

States. Yet all, every one of them, still wait for the Senate to take even the first step down the road toward confirmation.

The Senate can do much more and must do much more to address the current vacancy crisis. A year ago I urged Senators from both parties to rise above the bitterness of the past and provide a fair hearing and prompt vote for every nominee. And my call for a prompt vote—it doesn't matter to me who's in the White House or who controls the Senate. What matters to me is that we have a—that we address the vacancy crisis, that we solve the problem our Nation faces. That's what matters.

Let me tell you what the Chief Justice said recently. And I want you to know he was speaking expressly on behalf of the Federal judiciary. He asked the Senate to grant prompt hearings and up or down votes on all nominees. But the Senate has not acted, and by its inaction, the Senate is endangering the administration of justice in America.

All judicial nominees deserve a timely hearing, and they deserve a vote. As everyone here today understands, Americans need and deserve a judicial system at full strength. As we celebrate the role of law in our democracy, I call on Senate Democrats to end the vacancy crisis in our Federal courts by restoring fairness to the judicial confirmation process.

I want to thank you all for your interest in this incredibly important subject. I thank you for standing for justice and fairness, the American way.

One of the things that I talk about to—when I go to these conferences to try to help developing nations, or I talk about when leaders come in the Oval Office—I always talk about the need for there to be rule of law, that in order for people to be able to realize their dreams, society must be a society of law, and there ought to be rule of law. And our country is a shining example of that. But in order to make sure we continue to shine, we've got to address problems in a timely way when we find them. And that's what I'm here to discuss, and I want to thank you for your interest.

And may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:31 a.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

## Remarks at a Cinco de Mayo Reception

May 3, 2002

Thank you all very much. Please, *sientanse*. [Laughter] *Bienvenidos*. Welcome to the White House. This is the *casa para todos*. I'm honored you all have come to celebrate Cinco de Mayo. It's a pleasure to have you here. The victory we commemorate today is a source of tremendous pride to the people of Mexico and a source of inspiration to the people of America.

I want to thank *mi esposa*, Laura, for her—[laughter]—*mi amor*. I want to thank Sara for her passion for the education of Latino children. She is a—well, she's unique. She's smart; she's capable. After all, she's a *tejana*. [Laughter] But I really do appreciate her focus, her willingness to work hard to make sure that every child has got the opportunity to realize his or her dreams in America.

I want to thank *el Embajador de Mexico*, *mi amigo* Juan Jose Bremer, *tambien, esposa*. Thank you all for coming. And I appreciate all the *Mexicanos* who are here today. I'm glad you're here to celebrate a special day in your country, here in the White House. It's an indication of our friendship.

I want to thank members of my administration who are here, too many to name. I will name the Cabinet Secretary, Mel Martinez. I appreciate Mel's service. I see the Treasurer; *mi abogado*, Gonzales; the new Surgeon General nominee, Rick Carmona. Thank you, Rick; I appreciate you being here. I better stop now, before I forget somebody.

I want to thank Ed Pastor, the Congressman from the State of Arizona. Thank you for coming.

I want to thank Ana Maria for your being here. I really appreciate you coming. You did a great job as the emcee. And I know a lot of Americans watch your TV show, and we're honored you're here. I really want to thank Pedro Fernandez. Pedro, you're awesome. I'm not sure how you say that in Spanish—

[laughter]—or *Mexicano, brillante*. [Laughter] But I want to thank you and your *tres hombres* for being here. [Laughter]

Al, thank you for leading the Pledge. Al is the Director of the Selective Service. He wears the Medal of Honor. And again, thank you all for coming. We're so honored to have you.

Cinco de Mayo commemorates a great victory in the battle of Puebla. I remember when I went down, Jose, to—the guest of the previous President, President Zedillo, to see a reenactment of the battle in Puebla. It was exciting, and it was able to see firsthand the great courage and the victory in the battle for freedom that was fought against overwhelming odds.

That victory continues to inspire liberty-loving people all across the globe. It reminds us that the cost of freedom is always high, but it is never too high. Brave and determined people, committed to a great cause, can do great good. That was true 140 years ago, and it certainly remains true today.

Just before September the 11th, I welcomed my good friend President Vicente Fox *aqui*, in Washington, DC, as the guest of honor at the very first state dinner I hosted as the President. When he arrived, I said this—at the beautiful arrival ceremony we have on the South Lawn—I said, “The United States has no more important relationship in the world than the one we have with Mexico.” I meant it then; I mean it now.

In the past 8 months, our relationship has grown even stronger. The people of Mexico stand with the American people in the war on terror. This is a decisive decade in the history of liberty, a decisive moment in our history, and the United States is grateful we can count on the strong support of Mexico.

America's strong relationship with Mexico is built on common values and shared culture. We both value families; we both value communities—the places where character is formed and traditions are passed from one generation to the next. Americans appreciate the strong faith of the Mexican people, a faith that provides hope and inspiration and unity, even in the darkest of times. People on both sides of the Rio Grande value independence and value freedom and opportunity. People on *dos lados del Rio Bravo* appreciate the

ability to work hard to achieve dreams and to become successful as a result of hard work. By their strong values and their determination to create a better life for themselves and their children, immigrants from Mexico enrich American life.

My relationship with President Fox is similar to the relationship between our nations. It is built on the solid ground of respect and trust and friendship. President Fox is a great Mexican patriot, a man who—a man of honest talk and convictions who is passionately concerned for his people's welfare. I know firsthand; I've heard him speak clearly about the welfare of the people of Mexico.

We're both deeply committed to helping the entire American *familia* achieve prosperity and, as importantly, to live in peace. Mexico and America share a continent, and we are dedicated to common goals.

We are working together to create a smart border, one that will speed the safe flow of people and commerce but protect our two nations from terrorism and crime.

We are working together on a partnership for prosperity, to better focus the creativity and resources of the private sector on the critical task of development.

We're working together to address the important issue and challenging issue of immigration. I've asked our Congress to pass an extension of section 245(i) of our immigration law to allow families to stay together while they become permanent residents. There is no reason why this law should not be passed.

We're working together to improve conditions for people living along the border. It's really important that we do so.

We're working together to create an entire hemisphere that lives in liberty and trades in freedom. And I appreciate President Fox's leadership in our hemisphere. I rely upon his advice and good counsel; I appreciate his vision.

Our two nations will succeed together—we will succeed together—because our futures are bound to each other. Geography made us neighbors, but our shared values and rich cultures have made us the closest of friends.

The great Mexican leader Benito Juarez had a strong bond with President Abraham

Lincoln. Juarez said, “Between individuals, as between nations, *‘el respecto al derecho ajeno es la paz’*—respect for the rights of others is peace.” The United States and Mexico have a relationship of respect. It is the foundation of our enduring peace and lasting friendship.

I want to thank you all again for coming to the White House to celebrate Mexico’s strong and vibrant culture, its extraordinary history, our common future. May God bless the people of Mexico, and may God continue to bless the people of the United States.

Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:48 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sara Martinez Tucker, president and chief executive officer, Hispanic Scholarship Fund; Mexican Ambassador to the U.S. Juan Jose Bremer and his wife, Marcela S. Bremer; Rosario Marin, U.S. Treasurer; Alberto R. Gonzales, Counsel to the President; Ana Maria Canseco, reporter, Univision; Pedro Fernandez, singer; Alfred Rascon, Director, Selective Service System; and former President Ernesto Zedillo and President Vicente Fox of Mexico. In his remarks, he referred to section 245(i) of the Immigration and Naturalization Act which expired April 30, 2001. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

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### Digest of Other White House Announcements

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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.

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#### **April 27**

During the day, from the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel concerning the situation in the Middle East.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to Houston, TX, where they attended the wedding of former Presidential Aide Logan Walters. In the evening, they returned to Crawford.

#### **April 28**

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia concerning the situation in the Middle East.

#### **April 29**

In the morning, the President traveled to Albuquerque, NM. In the afternoon, he traveled to Los Angeles, CA.

#### **April 30**

In the morning, the President traveled to San Jose, CA. In the afternoon, he traveled to Santa Clara, CA. Later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the evening.

The White House announced that the President will meet with Prime Minister Sher Bahadur Deuba of Nepal at the White House on May 7 to discuss key bilateral issues and Nepal’s fight against Maoist terrorists.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Janez Dmrovsek of Slovenia to the White House on May 17.

The White House announced that the President will attend the NATO-Russia Summit in Italy on May 28.

The President announced his intention to nominate David McQueen Laney to be a member of the Amtrak Reform Board.

#### **May 1**

In the morning, the President had a breakfast meeting with Speaker of the House of Representatives J. Dennis Hastert, Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, Senate Minority Leader Trent Lott, and House Minority Leader Richard A. Gephardt. He then had intelligence and FBI briefings. Later in the morning, he met with Senior Minister Lee Kuan Yew of Singapore to discuss cooperation against terrorism and other regional issues. He then met with Republican House and Senate leaders to discuss the pending congressional agenda.

In the afternoon, the President met with Vice President Hu Jintao of China. Also in the afternoon, he met with House Appropriations Committee Chairman C.W. Bill Young.

The President announced his designation of Adm. David E. Jeremiah, USN (Ret.), as