

breaking point. Liability premiums are keeping us from doing what we love or forcing us to leave our homes.”

We have got a problem in America that we must deal with. And this is not only a local problem, but because lawsuits and premium increases and preventative medicine drive up the cost in Medicaid and Medicare and veterans health benefits, medical liability is a national issue that requires a national solution.

Every person with a legitimate claim deserves a day in court. Junk lawsuits make it hard to get into court. And bad doctors must be held to account. I'm confident that's what the Illinois Medical Society believes as well. Yet, for the sake of affordable and available health care, we need a cap on non-economic damages, of \$250,000. Punitive damages should be limited to reasonable limits.

This health care system needs liability reform now. No one has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit. This past March, the House of Representatives passed medical liability reform. The Senate has not acted. I urge all of you to talk to your Senators. I know one of them is okay.

You can make a difference. Not only should the people of Illinois who care about medical liability reform get involved, people all over this country—if you want a health care system that is available and affordable—need to get involved. You need to let your Senators know how you feel on this key issue.

I'll be right there with you getting involved. I want to sign this into law. I want to sign Medicare reform into law, and I want to sign medical liability reform into law, so that we can look the American people in the eye and say, “We have done our job; we saw a problem and we fixed it.”

There are challenges in the health care system. We understand that in Washington. And we can answer those challenges with practical, sensible, compassionate reforms. That is the charge before us, and that is the charge we must keep on behalf of the American people.

May God bless your work, and may God continue to bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:32 a.m. in the ballroom at the Chicago Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to former President Saddam Hussein

of Iraq; and Ronald L. Ruecker, M.D., chair, board of trustees, Illinois State Medical Society. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on Departure From Chicago

June 11, 2003

Terrorist Bombing in Jerusalem

Today there was a terrible bombing in Jerusalem. I send my heartfelt condolences to those who suffered and lost life.

It is clear there are people in the Middle East who hate peace, people who want to kill in order to make sure that the desires of Israel to live in secure and peace don't happen, who kill to make sure the desires of the Prime Minister of the Palestinian Authority and others of a peaceful state living side by side with Israel do not happen.

To the people in the world who want to see peace in the Middle East, I strongly urge all of you to fight off terror, to cut off money to organizations such as Hamas, to isolate those who hate so much that they're willing to kill to stop peace from going forward. I strongly condemn the killings, and I urge and call upon all of the free world, nations which love peace, to not only condemn the killings but to use every ounce of their power to prevent them from happening in the future.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:40 a.m. in Grant Park. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Joint Statement Between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Thailand

June 11, 2003

President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Thaksin Shinawatra met on June 10, 2003 to reaffirm the strength and importance of the alliance between the United States and the Kingdom of Thailand, built upon 170 years of close and warm relationship between both the two nations. In recognition of that

long history of cooperation, the President informed the Prime Minister that the United States is actively considering Thailand's designation as a Major Non NATO Ally (MNNA).

The two leaders discussed developments in Iraq and reaffirmed their shared commitment to help build a stable, prosperous, and democratic Iraq. President Bush welcomed Thailand's offer to deploy a military engineering battalion and medical teams to Iraq, and expressed appreciation for the humanitarian assistance that Thailand has already extended to the Iraqi people. The President further welcomed Thailand's successful deployment of an engineering battalion working with the Coalition in Afghanistan, noting that such cooperation highlights the continued vitality of the U.S.-Thai alliance.

Both leaders agreed that a lasting peace in the Middle East is of vital interest to the international community. In this regard, Prime Minister Thaksin expressed his appreciation for the personal involvement by President Bush to secure a comprehensive road map for sustainable peace and security in the region.

President Bush and Prime Minister Thaksin expressed concern about the situation on the Korean Peninsula. They reaffirmed their commitment to work with other states in Asia to achieve the complete, verifiable, and irreversible elimination of North Korea's nuclear weapons program, as is necessary for stability, peace, and security in the region. The President and the Prime Minister expressed concern for the people of North Korea and agreed on the importance of humanitarian food assistance and efforts to ensure that it gets to those who need it.

President Bush and Prime Minister Thaksin expressed deep concern over recent developments in Burma, in particular the violence that occurred on May 30, 2003. The two leaders agreed on the need for the immediate release of Aung San Suu Kyi and other National League for Democracy (NLD) members. Prime Minister Thaksin affirmed the Thai Government's readiness to do whatever possible to facilitate Burmese national reconciliation and the return to democracy. Noting that a democratic and pros-

perous Burma is important to the stability and prosperity of Southeast Asia, President Bush and Prime Minister Thaksin called for an immediate substantive political dialogue between Rangoon and all domestic political elements, consistent with the regime's stated commitment to a peaceful transition to democracy.

The two leaders emphasized their continued support for a peaceful solution to the conflict in Aceh and expressed hope that the parties would return to a negotiating process that seeks a political settlement which addresses the grievances of the people of Aceh, while respecting the territorial integrity of Indonesia.

The President commended Thailand's strong leadership in responding to the challenge of terrorism in Southeast Asia and its commitment to the international community to fight against all forms of terror. The President also expressed appreciation for the close U.S.-Thai partnership on counterterrorism. President Bush and Prime Minister Thaksin discussed recent developments in the war on terror in Southeast Asia, welcoming the enhanced cooperation among ASEAN nations that has helped disrupt terror plots and apprehend members of the Jemaah Islamiyah (JI) terrorist network. While noting that substantial progress has been made in eliminating terrorist threats from the region, the two leaders agreed that the war on terror is far from over. The President and the Prime Minister agreed on the need to further strengthen bilateral and multilateral cooperation to combat terrorism and looked forward to the upcoming APEC Leaders' Meeting in Bangkok as an important opportunity to advance important counterterrorism objectives. The President praised Thailand for joining the Container Security Initiative (CSI), designed to enhance the protection of shipping against exploitation by terrorists, and welcomed the plan for Minister of Foreign Affairs Surakiart Sathirathai and Secretary of Homeland Security Tom Ridge to sign the Declaration of Principles in Washington.

The two leaders recognized the long, successful history of cooperation between the United States and Thailand on law enforcement and counternarcotics. President Bush appreciated Thailand's leadership in hosting

one of the largest and most successful U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) operations in the world as well as the U.S.-Thai International Law Enforcement Academy (ILEA). President Bush recognized Prime Minister Thaksin's determination to combat transnational crime in all its forms, including drug trafficking and trafficking in persons. Regarding recent press allegations that Thai security services carried out extrajudicial killings during a counter-narcotics campaign in Thailand, Prime Minister Thaksin stated unequivocally that the Thai Government does not tolerate extrajudicial killings and assured President Bush that all allegations regarding killings are being investigated thoroughly.

President Bush and Prime Minister Thaksin celebrated the long U.S.-Thai partnership on a wide variety of tropical and infectious diseases, including HIV/AIDs, and agreed to strengthen that cooperation to combat new threats, such as Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS). The President commended Thailand's leadership in hosting the ASEAN and China Summit on SARS and offered continued U.S. support and assistance. Prime Minister Thaksin informed the President about his goals for the Asian Cooperative Dialogue (ACD), noting his hope that it would help strengthen regional cooperation across a range of fields.

President Bush and Prime Minister Thaksin celebrated the robust economic ties between the United States and Thailand and emphasized a desire to expand trade and investment ties even further, as called for in the bilateral Trade and Investment Framework Agreement (TIFA). The leaders expressed interest in moving forward under the auspices of the President's Enterprise for ASEAN Initiative (EAI), which sets forth a road map to promote investment, growth, and free trade between the United States and ASEAN countries. The President and the Prime Minister committed to making tangible progress on existing commitments under the TIFA, including in the areas of intellectual property rights, investment, and customs, as a necessary first step towards a possible free trade agreement. Both leaders also committed to work together in the World Trade Organization's Doha Develop-

ment Agenda negotiations, emphasizing that progress on agriculture will be key to a successful conclusion of the Doha negotiations.

Both sides recognized that Life Sciences will be one of the leading industry sectors in the new century, promising significant human benefits and economic growth. In that regard, Thailand welcomed the U.S. initiative to establish the Life Sciences Innovation Forum under APEC. The Prime Minister expressed hope that such mutual cooperation would advance Thailand's efforts to become a world class center for research and development in Life Sciences and related health fields.

The President congratulated Prime Minister Thaksin on his leadership of APEC in 2003. The two leaders affirmed their commitment to making tangible progress in APEC on both trade and investment liberalization and counterterrorism objectives. The President looked forward to his State visit to Thailand before the APEC Economic Leaders' Meeting and expressed appreciation for the gracious invitation of His Majesty King Bhumibol Adulyadej to visit Thailand. Prime Minister Thaksin expressed appreciation for the excellent arrangements being made for the forthcoming visit by His Royal Highness Crown Prince Vajiralongkorn to Washington. The leaders agreed that these visits would further strengthen the already warm friendship between their two governments and between the American and Thai peoples.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Remarks to Senior Citizens in New Britain, Connecticut

June 12, 2003

Thanks for the warm welcome. I really want to thank the good folks of the New Britain General Hospital for putting up with me and the entourage. [*Laughter*] But thanks for letting me come to talk about some important issues facing America.

I'm on my way to Maine, where I'm going to spend the weekend with one of my favorite seniors. [*Laughter*] He is turning 79 today. I'm not going to tell you how old my mother