

Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, December 9, 2005

The President's Radio Address

December 3, 2005

Good morning. Earlier this week, I visited Arizona and Texas to observe firsthand our efforts to protect our Southwest border. And I met with customs and border protection agents who are working tirelessly to enforce our laws and keep our borders secure.

Illegal immigration and border security are issues that concern Americans. We're a nation built on the rule of law, and those who enter the country illegally break the law. In communities near our border, illegal immigration strains the resources of schools, hospitals, and law enforcement. And it involves smugglers and gangs that bring crime to our neighborhoods. Faced with this serious challenge, our Government's responsibility is clear: We're going to protect our borders.

Since I took office, we've increased funding for border security by 60 percent, and our border agents have caught and sent home more than 4.5 million illegal immigrants, including more than 350,000 with criminal records. Yet we must do more to build on this progress.

This week I outlined my comprehensive strategy to reform our immigration system. The strategy begins with a three-part plan to protect our borders. First, we will promptly return every illegal entrant we catch at our border with no exceptions. For illegal immigrants from Mexico, we are working to expand an innovative program called interior repatriation, in which those caught at the border are returned to their hometowns far from the border, making it more difficult for them to attempt another crossing. For non-Mexican illegal immigrants, we're changing the unwise policy of catch-and-release to a policy of catch-and-return, and we're speeding up the removal process.

Second, we must fix weak and unnecessary provisions in our immigration laws, including senseless rules that require us to release ille-

gal immigrants if their home countries do not take them back in a set period of time.

Third, we must stop people from crossing the border illegally in the first place. So we're hiring thousands more Border Patrol agents. We're deploying new technology to expand their reach and effectiveness, and we're constructing physical barriers to entry.

Comprehensive immigration reform also requires us to improve enforcement of our laws in the interior of our country, because border security and interior enforcement go hand in hand. In October, I signed legislation that more than doubled the resources for interior enforcement, so we'll increase the number of immigration enforcement agents and criminal investigators, enhance worksite enforcement, and continue to go after smugglers, gang members, and human traffickers. Our immigration laws apply across all of America, and we will enforce those laws throughout our land.

Finally, comprehensive immigration reform requires us to create a new temporary-worker program that relieves pressure on the border but rejects amnesty. By creating a legal channel for willing employers to hire willing workers, we will reduce the number of workers trying to sneak across the border, and that would free up law enforcement officers to focus on criminals, drug dealers, terrorists, and others who mean us harm.

This program would not create an automatic path to citizenship, and it would not provide amnesty. I oppose amnesty. Rewarding lawbreakers would encourage others to break the law and keep pressure on our border. A temporary-worker program will relieve pressure on the border and help us more effectively enforce our immigration laws.

Our Nation has been strengthened by generations of immigrants who became Americans through patience, hard work, and assimilation. In this new century, we must continue to welcome legal immigrants and help

them learn the customs and values that unite all Americans, including liberty and civic responsibility, equality under God, tolerance for others, and the English language. In the coming months, I look forward to working with Congress on comprehensive immigration reform that will enforce our laws, secure our border, and uphold our deepest values.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:03 a.m. on December 2 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 3. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 2 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at the Kennedy Center Honors Reception

December 4, 2005

Please be seated. Thanks for coming, and welcome to the White House. The annual reception for the Kennedy Center Honors is always a memorable event, and Laura and I are happy you all could join us. We extend a special welcome to this year's honorees and to their families and friends.

The Kennedy Center Honors are presented for exceptional accomplishment in the performing arts. Once again, the Center has selected five extraordinary Americans for this high distinction. Each of these honorees, in a lifetime of achievement, has set a standard of excellence that is admired throughout the world. All of them have earned a unique place in the cultural life of the United States and a special respect among their fellow Americans.

The first Kennedy Center Honors were presented in 1978 to a group that included the eminent choreographer, George Balanchine. And on that stage that evening, dancing in tribute was the great Suzanne Farrell. Together, Balanchine and Farrell gave the world of ballet one of the rarest and most successful collaborations in history. He created masterpieces just for her, and no one epitomizes the style and grace of Balanchine choreography as much as Suzanne Farrell.

She first came to New York from Cincinnati. And only after a year at the American School of Ballet, she made her professional debut in 1961. Before long, word began to circulate there was something new—someone new, someone very special at the New York City Ballet. When she took the stage as Dulcinea in *Don Quixote*, she became a sensation. In that performance, a reviewer said, Suzanne Farrell was “absolutely flawless, technically impeccable, light as a bubble, perfect in line and style.”

In hundreds of performances over a 28-year period, Suzanne Farrell was never known to depart from that standard. This was a ballerina who had it all, grace, strength, and the ability to act, turn, and jump with perfection. During classes, Balanchine often coached dancers with three words: “Do like Suzanne.” [*Laughter*]

In performances as diverse as “Agon,” “Theme and Variations,” “Scotch Symphony,” and “Clarinade,” she had a mesmerizing effect on her audiences. Watching her was said to be “one of the sublime theatrical experiences of an era.” One admirer said that Suzanne was a dancer who “made audiences sweat.” This remarkable lady is now guiding a new generation of dancers as the leader of the Suzanne Farrell Ballet.

In the words of one of her dancers, Suzanne “inspires you. You want to give her everything you have because she meets you each step of the way.” She does this every day with the spirit and the patience and the kindness of a truly lovely woman. She is widely appreciated as the greatest ballerina this country has produced, and the United States of America is proud to honor Suzanne Farrell.

Julie Harris discovered very early in life she loved to act, and the world discovered that she was better at the craft than almost anyone else. Fifty years ago, when her beautiful face was on the cover of *Time Magazine*, the story inside offered the confident and accurate prediction that she would be a star “for the rest of her life.”

Julie Harris has excelled in every forum she has attempted, from historical drama to tragedy, to musical comedy, to Shakespeare. She is known for one of the most hauntingly loving—lovely voices in theater, and she

stands nearly alone in the depth and range of her talent. She became a star on Broadway at age 24, playing a 12-year-old girl in “The Member of the Wedding,” and was nominated for an Oscar when she played the same role for film. Whatever age or personality or struggle the role calls for, Julie Harris can fill it, with meaning and feeling and complete believability. She has thrilled audiences as St. Joan of Arc and Mary Todd Lincoln and Florence Nightingale, Queen Victoria, and Emily Dickinson.

Her greatest admirers, perhaps, are her fellow actors. Boris Karloff said Julie “is always in complete control of herself, just as a fine pianist is always the master of his music.” The screen pioneer, Ethel Barrymore, put it even more simply. She said, “The girl can do anything.” [Laughter]

The most respected actress in American theatre has received five Tony Awards—more than any other performer—plus a Special Tony Award for Lifetime Achievement in the Theatre. She has also won a Grammy and three Emmys and has appeared in many television plays and motion pictures. In her career, Julie Harris has starred with Robert Redford, George C. Scott, Lauren Bacall, Shelley Winters, and Sir Lawrence Olivier. She’s the girl who appeared opposite James Dean in the “East of Eden.”

Julie Harris has been called Broadway’s “tiniest tower of strength,” a woman of deep intelligence and discipline. She is known, as well, for her gentle spirit. As one stage manager put it, Julie Harris is “an angel—everyone loves her.” It’s hard to imagine the American stage without the face, the voice, and the limitless talent of Julie Harris. She has found happiness in her life’s work, and we thank her for sharing that happiness with the whole world.

There was a time when Robert Redford thought his life’s work might be as a baseball player. [Laughter] Well, he went to college on an athletic scholarship, but his interests soon turned to the arts and eventually to acting. Years later, when he was hitting home runs as the character, Roy Hobbs, a reviewer of the film said this: “Robert Redford reminds those who need reminding that he is one of the perfect male film stars, extraordinarily handsome, effortlessly fascinating,

and enormously talented. His role here gives us ample chance to see another kind of ‘natural’ in his element.”

For more than four decades, Robert Redford has been one of America’s most watchable and credible actors. From early appearances and televised plays and on Broadway, he moved easily into the film and into film history. We all remember his finest dramatic roles, with Barbra Streisand in “The Way We Were,” with his notebook in “All The President’s Men,” on the election trail in “The Candidate,” and in the Utah wilderness as “Jeremiah Johnson.” Paired with Paul Newman in two legendary films, Robert Redford also proved to be an actor with flawless comic timing, and he earned an Oscar nomination for his role in “The Sting.”

In his capacity to grow and to excel as an artist, Robert Redford has shown very few limitations. In 1980, he decided to try working behind the camera. The result was “Ordinary People,” and it won him the Oscar for best actor [director]*. Soon afterward, he founded a workshop for independent American filmmakers at Sundance, which has done so much to encourage and teach emerging filmmakers.

Robert Redford is a public-spirited man, a Westerner who cares about the issues. He knows what he believes, and he’s not afraid to tell people. [Laughter] Over the years, he’s had a strong influence on public policy. [Laughter] And it doesn’t hurt—[laughter]—and it doesn’t hurt that he’s quite a charismatic guy. [Laughter] One time, he found himself speaking in front of a group of people in a profession he didn’t think too much of. So he stepped to the mike and gave them a piece of his mind. When he finished, one of the people that he had just scolded rushed right up and said, “Did you really make the jump off the cliff in ‘Butch Cassidy?’” [Laughter]

When Robert Redford speaks, you hear more than an actor or director. You hear the voice of an active, passionate, committed citizen. His family can be proud that this man they love is one of the most familiar faces in the world, one of the biggest names in

* White House correction.

movies, and an alltime favorite of his fellow Americans. Congratulations.

Tina Turner's life began in Tennessee in a town called Nutbush. [Laughter] I've never been there, but—[laughter]—I've passed a few sign wavers who apparently want me to know about it. [Laughter] As a girl, she worked in the cotton fields and sang in the church choir. In her amazing journey, Tina Turner went on to sell tens of millions of records and earned a place in the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame.

She's written music classics and a best-selling book. And a movie about her life was nominated for two Oscars. As a performer, Tina Turner is known to "transcend age, gender, race, and social status." On one of her tour stops in Texas, a concert reviewer described an audience that included "college students, and biker chicks wearing jeans and leather vests, ten-gallon-hat-wearing cowboys, and finger-snapping grandpas." [Laughter] Everyone was there for the same reason—to see one of the greatest live entertainers ever to come out of the United States.

Tina Turner, it has been said, "commands that stage with the sheer force of her full-throttle voice and magnetic presence." People stand in wonder at the natural skill, the energy and sensuality, and the most famous legs in show business. [Laughter] Behave yourself. [Laughter]

Her voice has been described as combining "Otis Redding's husky break and James Brown's growl with some of Aretha Franklin's soaring cadences." She moves better and faster than dancers less than half her age; she does it all in four-inch high heels. [Laughter]

She first became a star in the "Ike and Tina Turner Revue." She made music history with a rendition of "Proud Mary" that no artist could ever hope to match. It won the Grammy and still wins her fans.

In the 1970s, the brave lady had to start over again, on her own. It was a hard time. All she owned in the world was her stage name and her God-given talent. These, combined with her persevering character, led to a phenomenal solo career. A single album, "Private Dancer," sold more than 12 million copies, and the year it was released won her three Grammys. She has produced a string

of hits that are familiar across the world, including "What's Love Got To Do With It?" and "Simply The Best." She has played before some of the largest concert crowds ever assembled, and each time, every eye is trained on the stage, not wanting to miss a single note or a single move by this electrifying artist.

There's nobody quite like Tina Turner, and in the arc of her life, there is so much to admire—the incredible musical gifts, the inner strength, and the moral courage. She's a woman of achievement and elegance and class. And it's an honor to welcome you to the White House.

Tony Bennett once said, "What I try to do is give a performance and have everybody say, 'God, I love that song.'" Well, he's known that satisfaction throughout his career. When you hear the title of a Tony Bennett song, all at once you can hear the man singing it—"Fly Me To The Moon," "The Good Life," "The Best Is Yet To Come," "Just In Time."

This son of New York made his singing debut as a little boy in 1936, standing beside Mayor LaGuardia at the opening of the Triborough Bridge. Much time has passed, and at this point, the Triborough Bridge is showing some age. [Laughter] The little boy who sang that day is still looking pretty good. [Laughter]

Perhaps his biggest professional break came in the late 1940s, when he was opening for Pearl Bailey in Greenwich Village, and she introduced him to Bob Hope. When he learned this young man's name was Anthony Dominick Benedetto, Mr. Hope said, "That's too long for the marquee, let's simplify it and call you Tony Bennett."

Soon he was one of the great nightclub singers, performing through the years with the likes of Duke Ellington and Count Basie and appearing on the "Tonight Show" as Johnny Carson's first guest. When Tony recorded "I Left My Heart In San Francisco," he won his first Grammy, and the song took him from the clubs to Carnegie Hall. From that day to this, he's been playing to sellout crowds. He's won a total of 11 Grammys and a lifetime achievement award.

And it's a symbol of his endurance that this man who was making records when

Harry Truman lived in the White House has become a favorite of the MTV generation. As one newspaper declared, “Tony Bennett has not just bridged the generation gap, he demolished it.” [Laughter] The vocal style and interpretive skill of Tony Bennett are without equal. And no other singer is held in higher regard by his fellow entertainers. B.B. King once said, “To be near him is a highlight of my life. I’ve met two Presidents in office; I’ve met the Pope, Pavarotti—and Tony Bennett.” [Laughter] Frank Sinatra declared that Tony Bennett was the best singer in his lifetime.

His vocal talent and love for music came from his dad, John Benedetto, who passed away when Tony was 10 years old. In his memoir, Tony writes that John was a “very poetic man, full of love and warmth, who sang with a gentle, sensitive voice I can still hear.” Tony’s mom, Anna, undoubtedly saw those same qualities in her son. He called her, “my one guiding star.” And in a long life, Anna watched her boy rise to the top and remain there.

Tony Bennett is also a very talented painter whose work is widely exhibited and admired. He’s a deeply committed humanitarian. He’s a man of character who served in the U.S. Army in World War II, and he marched for civil rights with Martin Luther King, Jr.

Of his career, Tony Bennett has said, “The audience has been beautiful to me.” And the sentiment is entirely mutual. Everybody likes the man. He’s been aptly described as “the kind of celebrity who cabdrivers call by his first name.” We’re joyful that he remains a friendly presence in American life, an entertainer still at the top of his game, and a voice we love to hear. Tonight our Nation honors Mr. Tony Bennett.

Each of these honorees has enriched our culture and reflected credit on our great country. It’s a true pleasure to be in their company and to let them know just how much they mean to the people of the United States. Congratulations. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:13 p.m. on the State Floor at the White House.

Remarks at the Children’s Holiday Reception

December 5, 2005

The President. Thanks for coming. Welcome. We’re glad you’re here. This is Laura; I’m George W. [Laughter] We hope you’ve had some fun here. I hope nobody pinched Rudolph on the nose. [Laughter] No, nobody did. That’s good—Rudolph is happy about that too. [Laughter]

We welcome the students from Stratford Landing Elementary School in Alexandria and Glen Haven Elementary School in Silver Spring. We’re glad you all are here. We want to welcome your teachers and your parents. Thanks for coming. We’re glad you’re at the White House.

I particularly want to welcome those of you here who have got a mom or dad serving our country in the United States military. I know it’s hard when they’re away; this has got to be a difficult time for you. But we really want you to know that they’re doing important work. They’re not only protecting the country, but they’re helping other boys and girls live in freedom like we do here in the United States, and that’s important. So one message I want to give you is, we’re really proud of your mom or dad, and you tell them thanks—thanks on behalf of a grateful nation.

And now I get to introduce somebody I’m grateful for, and that’s the First Lady of the United States, Laura Bush.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. on the State Floor at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Remarks on the National Economy in Kernersville, North Carolina

December 5, 2005

Thanks for having me. Thanks for letting me come by to John Deere-Hitachi. I’m here to talk about our economy. No better place to talk about our economy, in a place where people are working hard and where they’re productive, where they’re making a product people want. The economy of the United

States is strong, and I'm here—how we're going to work together to keep it stronger.

First, I want to thank the workers of this facility for letting me come by to interrupt your work day. I'll try to keep my comments brief so you can get back to work. *[Laughter]* I appreciate the job you're doing. This is a remarkable facility, a facility of high technology, of good management, and great, skilled workers.

I appreciate being back in the State of North Carolina. I was somewhat disappointed to learn that North Carolina is the best place to do business in the United States—I thought that might have been Texas. *[Laughter]*

I'm traveling today with the Secretary of the Treasury, John Snow. Mr. Secretary, thank you for joining us. Secretary of Commerce Carlos Gutierrez is with me today. These two men are involved with making sure that this economy stays strong, that we create an environment for people to be able to grow their businesses and employ people.

I'm proud to be here with Senator Richard Burr of the great State of North Carolina. He's a good, down-to-earth fellow who is a strong Member of the United States Senate. And he brings—every time I see him, he brings this message, he says, "You make sure you remember the people of North Carolina." Which I do.

I appreciate Congresswoman Virginia Foxx—we're right here in her congressional district—she's doing an excellent job on behalf of the people of this part of the world. I appreciate my longtime friend Congressman Howard Coble from the State of North Carolina. Finally, I'm proud to be traveling with a Congressman who doesn't look old enough to be a Congressman—*[laughter]*—that's Patrick McHenry, and he's doing a fine job, as well, in the United States Congress.

I want to thank the mayor of Kernersville for joining us. I appreciate all the other State and local officials.

I want to thank Ron Morrison for the—he's the operation manager, in case you've never heard of him—for giving me a tour. He's sure proud of this facility. He's proud of the safety record, and he's proud of the skill of the people who work here. I appreciate

Al Seeba, Jim Jenkins, and Hitoshi Manabe. Thank you all for having me.

Government does not create wealth. American and businesses and workers and farmers and entrepreneurs create the wealth for this country. And so the role of the Government is to create an environment where the small business can grow into a big business, where the entrepreneur can flourish, where people who dream about owning a home are able to own a home. In our economy, our most precious resource is the talent of the American worker, and there is no limit to what we can do when people have the freedom to make a better life for themselves and their family.

Ours is a confident and optimistic Nation, and our trust in the American people has brought us through some pretty tough times. In the past 5 years, our economy has endured a stock market collapse, a recession, terrorist attacks, corporate scandals, high energy costs, and devastating natural disasters. These were all shocks to our economy, which I felt required decisive action. I believe that economy grows when people are allowed to keep more of their own money, to be able to save and to spend.

And so I called on the United States Congress to let the people keep more of their own money, to cut their taxes. And Congress responded. We lowered your taxes and gave you an opportunity to keep more of what you earn and let you decide how best to spend your own money. We cut taxes on families by lowering the tax rates and by doubling the child credit and reducing the marriage penalty. I felt we shouldn't penalize marriage; I thought we ought to reward marriage in the Tax Code.

These cuts are making a real difference to American families. I just met one of your coworkers, Kirby Hartsell. Kirby is an Air Force veteran; he did a tour in South Korea. He and his wife, Carol, have three children: Olivia, David, and Claire. When we cut the taxes, the Hartsells received a refund check that they put in the bank for themselves and to save for their children. This year, the Hartsells saved \$2,200 on their 2004 Federal taxes because of our tax cuts. Now I know some in Washington say that's not a lot of money—well, it's a lot of money to the

Hartsells. And when the folks in Washington, DC, say that our working families don't need that tax relief, they ought to come right here to North Carolina and talk to the Hartsells, just like I did.

We not only reduced the taxes on individuals and families, we cut the taxes on dividends and capital gains to encourage job-creating investment. I understand most new jobs in America—and I hope you understand this too—most new jobs in America are created by small-business owners. And so we cut the taxes. We cut the taxes for our small businesses. Most small businesses pay taxes at the individual income tax rate. And so when you hear us talking about lowering the taxes on individuals, I want you to connect that with lowering taxes on small businesses. And we created incentives for small businesses to invest in new equipment so that they can expand and create jobs. To help our farmers and entrepreneurs pass on a lifetime of hard work to their loved ones, we put the death tax on the road to extinction.

Now some of those people up in Washington said the tax cuts wouldn't work. In the spring of 2003, one Democrat leader called tax relief a tragedy and said it would not create jobs or grow the economy. Another Democratic leader said the tax cuts "are ruining our economy and costing us jobs." All that comes with the job, by the way—doing what you think is right, and people laying out the criticism. But I want to remind people of the facts: Since those words were spoken, our economy has added nearly 4½ million new jobs.

Just this past Friday, the latest figures show our economy added 215,000 jobs in the month of November alone. Our unemployment rate is down to 5 percent. That's lower than the average of the 1970s, the 1980s, and 1990s. The latest numbers also show the economy grew at 4.3 percent last quarter. And it has been growing at near that average for more than 2 years. This economy of ours is on the move. People are being able to find work, and that's what's important to me. I want Americans working. I want anybody who wants a job to be able to find work—good paying, steady work—and that's what's happening in America.

Americans are buying homes, and that's good news for this country. We hit an alltime high in October, in terms of home buying. More Americans now own their homes than any time in our Nation's history. Minority ownership—homeownership is at an alltime high in the United States of America. Real disposable income is up. Our consumers are confident. New orders for durable goods like machinery have risen sharply, and shipments of manufactured goods are up as well. Business activity in our manufacturing sector reported its 30th straight month of growth. In the past 5 years, productivity has grown at some of the fastest rates since the 1960s. Our small businesses are thriving. Fortunately, I didn't listen to the pessimists about tax cuts. The tax cuts are working.

We've been wise with your money as well. Each year I've been in office, we've cut the rate of growth in nonsecurity discretionary spending. We're on track to reach our goal of cutting the budget deficit in half by 2009. Thanks to tax relief and spending restraint and progrowth economic policies, this economy is strong, businesses are booming, and the people in this country are working. See, we can't take this growth for granted. So we're moving forward with a comprehensive agenda that's going to keep the economy growing, to make sure people have got a hopeful future. Keeping this economy strong begins with a commitment to keeping your taxes low and, at the same time, being wise about how we spend your money.

Unfortunately, just as we're seeing the evidence of how our tax cuts have helped the economy, we're hearing some voices in Washington that want to raise your taxes. The tax relief we set—that we delivered is set to expire in a couple of years. In other words, it's not permanent; it can go away. And unless Congress acts, you're going to get a big tax hike when that happens.

Some even say, "We should repeal the tax relief sooner." If that happens, a family of four making \$60,000 today would see their Federal income taxes eventually go up by more than 50 percent. I want you to think about that. As you work hard and balance your family budgets and try to save for the future, back in Washington some folks want to take more out of your paycheck by rolling

back the tax cuts. When you hear people say that we don't need to make the tax relief permanent, what they're really saying is, they're going to raise your taxes. One way to keep this economy growing is to have certainty in our Tax Code, and to help you keep—and to keep—let you keep more of your paycheck, and so the United States Congress needs to make this tax relief permanent.

We're going to redouble our efforts to restrain the spending appetite of the Federal Government. Listen, we're at war, and we're going to spend what it takes to support our troops in harm's way. And that means we've got to show real discipline in other areas of the Federal budget.

Earlier this year, I submitted a budget that proposed an actual cut in nonsecurity discretionary spending. It's the most disciplined budget proposal since Ronald Reagan was in the White House, and Congress is set to meet this target, and I appreciate their hard work. I also proposed to terminate or reduce more than 150 Government programs that are underperforming or not meeting needs of the American people. I'm pleased to report it looks like the Congress is poised to deliver savings on more than 90 of these programs. For the first time since 1997, Congress is poised to deliver more than \$35 billion in savings in entitlement programs. By taking action to restrain spending, we're on our track to cut that deficit in half by 2009.

But there's a lot of work that needs to be done. In the long term, the most significant deficits will occur as baby boomers retire and more people receive Social Security and Medicare benefits. There's unfunded liabilities in our Social Security and Medicare systems. That means that there's a lot of baby boomers retiring who have been promised more benefits with fewer people paying into the system. That's what that means. And unless we do something about it—these unfunded liabilities—we're going to put a great burden on our children and our grandchildren.

Reform of Social Security and Medicare is an important issue for the American people. And I've been talking about it, and I'm going to keep talking about it, because I strongly believe the United States Congress has an obligation to do something about it.

My attitude is, when you get elected to office in Washington, DC, you have an obligation to confront problems, not pass them on to future generations and future Congresses.

Our approach on spending is clear: Working families have to set priorities for their spending, and so should the Federal Government. Unfortunately, we have too many politicians back in Washington who preach fiscal discipline while voting against spending cuts—and too many who think the only answer for runaway spending is to raise your taxes. My solution is to keep your taxes low and to be fiscally sound about how we use your money.

As we think about ways to make sure this economy remains strong today and strong tomorrow, one thing we've got to work on is our energy. I mean, we've got to be less dependent on foreign sources of energy if we want this economy to remain vibrant. High gasoline and heating costs are a tax on the working people, and they're a tax on small businesses, and they drain the budgets of people working hard. They make it expensive for people to run their companies, and they both affect our economic and national security. So our goal is to work for a day in which America is no longer dependent, beginning with less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

We made a pretty good start with an energy bill I signed this summer. It encourages conservation, and that makes sense. One way to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy is to use less of it. We made—we're spending money on making sure we can burn coal in a clean way. Clean coal technologies make a lot of sense. We've got a lot of coal in the United States of America, and we need to figure out how to use it cleanly. We need to do a better job of making sure we can get natural gas from overseas, liquified natural gas into the United States. We don't have enough liquified natural gas portals to allow that gas to come here, and we need to expand that in the United States.

We're promoting renewable sources of energy like ethanol and biodiesel. It makes sense to be able to use corn or soybeans to power our automobiles. I mean, one of these days, hopefully, the President sits down, opens up the crop report and says, "My,

we've got a lot of corn; it means we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy." It makes sense to explore that. We're spending money on hydrogen. One of these days, I hope your grandchildren or your children can start a car and have hydrogen being the source of power.

So we've got a good bill on the table that I signed. But we've got to do more. We've got to do more. Listen, Katrina hit us, and Rita hit us, and we realize how dependent and how fragile our infrastructure is when it comes to gasoline. Listen, your prices went up. I know that. And these storms show that we've got bottlenecks in the system, and there are shortages. Now, fortunately, today's gasoline prices are down nearly to what they were before Katrina and Rita, and that's good news. But we ought to take notice of what happened. Congress needs to pass legislation that will allow us to build and expand refineries. Do you realize we have not built a new refinery in the United States since the early 1970s? In order to take the pressure off your pocketbook, it seems to make sense to me that we need to expand the amount of supply of gasoline. The more gasoline there is available for our consumers, the less pressure there will be.

We've got to produce and refine more crude oil and natural gas here at home in environmentally sensitive ways. And we can do that. The most promising site for energy in America is the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge in Alaska. I don't know if you realize this, but technology today enables us to take a very small portion of the land—2,000 acres out of 19 million acres—and use that 2,000-acre site to exploit the oil and gas resources in that vast area, with little or no impact on the land or wildlife. And that's important for people to understand, the facts involved. Developing this tiny area could yield up to a million barrels of oil a day. That's a million barrels of oil a day less from a foreign source of energy. I can't tell you how important I think it is for the United States Congress to authorize a progrowth, projob, proenvironment exploration of ANWR.

We prosper as a country when our working people can look to the future with confidence. And people are more confident when they own something. And that's why

I've promoted an ownership society, an ownership society in which people own their own homes and have control over their health care accounts. They can own their own small businesses. Americans need to know that their hard work will be rewarded and that the institutions they depend upon are reliable. And so I want to talk about some reforms and some ideas for job training and health care.

We need to prepare Americans to take advantage of the opportunities of the 21st century. One thing is certain, is that this economy of ours changes, and as it changes, we've got to make sure the workers have got the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. It's one of the real challenges of our society.

I'm a big believer, by the way, in community centers—community colleges. I think they work. I think they work well, because they are available, and they're affordable, and they have got flexibility in their curriculum. I know that firsthand, that you've got a good system here in North Carolina because I've been to some of your community colleges. I've been to Forsyth Technical Community College. I've seen workers who were in the textile industry receiving help necessary to go back to school to become health care workers. And with a little bit of Government help, they are able to gain new skills and find permanent work at better pay. And that's really the challenge ahead of us, isn't it, to make sure that we match our workers' desire to work with the skills necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century.

We've got a good program out of Washington, DC. It's \$125 million a year in grants to help community colleges. More importantly, it's to help the workers going to community colleges. I'm working with Congress to make sure that we work with these schools that are developing curriculum for jobs which actually exist. We don't need people being trained for work where jobs don't exist; we need people being able to match the job demand with the curriculum. And it's happening. Congress needs to renew the job training program for our community college system and give us more flexibility to make

sure that the money actually gets to the workers, not to the bureaucracies involved with the program.

We need a health care system that makes sure that health care is available and affordable for all our people. And we need a health care system that puts patients in charge of the health care decisions, that offers greater choice, and allows you to have control over your plan. There's a new product called health savings accounts, HSAs, and they're a step toward consumer-driven health care.

Now, let me try to explain this to you. Under this type of plan, you or your employer can put money tax-free into what they call a health savings account. And you use that money in your account for routine medical expenses. And if you don't use it all up, you can roll it over to the next year, tax free. And the money in the account earns interest tax-free. In other words, it's a tax-free account. The money goes in tax-free. It stays in tax-free, and it comes out tax-free. And it's your money, and you control it, and you pay routine health care expenses.

And you couple that with a high-deductible insurance policy—paid by yourself, if you're self-employed, or your company—that pays for catastrophic care above a certain deductible if you get really sick or you get really hurt. Now, the advantage of this program is that, one, you make the decisions. Secondly, you own the HSA, and if you happen to change jobs—listen, we're in a society where people are changing jobs. And one of the uncertainty that comes with job changes is that you—a fellow or a woman worries about health care. Under this plan, it's your own health care plan, and you can take it with you to your next employer. And the employer can help you with your HSA, if that's the deal you're able to strike with them. In other words, if you own your health care plan, it brings certainty into your life. It makes your future more stable.

These high-deductible policies have lower premiums, and that's what you've got to know, which provide savings for the self-employed or the small-business owner or for the large company. People are beginning to understand the advantages of health savings accounts. Since I signed a bill into law that allowed for the existence of health savings ac-

counts, a million Americans have enrolled, most are families with children. And nearly 40 percent of HSA owners were uninsured before they got their account. Now we're going to strengthen health savings accounts, make them more available and more affordable so people have more choices when it comes to health care.

Now that's just one part of a comprehensive health initiative. Congress needs to pass association health plans. I don't know if there's any small-business owners here—small businesses sometimes have trouble affording health care. They need to be allowed to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can buy health insurance at the same discounts that big companies are able to buy health insurance.

The Federal Government has a responsibility to the elderly and the poor when it comes to health care. That's a commitment our Government made. My attitude is, if you're going to provide health care for the elderly, it ought to be good health care. That's why we had the most substantive reforms of Medicare since Lyndon Baines Johnson was the President, since the program was formed. The Medicare plan that is now available for our seniors includes prescription drug coverage and a wide variety of choices for our seniors to choose from. And it's going to become available this January, and if you've got a mother and father on Medicare, I strongly urge you to look on the Internet for medicare.gov, and take a look and explain to your mother or father the options available. It's a good deal. It makes sense to have a modern, reformed Medicare system for our seniors.

We're going to take care of the poor with Medicaid and to make sure there's a strong safety net available for the poor citizens in the United States. And we're going to be wise about how we set up systems. Since I took office, we've opened or expanded more than 800 community health centers, places for the poor and the indigent to get primary health care. It makes sense to make sure that people go to a primary care facility, such as a health center, and not an emergency room of a hospital.

We need to expand information technology in health care, which a lot of the experts are convinced will lower the cost of health care to the American citizens. To make health care available and affordable, we need medical liability reform. When your doctors get sued, it means there's going to be fewer doctors practicing medicine, and when your doctors get sued, it means your cost of medicine goes up. And for the sake of affordable health care, we need medical liability reform now. In order to make sure the economy is—keeps going on, we need a comprehensive health care agenda that gives you the power for making medical decisions, not bureaucracies in Washington, DC.

Now for the good of the workers, we need to strengthen the rules governing private pensions as well. You know, most Americans work for private companies that offer traditional pensions. And most companies, like this one, are fulfilling their obligations to their employees and their retirees. But too many companies are not putting away the cash they need to fund the retirement promises they're making to their employees. In other words, they're saying, "We'll make sure you got a retirement system," but they're not funding it. Therefore, when—if the company were to get into financial trouble and go bankrupt, their failure to live up to their promises, their failure to fund their pensions will leave retirees with pension checks that have been slashed.

Now, the Federal Government insures these pensions, and that means that if more and more companies fail to meet their responsibilities, the Federal Government might have to step in and bail them out. In that case, it would not only be the retirees who are harmed by the companies not fulfilling their obligations, but it can mean the taxpayers as well. Every American has an interest in seeing to it that this system gets fixed. So whether you're a worker at a company with an underfunded pension or a taxpayer, it's what I want you to understand.

In our society, we've had some companies—big companies go bankrupt, and workers at those companies know what I'm talking about. And so my message to corporate America is: You need to fulfill your promises. When you say to a worker, this is what they're

going to get when they retire, you better put enough money in the account to make sure the worker gets that which you said.

The Government's current pension rules are confusing and misleading. They allow companies to technically play by the rules and yet still not fund the promises they've made to their employees. And so Congress needs to straighten up these rules so that there's no confusion, so that everybody understands what I just said. I said, "If you make a promise to a worker, you put enough money in the account to fulfill that promise."

So we proposed reforms to the pension rules that say this, that say that companies must accurately measure and report the financial status of their pension plans to make sure they're fulfilling the promises they make. This reform plan would give companies that underfund their pensions 7 years to catch up. That seems reasonable to me. We're going to give you a little time to do what you said you're going to do, but you're going to do what you said you're going to do.

But some in Congress have said this reform is too tough, or some may be on the outskirts of Congress who have said the reform is too tough. And not only that, they want to weaken the current law even further. I believe that if you put in your hours, your pension should be there for you when you retire. Our workers need reform that significantly improves funding for these private pension plans, not a piece of legislation that weakens it. And I'm not going to sign a bill that weakens pension funding for the American workers.

And, finally, keeping this economy strong means welcoming opportunities that a global economy offers, not fearing those opportunities. And this country is home to about 5 percent of the world's population, which means that 95 percent of potential customers live abroad. By opening up new markets for our goods and our farm products and our services, we can help this economy continue to grow and create opportunity for people right here in our country.

Out in Washington, there are economic isolationists, people who are afraid of new opportunities. I think they've got to have more faith in the American worker and in

the entrepreneur. The folks in North Carolina are showing them why. Today, one of every 12 jobs in North Carolina is exported by—is supported by exports. In other words, one in 12 of the people who work in this State do so because they're selling a product overseas. And it's just not what you're sending overseas that is helping North Carolina grow. More than 200,000 North Carolinians have jobs because foreign companies have chosen to invest in the Tar Heel State. In other words, this is a good place to be. All across America, we see the same story: Foreign businesses come here because they recognize the quality and the skill and ethic of the American worker. That's why they're coming.

This company is a good example of how trade has transformed American business. In 1837, an Illinois blacksmith named John Deere fashioned a steel plow that let pioneer farmers cut through prairie soil. Today, the company that this guy started ships products—ships combines made in Illinois to Russia. Interesting, isn't it? A lot of the Deere business is done overseas because the product is good. People want the Deere product. People realize that their society could become more productive if they use products made by John Deere.

You've got an advantage right here in Kernersville. You've got an interesting joint venture with Hitachi. This plant is actually "in-sourcing". Over the past 4 years, this factory has taken on production that used to be done in Japan and Mexico. You've tripled your workforce. That's what opening markets means. It means good, steady work. It means good opportunity. In the 21st century, no economy can afford to be an island. And to create new opportunities for our workers, we need to keep this economy open to trade and investment. And we've got to make sure that everybody else treats us the way we treat them, that we want to have free trade, and we want to have fair trade.

The textile industry in this State has been through tough times. I understand that. We just did a deal with Central America that says, "You treat us the way we treat you." Do you realize products going from the United States to Central America were taxed? Products coming the other way weren't. It seemed to

make sense to level the playing field, which we're in the process of doing. But it also means that by working together with Central American partners, North Carolina textiles are more likely to be able to compete with Asian textiles.

My predecessor worked to get China into the WTO. And one of the conditions was that the United States and other WTO members would take steps to prevent their markets from being flooded with cheap Chinese textiles. Last month, we reached an agreement with China to have them meet that obligation under the textile agreements. It's an important agreement. It means that not only are we for free trade with China, but we expect China to be fair with American textile companies and American workers. This agreement adds certainty and predictability for businesses in both America and China.

Here's what I believe. I believe free trade is good for jobs. I believe opening markets for U.S. products is smart to do. I know we've got to make sure we have a level playing field because when we have a level playing field, the American worker, the American entrepreneur, and the American farmer can compete with anybody, anytime, anyplace.

The greatest opportunity we do have to advance the goal of free and fair trade is through the Doha round of trade talks. The Doha trade round has great potential to boost jobs here in America. By reducing and eliminating tariffs and other barriers on industrial goods and on farm goods—industrial goods like John Deere products, by the way—to end unfair subsidies and open up global markets for our services. Trade ministers will gather in Hong Kong next week for a critical meeting. I told our Trade Representative, Ambassador Rob Portman, that he's got to push for a bold and wide-ranging agreement. Opportunity increasingly depends on a free and fair trading global system, and our administration is going to continue to use our influence to bring greater opportunities for the American worker.

You know, throughout the last century, we often heard pessimists telling us that our best days are behind us and that the future belongs to others. Our grandparents heard the pessimists in the 1930s and 1940s say that the future belonged to the central planners.

Our parents heard the pessimists again in the 1950s when the Soviet Union launched the first satellite. Some of us remember hearing the pessimists in the 1970s and 1980s when we were told that America was tired and could no longer compete with Japan. At that moment, Ronald Reagan's tax cuts were just beginning to kick in, and that set off one of the largest economic expansions in our history. One newspaper editorialized about "the stench of failure" during that period of time.

You know, the great thing about our history when you look at it is, the American people have always proved the pessimists wrong. At the start of a hopeful new century, the American worker is the most productive worker that human history has ever known. At the start of this new century, we have proven that progrowth economic policies out of Washington, DC, do work and can overcome some mighty obstacles. At the start of the century, we recommit ourselves to the notion that the more free people are, the better off your economy will be.

This great country of ours is a place where people can start out with nothing and be able to raise a family and own a home or start a business. Through all my travels around the world, I'm always struck by how bright the future of America is. Our job in Washington is to keep that future bright and hopeful by making choices that reward hard work and enterprise. This economy is strong, and the best days are yet to come for the American economy.

I'm honored you let me come by. I'm always glad to come back to North Carolina. And I'm particularly pleased to be with the good, fine folks right here at the Deere-Hitachi plant. May God bless you and your families, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:08 p.m. at the John Deere-Hitachi Construction Machinery Corp. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Curtis L. Swisher of Kernersville, NC; and James R. Jenkins, senior vice president and general counsel, Deere & Co.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Director-General Lee Jong-wook of the World Health Organization and an Exchange With Reporters

December 6, 2005

President Bush. It's been my honor to welcome the Director of the World Health Organization, Dr. Lee, to the Oval Office, where we have just had an extensive conversation with high-ranking officials in my administration about the international strategy to deal with a possible pandemic of avian flu.

And I want to thank you, Dr. Lee, for staying on top of this issue, for raising the consciousness of the world, for helping to develop an international response, and for working so closely with Mike Leavitt and Julie Gerberding and Bob Zoellick of the State Department. This is a remarkable collaborative effort to do our duty to help people.

The other thing that's really interesting, I found out, is Dr. Lee told me we're very close to eradicating polio. And I want to congratulate you—from the world, by the way—and I want to congratulate you for your good work on that issue.

Director-General Lee. Thank you.

President Bush. You're a good public servant. I'm just proud to welcome you here to the Oval Office.

Director-General Lee. Well, thank you very much. Clearly, we've been working on avian flu and pandemic flu for many years. But it really didn't take off until the President launched this initiative in September in New York. And then after that, he mentioned—he raised this issue with many heads of state. That really made a difference. I'm very honored to be here.

And about polio eradication, it was a team-work. I appreciated the effort of the United States, especially the AID and CDC. And in the presence of the Secretary and also the Director, Julie Gerberding, that it is wonderful to be able to say that we are about to eradicate polio.

President Bush. Thank you, Dr. Lee.

Answer a couple of questions. Nedra [Nedra Pickler, Associated Press].

War on Terror in Iraq

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Insurgents in Iraq claim that they have taken a U.S. citizen hostage. We also have a U.S. peace activist who is being held. Is there anything you can do to get them back?

President Bush. We, of course, don't pay ransom for any hostages. What we will do, of course, is use our intelligence gathering to see if we can't help locate them. The best way to make sure that Iraq is a peaceful society is to continue to spread democracy. And clearly there are some there who want to stop the spread of democracy. There are terrorists there who will kill innocent people and behead people and kill children, terrorists who have got desires to hurt the American people.

And it should be—the more violent they get, the clearer the cause ought to be, that we're going to achieve victory in Iraq and that we'll bring these people to justice. We will hunt them down, along with our Iraqi friends, and at the same time, spread democracy.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters], yes.

Progress in Iraq

Q. Howard Dean says the idea that the U.S. will win in Iraq is just plain wrong, and he's comparing the war to Vietnam. Is that a fair comparison, and what do you think about his comments?

President Bush. I know we're going to win, and our troops need to hear, not only are they supportive but that we have got a strategy that will win. Oh, there's pessimists, you know, and politicians who try to score points. But our strategy is one that is—will lead us to victory. The only thing that the enemy has got going for them is the capacity to take innocent life and to get on our TV screens with this devastation that they cause. These people cannot stand free societies. They have no regard for the human condition. They'll kill women and children at the drop of a hat, all aimed at frightening the American people and trying to get us to withdraw. And if we were to withdraw, the likes of Zarqawi, who is a sworn ally of bin Laden, would have a safe haven from which to plot and plan.

The lessons of September the 11th are lessons this country must never forget. We've

got to take each threat seriously. We've got to stay on the offense. In the long run, a democracy will help eradicate the conditions that allow these people to find any kind of support.

And so our strategy is twofold. On the one hand, we'll stay on the offense. We'll train Iraqi soldiers so they can take the fight to the enemy. And on the other hand, we'll continue to work with the Iraqi people to spread democracy.

And the American people must take notice of the fact that the people of Iraq are showing incredible courage in the face of this violence. After all, there was an election last January to put a Transitional National Government in place; then they voted on a Constitution. And in a short period of time, they're going to be voting for a new Government. They vote by the millions, which stands in stark contrast to the society in which they lived under the tyrant, Saddam Hussein, who, by the way, is now on trial, as he should be on trial.

I think his trial is indicative of the change that has taken place in the Iraqi society. In the old days, if Saddam and his cronies didn't like you, you didn't get a trial. You were just put to death or tortured. Today, there is a system, a judicial system in place that will give Saddam Hussein a chance to make his case in court, as well as giving those who have been tortured by Saddam Hussein a chance to step forth and provide witness to the brutality of this man.

I—our troops need to know that the American people stand with them, and we have a strategy for victory. And of course, there will be debate and, of course, there will be some pessimists and some people playing politics with the issue. But by far, the vast majority of people in this country stand squarely with the men and women who wear the Nation's uniform.

Carl [Carl Cameron, FOX News].

Detention Facilities Abroad

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Does your administration have any plans to change the policy of renditioning and/or the detention centers alleged to be taking place in Europe?

President Bush. Carl, first of all, I don't talk about secret programs, covert programs,

covert activities. Part of a successful war on terror is for the United States of America to be able to conduct operations, all aimed to protect the American people, covertly.

However, I can tell you two things: One, that we abide by the law of the United States; we do not torture. And two, we will try to do everything we can to protect us within the law. We're facing an enemy that would like to hit America again, and the American people expect us to, within our laws, do everything we can to protect them. And that's exactly what the United States is doing. We do not render to countries that torture. That has been our policy, and that policy will remain the same.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:11 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ronald Schultz and Tom Fox, American citizens taken hostage in Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization. A reporter referred to Howard Dean, chairman, Democratic National Committee. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Lighting the Hanukkah Menorah

December 6, 2005

Welcome to the White House. Laura and I are glad you're here, and we're glad to be here to celebrate the festival of Hanukkah. Hanukkah begins later this month. It's a time to remember the story of a miracle once witnessed in the Holy Temple in Jerusalem.

More than 2,000 years ago, the ancient land of Israel was conquered, and Jewish people were forbidden to pray, observe their religious customs, or study the Torah. In response, a patriot named Judah Maccabee led a revolt against the enemy army. Their numbers were small, yet their courage in defense of their faith was powerful, and they were triumphant.

When the Maccabees returned to reclaim their Holy Temple, the oil that should have lasted only 1 day, instead burned for 8 days. During Hanukkah, Jews across the world signify this miracle by lighting the menorah.

This act commemorates the victory of freedom over oppression and of hope shining through darkness. Today, that light still burns in Jewish homes and synagogues everywhere. And today, that light will burn here in the White House.

Laura and I are honored to have a beautiful menorah here from Park Synagogue in Cleveland, Ohio. Rabbi Skoff, thank you very much for sharing it with us. I also want to thank Rabbi Barry Gelman for his prayer and thank him for his deep compassion. As he mentioned, he is the rabbi from the United Orthodox Synagogues in Houston, whose members did so much to help the victims of Hurricane Katrina.

I want to thank the West Point Jewish Cadet Choir for being here with us this evening. Our Nation is grateful to the American troops of all faiths who are serving our country around the world and who are away from their families this holiday.

The word "Hanukkah" and the Hebrew word for education both come from the same root word that means "to dedicate." And earlier today, I met with some of the leaders from our Nation's Jewish day schools. As educators who dedicate themselves to teaching the faith and to teaching, they are fulfilling the true lesson of Hanukkah every day of the year. Just as the Maccabees reclaimed their Holy Temple, these teachers help ensure that Jewish traditions are passed from generation to generation.

Tonight as we prepare to light the candles, we are grateful for our freedoms as Americans, especially the freedom to worship. We are grateful that freedom is spreading to still new regions of the world, and we pray that those who still live in the darkness of tyranny will some day see the light of freedom.

And now, I invite Rabbi Skoff and his daughter and family to join me for the symbolic lighting of the White House menorah. The honor is yours.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:37 p.m. in the Bookseller's Area in the East Wing at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Rabbi Joshua Skoff, Park Synagogue, Cleveland Heights, Ohio, and his daughter, Eden.

Remarks to the Council on Foreign Relations

December 7, 2005

Thank you all. Richard, thanks for the invitation. Thanks for letting me come by and address the Council on Foreign Relations. The Council is one of America's oldest and most admired foreign policy organizations, and I appreciate the chance to come and talk about foreign policy.

Richard is a good man, and he's doing a fine job as the President of the Council on Foreign Relations. And I appreciate your service to the country. I want to thank Nancy Roman. I want to thank the board members of the Council. And I want to thank you all for being here today.

Today we mark the anniversary of a fateful day in American history. On December the 7th, 1941, our peaceful Nation awoke to an attack plotted in secret and executed without mercy. The strike on Pearl Harbor was the start of a long war for America—a massive struggle against those who attacked us and those who shared their destructive ambitions. Fortunately for all of us, a great generation of Americans was more than equal to the challenge. Our Nation pulled together, and despite setbacks and battlefield defeats, we did not waver in freedom's cause. With courage and determination, we won a war on two fronts. We liberated millions. We aided the rise of democracy in Europe and Asia. We watched enemies become allies, and we laid the foundation of peace for generations.

On September the 11th, 2001, our Nation awoke to another sudden attack. In the space of just 102 minutes, more Americans were killed than we lost at Pearl Harbor. Like generations before us, we accepted new responsibilities, and we confronted new dangers with firm resolve. Like generations before us, we're taking the fight to those who attacked us—and those who share their murderous vision for future attacks. Like generations before us, we've faced setbacks on the path to victory, yet we will fight this war without waver. And like the generations before us, we will prevail.

Like earlier struggles for freedom, this war will take many turns, and the enemy must be defeated on every battlefield, from the

streets of Western cities to the mountains of Afghanistan, to the tribal regions of Pakistan, to the islands of Southeast Asia, and the Horn of Africa. Yet the terrorists have made it clear that Iraq is the central front in their war against humanity. So we must recognize Iraq as the central front in the war on terror.

Last week at the Naval Academy, I gave the first in a series of speeches outlining our strategy for victory in Iraq. I explained that our strategy begins with a clear understanding of the enemy we face. The enemy in Iraq is a combination of rejectionists and Saddamists and terrorists. The rejectionists are ordinary Iraqis, mostly Sunni Arabs, who miss the privileged status they had under the regime of Saddam Hussein. They reject an Iraq in which they are no longer the dominant group. We believe that, over time, most of this group will be persuaded to support a democratic Iraq led by a Federal Government that is strong enough to protect minority rights.

The Saddamists are former regime loyalists who harbor dreams of returning to power, and they're trying to foment anti-democratic sentiment amongst the larger Sunni community. Yet they lack popular support, and over time, they can be marginalized and defeated by security forces of a free Iraq.

The terrorists affiliated with or inspired by Al Qaida are the smallest but most lethal group. Many are foreigners coming to fight freedom's progress in Iraq. They are led by a brutal terrorist named Zarqawi, Al Qaida's chief of operations in Iraq, who has pledged his allegiance to Usama bin Laden. The terrorists' stated objective is to drive the United States and coalition forces out of Iraq and to gain control of the country. They would then use Iraq as a base from which to launch attacks against America, overthrow moderate governments in the Middle East, and try to establish a totalitarian Islamic empire that reaches from Indonesia to Spain.

The terrorists in Iraq share the same ideology as the terrorists who struck the United States on September the 11th, blew up commuters in London and Madrid, murdered tourists in Bali, killed workers in Riyadh, and slaughtered guests at a wedding in Amman, Jordan. This is an enemy without conscience;

they cannot be appeased. If we're not fighting and destroying the enemy in Iraq, they would not be leading the quiet lives of good citizens. They would be plotting and killing our citizens across the world and within our own borders. By fighting the terrorists in Iraq, we are confronting a direct threat to the American people, and we will accept nothing less than complete victory.

We're pursuing a comprehensive strategy in Iraq. Last week, my administration released a document called the "National Strategy for Victory in Iraq." Our goal is victory, and victory will be achieved when the terrorists and Saddamists can no longer threaten Iraq's democracy, when the Iraqi security forces can provide for the safety of their own citizens, and when Iraq is not a safe haven for terrorists to plot new attacks against our Nation.

Our strategy to achieve that victory has three elements. On the political side, we're helping the Iraqis build inclusive democratic institutions that will protect the interests of all Iraqis. We're working with the Iraqis to help them engage those who can be persuaded to join the new Iraq and to marginalize those who never will. In 2½ years, the Iraqi people have made amazing progress. They've gone from living under the boot of a brutal tyrant to liberation to free elections to a democratic constitution. A week from tomorrow, they will go to the polls to elect a fully constitutional government that will lead them for the next 4 years. By helping Iraqis continue to build their democracy, we will gain an ally in the war on terror. By helping them build a democracy, we will inspire reformers from Damascus to Tehran. And by helping them build a democracy, we'll make the American people more secure.

On the security side, coalition and Iraqi security forces are on the offense against the enemy. We're clearing out areas controlled by the terrorists and Saddam loyalists, leaving Iraqi forces to hold territory taken from the enemy, and following up with targeted reconstruction to help Iraqis rebuild their lives. And as we fight the terrorists, we're working to build capable and effective Iraqi security forces, so they can take the lead in the fight and eventually take responsibility for the

safety and security of their citizens without major foreign assistance.

As Iraqi forces become more capable, they're taking responsibility for more and more Iraqi territory. We're transferring bases for their control, to take the fight to the enemy. That means American and coalition forces can concentrate on training Iraqis and hunting down high-value targets like Zarqawi.

On the economic side, we're helping the Iraqis rebuild their infrastructure and reform their economy and build the prosperity that will give all Iraqis a stake in a free and peaceful Iraq. In doing this, we have involved the United Nations, other international organizations, our coalition partners, and supportive regional states.

A week ago at the Naval Academy, I spoke about our efforts to train the Iraqi security forces. I described the changes we've made in the way these forces are trained and the resulting gains the Iraqi forces have made in the past year. Today I'm going to talk about how we're working with those Iraqi forces and Iraq's leaders to improve security and restore order, to help Iraqis rebuild their cities, and to help the National Government in Baghdad revitalize Iraq's infrastructure and economy.

Over the course of this war, we have learned that winning the battle for Iraqi cities is only the first step. We also have to win the battle after the battle by helping Iraqis consolidate their gains and keep the terrorists from returning. Used to be that after American troops cleared the terrorists out of a city and moved onto the next mission, there weren't enough forces, Iraqi forces, to hold the area. We found that after we left, the terrorists would reenter the city, intimidate local leaders and police, and eventually re-take control. This undermined the gains of our military. It thwarted our efforts to help Iraqis rebuild and led local residents to lose confidence in the process and in their leaders.

So we adjusted our approach. As improvements in training produced more capable Iraqi security forces, those forces have been able to better hold onto the cities we cleared out together. With help from our military and civilian personnel, the Iraqi Government can

then work with local leaders and residents to begin reconstruction, with Iraqis leading the building efforts and our coalition in a supporting role.

This approach is working. And today I want to describe our actions in two cities where we have seen encouraging progress, Najaf and Mosul.

The city of Najaf is located about 90 miles south of Baghdad, and it's the home to one of Shi'a Islam's holiest places, the Imam Ali Shrine. As a predominantly Shi'a city, Najaf suffered greatly during Saddam's rule. Virtually every element of infrastructure and basic services had been crippled by years of insufficient maintenance. In 1991, thousands of Najaf residents were killed during a brutal crackdown by the dictator. Our troops liberated Najaf in 2003, yet about a year later, the city fell under the sway of a radical and violent militia. Fighting in the streets damaged homes and businesses, and the local economy collapsed as visitors and pilgrims stopped coming to the shrine out of fear for their lives.

In the summer of 2004, we discussed the growing problem in Najaf with Iraq's political leaders, and the coalition and Iraqi Government decided to retake control of the city. And we did. Together, coalition and Iraqi forces routed out the militia in tough, urban fighting. It was an intense battle. Our guys performed great, and so did the Iraqi forces. Together with the Iraqi Government and the Shi'a clerical community, we forced the militia to abandon the shrine and return it to legitimate Iraqi authority. The militia forces agreed to disarm and leave Najaf.

As soon as the fighting in Najaf ended, targeted reconstruction moved forward. The Iraqi Government played an active role and so did our military commanders and diplomats and workers from the U.S. Agency for International Development. Together, they worked with Najaf's Governor and other local officials to rebuild the local police force, repair residents' homes, refurbish schools, restore water and other essential services, re-open a soccer stadium, complete with new lights and fresh sod. Fifteen months later, new businesses and markets have opened in some of Najaf's poorest areas, religious pilgrims are visiting the city again, construction

jobs are putting local residents back to work. One of the largest projects was the rebuilding of the Najaf Teaching Hospital, which had been looted and turned into a military fortress by the militia. Thanks to the efforts by Iraqi doctors and local leaders, and with the help of American personnel, the hospital is now open and capable of serving hundreds of patients each day.

Najaf is now in the hands of elected government officials. An elected provincial council is at work drafting plans to bring more tourism and commerce to the city. Political life has returned, and campaigns for the upcoming elections have begun, with different parties competing for the vote. The Iraqi police are now responsible for day-to-day security in Najaf. An Iraqi battalion has consumed [assumed] * control of the former American military base, and our forces are now about 40 minutes outside the city.

A U.S. Army sergeant explains our role this way: "We go down there if they call us, and that doesn't happen very often. Usually, we just stay out of their way." Residents of Najaf are also seeing visible progress, and they have no intention of returning to the days of tyranny and terror. One man from Najaf put it this way: "Three years ago, we were in ruins. One year ago, we were fighting in the streets. Now look at the people, shopping and eating and not in fear."

There is still plenty of work left to be done in Najaf. Like most of Iraq, the reconstruction in Najaf has proceeded with fits and starts since liberation. It's been uneven. Sustaining electric power remains a major challenge, and construction has begun on three new substations to help boost capacity. Because there is a shortage of clean water, new water treatment and sewage units are now being installed. Security in Najaf has improved substantially, but threats remain. There are still kidnappings, and militias and armed gangs are exerting more influence than they should in a free society. Local leaders and Iraqi security forces are confronting these problems, and we're helping them.

Another area that has seen tremendous gains is the ancient city of Mosul. Mosul is one of Iraq's largest cities, and it's the home

* White House correction.

of a diverse population of Sunni Arabs, Kurds, and other ethnic groups. Mosul is also the city where our troops brought justice to Saddam's sons in the summer of 2003. In the months after liberation, Mosul was relatively quiet, and so we began to redeploy our forces elsewhere in the country. And when the terrorists and Saddamists infiltrated the city, the Iraqi police were not up to the task of stopping them. These thugs intimidated residents, and they overwhelmed the police.

By late last year, terrorists and Saddamists had gained control of much of Mosul, and they launched a series of car bombings and ambushes, including an attack on a coalition mess tent that killed 14 American servicemembers. The terrorists and Saddamists killed innocent Iraqi civilians, and they left them in the streets with notes pinned to their bodies threatening others. American and Iraqi forces responded with a series of coordinated strikes on the most dangerous parts of the city. Together we killed, captured, and cleared out many of the terrorists and Saddamists, and we helped the Iraqi police and legitimate political leaders regain control of the city. As the Iraqis have grown in strength and ability, they have taken more responsibility for Mosul's security. Coalition forces have moved into a supporting role.

As security in Mosul improved, we began working with local leaders to accelerate reconstruction. Iraqis upgraded key roads and bridges over the Tigris River, rebuilt schools and hospitals, and started refurbishing the Mosul Airport. Police stations and firehouses were rebuilt, and Iraqis have made major improvements in the city's water and sewage network.

Mosul still faces challenges. Like Najaf, Mosul's infrastructure was devastated during Saddam's reign. The city is still not receiving enough electricity, so Iraqis have a major new project underway to expand the Mosul power substation. Terrorist intimidation is still a concern. This past week, people hanging election posters were attacked and killed. Yet freedom is taking hold in Mosul, and residents are making their voices heard. Turnout in the—for the October referendum was over 50 percent in the Province where Mosul is

located. That's more than triple the turnout in the January election. And there's heavy campaigning going on in Mosul for next week's election.

In places like Mosul and Najaf, residents are seeing tangible progress in their lives. They're gaining a personal stake in a peaceful future, and their confidence in Iraq's democracy is growing. The progress of these cities is being replicated across much of Iraq, and more of Iraq's people are seeing the real benefits that a democratic society can bring.

Throughout Iraq, we're also seeing challenges common to young democracies. Corruption is a problem at both the national and local levels of the Iraqi government. We will not tolerate fraud, so our Embassy in Baghdad is helping to demand transparency and accountability for the money being invested in reconstruction. We've helped the Iraqi people establish institutions like a Commission on Public Integrity and a stronger Supreme Board of Audit to improve oversight of the rebuilding process. Listen, the Iraqi people expect money to be spent openly and honestly, and so do the American people.

Another problem is the infiltration of militia groups into some Iraqi security forces, especially the Iraqi police. We're helping Iraqis deal with this problem by embedding coalition transition teams in Iraqi units to mentor police and soldiers. We're also working with Iraq leaders at all levels of government to establish high standards for police recruiting. In a free Iraq, former militia members must shift their loyalty to the National Government and learn to operate under the rule of law.

As we help Iraq's leaders confront these challenges, we're also helping them rebuild a sound economy that will grow and deliver a better life for their people. Iraq is a nation with the potential for tremendous prosperity. The country has a young and educated workforce; they've got abundant land and water; and they have among the largest oil resources in the world. Yet for decades, Saddam Hussein used Iraq's wealth to enrich himself and a privileged few. As he built palaces, Saddam neglected the country's infrastructure. He ruined the economy, and he squandered the most valuable resource in Iraq, the talent and the energy of the Iraqi people.

So we're helping the new Iraq Government reverse decades of economic destruction, reinvigorate its economy, and make responsible reforms. We're helping Iraqis to rebuild their infrastructure and establish the institutions of a market economy. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong in Iraq. Our policies are aimed at unleashing the creativity of the Iraqi people.

Like our approach to training Iraqi security forces, our approach to helping Iraqis rebuild has changed and improved. When we started the reconstruction progress in the spring of 2003, our focus was on repairing and building large-scale infrastructure, such as electrical plants and large water treatment facilities. We moved forward with some of those large projects, yet we found our approach was not meeting the priorities of the Iraqi people. In many places, especially those targeted by the terrorists and Saddamists, the most urgent needs were smaller, localized projects, such as sewer lines and city roads. Delivering visible progress to the Iraqi people required us to focus on projects that could be completed rapidly.

And so in consultation with the Iraqi Government, we started using more resources to fund smaller, local projects that could deliver rapid, noticeable improvements and offer an alternative to the destructive vision of the terrorists. We increased the amount of money our military commanders had at their disposal for flexible use. We worked with Iraqi leaders to provide more contracts directly to Iraqi firms. And by adapting our reconstruction efforts to meet needs on the ground, we're helping Iraqi leaders serve their people, and Iraqis are beginning to see that a free life will be a better life.

Reconstruction has not always gone as well as we had hoped, primarily because of the security challenges on the ground. Rebuilding a nation devastated by a dictator is a large undertaking. It's even harder when terrorists are trying to blow up that which the Iraqis are trying to build. The terrorists and Saddamists have been able to slow progress, but they haven't been able to stop it.

In the space of 2½ years, we have helped Iraqis conduct nearly 3,000 renovation projects at schools, train more than 30,000 teachers, distribute more than 8 million text-

books, rebuild irrigation infrastructure to help more than 400,000 rural Iraqis, and improve drinking water for more than 3 million people.

Our coalition has helped Iraqis introduce a new currency, reopen their stock exchange, extend \$21 million in microcredit and small-business loans to Iraqi entrepreneurs. As a result of these efforts and Iraq's newfound freedom, more than 30,000 new Iraqi businesses have registered since liberation. And according to a recent survey, more than three-quarters of Iraqi businessowners anticipate growth in the national economy over the next 2 years.

This economic development and growth will be really important to addressing the high unemployment rate across parts of that country. Iraq's market-based reforms are gradually returning the proud country to the global economy. Iraqis have negotiated significant debt relief. And for the first time in 25 years, Iraq has completed an economic report card with the International Monetary Fund, a signal to the world financial community that Iraqis are serious about reform and determined to take their rightful place in the world economy.

With all these improvements, we're helping the Iraqi Government deliver meaningful change for the Iraqi people. This is another important blow against the Saddamists and the terrorists. Iraqis who were disillusioned with their situation are beginning to see a hopeful future for their country. Many who once questioned democracy are coming off the fence; they're choosing the side of freedom. This is quiet, steady progress. It doesn't always make the headlines in the evening news. But it's real, and it's important, and it is unmistakable to those who see it close up.

One of those who has seen that progress is Democratic Senator Joe Lieberman. Senator Lieberman has traveled to Iraq 4 times in the past 17 months, and the article he wrote when he returned from his most recent trip provides a clear description of the situation on the ground. Here's what Senator Lieberman wrote about the Iraq he saw: "Progress is visible and practical. There are

many more cars on the streets, satellite television dishes on the roofs, and literally millions more cell phones in Iraq hands than before.” He describes an Iraqi poll showing that, “two-thirds of Iraqis say they are better off than they were under Saddam Hussein.”

Senator Lieberman goes on, “Does America have a good plan for doing this, a strategy for victory in Iraq? Yes, we do. And it’s important to make clear to the American people that the plan has not remained stubbornly still, but has changed over the years.” The Senator says that mistakes have been made. But he goes on to say that he is worried about a bigger mistake. He writes, “What a colossal mistake it would be for America’s bipartisan political leadership to choose this moment in history to lose its will and, in the famous phrase, to seize defeat from the jaws of the coming victory.” Senator Lieberman is right.

There is an important debate going on in our Nation’s Capital about Iraq, and the fact that we can debate these issues openly in the midst of a dangerous war brings credit to our democracy. In this debate, some are calling for us to withdraw from Iraq on a fixed timetable, without regard to conditions on the ground. Recently, one Democratic leader came out in support of an artificial deadline for withdrawal and said an immediate withdrawal of our troops would, “make the American people safer, our military stronger, and bring some stability to the region.” That’s the wrong policy for our Government. Withdrawing on an artificial deadline would endanger the American people, would harm our military, and make the Middle East less stable. It would give the terrorists exactly what they want.

In a letter to the terrorist leader Zarqawi, the Al Qaida leader Zawahiri has outlined his goals in Iraq with these steps: “Expel the Americans from Iraq; establish an Islamic authority over as much territory as you can, to spread its power in Iraq; extend the jihad wave.” The terrorists hope America will withdraw before the job is done, so they can take over the country and turn it into a base for future attacks. Zawahiri called the Vietnam war as a reason to believe the terrorists can prevail. He wrote, quote, “The aftermath of the collapse of American power in Vietnam and how they ran and left their agents is

noteworthy.” In the past, Al Qaida has said that American pullouts from Lebanon and Somalia showed them that America was weak and could be made to run. And now the terrorists think they can make America run in Iraq, and that is not going to happen so long as I’m the Commander in Chief.

We are not going to yield the future of Iraq to men like Zarqawi, and we’re not going to yield the future of the Middle East to men like bin Laden. We will complete our mission in Iraq and leave behind a democracy that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself. Our military will continue to hunt down the terrorists in Iraq and to prepare the Iraqi security forces to take over more of the fight and control more of the territory on their own. We will continue to help the Iraqis rebuild their cities and their lives so they can enjoy the prosperity that freedom brings. We will continue to stand with the Iraqi people as they move forward on the path of democracy. And when victory is achieved, our troops will then come home with the honor they’ve earned.

Next week, I’ll discuss the political element of our strategy in greater detail, how we’re helping Iraqis build a democracy that will be a strong ally in this global war against the terrorists. One of the great lessons of history is that free societies are peaceful societies, and free nations give their citizens a path to resolve their differences peacefully through the democratic process.

Democracy can be difficult and complicated and even chaotic. It can take years of hard work to build a healthy civil society. Iraqis have to overcome many challenges, including longstanding ethnic and religious tensions and the legacy of brutal repression. But they’re learning that democracy is the only way to build a just and peaceful society, because it’s the only system that gives every citizen a voice in determining its future.

Before our mission in Iraq is accomplished, there will be tough days ahead. Victory in Iraq will require continued sacrifice by our men and women in uniform and the continued determination of our citizens. There will be good days, and there will be bad days in this war. I reject the pessimists in Washington who say, “We can’t win this war.” Yet every day, we can be confident of

the outcome, because we know that freedom has got the power to overcome terror and tyranny. We can be confident about the outcome, because we know the character and strength of the men and women in the fight. Their courage makes all Americans proud.

This generation of Americans in uniform is every bit as brave and determined as the generation that went to war after the attack on our Nation 64 years ago today. Like those who came before, they are defeating a dangerous enemy, bringing freedom to millions, and transforming a troubled part of the world. And like those who came before, they will always have the gratitude of the American people.

Our Nation will uphold the cause for which our men and women in uniform are risking their lives. We will continue to hunt down the terrorists wherever they hide. We will help the Iraqi people so they can build a free society in the heart of a troubled region. And by laying the foundations of freedom in Iraq and across the broader Middle East, we will lay the foundation of peace for generations to come.

Thanks for giving me a chance to come and speak to you today. May God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:44 a.m. at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Richard N. Haass, president, and Nancy E. Roman, vice president and director, Council on Foreign Relations; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Gov. Asaad Abu Gelal of Najaf Province, Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; and Ayman Al-Zawahiri, founder of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and senior Al Qaida associate. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Death of Carroll Campbell

December 7, 2005

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the loss of Governor Carroll Campbell. Carroll Campbell was a strong leader, a committed public servant, and a good friend. For more than two decades, he represented the people of South Carolina as a State legislator, Mem-

ber of Congress, and Governor. He was a tireless advocate for the State he loved and was known for his integrity and character. We join South Carolinians and Americans around the Nation in mourning the passing of Carroll Campbell, and we send our thoughts and prayers to Iris and the entire Campbell family.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Consolidated Report on the Deployment of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces

December 7, 2005

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am providing this supplemental consolidated report, prepared by my Administration and consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93-148), as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed about deployments of U.S. combat-equipped armed forces around the world. This supplemental report covers operations in support of the war on terror, Kosovo, and Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The War on Terror

Since September 24, 2001, I have reported, consistent with Public Law 107-40 and the War Powers Resolution, on the combat operations in Afghanistan against al-Qaida terrorists and their Taliban supporters, which began on October 7, 2001, and the deployment of various combat-equipped and combat-support forces to a number of locations in the Central, Pacific, and Southern Command areas of operation in support of those operations and of other operations in our war on terror.

I will direct additional measures as necessary in the exercise of the right of the United States to self-defense and to protect U.S. citizens and interests. Such measures may include short-notice deployments of special operations and other forces for sensitive operations in various locations throughout the world. It is not possible to know at this time either the precise scope or duration of the deployment of U.S. Armed Forces necessary to counter the terrorist threat to the United States.

United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous coalition partners, continue to conduct the U.S. campaign to pursue al-Qaida terrorists and to eliminate support to al-Qaida. These operations have been successful in seriously degrading al-Qaida's training capabilities. United States Armed Forces, with the assistance of numerous coalition partners, ended the Taliban regime and are actively pursuing and engaging remnant al-Qaida and Taliban fighters in Afghanistan. Approximately 280 U.S. personnel are also assigned to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) in Afghanistan. The U.N. Security Council authorized the ISAF in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1386 of December 20, 2001, and has reaffirmed its authorization since that time, most recently, for a 12-month period from October 13, 2005, in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1623 of September 13, 2005. The mission of the ISAF under NATO command is to assist the Government of Afghanistan in creating a safe and secure environment that allows reconstruction and the reestablishment of Afghan authorities. Currently, all 26 NATO nations contribute to the ISAF. Ten non-NATO contributing countries also participate by providing military and other support personnel to the ISAF.

The United States continues to detain several hundred al-Qaida and Taliban fighters who are believed to pose a continuing threat to the United States and its interests. The combat-equipped and combat-support forces deployed to Naval Base, Guantanamo Bay, Cuba, in the U.S. Southern Command area of operations since January 2002 continue to conduct secure detention operations for the approximately 500 enemy combatants at Guantanamo Bay.

The U.N. Security Council authorized a Multinational Force (MNF) in Iraq under unified command in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1511 of October 16, 2003, and reaffirmed its authorization in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1546 of June 8, 2004. In U.N. Security Council Resolution 1637 of November 8, 2005, the Security Council, noting the Iraqi Government's request to retain the presence of the MNF, extended the MNF mandate for a period ending on December 31, 2006. Under Resolutions 1546

and 1637, the mission of the MNF is to contribute to security and stability in Iraq, as reconstruction continues, until the completion of Iraq's political transformation. These contributions have included assisting in building the capability of the Iraqi security forces and institutions, as the Iraqi people, represented by the Transitional National Assembly, drafted and approved a constitution and progressed toward the establishment of a constitutionally elected government. The U.S. contribution to the MNF is approximately 160,000 military personnel.

In furtherance of our efforts against terrorists who pose a continuing and imminent threat to the United States, our friends and allies, and our forces abroad, the United States continues to work with friends and allies in areas around the globe. United States combat-equipped and combat-support forces are located in the Horn of Africa region, and the U.S. forces headquarters element in Djibouti provides command and control support as necessary for military operations against al-Qaida and other international terrorists in the Horn of Africa region, including Yemen. These forces also assist in enhancing counter terrorism capabilities in Kenya, Ethiopia, Yemen, and Djibouti. In addition, the United States continues to conduct maritime interception operations on the high seas in the areas of responsibility of all of the geographic combatant commanders. These maritime operations have the responsibility to stop the movement, arming, or financing of international terrorists.

Nato-led Kosovo Force (KFOR)

As noted in previous reports regarding U.S. contributions in support of peace-keeping efforts in Kosovo, the U.N. Security Council authorized Member States to establish KFOR in U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244 of June 10, 1999. The mission of KFOR is to provide an international security presence in order to deter renewed hostilities; verify and, if necessary, enforce the terms of the Military Technical Agreement between NATO and the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (which is now Serbia and Montenegro); enforce the terms of the Undertaking on Demilitarization and Transformation of the former Kosovo Liberation

Army; provide day-to-day operational direction to the Kosovo Protection Corps; and maintain a safe and secure environment to facilitate the work of the U.N. Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK).

Currently, there are 25 NATO nations contributing to KFOR. Eleven non-NATO contributing countries also participate by providing military personnel and other support personnel to KFOR. The U.S. contribution to KFOR in Kosovo is about 1,700 U.S. military personnel, or approximately 10 percent of KFOR's total strength of approximately 17,000 personnel. Additionally, U.S. military personnel occasionally operate from Macedonia, Albania, and Greece in support of KFOR operations.

The U.S. forces have been assigned to a sector principally centered around Gnjilane in the eastern region of Kosovo. For U.S. KFOR forces, as for KFOR generally, maintaining a safe and secure environment remains the primary military task. The KFOR operates under NATO command and control and rules of engagement. The KFOR coordinates with and supports the UNMIK at most levels; provides a security presence in towns, villages, and the countryside; and organizes checkpoints and patrols in key areas to provide security, protect minorities, resolve disputes, and help instill in the community a feeling of confidence.

In accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1244, UNMIK continues to transfer additional competencies to the Kosovar Provisional Institutions of Self-Government, which includes the President, Prime Minister, multiple ministries, and the Kosovo Assembly. The UNMIK retains ultimate authority in some sensitive areas such as police, justice, and ethnic minority affairs.

NATO continues formally to review KFOR's mission at 6-month intervals. These reviews provide a basis for assessing current force levels, future requirements, force structure, force reductions, and the eventual withdrawal of KFOR. NATO has adopted the Joint Operations Area plan to regionalize and rationalize its force structure in the Balkans. The UNMIK international police and the Kosovo Police Service (KPS) have full responsibility for public safety and policing throughout Kosovo except in the area of

South Mitrovica, where KFOR and UNMIK share this responsibility due to security concerns. The UNMIK international police and KPS also have begun to assume responsibility for guarding patrimonial sites and established border-crossing checkpoints. The KFOR augments security in particularly sensitive areas or in response to particular threats as needed.

NATO Headquarters in Bosnia and Herzegovina

Pursuant to the June 2004 decision made by NATO Heads of State and Government, and in accordance with U.N. Security Council Resolution 1575 of November 22, 2004, NATO concluded its Stabilization Force operations in Bosnia-Herzegovina and established NATO Headquarters-Sarajevo to continue to assist in implementing the Peace Agreement in conjunction with a newly established European Force. The NATO Headquarters-Sarajevo, to which approximately 220 U.S. personnel are assigned, is, with the European Force, the legal successor to SFOR. The principal tasks of NATO Headquarters-Sarajevo are providing advice on defense reform and performing operational supporting tasks, such as counterterrorism and supporting the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia.

I have directed the participation of U.S. Armed Forces in all of these operations pursuant to my constitutional authority to conduct U.S. foreign relations and as Commander in Chief and Chief Executive. Officials of my Administration and I communicate regularly with the leadership and other Members of Congress with regard to these deployments, and we will continue to do so.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 9.

**Remarks at a Reception for
Senatorial Candidate Mark Kennedy
in Minneapolis, Minnesota**

December 9, 2005

Thanks for coming. Thank you all. I appreciate the warm reception. *[Laughter]* This is a Senator Kennedy I can work with. I have come because I know Mark, and I know he is going to make a great United States Senator for the people of Minnesota.

He's a down-to-earth fellow. After all, he was raised in rural Minnesota. He brings commonsense values to Washington, DC. He's not one of these kind of fancy guys; he's a guy that gets the job done. He focuses on results. He works on behalf of the people. He'll make a great United States Senator from Minnesota.

Laura sends her love. Mark and I both married above ourselves. *[Laughter]* I'm proud to be up here with Debbie Kennedy as well. I met the—Sarah—the Kennedy family, if you don't know it, is quite large. *[Laughter]* If they all vote—*[laughter]*—it's a landslide. *[Laughter]* But Laura sends her very best.

One of the important things about running for office is to have a family that stands with you. It can be a little lonely out there at times. But there's nothing better than coming home to a great wife, and in Mark's case, and a family that dearly loves him. One reason to send Mark Kennedy to the United States Senate is, he understands the importance of family in our society today.

I want to thank the Governor of your great state, Tim Pawlenty, for being here. He's a fine man and doing a great job as Governor. I want to thank the Lieutenant Governor who is here. I want to thank all the State and local officials.

I want to thank my friend Norm Coleman. Congressman Jim Ramstad is with us today. Jim, I appreciate you coming—newlywed, I might add. Mark and I flew over with Congressman John Kline. You talk about a patriot and a good man who needs to be reelected to the United States Congress.

I want to thank a longtime family friend of ours, Rudy Boschwitz for his great leadership. I appreciate the Boschwitz family for being here. All the Boschwitz boys. *[Laugh-*

ter] And they didn't ask for any advice, but I gave it, and I said, "Listen to your mother." *[Laughter]* Mark, you need to be listening to yours too. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank all the grassroots activists. Thank you all for coming. Here's the deal. It's important to contribute like you have. But your contributions are going to be needed to win this campaign, and these are contributions of talking to your neighbors, going to your community centers and houses of worship and places you work, and telling people that when you've got somebody who's honest and decent like Mark Kennedy, they need to send him to the United States Senate for the good of all people of Minnesota.

So I want to thank you for what you have done for this good man and what you're going to do. I know he's going to work hard. He was just telling me today how many parades he's marched in. *[Laughter]* That's a lot, by the way. *[Laughter]* Showed me that old football schedules that he passes out. *[Laughter]* He's a grassroots-type fellow, gets down to where the people are. He tells them what's on his mind, and when he says something, he does it. And that's the kind of people we need in Washington, DC.

I also look forward to working with Mark. We're facing—we're living in historic times. These are dangerous times, and they're times of great opportunity. And I'm looking forward to working with Senator Mark Kennedy to secure this country, to do our duty in Washington, DC, and do everything we can to protect the people.

Our lives and the life of our Nation changed on September the 11th, 2001, and we must never forget the lessons of that day. We must deal with threats before they fully materialize. There's an enemy—*[applause]*. We have got to see the world the way it is, not the way we'd like it to be. There is an enemy which hates America. They hate us because we stand for what they don't believe in. We believe in freedom. We believe in the freedom for people to worship any way they want in the United States of America. We believe that people can speak their mind freely. We believe that people can write their editorials the way they want to write them. We believe in freedom, and we're not going to change.

And we face an enemy that has got an ideology and a strategy and a tactical plan to achieve their strategy. These people have hijacked a great religion and turned it to their advantage—they think. They're trying to spread a totalitarian empire from Indonesia to Spain. How do I know? Because they've told us. They've told us pointblank what they're looking for. They're trying to drive the United States out of the Middle East so they can take over other countries to spread their dark view of the world. They want safe haven from which to launch attacks.

Think about Afghanistan. They had achieved their objective for a short period of time. They had taken over Afghanistan so they could plot and plan their attacks, one of which was the September the 11th attack. I told the world—and I meant it, “If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist.” Our troops liberated the people of Afghanistan and routed the Taliban. And that part of the world is better off, and our country is more secure because democracy has taken hold in Afghanistan.

The enemy has made it abundantly clear that Iraq is a central front in their war against humanity. That's what they've said. And our Nation must understand that Iraq is the central front in the war against the terrorists. And that's why we have—we're there for one reason, and that is to achieve a victory, to make America more secure.

We took the threat seriously, and we removed that threat. And now our strategy is twofold. On the one hand, we're helping the brave Iraqis establish a democracy. Any way you look at it, these people that lived under the brutal thumb of a tyrant have made incredible progress. They had January elections. They approved a Constitution. And next week, they're voting for a 4-year Government. Democracy is making progress because of the courage of the Iraqi people.

And the second prong of our strategy is to train Iraqis so they can take the fight to the enemy, so they can bring people to justice. And we're making progress there as well. Of course, it's been uneven at times. But it's important for you to know that the Iraqis want to secure their democracy, and democracy helps make this world more peaceful.

Now, there's a debate raging in Washington, DC. There are some who are arguing for a fixed timetable of withdrawal. I think it's the wrong policy, and so does Mark Kennedy. A fixed timetable of withdrawal would embolden the enemy, would confuse the Iraqis, and would send the wrong signal to our young men and women in uniform. The United States of America—[*applause*].

We have got a strategy for victory, and we'll see that strategy through. We will defeat the terrorists in Iraq. We will not let Al Qaida take a stronghold—get a stronghold in Iraq. We'll help this country develop a democracy, which will send a powerful signal to people in Damascus and Tehran.

Our short-term objective is to stay on the hunt and bring the killers to justice before they hurt us again. I'd rather be defeating them there than facing them here at home. And our long-term objective is to spread the power of democracy and freedom.

You know, I recently went to the Far East, as you may know, and visited with my friend Prime Minister Koizumi of Japan. He's a good fellow, and he's a good friend. It struck me then, like it has in previous times, about how ironic it is, in a way, that the son of an 18-year-old Navy fighter pilot who fought the Japanese is now talking peace with the leader of a country that was our sworn enemy. Think about that for a minute. Sixty years ago, a lot of folks, a lot of your relatives, signed up to fight an enemy that attacked us. By the way, we lost more people on September the 11th than we did when Pearl Harbor was bombed. And a lot of people went and fought, and there was a lot of death and destruction. And yet, 60 years later—which seems like a long time when you're 59—[*laughter*]—but it's really not all that long in the march of history—I'm talking with Prime Minister Koizumi about how to keep the peace. So something happened between the time that my dad and your relatives signed up in World War II, and I'm talking peace with Koizumi. And what happened was, Japan became a democracy.

These are historic times. We have an obligation and a duty to protect the American people. And we'll do just that. That's why Mark Kennedy needs to be in the United States Senate. And we have an opportunity—

and we have an historic opportunity to lay the foundation of peace for generations to come. I'm absolutely convinced that someday, 50 or 60 years from now, an American President will be speaking to an audience saying, "Thank goodness a generation of Americans rose to the challenge and helped people be liberated from tyranny. Democracy spread, and the world is more peaceful for it."

And there's no doubt in my mind Mark Kennedy understands the stakes and shares the vision for laying that foundation for peace. He needs to be a United States Senator from the State of Minnesota.

I've enjoyed working with Mark Kennedy on economic matters. We share a philosophy that says this: The role of Government is not to create wealth; the role of Government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit is strong in America.

We've been through some tough times in this country. As you might recall, we had a recession, some corporate scandals, an attack on our country, a war, major hurricanes. And yet the third quarter growth in 2005 was 4.3 percent. We've added 4.5 million jobs since May of 2003. The unemployment rate in Minnesota is 3.7 percent. The unemployment rate nationally is 5 percent. Home-ownership is at an alltime high. More minorities own a home than ever before in our Nation's history. This economy is strong, and it's going to be stronger.

And one reason it's strong is we cut the taxes on the people. We understand that when somebody has got more money to spend or save, this economy is going to grow. And Mark Kennedy understands that. He also understands that we must have certainty in the Tax Code. We need to make the tax cuts we passed permanent. By the way, when you hear somebody say, "Don't make the tax cuts permanent," that's Washington, DC, code for saying, "We're going to raise your taxes." [Laughter] That's what that is.

And the other thing we've done is, we've worked hard to make sure that we've been wise about how we spend your money. Each year we've cut the rate of growth of nonsecurity discretionary spending. I'm hoping to sign a series of appropriation bills that will actually have negative growth in nondis-

cretionary—in nonsecurity discretionary spending, the first time since Ronald Reagan was the President. Mark Kennedy is a fiscal conservative. He is a CPA. It seems like to me we got enough lawyers in the United States Senate; why shouldn't we have a CPA in the United States Senate?

I want to talk about a couple of more issues. We got a farm bill coming up. This is an important farm State. It seems like to me you want to have a United States Senator who can come in the Oval Office and talk to the President about Minnesota farmers. We passed a good farm bill. I want to thank Mark for working on it. And in that farm bill was not only a safety net for our farmers but a commitment to open up markets for Minnesota farmers. Here's what I think. I think if you're good at something, like the Minnesota farmers are, they ought to be given opportunity to sell product all across the world.

In the farm bill, there was a strong conservation title called the CRP program. It's good for Minnesota ranchers and farmers. If you're interested in a strong ag economy like we got today, if you're a Minnesota farmer, there's only one man suited to be the United States Senator in this race, and that's Mark Kennedy.

Health care is an issue. It's an issue for patients. It's an issue for docs. It's an issue for small-business owners. We intend to do something about it. There's a philosophical divide, however, and there will be one in this race. There are some who believe that the Government ought to be making all the decisions. And there's people like Mark and I who believe that the best decisionmaking in health care is between the patient and the doctor. And that's why we strongly support health savings accounts, associated health plans for small businesses, community health centers, a reformed Medicare program.

But I want to talk about one other issue in health care. You cannot have affordable and available health care if your doctors are getting sued all the time. We got a problem in this country. We got too many docs being run out of the practice of medicine because of these junk lawsuits. And you're paying for it twice. You're paying for it as a result of higher doctor bills when you go to the office,

and you're paying for it through higher—because the Federal Government has got a huge, huge share of health care spending.

See, when I first went to Washington, I said, "Well, this is a local issue. The Governors can take care of it." But then I realized all these frivolous lawsuits and the defensive practice of medicine and the increase of premiums for docs are costing us billions of dollars a year at the Federal level—through Medicaid, Medicare, and veterans spending, for example. So medical liability is a national problem that requires a national solution. And I look forward to working with United States Senator Mark Kennedy to make sure health care is available and affordable for Minnesota patients.

There are three branches of Government, as you know. Well, some of them back there think there's four branches. [*Laughter*] The Constitution recognizes three branches. [*Laughter*] I'm proudly part of the executive branch. You'll be proudly part of the—he is a part of the legislative branch. And we've got to make sure that the judiciary—judicial branch of Government functions the way the framers of our Constitution wanted it to function, and that is to have people who serve on our bench who are not going to try to legislate but who will strictly interpret the Constitution of the United States of America.

I look forward to working with the United States Senator Mark Kennedy, who will make sure that the judges I name, those strict constructionists, those who will not try to legislate from the bench, are given an up-or-down vote on the floor of the United States Senate and confirmed—judges like John Roberts and Judge Sam Alito.

So I've come to thank you for supporting a good man. I've come to lay out my opinion, and that is, he's the right person for the job. He thinks right. He acts right. He's not one of these kind of politicians that takes a poll and then tries to figure out what to believe. We got too many of those in Washington, DC. We need straight shooters, people of principle, and people who care deeply about the State of Minnesota. And that person is Mark Kennedy.

Thanks for coming, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:34 p.m. at the Hilton Minneapolis Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Senatorial candidate Kennedy's wife, Debbie, and his daughter, Sarah; Gov. Timothy Pawlenty and Lt. Gov. Carol Molnau of Minnesota; Rudy Boschwitz, head of the U.S. delegation to the United Nations Commission on Human Rights; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

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.

December 3

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush traveled to Camp David, MD.

December 4

In the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush attended the Kennedy Center Honors Gala at the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

December 5

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Greensboro, NC, where, upon arrival, he greeted USA Freedom Corps volunteer Winfield Rose.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Kernersville, NC, where he participated in a tour of the John Deere-Hitachi Construction Machinery Corp. excavator assembly line. Later, he returned to Washington, DC.

December 6

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing followed by a hurricane briefing. Later, in the Yellow Oval Room, he and Mrs. Bush participated in an interview and photo shoot with *People* magazine.

In the afternoon, at the historic Evermay house, the President attended a Republican National Committee luncheon. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he met with Jewish educators.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt of Belgium to the White House on January 17, 2006.

The White House announced that the January 11, 2006, visit of Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany to the White House has been rescheduled for January 13.

December 7

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil to discuss the upcoming World Trade Organization ministerial conference in Hong Kong. Later, he had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President had lunch with Vice President Dick Cheney. Later, he participated in a photo opportunity with White House interns.

Later in the afternoon, in the Residence, the President met with congressional leaders to discuss legislative priorities.

In the evening, the President hosted a holiday reception at the White House.

December 8

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with Chancellor Wolfgang Schuessel of Austria. Then, in the Roosevelt Room, he participated in a briefing with Republican Members of Congress on the war on terror.

In the afternoon, on the State Floor, the President hosted a holiday reception for White House staff.

In the evening, on the State Floor, the President hosted another holiday reception for White House staff.

December 9

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld. He then participated in a photo opportunity with Make-a-Wish-Foundation children.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Minneapolis, MN, where, upon ar-

rival, he greeted USA Freedom Corps volunteer Nancy Sager.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, the President hosted a holiday reception.

The President declared a major disaster in Alaska and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe fall storm, tidal surges, and flooding on September 22–26.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released December 5

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Fact sheet: President Bush's Agenda for Economic Growth

Fact sheet: Progress on the 9/11 Commission Recommendations

Released December 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of Prime Minister Verhofstadt of Belgium

Released December 7

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 584, H.R. 680, and H.R. 1101

Fact sheet: Rebuilding Iraq

Released December 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Released December 9

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Trent Duffy

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Alaska

**Acts Approved
by the President**

Approved December 7

H.R. 584 / Public Law 109–125
Department of the Interior Volunteer Recruitment Act of 2005

H.R. 680 / Public Law 109–126
To direct the Secretary of the Interior to convey certain land held in trust for the Paiute Indian Tribe of Utah to the City of Richfield, Utah, and for other purposes

H.R. 1101 / Public Law 109–127
To revoke a Public Land Order with respect to certain lands erroneously included in the Cibola National Wildlife Refuge, California