

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:16 a.m. at the Park Hyatt Philadelphia. In his remarks, he referred to Buntzie Churchill, president, and William R. Sasso, vice-chairman, board of directors, World Affairs Council of Philadelphia; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Prime Minister Ibrahim al-Jafari, Deputy President Ghazi al-Ujayl al-Yawr, Minister of Defense Sadun al-Dulaymi, and Speaker of the Transitional National Assembly Hajim al-Hassani of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

### **Statement on the Death of Gebran Tueni**

*December 12, 2005*

The murder of Gebran Tueni, a Lebanese patriot, Member of Parliament, and publisher of one of Lebanon's leading newspapers, is yet another act of violence aimed at subjugating Lebanon to Syrian domination and silencing the Lebanese press. Mr. Tueni was a well-known opponent of Syrian interference in Lebanon. Like so many other brave Lebanese, Mr. Tueni knew that his courageous stand on behalf of Lebanon's independence and freedom carried great risk. Despite these dangers to his life, he returned to Lebanon a day before his assassination to continue his efforts to promote freedom and democracy in his country.

I strongly condemn the savage attack on Mr. Tueni and extend my condolences to his family and the families of the other innocent victims killed in Lebanon. Syria must comply with United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1559, 1595, and 1636 and end its interference in Lebanon once and for all.

### **Remarks Following a Roundtable Discussion on Medicare in Springfield, Virginia**

*December 13, 2005*

Dr. Mark McClellan and I have just heard from folks who have been analyzing and/or helping people analyze the current Medicare drug benefit and current Medicare—modernized Medicare program.

Awhile ago, I worked with the Congress to modernize and strengthen Medicare for

our seniors. And the reason we did, because if the Government commits to health care for our seniors, it ought to be a program that does the following things: One, provide modern medicine; and two, give seniors a variety of options from which to match their needs to that which is available.

We fully recognize that for some seniors, that this is a daunting task. When you give people choice and options, it is—it can be a situation where people say, “I don't really—this is something I may not want to do.” And so I want to assure the seniors the following things: One, the Medicare—the new Medicare plan is voluntary; it's optional; two, that there are people around who are willing to help explain the program for you and to you. There's—when you have choices to make, there's going to be some—you do have choices to make—and somebody will be able to sit down with you and explain why this program is good.

For example, Eloise is talking about the fact that she's spending a lot on prescription drugs, and under the new Medicare plan, she's able to choose a program that will substantially reduce the cost of her prescription drugs. Low-income seniors will get substantial help. People will be able to match a program to their specific needs.

And what we want to assure seniors around the country is that there is help. You can call 1-800-Medicare. You can get on the Internet with medicare.gov. Ask your son or daughter; ask people in your church; ask people in AARP; ask people in your community center to help you look at what's available for you. It's a good deal. It's a good deal for our seniors.

And so one of the reasons we have come today is to encourage people to see what is available in the new law. Enrollment began in mid-November. The program will begin in January of this year. We urge you to look at the options available to you and sign up by May of next year.

This is Government that has recognized it has a responsibility to help our seniors. And the bill I was fortunate enough to sign into law does just that.

Again, I want to thank you all for joining us. I want to thank you for your hard work, Charlotte. Ellen DeMucci is a pharmacist.

One of the interesting groups that are reaching out to our seniors are those who are behind the counter. Ellen and her fellow pharmacists interface with seniors on a daily basis. They know the needs of seniors. They, in many cases, have analyzed what's available for our seniors. They're available to help seniors fill out the forms. She has worked with Eloise.

Again, I urge our fellow citizens to help our seniors realize what's available in this wonderful program. And I finally want to thank Senator Allen and Congressman Davis for joining us as well. They're interested in this program. They're interested in the people of Virginia, and they want to make sure the seniors of Virginia get all the options available for them to choose from.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:36 a.m. at the Greenspring Village Retirement Community.

### **Remarks to the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars** *December 14, 2005*

Thank you very much. Please be seated. Thank you for the warm welcome. I'm delighted to be here with the men and women of the Wilson Center. According to your mission statement, the Center was created to bring together two groups, political leaders and scholars. I see some of the political leaders who are here, and I presume you've invited me to uphold the scholars' end. [*Laughter*]

I've come to discuss an issue of vital importance to the American people, and that is victory in the war on terror. On September the 11th, 2001, our Nation awoke to a sudden attack, and we accepted new responsibilities. We are confronting new dangers with firm resolve. We're hunting down the terrorists and their supporters. We will fight this war without wavering, and we will prevail.

In the war on terror, Iraq is now the central front. And over the last few weeks, I've been discussing our political, economic, and military strategy for victory in that country. An historic election will take place tomorrow in Iraq. And as millions of Iraqis prepare to cast their ballots, I want to talk today about

why we went into Iraq, why we stayed in Iraq, and why we cannot and will not leave Iraq until victory is achieved.

I want to thank Ambassador Gildenhorn for inviting me and introducing me. And I want to thank the members of the Board of Trustees who are here. I appreciate Lee Hamilton, who serves our Nation so well in so many different capacities. Thank you for being the president and director of the Woodrow Wilson Center.

I'm proud to be traveling today with members of my Cabinet: Secretary of State Condi Rice; Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld; and Secretary of Homeland Security Mike Chertoff. Thank you all for coming. I appreciate the Members of the Congress who are here. Thanks for taking time to come. I want to thank the members of the diplomatic corps that have joined us today. And thank you all for being here as well.

We are living through a watershed moment in the story of freedom. Most of the focus now is on this week's elections, and rightly so. Iraqis will go to the polls to choose a government that will be the only constitutional democracy in the Arab world. Yet we need to remember that these elections are also a vital part of a broader strategy for protecting the American people against the threat of terrorism.

We saw the future the terrorists intend for our Nation on that fateful morning of September the 11th, 2001. That day we learned that vast oceans and friendly neighbors are no longer enough to protect us. September the 11th changed our country. It changed the policy of our Government. We adopted a new strategy to protect the American people: We would hunt down the terrorists wherever they hide; we would make no distinction between the terrorists and those who harbor them; and we would advance our security at home by advancing freedom in the Middle East.

September the 11th also changed the way I viewed threats like Saddam Hussein. We saw the destruction terrorists could cause with airplanes loaded with jet fuel, and we imagined the destruction they could cause with even more powerful weapons. At the time, the leaders of both political parties recognized this new reality: We cannot allow the