'd better go home; that's what I think.

***Mr. Hume.*** Gentleman, thank you very much for doing this.

***President Bush.*** Yes, sir, thank you.

***Mr. Hume.*** It was a pleasure. Thank you, sir.

[*The interview moved to the Oval Office, and continued as follows.*]

***Working in the Oval Office***

***Mr. Hume.*** Now, as you stand here together, Mr. President 41, what is your most vivid memory of your time in this office, something that happened in this very room?

***Former President Bush.*** Well, I can't think of many, but I remember Colin Powell reaching under this desk—a desk and pulling out the telephone to call Schwarzkopf to see if the mission had been accomplished. After that, they said it's time to shut down this war——

***Mr. Hume.*** In Kuwait.

***Former President Bush.*** One hundred hours—we'd done what we said we wanted to do, and he called up—and that one sticks in my mind as a dramatic moment. But there are many, many other exciting things. But that one stands out.

***Mr. Hume.*** Can you think of your most anxious moment here?

***Former President Bush.*** Anxious moment?

***Mr. Hume.*** Yes.

***Former President Bush.*** I really can't.

***Mr. Hume.*** I mean, you had to give that order.

***Former President Bush.*** Yes, but I can't think of any—a real anxious moment that stands out among others. There are probably plenty of them, but——

***President Bush's First Moments in Office***

***Mr. Hume.*** When you first took office, took occupancy of this office, as I recall, the two of you had a brief moment together.

***President Bush.*** Right.

***Mr. Hume.*** Can you reflect on that? Do you remember it?

***President Bush.*** We had just witnessed the Inaugural Parade, and I came upstairs at the White House up there, and I think you were taking a nap.

***Former President Bush.*** No, I was in the bathtub, thawing out.

***President Bush.*** Yes, he was in the bathtub. [*Laughter*]

***Mr. Hume.*** Were you really?

***Former President Bush.*** Yes.

***President Bush.*** Of course, I yelled through the door. Anyway, I said, "Why don't you come over and meet me in the Oval Office?" And so I got in here before he did, and I was just getting a sense of what it was like to be in the shrine of democracy. And then I looked up, and in comes 41. And it was a moving moment. It was a great day for me, a very proud moment.

***Mr. Hume.*** Can you remember what was said?

***President Bush.*** Not really. I had a weird chair, as I recall. It had like an electric cord on it. And I don't—did you use the weird chair with the electric cord?

***Former President Bush.*** Yes.

***President Bush.*** Well, I didn't use the weird chair with the electric cord, but he showed me how to operate it.

***Mr. Hume.*** What did it do?

***President Bush.*** Jiggle or something.

***Mr. Hume.*** Where you put on your fingers, turned off the lights, and magic fingers make you feel all right? That kind of thing? [*Laughter*]

***Former President Bush.*** I remember it slightly differently. I remember being in the bathtub after that ice-cold Inaugural Parade or whatever, and Ramsey, one of the guys that was over in the White House said, "Get out of the bathtub, Mr. President, you got

to get over; the President wants you right now." [*Laughter*] "Come on, I'm just thawing out here." "Get over there." [*Laughter*] So I went over, and it was very, very moving.

***President Bush.*** It was an awesome moment, it really was, as you can imagine.

### *Message From the Outgoing President to the Incoming President*

***Mr. Hume.*** It is the custom of departing Presidents is to leave a note in the drawer.

***President Bush.*** Yes. Actually, it's a custom to leave a note upstairs at the—if I'm not mistaken—the residence.

***Mr. Hume.*** Well, however you do it. Do you recall what you wrote?

***Former President Bush.*** Reagan wrote me, and it was in the desk. And I think I did the same thing.

***President Bush.*** Oops.

***Mr. Hume.*** And what did you say, roughly?

***Former President Bush.*** I don't remember, just good luck

***Mr. Hume.*** To Bill Clinton?

***President Bush.*** I'm going to write one.

***Mr. Hume.*** Have you thought about it—what you're going to say?

***President Bush.*** I have not. I think it's probably best I wait for, you know, right before he and his family come to ride down Pennsylvania Avenue with me.

### *The Oval Office*

***Mr. Hume.*** This office has been used in different ways by different Presidents—atmosphere, formality, in some less formality than others. As I recall, you never set foot in this office, Mr. President 41, without a jacket and tie. Is that—that was true wasn't it?

***Former President Bush.*** That was my policy, I think.

***Mr. Hume.*** And how about you? Did you——

***President Bush.*** I thought it was the right policy.

***Mr. Hume.*** Has that always been the case?

***President Bush.*** Yes, I may have come in here once in over 8 years without a tie on—or twice. But I come in here to work. And as I said, I refer to this as a shrine to democracy, and it is, and it needs to be treated that way. And I had a fabulous mentor.

***Former President Bush.*** Now, I think it's important to treat this place with respect, and that's what we tried to do.

***Mr. Hume.*** Well, I'm sure you'll be remembered for having done just that. Thank you very much, gentlemen.

***President Bush.*** Thank you, sir.

***Former President Bush.*** Brit, good luck to you.

***Mr. Hume.*** Thank you very much. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The interview began taping at 10:32 a.m. in the Cabinet Room and continued in the Oval Office at the White House, for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to former Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida. Former President Bush referred to former Rep. Otis G. Pike of New York; Michael V. Hayden, director, Central Intelligence Agency; Gen. Colin L. Powell, USA (Ret.), former chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, USA (Ret.), former commander, U.S. Central Command. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 11. A portion of this interview could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

## Statement on the Death of Cardinal Pio Laghi

*January 11, 2009*

Laura and I send our deepest condolences to Pope Benedict XVI and all Catholics on the passing of Cardinal Pio Laghi. Cardinal Laghi was a friend who, in his more than 60 years of service to the Catholic Church, worked tirelessly for peace and justice in our world. As the Papal Nuncio to the United States during the final years of the cold war, and in his many other assignments, Cardinal Laghi always strove to unite people of all religions and promote reconciliation, religious freedom, and tolerance. Cardinal Laghi holds an especially important place in the hearts of the American people, having served as the first Papal Nuncio to the United States following the formal establishment of diplomatic relations between the United States and the Holy See in 1984.

On behalf of all Americans, Laura and I join Catholics around the world to offer our gratitude for the courageous service and life