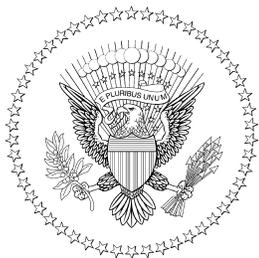


Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, May 8, 2006
Volume 42—Number 18
Pages 825–861

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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, May 5, 2006

Proclamation 8008—Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month, 2006

April 28, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

During Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month, we honor and celebrate the millions of Asian/Pacific Americans whose contributions have helped make America a strong, vibrant, and free society.

Asian/Pacific Americans represent many nations and ethnicities, each with its own culture, heritage, language, and experience. Across our country, this diverse group of people has excelled in all walks of life. Their talent and hard work have added to the success and prosperity of our Nation and helped make America a leader in the world. They have helped shape America's character and identity through their strong values, love of family, and commitment to community. America is especially grateful to the many Asian/Pacific Americans who have courageously answered the call to defend freedom as members of our Armed Forces. The sacrifices of these brave men and women help preserve the ideals of our country's founding and make the world a safer place.

To honor the achievements and contributions of Asian/Pacific Americans, the Congress, by Public Law 102-450 as amended, has designated the month of May each year as "Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month."

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 2006 as Asian/Pacific American Heritage Month. I call upon the people of the United States to learn more about the history of Asian/Pacific Americans and their role in our national story and to observe this month with appropriate programs and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of April, in

the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:50 a.m., May 1, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 2. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Proclamation 8009—Older Americans Month, 2006

April 28, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Older Americans represent the finest qualities of our Nation. During Older Americans Month, we honor our older citizens, celebrate their many accomplishments, and learn from their experiences.

Across our country, older Americans are demonstrating personal strength and compassion and are redefining the experience of aging. They are leading active lives, serving in their communities, and reaching out to their fellow Americans. Through organizations like Senior Corps, they are mentoring children, helping victims of natural disasters, and caring for citizens with disabilities. Their good works are changing the lives of many individuals and contributing to the strength of America.

This year's theme, "Choices for Independence," reflects the importance of our citizens making retirement, lifestyle, and health choices that enhance their quality of life as they grow older. My Administration is committed to strengthening senior programs and

ensuring the health and retirement security of older Americans. The Medicare Prescription Drug, Improvement, and Modernization Act of 2003 provides for the biggest improvement in health care for our seniors in nearly 40 years. In addition, the Medicare Prescription Drug Benefit, Medicare Part D, is helping seniors receive the prescription drugs they need at reduced costs.

Our Nation is blessed by our seniors. These individuals teach us lessons of the past, set an example for younger generations, and demonstrate the generosity and love for which Americans are known. This month, I encourage all our citizens to spend time with America's seniors.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim May 2006 as Older Americans Month. I appreciate our senior citizens for their achievements and contributions to our Nation. I also commend the Federal, State, local, and tribal organizations, service and health care providers, caregivers, and volunteers who dedicate their time and talents to our seniors. I urge all citizens to honor their elders and reaffirm our country's commitment to their well-being this month and throughout the year.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:50 a.m., May 2, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 3. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Proclamation 8010—Law Day,
U.S.A., 2006**

April 28, 2006

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

America's legal system is central to protecting the constitutional principles on which our Nation was founded. As we observe Law Day, we celebrate our heritage of freedom, justice, and equality under the law.

This year's Law Day theme, "Liberty Under Law: Separate Branches, Balanced Powers," honors the wisdom of the separation of powers that the Framers of our Constitution established for the Federal Government. Delegates to the Constitutional Convention recognized the risks that accompany the concentration of power and devised a system in which the Federal Government's authorities are divided among three independent branches. James Madison highlighted the importance of our Constitution's separation of powers when he wrote, "the accumulation of all powers, legislative, executive, and judiciary, in the same hands . . . may justly be pronounced the very definition of tyranny."

Throughout our Nation's history, we have been reminded repeatedly of the wisdom of the Framers' design. Our system of separation of powers has safeguarded our liberties and helped ensure that we remain a government of laws. Law Day is an occasion for us to celebrate our Constitution and to honor those in the judiciary and legal profession who work to uphold and serve its principles.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, in accordance with Public Law 87-20, as amended, do hereby proclaim May 1, 2006, as Law Day, U.S.A. I call upon all the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities. I also call upon Government officials to display the flag of the United States in support of this national observance.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and

of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:50 a.m., May 2, 2006]

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Proclamation 8011—Loyalty Day, 2006

April 28, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Our Nation is blessed and bound together by a creed of freedom and equality that is entrusted to all Americans. Preserving the ideals of our founding requires the service and sacrifice of every generation, and on Loyalty Day, we celebrate the gift of liberty and remember our own obligation to this great Nation.

The dedication and selflessness of America's soldiers and their families inspire us all. Some of our Nation's finest men and women have given their lives in freedom's cause. By their sacrifices they have given us a legacy of liberty and brought honor to the uniform, our flag, and our country. The American people are grateful to the brave men and women of our military for their service and we will always stand behind them. I encourage all Americans to learn more about opportunities to thank and support our troops, from sending a care package to writing a message, by visiting www.americasupportsyou.mil.

Loyalty Day is also a time for us to reflect on our responsibilities to our country as we work to show the world the meaning and promise of liberty. The right to vote is one of our most cherished rights and voting is one of our most fundamental duties. By making a commitment to be good citizens, flying the American flag, or taking the time to learn about our Nation's history, we show our gratitude for the blessings of freedom.

The greatest strength of America is in the heart and soul of its people, and every time a volunteer reaches out to a neighbor in need, our Nation grows stronger and more hopeful. Thousands of Americans are serving a higher calling by mentoring, coaching, serving in Senior Corps, and by participating in many other programs that enrich lives and help build a better tomorrow. The light of freedom shines brightly because of compassionate people who care about others. Their dedication to a cause greater than self gives all Americans confidence in the future of our Nation.

The Congress, by Public Law 85-529, as amended, has designated May 1 of each year as "Loyalty Day." I ask all Americans to join me in this day of celebration and in reaffirming our allegiance to our Nation.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 1, 2006, as Loyalty Day. I call upon all the people of the United States to join in support of this national observance, and to display the flag of the United States on Loyalty Day.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of April, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:50 a.m., May 2, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 3. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

April 29, 2006

Good morning. Last weekend, the people of Iraq formed a national unity government. This is an important milestone on the road to democracy in Iraq, and it marks the beginning of a new chapter in America's involvement. Last Sunday, I talked to the President, Prime Minister-designate, and Speaker of the new Government. And this week, I sent

Secretary of State Rice and Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld to Baghdad to meet face to face with the new Iraqi leadership. We've all been impressed by the Iraqi leaders' commitment to maintain the unity of their country and effectively represent the Iraqi people.

The new Iraqi Government will face many challenges. Iraqi leaders agree that the new Government must continue to build up the Iraqi security forces to defeat the terrorists and must establish control over militias. They also agree that the new Government must rebuild critical infrastructure, strengthen the Iraqi economy, and ensure that all Iraqis benefit as their nation grows in security and prosperity.

During their meetings in Baghdad, Secretaries Rice and Rumsfeld made clear that Iraq will have the continued support of America and our coalition partners, as we begin the new chapter in our relationship. We will help the new Iraqi Government assume growing responsibility for the Nation's security. And as Iraqis continue to make progress toward a democracy that can govern itself, defend itself, and sustain itself, more of our troops can come home with the honor they have earned.

The terrorists clearly recognize the threat that the new unity Government poses to their dark plans for Iraq and the broader Middle East. This week, the terrorist Zarqawi, leader of Al Qaida in Iraq, released a video in which he denounced the new Government and promised further acts of terrorist violence. Zarqawi lashed out at what he called "this rotten play of democracy" and declared that Iraq's new Government will become "a poisoned dagger" in the heart of his plans for the Muslim world.

On Wednesday, Iraq's leaders united to strongly condemn Zarqawi's statements. One Iraqi official declared that the terrorists and insurgents, quote, "are feeling this might be the last chance they have to survive. They're fighting everyone in Iraq—every Iraqi. I think that shows how weak they are." End quote. A newly appointed first Deputy Speaker of the Iraqi parliament said that Zarqawi fears the new Government will unify Shiites and Sunnis and Kurds. He said, quote, "I believe that Zarqawi was caught off guard by the new Government taking shape,

because it will be a very strong one representing all Iraqis." End quote.

The new leaders of Iraq are showing great courage in the face of terrorist threats. In recent weeks, terrorists have assassinated three siblings of top Iraqi politicians, but the new leaders of Iraq remain determined to lead their nation toward a future of democracy and peace. These brave leaders deserve our continued support, and I have told them they can count on America to stand with them.

The enemy is resorting to desperate acts of violence because they know the establishment of democracy in Iraq will be a double defeat for them. First, it will deny the terrorists their immediate aim of turning Iraq into what Afghanistan was under the Taliban—a safe haven where they can plot and plan more attacks against free nations. Second, in the long term, a democratic Iraq will be a major blow to the terrorists' hateful ideology, because it will send a powerful message across the region that the future of the Middle East belongs to freedom.

There will be more tough fighting ahead in Iraq and more days of sacrifice and struggle. Yet the enemies of freedom have suffered a real blow in recent days, and we have taken great strides on the march to victory. Iraq's leaders now have laid the foundations for a democratic government of, by, and for the Iraqi people. By helping the Iraqi people build their democracy, America will deal the terrorists a crippling blow and establish a beacon of liberty in the Middle East. And that will make our Nation and the world more secure.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:52 a.m. on April 28 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 29. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 28 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his address, the President referred to President Jalal Talabani, Prime Minister-designate Jawad al-Maliki, Speaker of the Parliament Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, and First Deputy Speaker Khaled Atea of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld

May 1, 2006

I want to thank Secretary Rice and Secretary Rumsfeld. And General Pace, thank you for being here as well. Thank you for joining me this morning.

They came by the Oval Office to brief me on their recent trip to Iraq. First of all, I appreciate them both going over there to send my best wishes to the new Government and to Prime Minister-designate Maliki, as well as the new Speaker and the President. I had spoken to them on the phone, but I thought it was very important for both Secretaries to go firsthand, to be there with the leadership to say, we're supporting them. It's very important for these two senior officials to sit down with these new folks and say, "You have our support, and we want you to succeed."

And they brought back interesting impressions from the three new leaders. They said they were optimistic people, that they're full of energy, and they're very eager to succeed. And that's really important for the American people to know, that we've got partners in this effort who are dedicated to a unified Iraq and dedicated to putting a Government together that is one that will represent all the Iraqi people.

This new Government is going to represent a new start for the Iraqi people. It's a Government that understands they've got serious challenges ahead of them. And the three leaders spoke to Secretary Rice and Secretary Rumsfeld about their need to deploy the growing strength of the Iraqi security forces in such a way as to defeat the terrorists and the insurgents. And we will continue to support them in that effort that they talked about: the need to establish control over the militias and other unauthorized armed groups and enforce the rule of law. And we will support them in these efforts to achieve that important objective. They talked about the need to rebuild infrastructure and strengthen their economy, and we agree with that assessment.

And finally, they talked about the need to make sure that all Iraqis share in the benefits of this new democracy. A new Iraqi Government represents a strategic opportunity for America—and the whole world, for that matter. This Nation of ours and our coalition partners are going to work with the new leadership to strengthen our mutual efforts to achieve success, a victory in this war on terror. This is a—we believe this is a turning point for the Iraqi citizens, and it's a new chapter in our partnership.

The Secretaries began building this new partnership during their trip. In other words, the Iraqi leaders saw that we are committed to helping them succeed. They need to know that we stand with them. And the Iraqi people need to know that we stand with them, that we understand the strategic importance of a free Iraq in the Middle East, and that we understand the need to deny safe haven to the terrorists who have caused such turmoil and havoc inside of Iraq.

There's going to be more tough days ahead. These Secretaries know that. They're realistic people. They have brought an assessment of what they saw on the ground, and some of it's positive and, obviously, there's some difficult days ahead because there's still terrorists there who are willing to take innocent life in order to stop the progress of democracy. But this Government is more determined than ever to succeed, and we believe we've got partners to help the Iraqi people realize their dreams.

Last December, the Iraqi people voted to have a free government. I know it seems like a long time ago for the American people, but what we have begun to see now is the emergence of a unity government to represent the wishes of the Iraqi people. Last December, millions of people defied the terrorists and killers and said, "We want to be free; we want a unity government." And now what has happened is, after compromise and politics, the Iraqis have come together to form that Government. And our Secretaries went over there to tell them that we look forward to working with them as partners in peace.

So I want to thank you all for going. I appreciate your dedication to the cause of peace. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:36 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Peter Pace, USMC, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Prime Minister-designate Jawad al-Maliki, Speaker of the Parliament Mahmoud al-Mashhadani, and President Jalal Talabani of Iraq.

Remarks on Presenting the Preserve America Presidential Awards

May 1, 2006

Thank you all. Thanks for the introduction. [Laughter] Laura and I welcome you here to the White House. We are privileged to have some of our country's really great community leaders and preservationists here in the Rose Garden. This is a fitting place, we think, to honor those who work hard to preserve our Nation's history and protect the natural beauty of the country.

This is a—this Rose Garden is one of America's historic treasures. I spend a lot of time mowing out here. [Laughter] The commitment of the folks here to preserve the unique treasures in your own communities means that you celebrate our Nation's history, and you help instill a love of our Nation's natural beauty for future generations. And that's why we have such an event, to encourage people to preserve and instill—preserve what is important and instill love for the—for our natural treasures.

I appreciate not only the First Lady of the United States being here, but I appreciate the first lady of Florida being here—*micunada*. Thank you. Give Brother my best. [Laughter] Tell him he's doing a fine job. [Laughter]

I want to thank Administrator Steve Johnson of the EPA. Thank you for being here, Steve. Lynn Scarlett, who's the Acting Secretary of the Department of Interior; Fran Mainella, who is the Director of the National Park Service; and Senator Craig Thomas of Wyoming—thanks for coming. Appreciate you being here, Senator. Thanks for taking time out of your busy schedule.

I appreciate Bruce Cole, who's the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, joining us. And it's good to see my old friend John Nau. He's the Chairman of the Advisory Council on Historic Preserva-

tion; he's the chairman of the Texas Historical Commission—and he's a fine lad. [Laughter] It's good to see Bobbie too. Thanks for coming. And we appreciate all the members of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation. Thank you for serving. Thank you for your dedication to our country.

Laura and I want every American to have a chance to learn about this country's history, and one of the best ways to do so is to visit our country's great historical landmarks. So in 2003, we created—actually, she created—she told me to create, which I did—[laughter]—the Preserve America Presidential Awards, to recognize outstanding contributions to America's cultural and natural heritage. By the efforts—their efforts, today's award winners have drawn tourists to historic sites and towns; they've revitalized communities and our natural spaces; and they've opened up new opportunities for learning.

The first Preserve America award winner we honor this year is Mission San Luis. It's a project that has reconstructed the former Western capital of Spanish Florida in Tallahassee. The mission was burned to the ground over 300 years ago. And the State of Florida, in partnership with local and private groups, successfully recreated nearly every detail of the mission. The reconstruction team used original mission documents to ensure the highest level of historical accuracy. By their painstaking effort, they have helped Mission San Luis rise from the ashes to an educational, cultural, and historical resource reflecting Florida's beginnings. Congratulations, and welcome.

Our second award recipient is the State of Maryland. Through a new program called Maryland Heritage Areas, the State is protecting areas of historical significance and increasing heritage, tourism, and educational opportunities. State and community leaders are investing in projects to highlight special parts of American history, including the location where Harriet Tubman's Underground Railroad helped slaves escape to the North, and Fort McHenry, the site that inspired Francis Scott Key to write America's National Anthem. And I appreciate the good folks of Maryland for highlighting the amazing sites you've got in your State. And welcome; thank you for coming.

Our third award recipient is a company named Tauck World Discovery, which is helping protect one of America's most precious natural resources. Since 2003, this company has been running an innovative volunteer program in Yellowstone National Park. Under this program, tourists who come to appreciate the scenic landscape can also help keep those vistas beautiful by contributing a good day's work. Pretty interesting concept, isn't it? Since the program began, guests have donated almost 10,000 hours of labor on projects throughout the park. By their good work, the good people at Tauck are inspiring Americans to lend a hand in preservation, and making sure that Yellowstone is a natural wonder for the years to come. And we welcome you both. Thank you for coming.

Our fourth award recipient is Hampton Hotels. Probably surprises you, doesn't it? Under their "Save-a-Landmark" program, Hampton Hotels is helping communities rehabilitate roadside attractions along America's great highways. Their efforts have helped preserve landmarks along Route 66, to restore the Jesse Owens Park in Alabama, to refurbish one of the country's classic theme parks in New Jersey, and to save the world's largest Santa Claus in Alaska. [Laughter] Each of these landmarks represents a piece of cultural and regional history. By saving them for future generations, they are helping to celebrate the diversity of America, and provide educational opportunities for families as they travel across our great land. Thank you very much; appreciate what you're doing. Congratulations.

All of these award winners set such a wonderful example for our fellow citizens. You've taken the lead in preservation, and we appreciate it. You're showing what is possible when local citizens decide to make a difference in the community in which they live, and your work is preserving America for generations to come.

And so Laura and I welcome you to the Rose Garden. We thank you for your efforts. May God continue to bless our country. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:22 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Columba Bush, wife of Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Barbara "Bobbie" E. Nau, wife

of Advisory Council on Historic Preservation Chairman John L. Nau III; and Robin Tauck, president and chief executive officer, and Arthur Tauck, chairman of the board, Tauck World Discovery. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady, who introduced the President.

Remarks to the American Hospital Association

May 1, 2006

Thank you very much. It was on this stage two nights ago that I had the pleasure of showing up with a George W. Bush look-alike. [Laughter] So I walked in and Dick said, "Is it really you?" [Laughter]

Thanks for your introduction, Dick. Thanks for the invitation to be here. I want to, first, thank all the good people of the American Hospital Association. I appreciate the important voice that you provided for our hospitals, but more importantly, I appreciate the compassionate care you give to our citizens.

I have come to talk about a comprehensive health care strategy that will make health care more affordable and available for all our citizens. And I appreciate you giving me a chance to use this forum as an opportunity to discuss our vision for moving forward.

I do want to thank George Lynn, who is the chairman of the American Hospital Association Board of Trustees. I want to thank all the trustees who are here. I appreciate the leadership of the American Hospital Association. I want to thank the members of the American Hospital Association.

I understand—there he is—my friend Charlie Norwood is here. Good to see you, Congressman. Thank you so much for being here. You're looking pretty good. [Laughter] Looking real good, as a matter of fact. [Laughter]

This economy of ours is strong, and that's important for health care. It's important for the hospitals. And the economy is getting stronger. We put our trust in the American people by cutting taxes, and the tax relief we passed is saving—is helping people save and spend and invest. And when people save, spend, and invest, it causes our economy to

grow. Thanks to tax relief and progrowth economic policies, we're now in our fifth year of uninterrupted economic growth.

In the first quarter of this year, the economy grew at 4.8 percent. We've had 18 straight quarters of economic expansion. Last year our economy grew faster than any other major industrialized nation. Over the past 2½ years, we've created 5.1 million new jobs, and that's more than Japan and the 25 nations of the EU combined. Productivity is high; the unemployment rate is 4.7 percent; consumer confidence is at its highest point ever—in nearly 4 years. The new economic report out today contains good news on income growth.

Things are looking good for this economy, but we cannot be complacent. One of my concerns is that the United States of America loses our nerve, fears competition, and we become an isolated and protectionist nation. And health care plays a vital role in making sure this nation remains competitive.

One of the best ways to make sure that we're a competitive nation is to continue to invest in research and technology. If America wants to be the leader of the world, we've got to remain on the leading edge of change. As many of you know, when I came into office, I pledged to continue the doubling of the funding for the National Institutes of Health, and we kept that commitment. And it's one of the many reasons why our health care system leads the world. And we need to keep—we need to understand the importance of research at the Federal level, and that's why I have proposed that the United States Congress double Federal investment in basic scientific research.

In other words, for this country to be competitive, we've got to invest in the future. See, I don't think we ought to fear the future; I don't think we ought to become protectionists and isolationists. I think we need to continue to lead. And one way to lead is to lead in research and development.

To keep this economy competitive with other nations around the world, we've got to do something about our dependence on oil. Dependency on oil creates an economic problem for us, and it creates a national security problem for us. So I look forward to working with Congress to change—to help

speed up research and development so we can change our habits, so we can drive cars fueled by ethanol, or so we can have batteries that enable cars to drive for the first 40 miles on electricity.

To keep this country competitive, we've got to have a health care system that provides our people with good quality care at affordable prices. In other words, you're a part of an industry that must be reformed in order for the United States to continue to be an economic leader.

America has the best health care system in the world, pure and simple. We got the best medicines; we got the best doctors; and we have the best hospitals. And we intend to keep it that way. Yet we are challenged by the fact that health care costs are rising sharply. In the past 5 years, private health insurance premiums have risen 73 percent. And as a result, some businesses have been forced to drop health care coverage for their employees. You know that as well as anybody. Others have been forced to raise copayments and premiums. Some have been paying increasing health care costs and, therefore, have been unable to give workers the pay raises they need to cope with rising health care costs.

With rising costs, many Americans are concerned. They're concerned they're not going to be able to afford health care. As you well know, millions of our fellow citizens have no health insurance at all. And as you know, that places burdens on our Nation's hospitals. This is unacceptable, for this country to have health care costs rising as fast as they are. If we want to be the leader of the world, we must do something about it. And my administration is determined to do something about it.

To make our health care system work for all Americans, we have to choose between two philosophies: one that trusts government to make the best decisions for the people's health care or one that trusts the people and their doctor to make the best decisions for their health care.

We know from experience which of these systems works best. Other nations that have adopted for bigger government and more centralized control now have long waits for treatment for their people. The quality of

care is lower. There's less technological innovation. In America, as you know, we follow a different path. We lead the world in health care because we believe in a system of private medicine that encourages innovation and change.

And the best way to reform this health care system is to preserve the system of private medicine, is to strengthen the relationship between doctors and patients and make the benefits of private medicine more affordable and accessible for all our citizens.

Government has a role to play; don't get me wrong. We're kind of—we're big in the health care field, as you may know. [*Laughter*] We have a major role to play in strengthening and reforming this health care system—but in a way that preserves the doctor-patient relationship.

And that's what I want to talk to you about today. The first goal of our health care strategy is to meet the obligation the Federal Government has made to take care of the elderly and the poor. We have said, as a Federal Government, we will help the elderly and the poor, and I intend to keep that obligation. We're meeting that obligation, that responsibility through Medicare, Medicaid, and community health centers.

More than four decades ago, the Federal Government established Medicare to provide health coverage for older Americans. The bill was signed by Lyndon Baines Johnson. He came from a State I know pretty well. [*Laughter*] When I came into office, I found a Medicare program that was outdated, a Medicare program that was not meeting the needs of America's seniors. The way I tried to explain it to the American people was this: We had a system that would pay \$28,000 for an ulcer surgery but not the \$500 it would cost for prescription drugs that would prevent the ulcer from being—with taking hold in the first place. And that didn't make any sense—\$28,000 for the surgery but not a dime of prescription drugs to prevent the surgery from being needed. To me, that's an outdated system. It's one that's not very cost-effective, and it's one that does not provide quality care for our seniors.

So I decided to do something about it. And I worked with the Congress, and we passed critical legislation that modernizes Medicare

and provides seniors with more choices through the private sector and has given our seniors better access to the prescription drugs they need.

The benefit allows seniors to choose from a number of private prescription drug plans to find the one that is right for them. It encourages plan providers to compete for the seniors' business, and that helps lower costs. The new Medicare prescription drug benefit is a good deal for America's seniors. The typical senior will end up spending about half of what he or she used to spend on prescription drugs each year.

In addition, we've provided extra help for low-income seniors. About a third of seniors are eligible for prescription drug coverage that includes low or no premiums, low deductibles, and no gaps in coverage. On average, Medicare will pay for more than 95 percent of the costs of prescription drugs for low-income seniors. I know you shared my concern when we heard the stories of low-income seniors having to choose between food and medicine. And because of this reform, those days are over with.

The Medicare prescription drug benefit went into effect in January. More than 30 million people now have prescription drug coverage through the Medicare program, and hundreds of thousands more are signing up each week. We want every senior who needs coverage to sign up.

The May 15th deadline for seniors to sign up at the lowest cost is approaching. Over the next 2 weeks, this administration will encourage our Nation's pharmacies—pharmacists and doctors and hospitals and others in the medical community to continue to get the word out to seniors about the benefits of this important program. There are some seniors who are risk-averse; they don't want to change. It is really important for those of us who are involved in health care in this country to get the word out that, at the very minimum, seniors ought to look and see what's available. Americans need to take advantage of this opportunity to choose a plan.

We're also—I also recognize that we got a problem with the long-term viability of Medicare. Today the trustees for our Medicare and Social Security systems will release their annual report. Each year the trustees

remind us that these programs are not structured in a way that they will be financially sound for our children and our grandchildren.

The problem is pretty basic. There's a lot of baby boomers like me getting ready to retire. [Laughter] In my case, 2½ years. [Laughter] And there's a lot of baby boomers who are living longer, and there are fewer workers per beneficiary paying money in the system to support future retirees like me. And so the systems are going broke, and now is the time to do something about it. We've got too much politics in Washington, DC. It's time to set aside politics and restructure Social Security and Medicare for generations to come.

We're honoring our Nation's commitments to take care of the poor by strengthening Medicaid. Medicaid is a program administered in conjunction with the States that provides health care for low-income families with children, poor seniors, and disabled Americans. To help improve Medicaid, earlier this year, I signed legislation to restructure Medicaid and give States more flexibility in designing better programs to cover their citizens.

Under the reforms I signed into law, it's now easier for States to offer alternative benefit plans, provide coverage to more people, and design their Medicaid program to meet their State's needs and budgets. In the coming months, my administration will be encouraging States to adopt commonsense reforms. Our health care system must be guided by the needs of patients, not by rules emanating out of Washington, DC.

Another way we're meeting our commitment to Americans in need is through community health centers. These centers provide primary health care for the poor, so they don't have to go to the emergency room of a hospital to get routine care. This is a really good use of taxpayers' money. It makes a lot of sense to have community health centers so that we can cut down on unnecessary visits to the emergency rooms. Health centers help lower the cost of health care for everyone.

Since I took office, we've funded about 800 new or expanded health centers, bringing our total to more than 3,700 health centers serving more than 13 million Americans

a year. And over the next 2 years, we will fund the opening and expanding of 400 more health centers. And Congress needs to fully support these health centers in the budget that I have submitted.

And so we have got a strategy to take care and help our elderly and the poor and the disabled. The second part of our strategy is to make care and coverage more affordable and available for Americans. And here are five key policies to support this goal.

Our first policy is to expand health savings accounts to help improve health care and to help lower costs. Under the current system, as you well know, most Americans have no idea what the actual cost of their treatment is. Third-party insurers pay their bills, so patients have no reason to demand better prices, and the health care industry is under little pressure to lower prices. When somebody else pays the bills, it seems like everything is just fine. The result is that health care costs are skyrocketing. The insurance companies pass these rising costs on to their workers—on to workers and their employees in the form of higher premiums.

Now, health savings accounts transform what I believe is an outdated system by putting patients in control of how their health care dollars are spent. And when patients and consumers see how their health care dollars are spent, they demand more value for their money. The result is better treatment at lower costs.

HSAs have two components: low-cost catastrophic insurance coverage and tax-free savings accounts. The catastrophic coverage protects you and your family in the event of a devastating medical illness. The health savings account allows your or your employer to contribute to a tax-free account to pay for your routine medical needs. The money that goes into your account is tax-free; the interest earned on your account is tax-free; and the money withdrawn from your account is tax-free. It means that you own your money in your account, and that you can build your savings by rolling over contributions that you do not spend in any given year.

HSAs can help us move toward a health care system that is no longer dominated by third-party payers—to a system in which consumers make their own decisions. And we

see strong evidence that HSAs are making health care more affordable and accessible. From March 2005 to January 2006, the number of HSAs tripled from 1 million to more than 3 million. This is a new product. People are getting—taking a look at it. They're beginning to see the merits of a tax-free savings system coupled with catastrophic care.

Forty percent of the people who bought HSAs have family incomes below \$50,000. HSAs are making health care more accessible for those without insurance. More than a third of those who bought HSAs on their own had previously been uninsured. HSAs are good for small-business owners. HSAs, in my judgment, will mean that Americans who do not have coverage will be able to get coverage and afford coverage, which is good for America's hospitals. You see, by making health care coverage more affordable, more Americans can afford insurance. And with more Americans insured, fewer people will show up at our Nation's hospitals needing uncompensated care.

HSAs also create an incentive for patients to become more informed about their medical options and more involved in their treatment as they shop for the best value for their health dollar. This involvement strengthens the doctor-patient relationship.

Equally importantly is that HSA owners can see the benefits of changing risky behavior. They can follow doctors' preventative recommendations. The healthier you are, the less money you're going to spend out of your savings account. And there will be a tangible return—more of your own money, tax-free. Some employers are even offering employees financial incentives to get regular checkups and lose weight and get fit. By encouraging preventative medicine, HSAs save lives and save health care dollars.

HSAs will benefit hospitals, doctors, and patients, and they can also benefit hospital workers. Today, only a handful of hospitals offer HSAs to their employees. I encourage the members of the American Hospital Association to consider the benefits of offering health savings accounts to your employees. HSAs will provide your workers with better care and lower your health care costs.

For decades, America's hospitals and health care professionals have led the world

in innovation and quality medical care. Now you have an opportunity to help America transform our health care system by choosing the innovation and quality of health savings accounts. As HSAs continue to grow in popularity, my administration is working to expand them to even more Americans.

One way to make HSAs more attractive is to make them portable so they can meet the practical needs of today's workers. Many people are changing jobs, and one of their greatest fears is that they will lose their health care coverage. We believe that no American should have to remain locked in a job to get health insurance. Today, the savings in your health account are portable, and that means you can take your savings accounts from job to job. However, the health insurance within your HSA account is often not portable, and this is because of outdated laws and practices that prevent insurers from offering portable policies. I believe health insurers should be allowed to sell portable HSA policies nationwide.

Another obstacle to expanding HSAs is the Federal Tax Code. Under current law, employers and employees pay no income or payroll tax on any health insurance provided through the workplace. If you buy your own insurance, you do not get the same tax break. That means that the self-employed or the unemployed or workers at companies that do not provide health insurance are at a great disadvantage. Congress needs to end this discrimination in the Tax Code and give Americans who buy HSA policies on their own the same tax breaks as those who get their health insurance from their employers.

The current Tax Code also limits the amount you contribute to your HSA tax-free. The limit is usually tied to your deductible. Sometimes your total out-of-pocket expenses are greater than your deductible. Those with chronic illnesses often have expenses that go well beyond their deductibles. So we need to fix the Tax Code by allowing Americans to cover their out-of-pocket expenses with tax-free dollars, and make HSAs even more practical for more American families.

In addition to these efforts to fix the code, I've proposed a refundable tax credit to help low-income Americans purchase health coverage on the individual market. Under my

proposal, low-income families can receive up to \$3,000 in a refundable tax credit to purchase HSA-qualified insurance. By working together, we can reform our Tax Code and make it easier for American families to get health care.

And this week, Congress takes an important step in these efforts. Congressman Eric Cantor of Virginia will introduce a bill that would end many of the biases in the Tax Code, provide a tax credit of up to \$3,000 for low-income families, and make HSAs more attractive. It's a bill called the "Tax-Free Health Savings Act."

I also want to thank Senators Burns and Allen, Ensign, and DeMint for introducing bills to improve HSA options for all Americans, and Senators Santorum and Murkowski for introducing legislation supporting the low-income tax credit. Congress needs to pass these reforms and make sure the doctor-patient relationship remains central to our health care system.

The second policy for making health care more affordable and accessible is to increase transparency in our health care system. To be smart consumers, we need to be informed consumers, and this is especially true for patients with HSAs who have an incentive to spend their HSA dollars wisely. They need to know in advance what their medical options are, the quality and expertise of the docs and the hospitals in the area in which they live, and what their medical procedures will cost.

My administration is working with the AHA and other health care associations to provide patients with reliable information about prices and quality on the most common medical procedures. And I want to thank the AHA board for adopting a resolution this week supporting transparency. I appreciate your leadership on this vital issue.

We must work together to get patients the information they need so they can get the best quality care for the best price. If you're worried about increasing costs, it makes sense to have price options available for patients. That's what happens in a lot of our society; it should happen in health care as well. By increasing transparency, the idea is to empower consumers to find value for their dollars and to help patients find better care

and to help transform this system of ours to make sure America remains the leader in health care.

Secretary Leavitt has met with leaders in the health care industry in 13 cities to encourage them to work with the Department of Health and Human Services to increase transparency in the marketplace. We're asking doctors and hospitals and other providers to post their walk-in prices to all patients.

I directed the Department of Health and Human Services to make data on Medicare's price and quality publicly available on the Internet. The first data will be available to all Americans by June 1st. We're also asking insurance companies to increase health care transparency by providing their negotiating prices and quality information to their enrollees. And the Federal Government will do the same. My administration will be requiring transparency from insurance plans participating in Federal programs. Beginning this year, the Federal Employees Benefit Program and the military's Tricare system are asking contractors to begin providing price and quality information.

Today I'm asking for your help. Every hospital represented here should take action to make information on prices and quality available to all your patients. If everyone here cooperates in this endeavor, we can increase transparency without the need for legislation from the United States Congress. By working together, transparency—to increase transparency, we can help lower costs.

Third policy is to provide modern information technology to our medical system. Too many doctors' offices and hospitals have the most advanced technology in the 21st century but still use last century's filing systems. Doctors are still writing out files by hand, and that's kind of dangerous because most doctors don't write too well. [*Laughter*] In hospitals, there's more risk of medical error and duplicate tests when records are handwritten on paper instead of cross-checked on a computer.

So in 2004, I set a goal that most Americans would have an electronic health record within 10 years. And we're making good progress toward that goal. The first thing is, we needed to develop a common standard of language so that health care providers in

Los Angeles and health care providers in New York knew what the—knew what we are talking about.

Imagine how valuable this access to information will become. If you had someone who had an epileptic seizure outside their hometown and ended up in a hospital in a nearby town, these electronic records would help save lives. Information would be valid and clear. There wouldn't be any confusion amongst those who are working hard to provide compassionate care.

As we develop an information network—nationwide information network, we will make sure that we protect the privacy of a patient's medical record. But make no mistake about it, bringing information technology into our health care system is going to reduce costs and increase quality care for American people.

And I hope you're aggressive on this front. I urge you to work with the AHA to come up with a plan to help develop a nationwide information system that is modern and helps you do your job better.

Fourth policy is to make it easier for small businesses to obtain the same discounts that big companies get when obtaining health care insurance. Unlike big businesses, small companies cannot negotiate lower health insurance rates because they can't spread their risk over a larger pool of employees. So we proposed association health plans that will allow small firms to band together across State lines and buy insurance at the same discounts available to big companies. The House has passed a bill. The Senate hasn't acted, and now it's time for the United States Senate to do something good for the small-business employers of this country.

Our fifth policy to confront high-cost health care and to make sure private medicine is central in the United States is to confront the glut of frivolous lawsuits that are driving good doctors out of practice and driving up the cost of health care. To avoid junk lawsuits, professionals in the health care field are forced to practice defensive medicine. They order tests and write prescriptions that are not necessary, so they can protect themselves from trial lawyer lawsuits. One hospital CEO in New York said, "Fear of liability does nothing but threaten patient safety by dis-

couraging open discussion of medical errors and ways to prevent them."

The total cost of defensive medicine to our society is estimated at 60 to a 100 billion dollars a year, and that includes \$28 billion billed directly to the American taxpayers through increased costs of Medicare, Medicaid, Veterans Affairs, and other Federal health programs. The costs of frivolous litigation are more than financial; they hurt patients all across America.

Most Americans are shocked when I cite the fact there are nearly 1,500 counties in the United States without an ob-gyn. We want our doctors focused on providing compassionate care, not fighting junk lawsuits. We want our hospitals pursuing innovative and promising ways to heal, not battling lawyers who second-guess them in the courts. This is a national issue that requires a national response. The House of Representatives have passed a good bill. The Senate has done nothing on medical liability reform. For the sake of affordable and accessible health care, we need medical liability reform this year.

I'm looking forward to working with the Congress to enact these reforms. This is a commonsense way of dealing with rising health care costs. And by dealing with rising health care costs, we will strengthen private medicine and fight off the calls of those in Washington, DC, who want the Federal Government making all the decisions for health care.

The story of America's hospitals is a story of America's commitment to be a nation of care and compassion. America's strength and its goodness and prosperity is built on a trust in the extraordinary wisdom and power of the American people. And so I believe that by giving more Americans more control over their health care decisions, we will strengthen the doctor-patient relationship, and we will preserve the system of private medicine that has made our Nation's hospitals and health care the best in the world.

People here in Washington need to trust the people. People here in Washington need to do commonsense things to address the rising costs of health care. And this person in Washington has come to thank you for your

compassion and what you do for the communities all around America. May God continue to bless your work, and may God bless our country. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:17 p.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Richard J. Davidson, president, American Hospital Association.

Remarks to the American Council of Engineering Companies

May 3, 2006

Thanks for the warm welcome. Thanks for inviting me. *[Laughter]* I was looking for something to do this morning. *[Laughter]* I'm really thrilled to be here. I thank you, Mr. Chairman, for letting me come by. I've got something to talk to you about, about the economy. What I'm really thrilled is, is that the American Council of Engineering Companies would allow a history major to come by to speak to you. *[Laughter]*

I want to first say, I appreciate the good work you do for the country. I want you to know that I know how vital your contribution to America is. And it means a lot, and thanks a lot for doing what you're doing. I remember the work you did to help repair the Pentagon after September the 11th. I know full well the work that members of your group do to help construct schools and hospitals in some of the world's newest democracies, particularly Afghanistan and Iraq. And for those of you who encourage your employees to do that, or if you've done that yourself, thank you from the bottom of our Nation's collective hearts.

I know that members have been down to help rebuild the communities along the gulf coast. And for those of you who have been down there or may live down there, you know what that storm did. I mean, you talk about wiping out a part of our country; it just flat did. And it makes a difference in people's lives when good-hearted citizens come down and lend their talents and expertise to help rebuild. I've been down there quite a bit; Laura, as a matter of fact, was down in New Orleans last night, and she's there this morning and heading over to Mississippi. And it's amazing what the collective compassion of

America has done to help lift the spirits of our fellow citizens. And some of our Nation's engineers were down there helping.

I also want to thank you for helping to build on this country's prosperity. Through your hard work, your vision, your ingenuity, you're helping this economy of ours. You know, I like to remind people that the Government's role is not to engineer the economy. The Government's role is to create an environment in which people can find work, risk capital, grow their companies, so that, collectively, we all benefit.

I appreciate the entrepreneurial spirit represented here in this room. One of the most important jobs of Government is to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit remains strong. We want America to be entrepreneurial heaven, the place where people can come and realize their dreams.

Laura sends her best. I'm a lucky man to have her as my wife. I believe the country is lucky to have her as the First Lady. She is a—*[applause]*—she's pretty busy. She's busy telling me what to do and not what to say. *[Laughter]* It's an interesting life in the White House, as I'm sure you can imagine. There's nothing better, to have somebody by your side who you love, right here in the middle of Washington, DC. *[Laughter]* And Laura is that way. You know, people—my friends from Texas always ask me what it's like to be the President, living in the White House and everything, and it's pretty interesting. I've got a 45-second commute. *[Laughter]* And the good news is, I commute to a house that's warm. And that's because of Laura.

So she sends her very best to you. I wish she were here. But she's, as I said, down in New Orleans helping the people on the gulf coast get their lives back together. As you might remember, she's a librarian, and she's talking about her foundation to help rebuild the libraries down there in the gulf coast of our country. Anyway, she's doing just good. I know you didn't ask, but I'm telling you anyway. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank—not only thank Ed, but I also want to thank the chairman-elect of the ACEC, Jeff Daggett. I want to thank Dave Raymond. I want to thank all the members for letting me come by.

Let me start by telling you, look, I understand there's a lot of, kind of, different opinions about our economy. And you'll hear a lot of different opinions, particularly as the political season approaches. Let me just give you some facts so you can draw your own conclusions, so the American people can draw their own conclusions about whether this economy is strong or not.

In the first quarter of this year, America's economy grew at an impressive rate of 4.8 percent. The strong start follows a strong 2005 when our economy—American economy grew at 3.5 percent. Now, let me put that in perspective for you. Our economy's growth in 2005 was faster than Japan, more than twice as fast as France, and more than three times as fast as Germany.

The American economy is the fastest growing of any major industrialized nation in the world. Productivity has been growing at the highest rate in decades. An economy that is productive is one that will help increase the standard of living for our American people, and we are a productive nation.

We've added jobs for 31 months in a row. We've added more than—[*applause*]*—*and that's totaled 5.1 million new jobs for the American people, and that's good news. The national unemployment rate has fallen to 4.7 percent. That is lower than the average of any decade since the 1950s. The job market for college graduates is the best it's been in 5 years. The American people are going to work in record numbers, and that's important. Construction spending is at an alltime high. Business confidence is strong, and business investment is growing. Business investment is an indication of confidence in the future. People invest because they think the future is going to be brighter. And when people invest, it helps this country remain productive, and it helps people find work.

Small businesses are flourishing. I know many of you all are small-business owners, and I applaud you for having the courage to start your own business and manage your own business. But small businesses are flourishing in America, and that's important. Most new jobs in America are created by small businesses, and when the small-business sector is strong, it means people are going to find work. The number of Hispanic-owned

businesses is growing at three times the national rate, and that's a positive development.

One of the things I try to do is promote an ownership society. We want people owning their own business. There's something that encourages somebody to think about the future of the country when they own their own company. The number of African American-owned businesses is growing at four times the national rate. Real after-tax income has grown by almost 9 percent per person since I took office.

Homeownership recently reached record levels. That's important. I mean, I love the idea, when somebody opens a door to where they live, says, "Welcome to my house; welcome to my piece of property." It is good for our society to encourage ownership.

Consumer confidence is at its highest point in nearly 4 years. Household wealth is at an alltime high. These are the facts which say to me, this economy is powerful, productive, and prosperous. And we intend to keep it that way.

One of the most important explanations for this strong economy is low taxes. When I came to Washington, taxes were too high, and this economy of ours was headed into a recession. Not only did we have a recession, there was a stock market correction, corporate scandals, an attack on the United States of America. This country went to war to defend ourselves; we had natural disasters. It's amazing the statistics I just read are as strong as they are, given what we've been through. But I believe a lot of the reasons why the statistics are strong is because we let people keep more of their own money under the theory that if you have more of your own money in your pocket to save, invest, or spend, this economy will do just fine.

Part of creating a wealth in which—an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit is strong is to let people have more of their money, is to unleash the great creative talent of the American people. And that's what we did. I worked with Congress to cut the taxes on everybody who pays taxes. It wasn't one of these tax cuts where, you seem okay, you get a tax cut, and you're not and you don't. My attitude was, the only fair way to treat people is if you pay taxes, you get tax relief.

So we reduced taxes for every American who pays taxes, and that's more than 110 million people in all. And I want to remind you about the tax relief. First of all, we doubled the child tax credit. We thought it made sense to help people who've got children. Secondly, we put—we reduced the marriage penalty. We did not think it made sense to penalize marriage. We cut the taxes on capital gains and dividends to encourage business investment.

I understand, with more investment, this economy of ours will grow. That's what you want to encourage; you want to encourage people to invest. And it's important for people who watch the economy and try to figure out why we make decisions we make to understand that the more investment there is in the private sector, the more likely it is someone will be able to find work. And so we created incentives in the Tax Code for our small businesses to purchase equipment. We rewarded family businesses and farmers and ranchers by putting the death tax on the way to extinction.

The cumulative effect of these tax cuts left \$880 billion in the hands of American workers and businesses. And they have used that money to fuel our economic resurgence. It's the American people, people such as yourself, that used your own money to help make this economy as strong as it is.

There's a business owner today named Gregg Ten Eyck. You know old Gregg. I just named him. Where are you? There he is, right there. *[Laughter]* I hope you're okay with—is that your son? Your son? Yes. Is it okay to mention the old man's name in public? *[Laughter]* Good, because I just did. Gregg is—runs an engineering company in Denver, Colorado. He brought his family—thank you all for being here. He files as a subchapter S corporation. Most of you know what that means. For those of you who don't, it means that he pays taxes on business income at individual income tax rates.

See, most small businesses are subchapter S corporations or limited partnerships, and therefore, the business pays tax at an individual income tax rate. And so by cutting individual income taxes—rates across the board, we cut taxes on small businesses like Gregg. And there's a reason why you would

want to do that. If most new jobs are created by small businesses in the United States and a primary objective is to help people find work, it then makes sense to leave more money in Gregg's hands so he can spend it to expand his business.

He also took advantage of the new investment opportunities to purchase computers and software that help make him more competitive. Not only did it make him more competitive but somebody had to make the computers that he purchased. There's an effect throughout the economy when Government provides incentives for people to invest. And the fundamental question facing our country is, who do you want making decisions with his own money? Do you want Gregg making the decisions, or do you want somebody in the halls of Congress? This administration thinks the money is better left in Gregg's hands.

The most important connection for the American people to what I just said about encouraging investment and reducing taxes is this: Gregg's added—Gregg's business added employees for the past 5 years in a row. And this year he plans to add a few more. Stories like Gregg's prove the tax cuts are doing what we want them to do, and that's to get this economy growing so people can find work. That's what we want.

The problem is that these tax cuts are scheduled to expire in the next few years. So when Congress passed them, they didn't make them a permanent part of the Tax Code. They said, we'll give you some tax relief for a while, but the tax relief is scheduled to go away. And, of course, if that were to happen, it means your taxes are going to go up. The prospect of higher taxes, the notion that there's uncertainty in the Tax Code makes it difficult for small-business owners and company execs to plan. How can you plan if you're uncertain about what the future is going to be when it comes to the Tax Code?

Obviously, if you think a big tax crease is incoming—a big tax increase is coming, it will make you less likely to invest. Investment leads to a more productive society; investment leads to job. The lack of investment will make us less competitive and make it more likely there won't be new jobs created.

And so there's uncertainty in the Tax Code, because the Congress made sure that the tax cuts would expire. At a time of high gasoline prices—I know energy prices is on your mind, like a lot of other folks—at a time when there's growing competition in the world, the last thing the American people need is a tax hike. And so my message to the Congress is this: In order to keep this economy strong, Congress needs to make the tax relief permanent.

By the way, there's a struggle here in Washington about who best can spend your money. *[Laughter]* Some are very anxious for the tax cuts to expire; some want to repeal the tax cuts now. Many of those are members of the loyal opposition here in Washington, DC, who've objected to tax relief all along the way. When Congress first cut taxes back in 2001, most of the Democrats in Congress voted against it. One leading Democrat said that tax cuts were a huge mistake. We have a philosophical difference here in Washington; nothing wrong with that. There's nothing wrong with having differences of opinion. Another predicted that the tax cuts would do nothing to create jobs. A year-and-a-half ago, a Democrat Senator informed us the economy may be on the brink of collapse. The Democrats' record of pessimism has been consistent; it's been consistently wrong.

If the people have their way—who want this tax relief to expire—the American people will be hit with \$2.4 trillion in higher taxes over the next decade. That's 2.4 trillion that would be taken out of the pockets of firms like Gregg, taken out of the pockets of those who are raising their children. It would be handed over to Government; that's where the money would go. It would be taken out of the economy and given to people here in Washington, DC, to spend. A tax increase would be disastrous for business, disastrous for families, and disastrous for this economy.

Congress has an opportunity to pass a progrowth measure that would keep key elements of the tax relief in place. The House and the Senate are close to completing a bill that would extend the tax cuts on dividends and capital gains for two more years, through 2010. The bill would also extend incentives for small businesses to purchase new equip-

ment. All these provisions have been successful over the past few years. By improving access to capital, the tax cuts on capital gains have led to more investment, more growth, and more job creation.

The tax cuts on the dividends has resulted in more dividend payments to investors and large savings for our seniors who rely on fixed incomes. The small-business expensing incentives have helped many businesses like yours expand and hire new workers. There is no reason for Congress to allow taxes on the job creators to go up. So the House and the Senate have got to resolve their differences and pass progrowth legislation, so I can sign it into law.

Congress also needs to take action on the other side of the ledger as well. And by that, I mean we've got to restrain spending. See, what you'll hear in Washington is, we must balance a budget by raising your taxes. The problem is, that's not the way Washington works. What happens is, they'll raise your taxes and figure out new ways to spend your money. *[Laughter]* The best way to reduce our deficit is to keep progrowth economic policies in place so the economy expands, which will yield more tax revenues, and be wise about how we spend your money.

It's difficult in Washington for people to set priorities when it comes to spending your money. I have set priorities, and our number-one priority is to make sure that the men and women in our uniform have what it takes to defend America and win the war on terror—*[applause]*—which means we must show discipline in other areas of the budget. You know what that means. You can't spend every—your money on everything you want to spend it on. You have to set priorities. And that's what Congress needs to do.

We're actually making good progress on spending restraint. There are two types of spending: discretionary spending and mandatory spending. Mandatory spending, which I'll talk about a little bit later on, is relief programs that escalate based upon formula. Medicare and Social Security are the two programs that you're most familiar with.

Discretionary spending is where the Congress can decide whether or not to increase or decrease a particular budget. Every year since I took office, we've slowed the growth

of discretionary spending that's not related to the military or homeland security. The last two budgets have actually had cuts in this kind of spending. We've reduced the spending.

What we've asked Congress to look at is, we said, look, why don't you analyze whether or not a program is working? See, every program sounds great, they all have got good titles, but sometimes they don't deliver results. And when they don't deliver results, we shouldn't spend taxpayers' money on it. In 2007 budget, we've identified 141 programs that are performing poorly or not fulfilling essential priorities. We've asked Congress to get rid of them. If they're not working, eliminate them.

With a disciplined approach to spending, we're on our way to cutting the deficit in half by 2009, and that's a positive goal. Congress is considering a piece of legislation that will test its commitment to spending restraint. I've requested a bill that would provide emergency funds for the war on terror and hurricane relief. Unfortunately, there are some here in Washington trying to load that bill up with unnecessary spending. This bill is for emergency spending, and it should be limited to emergency measures.

And so I've told the Congress—I'd like to reiterate it here for you—that anything above \$92.2 billion for this emergency spending bill, plus the funding to prepare for a pandemic flu emergency, will be vetoed. The Congress needs to hear me loud and clear: If they spend more than 92.2 plus pandemic flu emergency funds, I will veto the bill. It's important for there to be fiscal discipline in Washington, DC, if we want to keep this economy strong.

There are other ways to make sure we're wise about how we spend your money. I'm going to work with Congress to reduce the number of what's called earmarks for special projects. [Applause] Sounds like you know what an earmark is. [Laughter] Earmarks are often an award of Federal funds to projects without a proper hearing. In other words, people just kind of slide them in there in these bills. And as a result, I don't think the taxpayer gets the best result for their money. It's not—I don't think you can prioritize if

you have a system of people just slipping spending in bills without proper hearing.

I appreciate the Senate work on sensible earmark reform. Today the House of Representatives is taking up a measure that includes earmark reform. And I encourage both bodies of Congress to get the job done, to have meaningful, real earmark reform. I look forward to signing such a bill if it comes to my desk.

Congress also can pass the line-item veto. By the way, earmark reform may not require—it's really a matter of Congress having the will to do what's right; same with the line-item veto. A line-item veto would allow me to eliminate wasteful spending items without having to veto the entire bill. And this will be a useful way to help bring fiscal discipline to Washington, DC. The Congress needs to pass a line-item veto quickly. I look forward to working with members of both political parties to achieve budgetary reform so we can do the job you expect us to do.

The biggest problem we've got, however, is—for our budgetary health—is the entitlement spending programs like Social Security and Medicare. If we're wise about keeping progrowth policies in place and fiscal restraint, we can get this deficit down. We're on a trajectory to do so by—cut it in half by 2009. But there's a large problem looming out there, and it's because baby boomers like me and you—[laughter]—well, some of you—are getting ready to retire. We're getting to that age where the Government has made us a promise. And there's a lot of us. There's a lot of baby boomers. There's a baby boomer bulge—in more ways than one. [Laughter] And we're living longer than anybody thought when they first designed these programs.

And I don't know about you, but I like to get exercise, I'm wise about the choices I make in terms of drinking and all that. And as a result—and medicine has improved—we're living longer lives. So you've got a lot of people getting ready to retire who are going to live longer lives, and we've been promised greater benefits than the previous generation. People running for office say, "Vote for me; I promise to increase your benefits in these entitlement programs." And

sure enough, they won and did what they said they were going to do.

But the problem is, is that there are fewer payers per beneficiary into the system than ever before. In other words, there is a heavy burden on a young generation of Americans coming up to pay the promises that Congress has made. And I really, really think that Congress has got to address this issue with me.

I tried last year, I took it on, Social Security in particular, and went around the country saying, "Folks, we got a problem"—on the theory that when the people said we got a problem, Congress would respond. Well, I got half of it right. [Laughter] People said, "We got a problem." And it's so political up here that it's difficult at this stage of the game to get people to come together, to come with a bipartisan solution. Look, we don't have to cut programs. It's like making sure you slow your car down to the speed limit. You don't have to put it in reverse. There are common-sense ways to keep the promises to the generation that is fixing to retire but make sure that future generations will have a sound Social Security and Medicare system.

So I just want to assure you this issue is on my mind a lot. I like to remind people that the job of a President is to confront problems, no matter how difficult they may look, and not pass them on to future Presidents. I also believe—[applause]. So we're in the process of working with Democrats and Republicans to come together to forge a bipartisan solution so that we can say we did our duty, that we came and we made the system work better. It's a really important issue.

And so when you hear people talking about the budget, the current account deficit is important; it's really important. But these unfunded liabilities will serve to be a major drag on our economy if we don't do it now. Now is the time to do it. The longer we wait, the more difficult it's going to be for people to come together. So you'll see me working with Democrats and Republicans, hopefully, to come up with a solution that will address this problem.

One of the interesting challenges we face is whether or not this Nation will lose its confidence or not. We live in a global economy, as you well know. And some people in the

country really wonder whether it's worth the competition, whether it makes sense to try to compete with these new and growing economies like China and India. I, first of all, know it's important for us to compete and to be confident. If we want to remain the economic leader of the world, which I happen to believe is good for our people, we shouldn't fear the competition. We ought to welcome it. And we ought to develop a strategy so that we can remain the leader. And here's some ideas.

Obviously, we've got to do something about energy. A global economy means that when demand for energy goes up in India and China, which it is, it causes our gasoline prices to go up. When the price of crude goes up, because of international demand increase is greater than the supply, your gasoline prices go up. And so it's—and my attitude about this is to make sure you're not being mistreated at the pump, you're being treated fairly, but also recognize now is the time to spur strong research and development into using other ways to power our cars, such as hydrogen or ethanol or batteries that can give the first 40 miles on electricity, as opposed to gasoline. Now is the time.

And so I look forward to working with Congress to press ahead hard on research and development. And we're close to some amazing breakthroughs. Cellulosic ethanol may be on the verge of becoming commercially viable. We're close to these new battery technologies that will enable people to drive the first 40 miles in a city not using gasoline. Ethanol is on the move. We must, as a nation, in order to stay competitive, diversify away from crude oil. I know it sounds weird for a Texan to say—[laughter]—but I'm telling you, it is essential for our economic security and national security to do so.

We've got a challenge when it comes to making sure our health care is available and affordable. There is a debate here in Washington. There are some who say, "Let's let the Government run it, set the price, set the supply." I'm strongly against that. I believe we've got to empower the doctor-patient relationship. And we put out a lot of good ideas, two that I think will interest you. One is to make sure the small businesses can pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they can

buy insurance at the same discounts—[*ap-
plause*]. And secondly, do something about these junk lawsuits that are running up the cost of medicine.

Do you realize there are over 1,500 counties in America—about, they estimate—that do not have an ob-gyn? That is harmful for our health care system. It is—it’s discouraging to the America people. A lot of it is because of these lawsuits. And the lawsuits not only make medicine less accessible but docs practice defensive medicine. If you think you’re going to get sued, you prescribe more drugs than necessary or more procedures than necessary so that you can make your case in a court of law. And this is—these lawsuits harm medicine. It makes the cost of medicine difficult for you, and it makes it hard for you to afford it for your employees.

When I came to Washington, I said, this isn’t really a national issue; States ought to deal with it. Then I realized that the cost of defensive medicine and the cost of raising premiums costs our Government—you—about \$28 billion a year because of Federal health programs such as Medicare, Medicaid, veterans’ benefits. And so I’ve called upon Congress to get a bill to my desk that is rational, reasonable, and common sense, that does something about these junk lawsuits.

Another initiative I think you’ll be interested in is this: To stay competitive, we got to make sure our children have the skill sets necessary to fill the jobs of the 21st century. That skill set happens to be based upon math and science. I think you know what I’m talking about. And as well, in order to be a competitive nation—one that doesn’t fear the future, but welcomes the competition, and says, look, we can compete; recognizes the importance of research and technology—the research and development tax credit needs to be a permanent part of our Tax Code in order to make sure that people invest in the future, come up with new ideas.

As well, I’ve committed the Government to double research in basic sciences over the next 10 years. The Government has got a vital role to play. People say to me, why should the Government invest in basic sciences, basic research—research for the basic sciences? And the answer is, is because it’s

amazing what happens, what research can bring, such as the Internet. The Internet came to be as a result of Government research monies spent at the DOD. There’s unbelievable things that can happen when we unleash the creativity of the American people, and the Federal Government ought to be a rational part of that.

But the other answer—the other real challenge we face is whether or not our kids can compete. And the American people have got to understand that if our children do not have the basics in math and science, they will then not have the skill sets necessary for the jobs of the 21st century. And in a global economy, those jobs will go somewhere else.

And now’s the time to get it correct. And we’re making pretty good progress, in my judgment. First of all, as people who are results-oriented people, I think you’ll appreciate the approach we took in the No Child Left Behind Act which basically said, in return for spending Federal money, particularly for Title I students—the poor students, which I support, why don’t you show us whether or not we’re getting results? It’s kind of an odd concept, isn’t it—[*laughter*—we spend, you measure. You notice I didn’t say, the Federal Government will design the test. I don’t believe in federalizing schools. I believe in local control of schools, but I do believe in accountability.

And so therefore, we said to the States, in return for Federal participation, develop accountability systems so we know. There’s all kinds of debates that take place in public education. One of them is, does the curriculum work that you’re using? The best way to figure it out is to measure.

The second part of this system is that when we find children falling behind early, there’s extra money, supplemental service money we call it, to get tutoring so that the children are not left behind. In other words, we’re tired of this business about socially promoting students. We want to make sure that people get promoted based upon knowledge. And our system is working.

There’s a—there’s an achievement gap in America that’s got to be closed for the future of this—to make sure this country’s future is bright. And we’re closing it. How do we know? Because we measure. And we need

to apply the same rigor, by the way, that we apply to reading, to math and science. It turns out that we're doing fine in fourth grade math, and we're doing fine in eighth grade math, but when kids get into high school, when it comes to the rest of the world, we're falling down. And so therefore, it makes sense to measure in junior high and provide supplemental services for math, to make sure that our children have got the skill base necessary to become the engineers and scientists.

AP works—Advanced Placement program works. If it's—if you're involved with your schools in your community, you know what I'm talking about. It's important to set high standards. The Government ought to help train 70,000 teachers to become Advanced Placement teachers to raise the standards for our children. We need 30,000—30,000 scientists and engineers to become adjunct professors, so to speak, in the classrooms to make sure that—[*applause*]. I can go on forever.

Here's the deal, though. Here's what I'm trying to explain to you: We don't need to fear the future, because we're going to shape the future. We'll make sure our children are educated. We're going to make sure we do something about these junk lawsuits. We're going to make sure that we do something about energy. Why I wanted to talk to you today, though, is to make sure that you understand that in order for this country to be competitive, in order for us not to fear the future, we got to keep your taxes low.

I appreciate you for what you do for our country. Thanks for letting me come by and share some thoughts with you. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. at the Grand Hyatt Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Edward J. Mulcahy, chairman, and David A. Raymond, president, American Council of Engineering Companies.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Members of Congress

May 3, 2006

I want to thank the Members of the House and the Senate, members of both parties, for a really constructive and important dialog.

We talked about ways to deal with America's energy problem. And we talked about it in a very constructive way, and I want to thank the Members for joining us.

We talked about the need to make sure our consumers are treated fairly, that there be fairness in the marketplace, and there was common consensus that we need to hold people to account if they're not dealing squarely with the American consumer.

We talked about ways to help mitigate demand, and one way to do so is to encourage alternative automobiles, like hybrid automobiles. And there seemed to be an agreement that we ought to extend the tax credit for these kind of automobiles to encourage our consumers to purchase the hybrid automobile.

We talked about ways to—the need to research, to spend money for research and development, to change the fuels that we use in automobiles. One of the great promising sources of fuel is ethanol, and we talked about ways to encourage not only the production of ethanol but the distribution of ethanol.

We talked about the need to continue research and development into new types of batteries so that the American consumer will be able to drive the first 40 miles on electricity. We talked about the need to increase supply of energy. One of the things that is necessary to help relieve price is to increase the amount of gasoline.

We talked about regulatory relief, to see to it that we can expand refining capacity and build new refineries. If the American people want there to be a lower price of gasoline, we need more gasoline on the marketplace.

And so we talked about commonsense ideas. And I really do appreciate the members from both political parties thinking strongly about how we can work together to serve the American consumer and make us less dependent on foreign sources of oil. The prices of gasoline should serve as a wake-up call to all of us involved in public office that we have got an energy security problem and a national security problem, and now is the time to deal with it in a forceful way. And I am heartened by the fact that we were able to have such a constructive dialog, and

that there's a commitment to get good legislation out of the Congress.

Thank you all very much for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:31 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Statement on Zacarias Moussaoui

May 3, 2006

One year ago, Zacarias Moussaoui pled guilty in Federal court to six counts of terrorism, including conspiracy to murder innocent Americans. He openly rejoiced at their deaths. This afternoon the jurors in his sentencing trial concluded that this man should spend the rest of his life in prison.

Our thoughts today are with the families who lost loved ones on September 11th, 2001. Our Nation continues to grieve for the men, women, and children who suffered and died that day. We are still deeply touched by the memory of rescuers who gave all, the passengers who ran a hijacked plane into the ground to prevent an even greater loss of life, and the frightened souls who comforted one another during their final moments on earth.

The end of this trial represents the end of this case but not an end to the fight against terror. The enemy that struck our shores on September 11th is still active and remains determined to kill Americans. We will stay on the offensive against the terrorists. We will end their ability to plot and plan. We will deny them safe haven and the ability to gain weapons of mass murder. In these 4½ years, with good allies at our side, the United States has killed or captured many terrorists, shut down training camps, broken up terror cells in our own country, and removed regimes that sponsored terror. We have many dedicated men and women fully engaged in this fight—in the military, intelligence, and homeland security; law enforcement personnel; and Federal investigators and prosecutors who gather the evidence, make the case, and ensure that justice is done. They are doing superb work every day to remove this danger and to protect our country.

We have had many victories, yet there is much left to do, and I will not relent in this struggle for the freedom and security of the American people. And we can be confident.

Our cause is right, and the outcome is certain: Justice will be served; evil will not have the final say; this great Nation will prevail.

Proclamation 8012—National Day of Prayer, 2006

May 3, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Throughout our Nation's history, our citizens have prayed and come together before God to offer Him gratitude, reflect on His will, seek His aid, and respond to His grace. On this National Day of Prayer, we thank God for His many blessings and His care of our country.

God has greatly blessed the American people, and in 1789, George Washington proclaimed: "It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the Providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and to humbly implore His protection and favor." Americans remain a prayerful and thankful people. We pray for the safety of our troops as they carry out dangerous missions with courage and compassion, and we remember the strength and sacrifice of their families. We pray for the good people of the Gulf Coast region as they work to rebuild their communities after the devastating hurricanes of 2005, and we thank God for the volunteers who have opened their hearts to help their neighbors in a time of need. We pray for the protection of innocent lives and for the expansion of peace and liberty throughout the world.

Through prayer, our faith is strengthened, our hearts are humbled, and our lives are transformed. May our Nation always have the humility to trust in the goodness of God's plans.

The Congress, by Public Law 100-307, as amended, has called on our Nation to reaffirm the role of prayer in our culture and to respect the freedom of religion by recognizing each year a "National Day of Prayer."

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America,

do hereby proclaim May 4, 2006, as a National Day of Prayer. I ask the citizens of our Nation to give thanks, each according to his or her own faith, for the freedoms and blessings we have received and for God's continued guidance and protection. I urge all Americans to join in observing this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 5, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on May 8.

**Remarks Following a Meeting With
Chancellor Angela Merkel of
Germany and an Exchange With
Reporters
May 3, 2006**

President Bush. There will be a couple of opening statements and then a couple of questions per side.

Welcome back. Thank you for coming. I've been really looking forward to this visit. Chancellor Merkel has got a very good grasp of the international issues. She's a clear thinker. She speaks very plainly. And I'm honored that you came to visit.

I'm looking forward to taking the Chancellor upstairs to my private residence after this press availability to continue our discussions and to have a dinner that is a continuation of a personal relationship that is developing, where we're able to speak in such a way that we're—can understand our—what we're trying to say and understand our mutual desire to work together to make this world a peaceful place. German-U.S. relations are very important. They're—and I'm just honored you came back.

I do want to mention that we did talk about a couple of very important subjects. Obviously, we spent a lot of time on Iran. After all, we're close allies in trying to make sure

that the Iranians do not develop a nuclear weapon. We talked about the WTO round, the Doha round for the WTO, and I appreciated the Chancellor's willingness to work with not only the Europeans but with a country like Brazil and others, to see if we can't bring this round to a favorable conclusion.

This evening I'm going to talk to the Chancellor about Sudan and the progress that's being made in Iraq. We've got a lot to talk about, because we're friends and allies. And so I welcome you; glad you're here.

Chancellor Merkel. Well, let me say that I am indeed very pleased to be here, and I am also very gratified to know that over the past few months, we have been able to strike up indeed a very, very good rapport, very good relationship, indeed a friendship. And we bolster that friendship mostly by frequent telephone calls; we've been in constant contact.

We addressed a number of issues here today that—of mutual concern, chief among them is Iran, where we are in total agreement, saying that under no circumstances must Iran be allowed to come into possession of nuclear weapons.

We are in agreement, also, that a diplomatic solution needs to be found, and we do see good chances for bringing this about. But we also think that it is essential in this context that the clear resolve of the international community is shown by standing united, by showing cohesion on this matter. And what is also essential and indeed crucial in this context is that we try to draw as many partners as possible into the fold and to clearly show to the Iranians that this is unacceptable.

We also addressed the issue of the WTO, the negotiating round, and we said that we want a success of WTO. I explained to the President of the United States that we will use the upcoming EU-Latin American summit in order to get together again with our partners there, in bilateral talks, and try to impress also the Latin American countries that it is, indeed, necessary for all of us to come to a successful outcome here and that all of these countries need to lend their contribution to bringing that about.

Well—and I trust that this evening we're going to continue discussing other important

foreign policy issues. We also, I think, have a number of bilateral issues that we would like to discuss over dinner. Also, because tomorrow one of my stops during this trip will be a stop to New York, where I will meet with representatives of the American business community—so German-American business will also be on the agenda there.

And in conclusion, let me thank you yet again for the very warm and gracious reception here, to the White House.

President Bush. Thanks. Deb [Deb Riechmann, Associated Press]. Hold on a second. One at a time. Deb.

Zacarias Moussaoui

Q. Mr. President, are you satisfied with the Moussaoui verdict? He didn't get the death penalty that the Government was seeking. Were you worried that a death sentence might have turned him into a martyr?

President Bush. Mr. Moussaoui got a fair trial; the jury convicted him to life in prison, where he'll spend the rest of his life. In so doing, they spared his life, which is something that he evidently wasn't willing to do for innocent American citizens.

As I think about the trial, I can't help but think about the families who lost a loved one on September the 11th. I think about the rescuers who tried to save lives in the burning buildings. And I know that it's really important for the United States to stay on the offense against these killers and bring them to justice. And those are my thoughts about the Moussaoui trial.

Iran

Q. Mr. President, what kind of sanctions should be taken against Iran, and when?

President Bush. That's the kind of question that allies discuss in private.

Q. You discussed it just this afternoon.

President Bush. Hold on a second. It's very important that the international community send a clear message to the Iranians that a nuclear weapon is unacceptable. We are pleased that the EU-3 has taken such a strong role in this measure. It is part of having a unified message. The United States is actively involved with our partners in achieving this important objective.

The first important thing that must be done in achieving an issue diplomatically is for everybody to share a goal. And the goal is clear, and that is, the Iranians should not have a nuclear weapon or the capacity to make a nuclear weapon. And that in itself is a important diplomatic achievement.

We—the Chancellor and I, of course, obviously agree on that, but so do other partners in this effort, such as the Russians. They agree that the Iranians should not have a nuclear—it's a good starting point. And now we're talking about the tactics, as to how to achieve that objective. One such tactic is to go to the United Nations Security Council, and today we laid down a resolution. And we will continue to consult with our partners as to how to achieve a diplomatic solution to this issue. And the timing of resolutions and what they should say and—is all—what allies do. And we will come to a common agreement as to how to proceed, because this is a common effort.

And the Iranians must understand that we won't fold, that our partnership is strong, that for the sake of world peace, they should abandon their nuclear weapons ambitions. And we're resolute on that matter. And so that's what Angela and I talk about. We talk about how to make sure this coalition continues to send a common message. And I appreciate her steadfast—and her strength on this issue.

Let's see, we've got Toby [Tabassum Zakaria, Reuters], yes.

Chancellor Merkel. Let me just add one remark. I think in a situation, just as the one that we have now, it is crucial, if one wants to see this matter through to a diplomatic success, to actually do this on a step-by-step basis. Quite often, attempts are being made to rush matters, to actually preempt what should be at the end of the process, and to take the next—the over—next step before the next one. And I really do think that on this one, in order to pursue this diplomatic process successfully, we need to pursue this on a step-by-step basis.

And I mean, it's happening now. We now have an agenda. What is on the agenda now is looking at this matter, and then the Chapter VII of the Security Council resolution, and what we need to do further is discuss

what we want to pursue further in this process with all of our partners and try to keep them all together.

President Bush. Right. Toby.

Q. Madam Chancellor, do you want the United States to talk directly with Iran on this issue? And did you tell that to President Bush today?

Chancellor Merkel. What I want is to achieve this together, to be successful in this together, in what we are trying to do here—and that is to see to it that Iran is not in possession of a nuclear weapon, persuading them that they will not be allowed to get possession of a nuclear weapon and that they need to abide by international rules.

And I think in this overall process, we have shown that there is very good interaction between us. What we have been doing, we've been doing together, and we shall continue to do so. And I think it is right in this overall process to say, it's important what the European Union has done in this process. They've played a very crucial role. And I must say that I'm fully behind the attempts that have been made by the EU-3, and together with the United States, because right from the start, we have been in on this together, and we shall continue to be so.

Germany-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President—

President Bush. Nice to see you again.

Q. Yes. Thank you very much. Nice to see you too.

President Bush. It's a face a fellow can't forget. [Laughter] Okay.

Q. We can talk about this. [Laughter] Seriously, we've learned that you have been talking a lot with Madam Merkel, and you've been on the phone for—six times. You've been—you've seen each other a lot. So how has this relation, German-American relation developed since she took office? Are we back into partners in leadership? And when are you planning to come to Germany, maybe to the soccer World Cup?

President Bush. I'm going to come to Germany before the G-8 and—am I supposed to say that? [Laughter] Breaking news. Last time I had a press conference with the Chancellor, I did talk about her predecessor and, you know, I had a lot of meetings with

her predecessor, and I remember them fondly. And I thought our relations—look, the Iraq war made relations difficult. People—it's just—the Government didn't agree. And I understand that.

And the Chancellor is a—I wouldn't call it a new chapter in German-U.S. relations, because I did feel we had, you know, we were still writing chapters. But I find the Chancellor to be a—one, a fascinating person who brings a unique perspective. A lot of us who grew up in the West take our liberties for granted, that freedom is something that's just—is prevalent everywhere, and where it's not prevalent, don't worry about it.

Well, I'm talking to a very sophisticated leader who knows what it's like to live in a world that isn't free. And there's just something, to me, that is intriguing and important to have a partner in peace who brings that kind of perspective, who knows the discomfort of what it means to live under the iron hand of a Communist ruler.

So our relationship—the way I view the relationship is, it's growing and it's strengthening. Any time you have a relationship like this, there has to be a certain degree of trust—and you trust the person when they say something. And I appreciate Chancellor Merkel's straightforward judgment. And I hope that I've created the condition where she tells me what's on her mind, and she expresses her beliefs—and I certainly will express mine—and we're able to find common ground.

And we do disagree, of course. And she—but the disagreements are always in such a way as to make sure that there's a positive relationship, because we both understand relations between Germany and the United States are important for our respective people, important for the relationships in Europe, for the United States. In other words, it enhances the transatlantic relationship. And by working together, we can help solve major problems. And this is a troubled world. We're dealing with Iran. We're dealing with Sudan. And it's very important for diplomacy to work, and it works better when you have a partner in peace, a partner—an ally with—a Germany that understands it can really make a difference in the international community.

And so I value this relationship, and I thank her for her friendship. And I'm looking forward to going to Germany again.

Thank you all.

Chancellor Merkel. Well, to put this in a nutshell, I invited the President to come over before the G-8 summit and to visit me in my constituency, simply because I wanted to show him around and show him a little bit of what has been achieved in what we call the new Linder; to get to know, also, people who, like me, lived on the other side of that wall. And let me say that I'm very much looking forward to his coming over.

Q. When?

Chancellor Merkel. Since the G-8 summit—that was the question as to when you would come over—the G-8 summit is from the 15th through the 17th, so it will, in all probability, be the day before that—the 14th.

President Bush. Yes, somewhere around there. I want to keep it somewhat of a mystery. [*Laughter*] Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:16 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Zacarias Moussaoui, an Al Qaida operative who was sentenced on May 4 for helping to plan the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks; and former Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany. Chancellor Merkel spoke in German, and her remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks on the National Day of Prayer

May 4, 2006

Welcome to the White House. I am really glad you're here. Thanks for coming. And I'm honored to join you for the National Day of Prayer. On this special day, we give thanks for the many ways that America has been blessed, and we acknowledge the Almighty, who is the source of these blessings.

I appreciate the chairman of the National Day of Prayer, Shirley Dobson. I notice you brought your old husband with you too. [*Laughter*] Thank you for organizing this event here at the White House and around the Nation.

Mrs. Bright, it's good to see you. Thank you; welcome. I'm glad you're back again. Dr. Blackaby, thank you very much, sir, for

being the honorary chairman of the National Day of Prayer Task Force. And we welcome Marilyn as well.

I want to thank the members of the Cabinet who are here. Thank you all for coming. Appreciate you taking time out of your day to be here to join.

I'm glad to see my friend Archbishop Demetrios. How are you, sir? Thanks for coming. I appreciate the military chaplains who are here. Thanks for administering to the needs and souls of the men and women who wear the uniform. Yours is an important job, and I'm grateful, as your Commander in Chief, for what you do.

I want to thank Rabbi Ciment, Father Connor, and Jay Dennis for joining us. Thank you for your prayers and your strong statements.

I thank Rebecca St. James for your beautiful music. We're proud you're here. I want to thank those who accompanied you. About the coat—[*laughter*]—your answer is, it's the voice that matters—[*laughter*]—and the spirit behind the voice.

And, Gail, thank you for coming as well. We're proud you're here. Thanks for sharing with us.

America is a nation of prayer. It's impossible to tell the story of our Nation without telling the story of people who pray. The first pilgrims came to this land with a yearning for freedom. They stepped boldly onto the shores of a New World, and many of them fell to their knees to give thanks.

At decisive moments in our history and in quiet times around family tables, we are a people humbled and strengthened and blessed by prayer. During the darkest days of the Revolutionary War, the Continental Congress and George Washington—I call him the first George W.—[*laughter*]—urged citizens to pray and to give thanks and to ask for God's protection.

More than two centuries since our first National Day of Prayer and Thanksgiving, we continue to ask for God's guidance in our own lives and in the life our Nation. Each year, thousands of citizens write letters and send cards to the White House that mention their prayers for this Nation and this Office.

In my travels across the great land, a comment that I hear often from our fellow citizens is, “Mr. President, I pray for you and your family.” It’s amazing how many times a total stranger walks up and says that to me. You’d think they’d say, “How about the bridge?” or “How about filling the potholes?” [Laughter] No, they say, “I’ve come to tell you I pray for you, Mr. President.”

And the only thing I know to do is to look at them in the eye and say, “That is the greatest gift that a fellow citizen can do for those of us who have been entrusted to lead our country.” And for that—[applause]. And so I thank thanks—I say thanks to the millions of Americans who pray each day for our Nation, our troops, and our elected leaders.

Prayer is a gift from Almighty God that transforms us, whether we bow our heads in solitude or offer swift and silent prayers in times of trial. Prayer humbles us by reminding us of our place in creation. Prayer strengthens us by reminding us that God loves and cares for each and every soul in His creation. And prayer blesses us by reminding us that there is a divine plan that stands above all human plans.

In the stillness and peace of prayer, we surrender our will to God’s will, and we learn to serve His eternal purposes. By opening ourselves to God’s priorities, our hearts are stirred, and we are inspired to action—to feed the hungry, to reach out to the poor, to bring aid to a widow or to an orphan or to the less fortunate.

On this day, we also remember that we are a people united by our love for freedom, even when we differ in our personal beliefs. In America, we are free to profess any faith we choose—or no faith at all. What brings us together is our shared desire to answer the call to serve something greater than ourselves.

Over the past 5 years, I have watched the American people answer this call. Some serve their fellow man on distant shores, placing themselves in harm’s way so that others might live in freedom. Others serve in our Nation’s armies of compassion, bringing comfort and kindness to suffering communities at home and abroad. In millions of acts of service, the American people have shown the good heart of our Nation.

From our Nation’s prayerful beginnings, America has grown and prospered. Through prayer, we humbly recognize our continued dependence on divine providence.

I want to thank you all for keeping prayer a part of our national life. May God bless each one of you, and may God continue to bless our Nation.

And now it is my honor to welcome Reverend Jay Dennis.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:44 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to James Dobson, husband of National Day of Prayer chairman Shirley Dobson; Vonette Bright, former chairman, National Day of Prayer Task Force; Marilyn Blackaby, wife of Henry T. Blackaby, honorary chairman of the National Day of Prayer Task Force; Archbishop Demetrios, Primate of the Greek Orthodox Church in America; Rabbi Sholom Ciment, director, Chabad Lubavitch of Greater Boynton, Boynton Beach, FL; Father Charles P. Connor, pastor, St. Rose of Lima Church, Carbondale, PA; Rev. Jay Dennis, pastor, First Baptist Church at the Mall, Lakeland, FL; gospel music entertainer Rebecca St. James; and entertainer Gail Richardson.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Tabare Vazquez of Uruguay

May 4, 2006

President Bush. *Bienvenidos.* It’s been a distinct pleasure to welcome the President to the Oval Office. We’ve had a very extensive conversation about—we talked about a lot of subjects. We talked about the human condition. We talked about our mutual desire to improve lives through good education and health care. I assured the President that the billions of dollars of aid that we spend in the neighborhood are all aimed at justice and giving people a chance to realize their dreams.

We talked about ways to make sure there’s better student exchanges between our countries. It made a lot of sense; after all, the President was educated—or received some education in my home state of Texas, at M.D. Anderson.

We talked about extending our commercial relations. One of the interesting topics that the President brought up was renewable energy, a subject that is very dear to my heart

and necessary for our country. And finally, I shared some thoughts with the President about my deep desire to help countries become free, so that this world is more peaceful.

I—in short, it was a very extensive dialog. And finally, he shared with me the joy of being a grandfather. Obviously, he's a good man, because he's got such pride in his family.

And so I welcome you here, sir. Thank you for coming.

President Vazquez. Mr. President, thank you very much for your kindest attention. It's, for us, a great opportunity to speak—but I speak Spanish.

President Bush. *Si.* [Laughter]

President Vazquez. *Y tu tambien.*

Thank you very much, Mr. President. I want to thank you very much for your welcome. This is one more show of friendship that has been a very deep friendship between our countries from the very beginning.

We've had a very kind and extensive exchange of opinions with President Bush. First of all, we recalled the bilateral investment treaty that was recently signed by our two countries in which we have—and we have now also agreed to work to expand, intensify, and strengthen our trade relations. In fact, our technical people are going to be meeting within the framework of our joint commission in a few months in Montevideo, and we've agreed that we are going to be kicking off work at that time.

I will not extend on the points that have—the items that have already been referred to by the President, but I do want to thank you very much.

And to the Uruguayan people who are listening to me, I want to say to all of you: Without exception, without exclusions, together, we will continue to work jointly on this path that we have undertaken in order to further the standard of life with our people, through education, through health care, through more and better jobs, and through decent salaries for all our people, and to truly insert Uruguay on the path of globalization.

Thank you very much.

President Bush. *Gracias, senior. Gracias.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:09 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Vazquez spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Remarks at a Cinco de Mayo Celebration

May 4, 2006

Thank you. Please be seated. *Bienvenidos.* Welcome to the White House. I'm honored to have so many distinguished Hispanic and Mexican American leaders here for the Cinco de Mayo celebration. You may have noticed this celebration is not on the *cinco de Mayo*—[laughter]—it's on the *cuatro de Mayo*. [Laughter] It's such an important holiday, we thought we would start early. [Laughter]

I appreciate Hector, good to see you—head of the SBA is with us today. Gaddi Vasquez, thank you for coming. Thank you both for bringing—thank you for bringing your wife, Hector. I want to thank Anna Cabral, who is the Treasurer, and glad you brought Victor. Thanks for coming.

I appreciate the Ambassadors who have joined us—Ambassador *de Mexico* is with us today—*Embajador, gracias—y tambien, mi amigo*, the Ambassador from the United States to Mexico, Antonio Garza. Welcome you both. Glad you're here. I appreciate Eduardo Aguirre, Ambassador to Spain. Thank you for coming, Eduardo—Hans Hertell, the Ambassador to the Dominican Republic. Thank you all very much for coming. Thanks for serving the country, and thanks for serving your country, Ambassador, as well.

I appreciate the military personnel who are here today. We're proud of you. Thanks for wearing the uniform of the United States of America.

Before I introduce our entertainer, I do want to share some thoughts with you about the importance of Cinco de Mayo, for it commemorates a joyful moment in Mexican history. Americans must understand that it was a time when Mexican soldiers won the Battle of Puebla and defended their independence. So, obviously, Cinco de Mayo is a day of special pride for citizens of Mexico, but it is, as well, for Americans. It is a reminder of

a proud heritage we share with our neighbor to the south. That's how I view the day.

We pay tribute to that heritage, and we honor the warmth and importance of the friendship between our two nations. The United States and Mexico are united by ties of family and by commerce and by history and by culture and by values. Both nations believe in the rights and the dignity of all people. We share an important trade relationship. We have discovered that trade between our nations is good for our peoples. We believe in the ideals of freedom and independence that Cinco de Mayo represents.

Here in the United States, Mexican Americans have helped build our country and helped shape our culture. Mexican Americans have made our Nation more vibrant and more hopeful—*cada dia*. Mexican Americans have enriched the American experience with contributions to business and the arts and music and sports. Latino entrepreneurs are creating jobs across the country; the number of Hispanic-owned businesses is growing at three times the national rate. More Hispanic Americans own their homes than ever before in our Nation's history.

Many Mexican Americans have also shown their devotion to this country by defending it. More than 600,000 of our veterans are of Mexican descent. I see some of our veterans back. I'm sure—we got a lot of veterans here, as a matter of fact. I want to thank you for setting such a good example for those who wear the uniform today.

Many Mexican Americans are wearing the uniform of the United States military, and they're defending our country with valor. They're making America more secure and, at the same time, laying the foundation of peace for generations to come.

I know our citizens have enormous pride in the Mexican heritage, and rightly so. We also know that America has thrived as a nation because we've always welcomed newcomers who, in turn, embrace our values and our way of life. Becoming an American is a great privilege, and it carries with it responsibilities. Those who come here to start new lives in our country have a responsibility to understand what America is about and the responsibility to learn the English language so they can better understand our national

character and participate fully in American life. That's what we want. Making this effort is also key to unlocking the opportunities of America, allowing new folks to rise in society and realize the American Dream.

In this country, we're now having an important debate about immigration. And it is really important that we discuss this issue in a way that is worthy of this country's best traditions. Our Nation does not have to choose between being a compassionate society and a lawful society. A lawful society is one that enforces its laws and enforces its border; that's what a lawful society does. A compassionate society rejects a system that treats people as if they're something to be traded, honors human rights and human dignity, helps people out of the shadows of society, treats people in a decent and humane way.

So I support strengthening our borders, and I support a temporary-worker program that would match willing workers with American employers. See, I think we need to create a secure and legal channel for people to come to this country to work. It will reduce the number of people trying to sneak across our border. It will treat people humanely. It will get rid of the *coyotes* and the document forgers. It will affirm our belief that every person has got dignity and every person has got value, and at the same time, it will make it easier for us to be a nation of law and to protect our border.

Immigration reform needs to be comprehensive because all elements of this problem must be addressed together, or none of them will be solved at all. The American people must conduct this debate with dignity. They must remember that we're a nation of immigrants. They must understand—they must remember that throughout our history, people have come to America because this is a place where they can pursue their dreams no matter who they are or where they're from.

Mexican Americans have brought with them a culture based upon faith in God, a deep love for family, and a belief that hard work leads to a better life. Every immigrant who lives by these values makes the United States a better country, makes our future brighter as one Nation under God.

Across America tomorrow, there will be many celebrations of Cinco de Mayo. The performances we're going to see today represent some of the very fine talent. It reminds us that we're a nation that is strong because of our diversity. There's going to be a lot of traditional music, a lot of pretty good Mexican food too, I bet you. [*Laughter*] Kind of reminds us of Texas, doesn't it, Ambassador?

May God continue to bless all of us who are fortunate enough to live in this land, and may God continue to bless our country and the many sons and daughters of Mexico who call our Nation home. Happy Cinco de Mayo, and now it is my pleasure to introduce one of Mexico's great talents, Graciela Beltran.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:57 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Robin Barreto, wife of Small Business Administration Administrator Hector V. Barreto; Victor G. Cabral, husband of Treasurer of the United States Anna Escobedo Cabral; Mexico's Ambassador to the U.S. Carlos Alberto de Icaza Gonzalez; and entertainer Graciela Beltran of Mexico. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Port Security Legislation

May 4, 2006

I am pleased that the House of Representatives today passed a bill to enhance the security of our Nation's ports. I look forward to working with Congress on passage of legislation that will make our people safer and facilitate trade.

Proclamation 8013—Mother's Day, 2006

May 4, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On Mother's Day, we honor our mothers and pay tribute to their devoted work and selfless gift of love.

America's mothers are women of determination and vision. They serve as caregivers and guides, helping to build the foundation for our children's success and nurturing them as they grow and explore the great promise of our Nation. Through their mothers' examples, children come to understand the virtue of kindness, the blessing of compassion, and the importance of principle. A mother's support encourages children to make right choices, set high goals, and become good citizens. A mother's love inspires children to achieve their full potential and strengthens the character of our country. The commitment and love of mothers reflect the best of America.

On this special day, we remember the many mothers whose sons and daughters serve in harm's way. The determination and courage of these women demonstrate the spirit of our Nation, and America will always be grateful for their unfailing devotion. We also recognize the dedication of the many mothers who serve in America's Armed Forces. These brave women protect the safety and security of our Nation and help ensure a peaceful future for our children.

To honor mothers, the Congress, by a joint resolution approved May 8, 1914, as amended (38 Stat. 770), has designated the second Sunday in May each year as "Mother's Day" and has requested the President to call for its appropriate observance. May God bless all mothers across our country on this special day, and throughout the year.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 14, 2006, as Mother's Day. I encourage all Americans to show their gratitude and love to mothers for making a difference in the lives of their children and communities. I call upon citizens to observe this day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fourth day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:46 a.m., May 8, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on May 9.

Memorandum on Determination Pursuant to Section 2(c)(1) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as Amended

May 4, 2006

Presidential Determination No. 2006-13

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Determination Pursuant to Section 2(c)(1) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as Amended

Pursuant to section 2(c)(1) of the Migration and Refugee Assistance Act of 1962, as amended, 22 U.S.C. 2601(c)(1), I hereby determine that it is important to the national interest that up to \$28 million be made available from the U.S. Emergency Refugee and Migration Assistance Fund to support unexpected urgent humanitarian needs related to the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees' new role to protect and assist Internally Displaced Persons; refugee repatriation to Burundi and the Democratic Republic of Congo; refugee feeding operations; and drought relief affecting conflict areas of Somalia. These funds may be used, as appropriate, to provide contributions to international, governmental, and non-governmental organizations, and, as necessary, for administrative expenses of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration.

You are authorized and directed to inform the appropriate committees of the Congress of this determination and the obligation of funds under this authority and to arrange for the publication of this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

Remarks at the American Jewish Committee's Centennial Dinner

May 4, 2006

[*The President's remarks are joined in progress.*]

The President. —I want to thank the Members of Congress who are here. I appreciate the members of the diplomatic corps who have joined us today. I want to pay a special tribute to a friend of mine from Texas who has done a superb job as the Chairman of the U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council, and that's Fred Zeidman.

My administration shares a strong commitment with the AJC to make sure relations between Israel and America remain strong. We have so much in common. We're both young countries born of struggle and sacrifice. We're both founded by immigrants escaping religious persecution. We have both established vibrant democracies built on the rule of law and open markets. We're both founded on certain basic beliefs, that God watches over the affairs of men and that freedom is the Almighty God's gift to every man and woman on the face of this Earth. These ties have made us natural allies, and these ties will never be broken. America's commitment to Israel's security is strong, enduring, and unshakable.

I'm looking forward to my meeting with Prime Minister Olmert in a couple of weeks. And as he comes to America, I cannot help but think about my friend Ariel Sharon. Ariel Sharon is a friend who remains in our thoughts and prayers. He is a man of courage and a man of peace. And so tonight we pray for his recovery; we rededicate ourselves to the cause to which he devoted his life, the peace and the security of Israel.

As you know, I'm a strong believer in democracy and free elections, but that does not mean we have to support elected officials who are not committed to peace. Hamas has made it clear that they do not acknowledge the right of Israel to exist, and I've made it clear that so long as that's their policy, we will have no contact with the leaders of Hamas. Democratically—leaders cannot have one foot in the camp of democracy and one foot in the camp of terror. Hamas must accept the demands of the international community to recognize Israel, disarm and reject terrorism, and stop blocking the path to peace.

Many of the AJC leaders who have come to know me, understand how my thinking was profoundly affected by the attacks on our

country on September the 11th, 2001. The security of our Nation is foremost in my mind. I vowed that day and I vow to you today that the United States of America will stay on the hunt and bring the killers to justice.

And one of the lessons of September the 11th is that this Nation must take threats seriously before they fully materialize. And I saw a threat in Saddam Hussein. He had invaded a neighbor; he had used weapons of mass destruction against his own people; he had the capability of making weapons of mass destruction; he harbored terrorists; he was shooting at U.S. aircraft. He was a threat, and the world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power.

Our goal in Iraq is to have an ally in the war on terror and to help that young country establish an Iraqi-style democracy. Last December, 12 million people defied the car bombers and the killers and the terrorists, and said that "We want to live in liberty." Recently a unity government has formed in Iraq. They reached an agreement on their top leadership posts. This new Government represents a turning point in Iraq, a new chapter in our engagement there, and an opportunity for progress. We will form a new partnership with these leaders. We will adjust our methods to support their priorities. We will strengthen our mutual efforts to achieve victory.

But I want you to understand that the new Government is yet another blow to those who hate liberty. First, it will deny the terrorists their immediate aim of turning Iraq into a safe haven from which they can plot and plan attacks against the United States and our allies. And secondly, a democratic Iraq will be a major blow to the terrorists' hateful ideology, sending a powerful message across the region that the future of the Middle East belongs to freedom. The only way we can lose in Iraq is if we lose our nerve, and I am not going to lose my nerve.

The AJC, the American Government, and most of the nations of the world are concerned about Iran. We're concerned because the Iranian regime is repressing its people, sponsoring terrorists, destabilizing the region, threatening Israel, and defying the world with its ambitions for nuclear weapons.

America will continue to rally the world to confront these threats.

We're making progress. The first goal is to reach a common objective, and the objective amongst America, our European allies, Russia, and China is to deny Iran a nuclear weapon. I spent time with Chancellor Merkel yesterday talking about this important issue. I can assure you we have a strong ally in Chancellor Merkel when it comes to uniting the world to speak with one clear voice.

We will continue to press the Iranian Government to comply with IAEA, as well as U.N. Security Council resolutions. America respects and admires the people of Iran. We respect their history and culture. We respect their right to choose their own future and win their own freedom. And America looks forward to the day when our Nation can be closest of friends with a free and democratic Iran.

Before I introduce the Chancellor, I do want to talk about another subject that I know is important to you, and it's important to me, and that's Darfur. Last weekend, thousands rallied on our National Mall to call for justice in Darfur. And among the speakers was a man who understands the meaning of evil. You know him well. Elie Wiesel put it this way: "We refuse to be silent because silent helps the killer, never his victims."

America is not silent. The United States is the only country to have called the crimes taking place in Sudan what they are—genocide. To end these atrocities, we've developed a clear standard. First, there must be a political course. Right now as we speak, we're negotiating to bring a political settlement so that all sides will lay down their arms, a settlement between the Government and the rebels. These conversations are taking place in Abuja.

But, as well, we must understand that the rape and the murder and the suffering must be stopped, and that's why I believe strongly that we must augment AU forces with a blue-helmeted U.N. force, with a NATO overlay, so that we can send a clear message to the leaders of Sudan: We will not tolerate the genocide taking place in that country.

My remaining time in office, I look forward to working with AJC leaders. I appreciate your steadfast strength when it comes

to dealing with terror. I appreciate your strong belief in the power of liberty to transform the world we have. I look forward to working with you to continue to lay the foundations of peace, so that generations after our time will look at all of us and say, job well done.

And now it's my pleasure to introduce a leader who understands the importance of freedom. Angela Merkel grew up in East Germany during the dark days of the cold war. She understands what it means to live in a free society. She understands the power of liberty. She's a straightforward person; she tells me what's on her mind. She's a woman of good judgment. She's a strong leader. It's my privilege to welcome her here, and to our friends at the AJC.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:57 p.m. at the National Building Museum. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert, and former Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany; and Nobel prize winner and author Elie Wiesel. A complete transcript of these remarks is available on the White House web site, www.whitehouse.gov.

Remarks on the National Economy

May 5, 2006

Frager's Hardware

The President. Listen, thank you for your hospitality. I'm here to talk about our economy. Today we got some good news: 138,000 additional Americans found jobs over the last month, which is good; the national unemployment rate is 4.7 percent. This economy is strong.

And one of the hopeful things about our economy is, small businesses are doing well. Small businesses provide most of the job growth in our country. The small-business sector is doing well; so is the American economy.

One thing we've got to make sure is that we keep the people's taxes low to keep this economy growing. Raising taxes will hurt small businesses; raising taxes will hurt consumers; raising taxes will particularly affect working people, now that the price of gasoline has gone up. So one of the things Con-

gress has got to do is be mindful that the economic growth we're seeing, the strong economic growth, is dependent upon good tax policy.

At the same time, Congress should be wise about how they spend the people's money. They've got to make sure the supplemental comes to me at a rate that I'll accept, \$92.2 billion, plus money for the pandemic flu. We've got a plan to make sure this economy keeps growing, but today's news is good news for the American people.

And I want to thank you for coming by here to say hi, too.

John Weintraub. All right, I thank you.

The President. It's a good place to shop, by the way. I just spent some of my hard-earned money on Barney. I bought him a couple of toys to chew on—but don't let him know until I get over there, because it's a surprise. Thanks for letting me come by.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:08 a.m. at Frager's Hardware. Participating in the visit was John Weintraub, co-owner, Frager's Hardware. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Announcing the Resignation of Porter J. Goss as Director of the Central Intelligence Agency

May 5, 2006

The President. This morning Director Porter Goss offered his resignation as the Director of the Central Intelligence Agency; I've accepted it.

During the course of his tenure, I've established a very close personal relationship with Porter, which is very important for the Director of the CIA. He's spent a lot of time here in the Oval Office. He's told me—he's given me his candid advice. I appreciate his integrity. I appreciate the honor in which—that he brought to the job.

Porter's tenure at the CIA was one of transition. He's helped this agency become integrated into the intelligence community, and that was a tough job. And he's led ably. He's got a 5-year plan to increase the number of analysts and operatives, which is going to help make this country a safer place and help

us win the war on terror. He's instilled a sense of professionalism. He honors the proud history of the CIA, an organization that is known for its secrecy in accountability. I am confident that his successor will continue the reforms that he's put in place, and as a result, this country will be more secure.

We've got to win the war on terror, and the Central Intelligence Agency is a vital part of that war. And so I want to thank you for your service.

[At this point, Director Goss made brief remarks.]

The President. God bless. Thank you. I appreciate you. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:44 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Director Goss.

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.

April 29

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the evening, at the Washington Hilton Hotel, the President and Mrs. Bush attended the White House Correspondents' Association dinner.

May 1

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Vladimir Putin of Russia. Later, he had intelligence briefing.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President Umar

Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir of Sudan to discuss peace efforts in Sudan.

The President announced his intention to nominate Sheila C. Bair to be Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation.

The President announced his intention to nominate John M.R. Kneuer to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information.

The President announced his intention to nominate Dawn M. Liberi to be Ambassador to Mauritania.

The President announced his intention to nominate William B. Taylor, Jr., to be Ambassador to Ukraine.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael Wood to be Ambassador to Sweden.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Committee for Purchase From People Who Are Blind or Severely Disabled: Perry E. Anthony; Robert J. Henke; Andrew D. Houghton; and James House.

May 2

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan. Later, he had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President had lunch with Vice President Dick Cheney. Later, in the Oval Office, he met with Republican congressional leaders to discuss legislative priorities.

The President announced his designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to San Jose, Costa Rica, to attend the Inauguration of President Oscar Arias Sanchez of Costa Rica on May 8: Laura Bush (head of delegation); and Mark Langdale.

The President declared an emergency in Connecticut and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by record snowfall from February 11–12.

The President declared a major disaster in Hawaii and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the areas struck by severe storms, flooding, landslides, and mudslides from February 20 to April 2.

May 3

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld.

In the afternoon, on the South Portico, the President participated in a photo opportunity with recipients of the 2005 Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching.

In the evening, at the Residence, the President and Mrs. Bush hosted a dinner for Chancellor Angela Merkel of Germany.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Vienna, Austria, to participate in the U.S.-European Union summit on June 21.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mark Myers to be Director of the U.S. Geological Survey at the Department of the Interior.

The President announced his intention to nominate the following individuals to be members of the National Museum and Library Services Board: Katherine M.B. Berger; Karen Brosius; Ioannis N. Miaoulis; Sandra Pickett; Christina Orr-Cahall; and Kevin Owen Starr.

The President announced his intention to designate James Manning as Acting Assistant Secretary for Postsecondary Education at the Department of Education.

May 4

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Abdullah bin Ahmad Badawi of Malaysia.

In the afternoon, in the Diplomatic Reception Room, the President participated in an interview with ARD German Television. Later, he dropped by a meeting between Secretary of the Security Council of Russia Igor Sergeevich Ivanov and National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley.

May 5

In the morning, the President had breakfast with Secretary of State Condoleezza

Rice. Later, he had an intelligence briefing followed by a National Security Council meeting on Iraq.

Later in the morning, in the Library, the President participated in an interview with Larry Kudlow of CNBC.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in an interview with Bild of Germany. Later, he met with Quartet Special Envoy for Gaza Disengagement James D. Wolfensohn to thank him for his service.

In the evening, at the Marine Barracks, the President and Mrs. Bush met with marines wounded in the war on terror. Later, they participated in the evening parade.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted May 1

Paul Cherecwich, Jr., of Utah, to be a member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board for a term expiring September 14, 2009, vice Charles L. Kolbe, term expired.

Donald V. Hammond, of Virginia, to be a member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board for a term expiring September 21, 2010, vice Robert M. Tobias, term expired.

John M.R. Kneuer, of New Jersey, to be Assistant Secretary of Commerce for Communications and Information, vice Michael D. Gallagher, resigned.

Dawn M. Liberi, of New York, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Islamic Republic of Mauritania.

William B. Taylor, Jr., of Virginia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Ukraine.

Catherine G. West, of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board for a term expiring September 14, 2008, vice Karen Hastie Williams, term expired.

Deborah L. Wince-Smith, of Virginia, to be a member of the Internal Revenue Service Oversight Board for a term expiring September 14, 2010, vice Larry L. Levitan, term expired.

Michael Wood, of the District of Columbia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Sweden.

Submitted May 2

Sheila C. Bair, of Kansas, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation for the remainder of the term expiring July 15, 2007, vice Donald E. Powell, resigned.

Sheila C. Bair, of Kansas, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation for a term expiring July 15, 2013 (reappointment).

Sheila C. Bair, of Kansas, to be Chairperson of the Board of Directors of the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation for a term of 5 years, vice Donald E. Powell, resigned.

Submitted May 3

Mark Myers, of Alaska, to be Director of the U.S. Geological Survey, vice Charles G. Groat, resigned.

Susan C. Schwab, of Maryland, to be U.S. Trade Representative, with the rank of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, vice Robert J. Portman.

Submitted May 4

Valerie L. Baker, of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Central District of California, vice Consuelo B. Marshall, retired.

Jerome A. Holmes, of Oklahoma, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Tenth Circuit, vice Stephanie K. Seymour, retired.

Charles P. Rosenberg, of Virginia, to be U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Virginia for the term of 4 years, vice Paul J. McNulty, resigned.

Withdrawn May 4

Jerome A. Holmes, of Oklahoma, to be U.S. District Judge for the Northern District of Oklahoma, vice Sven E. Holmes, resigned, which was sent to the Senate on February 14, 2006.

Submitted May 5

Katherine M.B. Berger, of Virginia, to be a member of the National Museum and Library Services Board for a term expiring December 6, 2010, vice Nancy S. Dwight, term expired.

Karen Brosius, of South Carolina, to be a member of the National Museum and Library Services Board for the remainder of the term expiring December 6, 2006, vice Thomas E. Lorentzen, resigned.

Karen Brosius, of South Carolina, to be a member of the National Museum and Library Services Board for a term expiring December 6, 2011 (reappointment).

Ioannis N. Miaoulis, of Massachusetts, to be a member of the National Museum and Library Services Board for a term expiring December 6, 2010, vice Terry L. Maple, term expired.

Christina Orr-Cahall, of Florida, to be a member of the National Museum and Library Services Board for a term expiring December 6, 2010, vice Maria Mercedes Guillemard, term expired.

Sandra Pickett, of Texas, to be a member of the National Museum and Library Services Board for a term expiring December 6, 2010 (reappointment).

Kevin Owen Starr, of California, to be a member of the National Museum and Library Services Board for a term expiring December 6, 2009, vice David Donath, term expired.

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 May 1

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Fact sheet: Making Health Care More Affordable and Accessible for All Americans

Released May 2

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Connecticut

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Hawaii

Released May 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan and Assistant to the President for Homeland Security and Counterterrorism Frances Fragos Townsend

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing the President's upcoming visit to Vienna, Austria, to participate in the U.S.-European Union summit on June 21

Fact sheet: Advancing the Nation's Preparedness for Pandemic Influenza

Fact sheet: Growing Our Economy: Keeping Taxes Low and Restraining Spending

Released May 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Released May 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Fact sheet: Economic Growth Continues—More Than 5.2 Million Jobs Created Since August 2003

Statement by the Press Secretary: Darfur Peace Agreement

Acts Approved by the President

NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.