Presidents—four Republicans and two Democrats. As a former CIA Director and the current president of Texas A&M University, he has experience leading large and complex organizations, and he has shown that he is an agent of change. As Secretary of Defense, he will provide a fresh outlook on our strategy in Iraq and what we need to do to prevail.

Bob replaces the longest serving member of my Cabinet, Don Rumsfeld. History will record that on Secretary Rumsfeld's watch, the men and women of our military overthrew two terrorist regimes, brought justice to scores of senior Al Qaida operatives, and helped stop new terrorist attacks on our people. America is safer and the world is more secure because of the leadership of Don Rumsfeld, and I am deeply grateful for his service.

The message of this week's elections is clear: The American people want their leaders in Washington to set aside partisan differences, conduct ourselves in an ethical manner, and work together to address the challenges facing our Nation. This is important work that will demand the hard effort and good faith of leaders from both sides of the aisle, and I pledge to do my part.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:15 p.m. on November 10 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 11. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 10 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at a Veterans Day Ceremony in Arlington, Virginia

November 11, 2006

Thank you. Thanks for coming. Secretary Nicholson, thank you for your kind words and for your leadership. Members of the Cabinet; Members of Congress; members of the United State military; all veterans; all volunteers who have sworn to uphold the security of the United States, I thank your families for being here; and I thank our veterans. I am proud to join you on this day of honor.

On this day, in this month, at this hour, our Nation remembers the moment when the guns of World War I went silent, and we recognize the service and the sacrifice of our Nation's veterans. From Valley Forge to Vietnam, from Kuwait to Kandahar, from Berlin to Baghdad, our veterans have borne the costs of America's wars, and they have stood watch over America's peace. The American people are grateful to the veterans and all who have fought for our freedom.

Since the Presidency of Abraham Lincoln, the National Cemetery has reminded our citizens of the cost of liberty. The simple white markers testify to honor fulfilled and duty served. Most of these markers stand over graves of Americans who came home to enjoy the peace they earned. Too many stand over the graves of those who gave their lives to protect that peace. This day is dedicated to all who answered the call to service, whether they live in honor among us or sleep in valor beneath this sacred ground.

On this Veterans Day, we give thanks for the 24 million Americans who strengthen our Nation with their example of service and sacrifice. Our veterans are drawn from many generations and from many backgrounds. Some charged across great battlefields. Some fought on the high seas. Some patrolled the open skies. And all contributed to the character and to the greatness of America.

On this Veterans Day, we honor a new generation of men and women who are defending our freedom. Since September the 11th, 2001, our Armed Forces have engaged the enemy, the terrorists, on many fronts. At this moment, more than 1.4 million Americans are on active duty, serving in the cause of freedom and peace around the world. They are our Nation's finest citizens. They confront grave danger to defend the safety of the American people. They've brought down tyrants; they've liberated two nations; they have helped bring freedom to more than 50 million people. Through their sacrifice, they're making this Nation safer and more secure, and they are earning the proud title of veteran.

On this Veterans Day, we're humbled by the strong hearts of those who have served.

Last week, Secretary Nicholson told me about a visit he made to New York City, where he met a group of veterans who lost limbs in this war. Secretary Nicholson asked them how they could keep their spirits up. One man answered,"Sir, it is because we feel the American people are so appreciative of our service." Many of our veterans bear the scars of their service to our country, and we are a nation that will keep its commitments to those who have risked their lives for our freedom. That young man was right—we do appreciate the service of those who wear our uniform.

To help Americans show our appreciation to those who have served, Secretary Nicholson has asked all our Nation's veterans to wear their medals today. I urge our citizens to go up to those men and women and shake a hand and give a hug and give a word of thanks. I ask you to consider volunteering at a veterans hospital or a nursing home. I encourage you to work with your local veterans group to help support our troops in the field and their families here at home.

As we raise our flag and as the bugle sounds taps, we remember that the men and women of America's Armed Forces serve a great cause. They follow in a great tradition, handed down to them by America's veterans. And in public ceremonies and in private prayer, we give thanks for the freedom we enjoy because of their willingness to serve.

I thank you for honoring those who serve today and for honoring those who have set such a sterling example, our Nation's veterans. May God bless our veterans; may God bless all who wear the uniform; and may God continue to bless the United State of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:39 a.m. in the Amphitheater at Arlington National Cemetery.

Remarks at the Groundbreaking Ceremony for the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Memorial

November 13, 2006

Thank you all very much. I'm honored to join you today in today's ceremony. I'm proud to dedicate this piece of our Nation's Capital to the lasting memory of a great man.

We have gathered in tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, to the ideals he held, and to the life he lived. Dr. King showed us that a life of conscience and purpose can lift up many souls. And on this ground, a monument will rise that preserves his legacy for the ages. Honoring Dr. King's legacy requires more than building a monument; it required the ongoing commitment of every American. So we will continue to work for the day when the dignity and humanity of every person is respected and the American promise is denied to no one.

This project has been over a decade in the making, and I thank those who have worked to bring about this day. I particularly want to thank my predecessor, the man who signed the legislation to create this memorial, President Bill Clinton. It sounds like to me they haven't forgotten you yet. [*Laughter*] He's become, as you know, my fourth brother. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank Harry Johnson. I appreciate the members of my Cabinet who are here. I welcome the Members of Congress. I thank my mayor, Tony Williams, who is here. I'm proud to be with the members of the King family. I thank the representatives of the community and civil rights groups who have joined us. I thank the Martin Luther King, Jr., National Memorial Project Foundation board members and executive cabinet. Most of all, thank you all for coming.

Our Declaration of Independence makes it clear that the human right to dignity and equality is not a grant of government. It is the gift from the Author of Life. And Martin Luther King considered the Declaration one of America's great, as he called it, "charters of freedom." He called our Founders' words, "a promise that all men—yes, black men, as well as white men—would be guaranteed the unalienable right of liberty, life, and the pursuit of happiness."

Throughout Dr. King's life, he continued to trust in the power of those words, even when the practice of America did not live up to their promise. When Martin Luther King came to Washington, DC, in the summer of 1963, he came to hold this Nation to its own standards and to call its citizens to live up to the principles of our founding. He stood not far from here, on the steps of