

President's U.N. Address

Q. Mr. President, what about the response to your speech yesterday?

President Bush. I can only judge by your reaction to it. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:35 a.m. at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Congressional Passage of the Department of Homeland Security Appropriations Act, 2004

September 24, 2003

To win the war on terrorism, we are staying on the offensive abroad and protecting Americans at home. I applaud Congress for passing the Department of Homeland Security appropriations bill. These funds will help make Americans and their families even safer through stronger border enforcement, improved transportation security, and continued support for police, firefighters, and emergency-response teams. I look forward to signing this legislation.

Statement on the Death of Hugh Gregg

September 24, 2003

Hugh Gregg left an indelible mark on the State he loved and on the lives of the people of New Hampshire. He served his country in time of war and served his State with distinction as Governor, statesman, and successful business leader. In all of his endeavors, he acted with integrity and honor. He will be missed. Laura joins me in sending our condolences to his wife, Catherine, his two sons, and his family during this difficult time.

Memorandum Waiving Prohibition on United States Military Assistance to Parties to the Rome Statute Establishing the International Criminal Court

September 24, 2003

Presidential Determination No. 2003-40

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Waiving Prohibition on United States Military Assistance to Parties to the Rome Statute Establishing the International Criminal Court

Consistent with the authority vested in me by section 2007 of the American Servicemembers' Protection Act of 2002, title II of Public Law 107-206 (22 U.S.C. 7421 *et seq.*), I hereby determine that:

(1) Afghanistan, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Georgia, and Honduras have each entered into an agreement with the United States pursuant to Article 98 of the Rome Statute preventing the International Criminal Court from proceeding against U.S. personnel present in such countries, and waive the prohibition of section 2007(a) of the American Servicemembers' Protection Act with respect to these countries for as long as such agreement remains in force; and

(2) it is important to the national interest of the United States to waive, for a period of 6 months from the date of this determination, the prohibition of section 2007(a) with respect to Guinea, and waive that prohibition with respect to this country for that period.

You are authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress, and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 25. An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Budget Amendment for International Assistance Programs

September 24, 2003

Dear Mr. Speaker:

I ask the Congress to consider the enclosed FY 2004 budget amendment for International Assistance Programs. This amendment would not increase the budgetary resources proposed in my FY 2004 Budget.

The details of this request are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on September 25.

Remarks Following a Meeting With the Congressional Conferees on Medicare Modernization and an Exchange With Reporters

September 25, 2003

The President. Listen, thank you all for coming. Today we met with the conferees on Medicare and had a good and frank discussion about the need to work together to get a Medicare bill that modernizes the system, that fulfills the promises to America's seniors, that uses the latest technology to improve the health care of our elderly.

And in my judgment, the sentiment was optimistic. I believe people know it's possible to get it done. And there's a lot of work to get done, but fortunately, we're surrounded here by conferees that are plenty capable, plenty smart, and care deeply about the future of the country.

And so I want to thank them for coming. I want to thank you for your commitment to our seniors, and I look forward to working with you to get a good bill out of both bodies and to my desk before you go home this fall.

I'd like to take a couple of questions. Terry [Terry Hunt, Associated Press].

Medicare Reform Legislation

Q. Mr. President, with huge Federal budget deficits, do you have any qualms about spending \$400 billion on Medicare prescription drugs?

The President. First of all, no, I don't. I think it's the right thing to do. We have an obligation to our seniors. Secondly, we've proposed a plan that reduces the deficit in half by 5 years—within 5 years. I absolutely believe we're doing the right thing.

Iran/Meeting With President Vladimir Putin of Russia

Q. Sir, what did you think of the discovery of traces of weapons-grade uranium—

The President. Do what now?

Q. What did you think of the discovery of weapons-grade—traces of weapons-grade uranium in Iran? And will this be on your agenda with President Putin this weekend?

The President. It was on my agenda—it will be on my agenda with President Putin this weekend. It was on my agenda with many of the world leaders I met with in New York. It is very important for the world to come together to make it very clear to Iran that there will be universal condemnation if they continue with a nuclear weapons program. And I will tell you, the response was very positive. People understand the danger of the Iranians have a nuclear weapons program. But you bet; I'll talk to President Putin about it this weekend.

Saddam Hussein/Lessons of 9/11

Q. Sir, in February of 2001, your Secretary of State said that the sanctions against Iraq had prevented Saddam from developing any significant capability with respect to weapons of mass destruction. A year-and-a-half later, before the U.N., you called Saddam a grave and gathering danger. And I'm wondering, what changed in that time? Was it the nature of the threat? Did you get new intelligence? Or did 9/11 put a new—set a new playing field for those—

The President. Yes, the Secretary of State said the same thing as well, that Saddam was a threat. Nine-eleven changed my calculation. It made it really clear we have to deal with threats before they come on our shore. You know, for a long period of time we