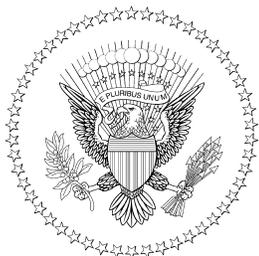


Weekly Compilation of  
**Presidential  
Documents**



Monday, December 4, 2006  
Volume 42—Number 48  
Pages 2091–2118

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## WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

## PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

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Week Ending Friday, December 1, 2006

**The President's Radio Address**

*November 25, 2006*

Good morning. This week Americans across our Nation gather with loved ones to give thanks for the many blessings we share. We're grateful for our friends and families, who fill our lives with meaning and purpose. We're grateful to live in a land of plenty and during a time of great prosperity. And we're grateful to Almighty God for the freedom to enjoy all these gifts.

Every Thanksgiving we remember the story of the Pilgrims who came to America in search of a better life and religious freedom. Much has changed in the four centuries since these humble settlers landed at Plymouth Rock. While they were only a shivering few, we are now a strong and growing nation of more than 300 million. And the desire for freedom that led the Pilgrims to the New World still guides our Nation today.

Americans believe that every person has the right to live, work, and worship in freedom. And we're thankful to the men and women of our Nation's Armed Forces who risk their lives to protect those rights. This Thanksgiving we are mindful that many of our finest citizens are spending the holiday far from their homes and loved ones, and we know that their service makes it possible for us to live in freedom.

On Tuesday I had the chance to visit our troops and their families at Hickam Air Force Base in Honolulu, Hawaii. Our servicemembers there have deployed around the world—to fight the terrorists in Afghanistan and Iraq, conduct important maritime exercises in the Pacific, help deliver humanitarian aid to the victims of disaster, and fight drug trafficking. I told the men and women at the base that we're grateful for their brav-

ery and service and that we will never forget those who have made the ultimate sacrifice.

One American who made the ultimate sacrifice was Marine Corporal Jason Dunham. Two-and-a-half years ago in Iraq, Corporal Dunham gave his life when he threw himself on top of an enemy grenade and absorbed the blast. His selfless act saved the lives of two of his fellow marines, and earlier this month, I announced that our Nation will recognize Corporal Dunham with our highest decoration for valor, the Medal of Honor.

Corporal Dunham's friends remember him as the kind of guy who would do anything for you; his superiors remember him as a model marine; and a grateful Nation will forever remember him as one of America's most valiant heroes. This Thanksgiving our thoughts and prayers are with his family and with all military families, especially those mourning the loss of a loved one.

During this holiday season, we also think of those still working to recover from the devastating hurricanes that struck our Nation last year. We are grateful to the armies of compassion who rallied to bring food, water, and hope to those who had lost everything, and we renew our commitment to help those who are still suffering and to rebuild our Nation's gulf coast.

Thanksgiving reminds us that the true strength of our Nation is the compassion and decency of our people. And as we count our blessings, we remember that those blessings are meant to be shared. I encourage all Americans to look for a way to help those in need—from tutoring a child to working in a shelter to giving a hand to a neighbor. I thank all those Americans who volunteer this season, and Laura and I wish every American a safe and happy holiday.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 11:20 a.m. on November 22 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 25. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 24 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

### **Statement on the Deaths of Frank Madla, Mary Cruz, and Aleena Jimenez**

*November 26, 2006*

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the deaths of Frank Madla, his mother-in-law, Mary Cruz, and his granddaughter, Aleena Jimenez. Frank was a dedicated public servant who devoted more than three decades of his life to serving his State and all its people in the Texas house and senate. Frank never hesitated to reach across party lines to do what was best for his fellow Texans, and I was proud to work with him when I was Governor. Texas has lost a fine man. Laura and I pray for the full and speedy recovery of Frank's wife, Helen. We send our deepest sympathies to the entire family for their loss.

### **Statement on the Death of Police Officer Steve Favela**

*November 26, 2006*

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of Officer Steve Favela of the Honolulu Police Department. Officer Favela died from injuries he suffered while protecting us during our visit to Hawaii. We send our condolences to his wife, Barbara, his entire family, and his fellow law enforcement officers. We pray that God will comfort them and that their friends and loved ones will sustain them in this difficult time.

Officer Favela risked his life every day to protect the people of his community. In this time of great sadness, we give thanks for his life of service.

### **Proclamation 8086—National Methamphetamine Awareness Day, 2006**

*November 27, 2006*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

Methamphetamine abuse shatters families and threatens our communities. On National Methamphetamine Awareness Day, we underscore the dangers of methamphetamine and reaffirm our collective responsibility to combat all forms of drug abuse.

Methamphetamine is a powerfully addictive drug that dramatically affects users' minds and bodies. Chronic use can lead to violent behavior, paranoia, and an inability to cope with the ordinary demands of life. Methamphetamine abusers can transform homes into places of danger and despair by neglecting or endangering the lives of their children, spouses, and other loved ones. Additionally, methamphetamine production exposes anyone near the process to toxic chemicals and the risk of explosion.

My Administration is committed to fighting the spread of methamphetamine abuse throughout our country. While the number of teens who have tried this deadly drug and the number of people testing positive for methamphetamine in the workplace have decreased in recent years, methamphetamine use is still a dangerous public health problem. In the Synthetic Drug Control Strategy released earlier this year, my Administration set goals of a 15 percent decrease in methamphetamine use and 25 percent reduction in domestic methamphetamine labs over the next 3 years. To help reach these objectives, my proposed 2007 budget includes \$25 million to help ensure that Americans have access to effective methamphetamine abuse recovery services and programs. Earlier this year, I also signed into law the Combat Methamphetamine Epidemic Act of 2005, which makes manufacturing the drug more difficult and imposes tougher penalties on those who smuggle or sell it.

The struggle against methamphetamine is a national, State, and local effort. To find out how to raise awareness and to learn more

about the battle against methamphetamine abuse, concerned citizens may visit [theantidrug.com](http://theantidrug.com) and [methresources.gov](http://methresources.gov). By working together, we can build a stronger, healthier America for generations to come.

**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 laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim November 30, 2006, as National Methamphetamine Awareness Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate programs and activities.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-seventh day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., November 29, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 28, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on November 30.

**Memorandum on Waiving the Prohibition on the Use of Fiscal Year 2006 Economic Support Funds With Respect to Various Parties to the Rome Statute Establishing the International Criminal Court**

*November 27, 2006*

Presidential Determination No. 2007-5

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State*

*Subject:* Waiving the Prohibition on the Use of Fiscal Year 2006 Economic Support Funds with Respect to Various Parties to the Rome Statute Establishing the International Criminal Court

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, including section 574 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2006 (the "Act"), Public Law 109-102, I hereby:

- Determine that it is important to the national interests of the United States to waive the prohibition of section 574(a) of the Act with respect to Bolivia, Costa Rica, Cyprus, Ecuador, Kenya, Mali, Mexico, Namibia, Niger, Paraguay, Peru, Samoa, South Africa, and Tanzania; and
- Waive the prohibition of section 574(a) of the Act with respect to these countries.

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

**George W. Bush**

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 28.

**Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Andrus Ansip of Estonia in Tallinn, Estonia**

*November 28, 2006*

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

**Prime Minister Ansip.** —once again, thank you very much for your support and for the support of your country.

**President Bush.** Thank you, Mr. Prime Minister. We're honored to be here. It's a great country. And I thank you for your leadership. I'm very proud of the economic accomplishments and your contributions to peace and liberty around the world. I've really been looking forward to coming here. I'm honored that you agreed to—[*inaudible*]. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 9:37 a.m. at the Stenbock House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

**Remarks Following a Meeting With Proponents of Democracy in Tallinn**

*November 28, 2006*

It's an amazing country you have here. They've got an e-government system that should be the envy of a lot of nations. They've

got a tax system that is transparent, open, and simple; people file their taxes over the Internet.

You're doing a fine job, Mr. Prime Minister. Proud of you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:31 a.m. at the Stenbock House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Andrus Ansip of Estonia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **The President's News Conference With President Toomas Ilves of Estonia in Tallinn**

*November 28, 2006*

**President Ilves.** Again, I'm very happy to greet the President of the United States, George W. Bush, in our fall weather here in Tallinn. Unfortunately, the weather isn't better than it is, but that's how it happens. This visit and these very open meetings that we have had, President Bush has had with me as well as with the Prime Minister, Andrus Ansip, truly prove that Estonia and the United States are close allies.

One of the main messages today was the message of freedom to those states who, like us, have chosen the way to democracy and freedom and will not bow to pressure from any of their neighbors, and by these countries we mean Georgia, Ukraine, the Balkan States. We should not hesitate to support these states. And we should not falter when any of our allies are losing hope or faith, and we will help them in every way we can.

We will also not falter in making Afghanistan more secure, where Estonian soldiers are helping to protect the welfare of Afghan citizens, again, together, hand in hand with the United States. NATO's greatest foreign operation in the post-cold-war period—it is the greatest challenge of the postwar period. It is a challenge not only for the neighbors of these countries but also for the whole world, as was proved by September the 11th.

We are hoping to strengthen the ties between European countries and the United States. Conflicts between us are minor or nonexistent, and any issues will be easy to resolve. President Bush's visit to Tallinn is taking place at a time immediately before the

summit of NATO in Riga. This summit shows how far the Baltic States have developed and how strong the support of our allies is for us. We want to give a strong message at the summit, and that is that the doors to NATO are not closed and this is becoming a very mature, good organization.

And I want to tell Mr. Bush, welcome to Estonia.

**President Bush.** I'm proud to be the first sitting American President to visit Estonia. I'm really glad I came. Yours is a beautiful country and a strong friend and ally of the United States. I appreciate the warm welcome I've received. My only regret is that Laura is not with me. She's receiving the Christmas tree at the White House. She sends her very best, Mr. President.

We had a lot—we had a really good discussion. The President and I spent a lot of time talking about the issue of freedom and liberty and peace. I appreciate very much the leadership Estonia is providing inside NATO.

We talked about how our nations can cooperate to achieve common objectives and promote common values, values such as human dignity and human rights and the freedom to speak and worship the way one sees fit.

Estonia is a strong ally in this war on terror. I appreciate so very much the President's understanding of the need to resist tyranny. Of all the people in the world who understand what tyranny can do, it's the Estonian people. I appreciate very much the fact that Estonia is helping others resist tyranny and realize their dreams of living in a free society.

In Afghanistan, Estonians are serving as a part of NATO's International Security Assistance Force in a dangerous province that the extremists, the Taliban, seeks to control. I appreciate the fact that your forces are serving bravely, Mr. President. The people of Estonia need to be proud of their military. It's a fine military. And the commitment of your people is important to helping secure the peace.

I appreciate the troops that you have sent to Iraq. I also understand Estonian soldiers have been wounded and two soldiers have given their lives. We hold their families in our hearts. We lift them up in prayer. And

Americans are grateful to be serving alongside such brave allies.

Estonia is sharing its democratic experience with other nations. You have made a very successful transition to democracy, and you're helping other nations do the same, and that is a vital contribution to world peace. I appreciate the fact that you're training leaders from Georgia to Moldova to the Ukraine. I appreciate the assistance programs you're providing to the Afghan people. I also appreciate the fact that you work with your neighbors and through the European Union to promote freedom in this region and around the globe.

This morning the Prime Minister and I had a chance to meet as well, and he introduced me to some of your citizens who are helping to build democracies, and I thanked them for their work. We also discussed how Estonia has built a strong economy and raised the standard of living for the people. I appreciate the fact that you've got a flat tax; you got a tax system that's transparent and simple. I also am amazed by the e-governance you have here in your country. You really are on the leading edge of change, and you're setting a really strong example.

We talked about the fact that Estonians want to be able to travel to America visa-free. Both the President and the Prime Minister made this an important part of our discussions. They made it clear to me that if we're an ally in NATO, people ought to be able to come to our country in a much easier fashion. It is clear to me that this is an important issue for the Estonian people as well. I appreciate their leaders being straightforward and very frank. There's no question where they stand.

I am pleased to announce that I'm going to work with our Congress and our international partners to modify our visa waiver program. It's a way to make sure that nations like Estonia qualify more quickly for the program and, at the same time, strengthen the program's security components.

The new security component of the visa waiver program would use modern technology to improve the security regime for international travelers to and from the United States. In other words, we need to know who is coming and when they're leav-

ing. And the more we can share information, the easier it will be for me to get Congress to make it easier for Estonians to travel to the United States.

We want people to come to our country. We understand a lot of Estonians have relatives in America. It's in our Nation's interest that people be able to come and visit, and it's important, at the same time, to make sure that those who want to continue to kill Americans aren't able to exploit the system.

I'm going to go to Riga right after our lunch. We have an ambitious agenda there. More than 50,000 NATO soldiers are providing security in six missions on three continents. These deployments have shown that our alliance remains as relevant today as it was during the height of the cold war.

Our alliance defends freedom and, so doing, helps make us all more secure. We will discuss NATO's largest deployment, and that is Afghanistan. We're partnering with Afghan security forces to defeat the Taliban and strengthen that young democracy. To succeed in Afghanistan, NATO allies must provide the forces NATO military commanders require. And I appreciate Estonia's commitment. Like Estonia, member nations must accept difficult assignments if we expect to be successful.

In Riga, we'll discuss how our alliance must build on what we have learned in Afghanistan. We will continue to transform NATO forces and improve NATO capabilities so that our alliance can complete 21st century missions successfully. The threat has changed. Our capabilities must change with the threats if NATO is to remain relevant. The President understands that, and I appreciate our discussion along those lines today.

We're also going to discuss NATO's further enlargement. By inviting qualifying democracies to join our alliance at the next NATO summit in 2008, we'll continue to build a Europe that is whole, free, and at peace.

I want to thank you for your hospitality again. I know the people of this country are proud of their accomplishments. The American people would be amazed at what your country has done, and I'm proud for you. And I'm proud to call you friend. Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Ilves.** Thank you, Mr. President.

**President Bush.** Is there some questions?

#### **U.S. Visa Policy**

**Q.** I have a question for both Presidents. Mr. Bush, you said that you really appreciate everything that Estonia has done and that the U.S. is very interested in seeing Estonians visit your country. But you, as President, when will you be proposing to Congress this change in the visa laws to give us visa-free travel? And the second part of the question is, what should Estonia do in order to help you resolve this issue more quickly?

**President Bush.** —to work on our 3-percent requirement, and at the same time, assure Members of Congress that in loosening the visa waiver issue, or changing the visa waiver issue, that we'll still be able to protect our country from people who would exploit the visa waiver program to come to our country to do harm. And that process is beginning shortly.

**President Ilves.** And I may add that Estonia is constantly—has been raising this question. I had a very long discussion, even back when I was a delegate in European Parliament. I would say that we have come quite a long way from the time we started these discussions 2 years ago with Nick Burns, and we are prepared when the security requirements have been clarified, have been explained, then we will be able to implement them in our passports. And that is simply a technical problem, but it is resolvable.

**President Bush.** Are you going to call on anybody?

#### **Russia-Georgia Relations**

**Q.** First, my respect to both of you, Mr. Bush, Mr. Ilves. A question for Mr. Bush: You said that you discussed with Mr. Ilves the situation in Georgia. Estonia and the United States have helped in the development of this country of Georgia, and we are hoping to see some progress—in this country. But the conflict between Russia and Georgia is putting a stop to this. What do you think we should do to help resolve this conflict between Russia and Georgia?

**President Bush.** Precisely what we ought to do is help resolve the conflict and use our

diplomats to convince people there is a better way forward than through violence. We haven't seen violence yet. The idea is to head it off in the first place. I spoke to Vladimir Putin about this very subject when I saw him in the Far East last week. I know that the President has spoken with President Saakashvili as well. The tenor of the conversation appears to be improving to me, that people understand that the best way to resolve their differences is to sit down at the table and solve them diplomatically. And so we'll continue to work along those lines.

I don't know if you want to add anything to that.

**President Ilves.** Briefly, just that we sincerely hope that Russia will understand that a democratic state on its borders is not a danger to Russian security. And we hope Russia will understand that authoritarian states at its borders will not guarantee its own stability.

**President Bush.** That's Deb [Deb Riechmann, Associated Press], AP. Yes, Deb.

#### **War on Terror/Democracy in the Middle East**

**Q.** Mr. President, thank you, sir. What is the difference between what we're seeing now in Iraq and civil war? And do you worry that calling it a civil war would make it difficult to argue that we're fighting the central front of the war on terror there?

**President Bush.** You know, the plans of Mr. Zarqawi was to foment sectarian violence. That's what he said he wanted to do. The Samarra bombing that took place last winter was intended to create sectarian violence, and it has. The recent bombings were to perpetuate the sectarian violence. In other words, we've been in this phase for awhile. And the fundamental objective is to work with the Iraqis to create conditions so that the vast majority of the people will be able to see that there's a peaceful way forward.

The bombings that took place recently was a part of a pattern that has been going on for about 9 months. I'm going to bring this subject up, of course, with Prime Minister Maliki when I visit with him in Jordan on Thursday. My questions to him will be: What do we need to do to succeed? What is your strategy in dealing with the sectarian violence? I will assure him that we will continue

to pursue Al Qaida to make sure that they are unable to establish a safe haven in Iraq.

I will ask him: What is required and what is your strategy to be a country which can govern itself and sustain itself? And it's going to be an important meeting, and I'm looking forward to it.

**Q.** —people who are saying that we're moving forward to a full war are wrong?

**President Bush.** Deb, there's all kinds of speculation about what may be or not happening. What you're seeing on TV has started last February. It was an attempt by people to foment sectarian violence, and no—no question, it's dangerous there and violent. And the Maliki Government is going to have to deal with that violence, and we want to help them do so. It's in our interest that we succeed. A democracy in the heart of the Middle East is an important part of defeating the radicals and totalitarians that can't stand the emergence of a democracy.

One of the interesting things that's taking place—and people have got to understand what's happening—is, when you see a young democracy beginning to emerge in the Middle East, the extremists try to defeat its emergence.

That's why you see violence in Lebanon. There's a young democracy in Lebanon run by Prime Minister Siniora. And that Government is being undermined, in my opinion, by extremist forces encouraged out of Syria and Iran. Why? Because a democracy will be a major defeat for those who articulate extremist points of view.

We're trying to help get a democracy started in the Palestinian Territory. Prime Minister Olmert has reached out, at one point, to Prime Minister Abbas—or President Abbas. And you know what happens as soon as he does that? Extremists attack, because they can't stand the thought of a democracy. And the same thing is happening in Iraq. And it's in our mutual interest that we help this Government succeed.

And no question, it's tough, Deb; no question about it. There's a lot of sectarian violence taking place, fomented, in my opinion, because of these attacks by Al Qaida, causing people to seek reprisal. And we will work with the Maliki Government to defeat these elements.

By far, the vast majority of the people want to live in peace. Twelve million people voted. They said, "We want to live under a Constitution which we approved." And our objective must be to help them realize their dreams. This is the—this is an important part of an ideological struggle that is taking place here in the beginning of the 21st century. And the interesting contribution that a country like Estonia is making is that, people shouldn't have to live under tyranny—"We just did that; we don't like it." They understand that democracies yield peace. This President is a strong advocate for democracies, because he understands. He understands what it means to live under subjugation, and he understands the hope that democracy brings to regions of the world. And I appreciate your steadfast leadership.

Toby [Tabassum Zakaria, Reuters]. Last question?

**Q.** Yes.

**President Bush.** I'll follow your instructions.

### **Iran-Iraq Relations**

**Q.** Mr. President, would direct talks between the United States and Iran and Syria help stem the violence in Iraq? And would you agree to such a step?

**President Bush.** I think that, first of all, Iraq is a sovereign nation which is conducting its own foreign policy. They're having talks with their neighbors. And if that's what they think they ought to do, that's fine. I hope their talks yield results. One result that Iraq would like to see is for the Iranians to leave them alone. If Iran is going to be involved in their country, they ought to be involved in a constructive way, encouraging peace. That is the message that the Iranians—the Iraqis have delivered to the Iranians. That's the message that Prime Minister Maliki has made clear, that he expects the neighbors to encourage peaceful development of the country.

As far as the United States goes, Iran knows how to get to the table with us, and that is to do that which they said they would do—which is verifiably suspend their enrichment programs. One of the concerns that I have about the Iranian regime is their desire to develop a nuclear weapon, and you ought

to be concerned about it too. The idea of this regime having a nuclear weapon by which they could blackmail the world is unacceptable to free nations. And that's why we're working through the United Nations to send a clear message that the EU-3 and the United States, Russia, and China do not accept their desires to have a nuclear weapon.

There is a better way forward for the Iranian people. And if they would like to be at the table discussing this issue with the United States, I have made it abundantly clear how they can do so, and that is verifiably suspend the enrichment program. And then we'll be happy to have a dialog with them.

But as far as Iraq goes, the Iraqi Government is a sovereign government that is capable of handling its own foreign policies and is in the process of doing so. And they have made it abundantly clear, and I agree with them, that the Iranians and the Syrians should help, not destabilize this young democracy.

Thank you.

**President Ilves.** Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11 a.m. at the National Bank of Estonia. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Putin of Russia; President Mikheil Saakashvili of Georgia; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; Prime Minister Fuad Siniora of Lebanon; Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel; and President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority. President Ilves spoke in Estonian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

### **Remarks at a Lunch Hosted by President Toomas Ilves of Estonia in Tallinn**

*November 28, 2006*

Mr. President, thank you very much, and, Mr. Prime Minister, thank you as well for your gracious hospitality. I'm really thrilled to be here in Estonia. I love being in a country that values liberty and freedom. I appreciate being in a country that understands there are duties and obligations beyond her border to help others realize the benefits of liberty and freedom. I'm very proud of your military, and I'm pleased to be in the pres-

ence of those who wear the uniform of Estonia. I know our military has great respect for the Estonian soldiers.

I am amazed to be in a country that has been able to effect a flat tax in such a positive way. I am impressed by the e-governance that you have here in Estonia.

All in all, this has been a very worthwhile and exciting visit for me, and I thank you for your warm hospitality. And I'd like to raise my glass to the leadership of this important country, to our friendship, and most importantly, to the people of Estonia.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:42 a.m. in the Estonian Theater. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Andrus Ansip of Estonia. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of President Ilves. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **Remarks Following Discussions With President Vaira Vike-Freiberga of Latvia in Riga, Latvia**

*November 28, 2006*

**President Vike-Freiberga.** Well, ladies and gentlemen, it's been a great pleasure to have the President of the United States here in Riga for the second time in less than 2 years. And I expressed how delighted we are to be receiving him and his delegation here on the occasion of the Riga 2006 summit.

The United States has been our strong supporter all those years when Latvia was not free, has been our supporter after we regained our independence, and I'm most grateful to the United States for the understanding and support we got in our direction and our movement towards NATO. Now that we are fully members, Latvians certainly sleep better at night knowing that they are protected by an alliance that will spare them the sorts of experiences they had in earlier years.

But of course I'm delighted to be welcoming the President of the United States as the representative of what still remains as a shining example of the free world, of the sort of success one can achieve in a country

that has been working at its democracy for a long time, that keeps perfecting it. I would hope that Latvia, as well, has the same opportunities; that we can go ahead, have our own choices, make our own mistakes, and do so with the help and understanding and support of fellow nations who share the same values as us.

**President Bush.** Madam President, thanks for inviting me back to Riga. Our experience was so good the first time that we couldn't wait to get back. I want to congratulate you on hosting this very important NATO summit. You and your Government have done a spectacular job, and I want to thank the people of Riga for accommodating all the world leaders who have come to this important meeting.

I appreciate very much your strong belief that liberty has got the capacity to transform the world for the good. I thank you and the Latvian people for supporting young democracies in Afghanistan and in Iraq.

We spent time talking about our bilateral relations. Trade is good between the United States and Latvia, and that's very positive. The President brought up the visa waiver program. She is deeply concerned that the people of Latvia aren't able to travel to the United States as freely as she would like. And I fully understand your concerns, Madam President. And to this end, I'll be sending to Congress a new proposal to make it easier for the citizens of Latvia to come to the United States and, at the same time, for us to share information to make sure that we're able to thwart any type of terrorist activities in our country. And I'm confident we can work this through.

And I want to thank you for working hard on this issue. Every time I've met with you, you brought it up, because you deeply care about the people of your country. I want to congratulate you on your strong leadership, and again, thank you for your very warm hospitality.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 3:40 p.m. at Riga Castle. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

## Remarks at Latvia University in Riga November 28, 2006

Thank you all. *Labdien*. Madam President, thank you for your kind words. Thank you for your leadership, and thank you for your friendship. Mr. Speaker; Mr. Prime Minister; Senator Sessions from the great State of Alabama, who is with us; Marc Leland, my friend from a long period of time. I want to thank the rector of this important university. Distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your warm welcome. I'm delighted to be back in Riga.

I appreciate the Latvian Transatlantic Organization, the Commission of Strategic Analysis, and the German Marshall Fund of the United States for organizing this important conference. This is my third visit to the Baltics as the President of the United States, and it's my second visit to this beautiful city. I just can't stay away. I'm thrilled and honored to be back here, and I bring the greetings and good wishes of the American people.

Not far from where we meet today stands Riga's Freedom Monument. It was erected in 1935, during this country's brief period of independence between the two world wars. During the dark years of Soviet occupation, the simple act of laying flowers at the foot of this monument was considered a crime by Communist authorities. In 1989, the monument was the scene of one of the most remarkable protests in the history of freedom. Hundreds of thousands of people stood together and formed a human chain that stretched nearly 400 miles across the Baltics—from Tallinn in the north, through downtown Riga, and into the heart of Vilnius. By joining hands, the people of this region showed their unity and their determination to live in freedom, and it made clear to the Soviet authorities that the Baltic peoples would accept nothing less than complete independence.

It took more years of struggle, but today, the Baltic nations have taken their rightful place in the community of free nations, and Latvia is a host for an important NATO summit—the first time our alliance has met in one of the “captive nations” annexed by the Soviet Union. This is a proud day for the

people of Latvia and all the Baltic States. And on behalf of the American people, I thank you for your hospitality, your friendship, and the courage you are showing in the NATO alliance.

As members of NATO, you are a vital part of the most effective multilateral organization in the world and the most important military alliance in history. As NATO allies, you will never again stand alone in defense of your freedom, and you'll never be occupied by a foreign power.

Each of the Baltic countries is meeting its obligations to strengthen NATO by bringing new energy and vitality and clarity of purpose to the alliance. Your love of liberty has made NATO stronger. And with your help, our alliance is rising to meet the great challenges and responsibilities of this young century by making NATO the world's most effective united force for freedom.

One of the great responsibilities of this alliance is to strengthen and expand the circle of freedom here in Europe. In the nearly six decades since NATO's founding, Europe has experienced an unprecedented expansion of liberty. A continent that was once divided by an ugly wall is now united in freedom. Yet the work of uniting Europe is not fully complete. Many nations that threw off the shackles of tyranny are still working to build the free institutions that are the foundation of successful democracies. NATO is encouraging these nations on the path to reform—and as governments make hard decisions for their people, they will be welcomed into the institutions of the Euro-Atlantic community.

After I took office in 2001, I declared that the United States believes in NATO membership for all of Europe's democracies that seek it and are ready to share the responsibilities that NATO brings. The following year in Prague, we invited seven nations to join our alliance—Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, Romania, Bulgaria, Slovakia, and Slovenia. Here in Riga, allies will make clear that the door to NATO membership remains open, and at our next summit in 2008, we hope to issue additional invitations to nations that are ready for membership.

Today, Croatia, Macedonia, and Albania are all participating in NATO's Membership Action Plan, and the United States supports

their aspirations to join the Atlantic alliance. Georgia is seeking NATO membership as well, and as it continues on the path of reform, we will continue to support Georgia's desire to become a NATO ally. We are also supporting the leaders of Ukraine as they work to curb corruption, promote the rule of law, and serve the cause of peace. Our position is clear: As democracy takes hold in Ukraine and its leaders pursue vital reforms, NATO membership will be open to the Ukrainian people if they choose it.

We're also working with Russia through the NATO-Russia Council. We recognize that Russia is a vital and important country, and that it's in our interests to increase our cooperation with Russia in areas such as countering terrorism and preventing the spread of weapons of mass destruction. By building ties between Russia and this alliance, we will strengthen our common security, and we will advance the cause of peace.

As we help the new democracies of Europe join the institutions of Europe, we must not forget those who still languish in tyranny. Just across the border from here lies the nation of Belarus—a place where peaceful protesters are beaten and opposition leaders are “disappeared” by the agents of a cruel regime. The existence of such oppression in our midst offends the conscience of Europe, and it offends the conscience of America. We have a message for the people of Belarus: The vision of a Europe whole, free, and at peace includes you, and we stand with you in your struggle for freedom.

Another great responsibility of this alliance is to transform for new challenges. When NATO was formed in 1949, its principal mission was to protect Europe from a Soviet tank invasion. Today, the Soviet threat is gone. And under the able leadership of the Secretary General, NATO is transforming from a static alliance focused on the defense of Europe, into an expeditionary [expeditionary]\* alliance ready to deploy outside of Europe in the defense of freedom. This is a vital mission.

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\* White House correction.

Over the past 6 years, we've taken decisive action to transform our capabilities in the alliance. We created a new NATO transformation command to ensure that our alliance is always preparing for the threats of the future. We created a new NATO battalion to counter the threats of enemies armed with weapons of mass destruction. We created a new NATO Response Force, to ensure that our alliance can deploy rapidly and effectively.

Here in Riga, we're taking new steps to build on this progress. At this summit, we will launch a NATO Special Operations Forces Initiative that will strengthen the ability of special operations personnel from NATO nations to work together on the battlefield. We will announce a new Strategic Airlift Initiative that will ensure that participating NATO members have a dedicated fleet of C-17 aircraft at their disposal. We will launch the Riga Global Partnership Initiative that will allow NATO to conduct joint training and joint exercises and common defense planning with nations like Japan and Australia—countries that share NATO's values and want to work with our alliance in the cause of peace. We will launch a new NATO Training Cooperation Initiative that will allow military forces in the Middle East to receive NATO training in counterterrorism and counterproliferation and peace support operations. And as we take these steps, every NATO nation must take the defensive—must make the defensive investments necessary to give NATO the capabilities it needs, so that our alliance is ready for any challenge that may emerge in the decades to come.

The most basic responsibility of this alliance is to defend our people against the threats of a new century. We're in a long struggle against terrorists and extremists who follow a hateful ideology and seek to establish a totalitarian empire from Spain to Indonesia. We fight against the extremists who desire safe havens and are willing to kill innocents anywhere to achieve their objectives.

NATO has recognized this threat. And 3 years ago, NATO took an unprecedented step when it sent allied forces to defend a young democracy more than 3,000 miles from Europe. Since taking command of the

International Security Assistance Force in Afghanistan, NATO has expanded it from a small force that was operating only in Kabul into a robust force that conducts security operations in all of Afghanistan. NATO is helping to train the Afghan National Army. The alliance is operating 25 Provincial Reconstruction Teams that are helping the central government extend its reach into distant regions of that country. At this moment, all 26 NATO allies and 11 partner nations are contributing forces to NATO's mission in Afghanistan. They're serving with courage, and they are doing the vital work necessary to help this young democracy secure the peace.

We saw the effectiveness of NATO forces this summer, when NATO took charge of security operations in Southern Afghanistan from the United States. The Taliban radicals who are trying to pull down Afghanistan's democracy and regain power saw the transfer from American to NATO control as a window of opportunity to test the will of the alliance. So the Taliban massed a large fighting force near Kandahar to face the NATO troops head on. It was a mistake. Together with the Afghan National Army, NATO forces from Canada and Denmark and the Netherlands and Britain and Australia and the United States engaged the enemy—with operational support from Romanian, Portuguese, and Estonian forces. According to NATO commanders, allied forces fought bravely and inflicted great damage on the Taliban.

General David Richards, the British commander of NATO troops in Afghanistan, puts it this way: "There were doubts about NATO and our ability to conduct demanding security operations. There are no questions about our ability now. We've killed many hundreds of Taliban, and it has removed any doubt in anybody's mind that NATO can do what we were sent here to do."

Taliban and Al Qaida fighters and drug traffickers and criminal elements and local warlords remain active and committed to destroying democracy in Afghanistan. Defeating them will require the full commitment of our alliance. For NATO to succeed, its commanders on the ground must have the resources and flexibility they need to do their jobs. The alliance was founded on a clear principle: An attack on one is an attack on

all. That principle holds true whether the attack is on our home soil or on our forces deployed on a NATO mission abroad. Today, Afghanistan is NATO's most important military operation, and by standing together in Afghanistan, we'll protect our people, defend our freedom, and send a clear message to the extremists—the forces of freedom and decency will prevail.

Every ally can take pride in the transformation that NATO is making possible for the people of Afghanistan. Because of our efforts, Afghanistan has gone from a totalitarian nightmare to a free nation with an elected President, a democratic Constitution, and brave soldiers and police fighting for their country.

Over 4.6 million Afghan refugees have come home. It's one of the largest return movements in history. The Afghan economy has tripled in size over the past 5 years. About 2 million girls are now in school—compared to zero under the Taliban—and 85 women were elected or appointed to the Afghan National Assembly. A nation that was once a terrorist sanctuary has been transformed into an ally in the war on terror, led by a brave President, Hamid Karzai. Our work in Afghanistan is bringing freedom to the Afghan people; it is bringing security to the Euro-Atlantic community; and it's bringing pride to the NATO alliance.

NATO allies are also making vital contributions to the struggle for freedom in Iraq. At this moment, a dozen NATO allies, including every one of the Baltic nations, are contributing forces to the coalition in Iraq. And 18 NATO countries plus Ukraine are contributing forces to the NATO Training Mission that is helping develop the next generation of leaders for the Iraqi security forces. To date, NATO has trained nearly 3,000 Iraqi personnel, including nearly 2,000 officers and civilian defense officials trained inside Iraq, plus an additional 800 Iraqis trained outside the country. NATO has also helped Iraqis stand up a new military academy near Baghdad, so Iraqis can develop their own military leaders in the years to come. And NATO has contributed \$128 million in military equipment to the Iraqi military, including 77 Hungarian T-72 battle tanks. By helping to equip the Iraqi security

forces and training the next group of Iraqi military leaders, NATO is helping the Iraqi people in the difficult work of securing their country and their freedom.

Tomorrow I'm going to travel to Jordan where I will meet with the Prime Minister of Iraq. We will discuss the situation on the ground in his country, our ongoing efforts to transfer more responsibility to the Iraqi security forces, and the responsibility of other nations in the region to support the security and stability of Iraq. We'll continue to be flexible, and we'll make the changes necessary to succeed. But there's one thing I'm not going to do: I'm not going to pull our troops off the battlefield before the mission is complete.

The battles in Iraq and Afghanistan are part of a struggle between moderation and extremism that is unfolding across the broader Middle East. Our enemy follows a hateful ideology that rejects fundamental freedoms like the freedom to speak, to assemble, or to worship God in the way you see fit. It opposes the rights for women. Their goal is to overthrow governments and to impose their totalitarian rule on millions. They have a strategy to achieve these aims. They seek to convince America and our allies that we cannot defeat them and that our only hope is to withdraw and abandon an entire region to their domination. The war on terror we fight today is more than a military conflict; it is the decisive ideological struggle of the 21st century. And in this struggle, we can accept nothing less than victory for our children and our grandchildren.

We see this struggle in Lebanon, where last week, gunmen assassinated that country's Industry Minister, Pierre Gemayel, a prominent leader of the movement that secured Lebanon's independence last year. His murder showed once again the viciousness of those who are trying to destabilize Lebanon's young democracy. We see this struggle in Syria, where the regime allows Iranian weapons to pass through its territory into Lebanon and provides weapons and political support to Hizballah. We see this struggle in Iran, where a reactionary regime subjugates its proud people, arrests free trade union leaders, and uses Iran's resources to fund the spread of terror and pursue nuclear weapons.

We see this struggle in the Palestinian Territories, where extremists are working to stop moderate leaders from making progress toward the vision of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security.

In each of these places, extremists are using terror to stop the spread of freedom. Some are Shi'a extremists; other are Sunni extremists; but they represent different faces of the same threat. And if they succeed in undermining fragile democracies and drive the forces of freedom out of the region, they will have an open field to pursue their goals. Each strain of violent Islamic radicalism would be emboldened in its efforts to gain control of states and establish new safe havens. The extremists would use oil resources to fuel their radical agenda and to punish industrialized nations and pursue weapons of mass destruction. Armed with nuclear weapons, they could blackmail the free world, spread their ideologies of hate, and raise a mortal threat to Europe, America, and the entire civilized world.

If we allow the extremists to do this, then 50 years from now, history will look back on our time with unforgiving clarity and demand to know why we did not act. Our alliance has a responsibility to act. We must lift up and support the moderates and reformers who are working for change across the broader Middle East. We must bring hope to millions by strengthening young democracies from Kabul to Baghdad to Beirut. And we must advance freedom as the great alternative to tyranny and terror.

I know some in my country and some here in Europe are pessimistic about the prospects of democracy and peace in the Middle East. Some doubt whether the people of that region are ready for freedom, or want it badly enough, or have the courage to overcome the forces of totalitarian extremism. I understand these doubts, but I do not share them. I believe in the universality of freedom. I believe that the people of the Middle East want their liberty. I'm impressed by the courage I see in the people across the region who are fighting for that liberty.

We see this courage in the 8 million Afghans who defied terrorist threats and went to the polls to choose their leaders. We see

this courage in the nearly 12 million Iraqis who refused to let the car bombers and assassins stop them from voting for the free future of their country. We see this courage in the more than one million Lebanese who voted for a free and sovereign government to rule their land. And we see this courage in citizens from Damascus to Tehran, who, like the citizens of Riga before them, keep the flame of liberty burning deep within their hearts, knowing that one day its light will shine throughout their nations.

There was a time, not so long ago, when many doubted that liberty could succeed in Europe. Here in the Baltics, many can still recall the early years of the cold war when freedom's victory was not so obvious or assured. In 1944, the Soviet Red Army reoccupied Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia, plunging this region into nearly five decades of Communist rule. In 1947, Communist forces were threatening Greece and Turkey, the reconstruction of Germany was faltering, and mass starvation was setting in across Europe. In 1948, Czechoslovakia fell to communism, France and Italy were threatened by the same fate, and Berlin was blockaded on the orders of Josef Stalin. In 1949, the Soviet Union exploded a nuclear weapon. And weeks later, Communist forces took control in China. And in the summer of 1950, seven North Korean divisions poured across the border into South Korea, marking the start of the first direct military clash of the cold war. All of this took place in the 6 years following World War II.

Yet today, six decades later, the cold war is over, the Soviet Union is no more, and the NATO alliance is meeting in the capital of a free Latvia. Europe no longer produces armed ideologies that threaten other nations with aggression and conquest and occupation. And a continent that was for generations a source of instability and global war has become a source of stability and peace. Freedom in Europe has brought peace to Europe, and freedom has brought the power to bring peace to the broader Middle East.

Soon after I took office, I spoke to students at Warsaw University. I told them America had learned the lessons of history. I said, "No more Munichs and no more Yaltas." I was speaking at the time about Europe, but the

lessons of Yalta apply equally across the world. The question facing our nations today is this: Will we turn the fate of millions over to totalitarian extremists and allow the enemy to impose their hateful ideology across the Middle East, or will we stand with the forces of freedom in that part of the world and defend the moderate majority who want a future of peace?

My country has made its choice, and so has the NATO alliance. We refuse to give in to the pessimism that consigns millions across the Middle East to endless oppression. We understand that, ultimately, the only path to lasting peace is through the rise of lasting free societies.

Here in the Baltic region, many understand that freedom is universal and worth the struggle. During the Second World War, a young girl here in Riga escaped with her family from the advancing Red Army. She fled westward, moving first to a refugee camp in Germany and then later to Morocco, where she and her family settled for 5½ years. Spending her teenage years in a Muslim nation, this Latvian girl came to understand a fundamental truth about humanity: Moms and dads in the Muslim world want the same things for their children as moms and dads here in Riga—a future of peace, a chance to live in freedom, and the opportunity to build a better life.

Today, that Latvian girl is the leader of a free country—the Iron Lady of the Baltics, the President of Latvia. And the lessons she learned growing up in Casablanca guide her as she leads her nation in this world. Here is how she put it earlier this year in an address to a joint meeting of the United States Congress: “We know the value of freedom and feel compassion for those who are still deprived of it. Every nation on Earth is entitled to freedom,” your President said. She said, “We must share the dream that someday, there won’t be a tyranny left anywhere in the world. We must work for this future, all of us, large and small, together.”

Like your President, I believe this dream is within reach. And through the NATO alliance, nations large and small are working together to achieve it.

We thank the people of Latvia for your contributions to NATO and for the powerful

example you set for liberty. I appreciate your hospitality at this summit. America is proud to call you friends and allies in the cause of peace and freedom. May God bless you, and may God continue to bless America. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:30 p.m. in the Grand Hall. In his remarks, he referred to President Vaira Vike-Freiberga, Speaker of the Saeima Indulis Emsis, and Prime Minister Aigars Kalvitis of Latvia; Marc Leland, cochairman, German Marshall Fund; Ivars Lacis, rector, Latvia University; Secretary General Jakob Gijbert “Jaap” de Hoop Scheffer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

### **The President’s News Conference With Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq in Amman, Jordan**

*November 30, 2006*

**President Bush.** Good morning. It’s good to be in Amman. I first want to thank His Majesty King Abdullah for his gracious hospitality.

Prime Minister Maliki and I just had a very productive meeting. This is the third time we’ve met since he took office 6 months ago, and with each meeting, I’m coming to know him better. He’s a strong leader who wants a free and democratic Iraq to succeed. The United States is determined to help him achieve that goal.

I told the Prime Minister we’re ready to make changes to better support the unity Government of Iraq and that certain key principles behind our strategy remain firm, and they’re fixed. First, we believe the success of Prime Minister Maliki’s Government is critical to the success in Iraq. His Government was chosen by the Iraqi people through free elections in which nearly 12 million people defied terrorists to cast their ballots. I’ve told the Prime Minister that our goal in Iraq is to strengthen his Government and to support his efforts to build a free Iraq that can govern itself, sustain itself, and defend itself, and is an ally in the war against the terrorists.

Secondly, the success of the Iraqi Government depends on the success of the Iraqi security forces. During our meetings, the

Prime Minister and I heard an update from an important group that our Government established last month: the Joint Committee on Accelerating the Transferring of Security Responsibility. We agreed on the importance of speeding up the training of Iraqi security forces. Our goal is to ensure that the Prime Minister has more capable forces under his control so his Government can fight the terrorists and the death squads, and provide security and stability in his country.

Third, success in Iraq requires a united Iraq where democracy is preserved, the rule of law prevails, and minority rights are respected. The Prime Minister made clear that splitting his country into parts, as some have suggested, is not what the Iraqi people want, and that any partition of Iraq would only lead to an increase in sectarian violence. I agree. In the long term, security in Iraq requires reconciliation among Iraq's different ethnic and religious communities, something the overwhelming majority of Iraqis want.

The Prime Minister and I also discussed the review of our strategy in Iraq that is now nearing completion. I assured the Prime Minister that our review is aimed at strengthening the capacity of the sovereign Government of Iraq to meet their objectives, which we share. As part of the review, I've asked our military leaders in the Pentagon and those on the ground in Iraq to provide their recommendations on the best way forward.

Others outside the Government are conducting their own review, and I look forward to hearing their recommendations. I want to hear all advice before I make my decisions about adjustments to our strategy and tactics in Iraq to help this Government succeed.

My consultations with the Prime Minister and the unity Government are a key part of the assessment process. And that's why I appreciate him coming over from Iraq so that we could have a face-to-face visit. The Prime Minister and I agree that the outcome in Iraq will affect the entire region. To stop the extremists from dominating the Middle East, we must stop the extremists from achieving their goal of dominating Iraq. If the extremists succeed in Iraq, they will be emboldened in their efforts to undermine other young democracies in the region, or to overthrow moderate governments, establish new safe

havens, and impose their hateful ideology on millions. If the Iraqis succeed in establishing a free nation in the heart of the Middle East, the forces of freedom and moderation across the region will be emboldened, and the cause of peace will have new energy and new allies.

Mr. Prime Minister, I want to thank you again for your time. I appreciate your friendship, and I appreciate the courage you show during these difficult times as you lead your country.

**Prime Minister Maliki.** Thank you. In the name of God. Beginning, I would like to thank King Abdullah for hosting this meeting. And I would also like to thank the President of the United States for his response and for the role that he has shown in dealing most positively with all the files that we've discussed.

And I would like, during this occasion as we leave this transitional stage, we have won initially when we have accomplished democracy in Iraq and when we give Iraq the permanent Constitution and the Parliament and the unity Government. And all these are victories—that are victories with the principles that we believe in. And therefore, these victories were our decision not to let those who would like to tamper with the fates of the region, or those who oppose democracy, to win so that the despotic regime comes back. And Iraq will never be a safe haven for terrorists who are trying to spread darkness instead of light, the light that started in Mesopotamia.

We have many visions and many ideas about the transformation process, and we are determined to succeed in the face of all the challenges that we believe are probably—should exist in a situation such as the situation that Iraq is going through. These are not outrageous challenges. There are criminals, there are people who are breaking the law. But the steel strength of the national unity Government would help us face all those who are breaking the law, or those who are trying to take down democracy in Iraq, or those who are conspiring and trying to have coups or basically bring down the national unity Government.

We are active with anybody who are working within the framework of the Constitution. Because we established the Constitution,

we'll abide by it, we'll protect it, and we'll be protected by it. We assure everybody that we are in alliance with international community in facing all the challenges that the world is facing. And foremost in those challenges is terrorism. Terrorism is not a danger only to Iraq; it's a culture; it's an ideology. The whole civilized world must face it as one line, one unit. Some people might not understand the successes that we have as we daily face terrorism in Iraq and as the security forces in Iraq chase them down, arrest them. This is solid strength based on our vision, and our vision is that terrorism, terroristic ideology, extremism, sectarianism are all issues that will rob humans from happiness.

We are ready to cooperate with everybody who believe that they need to communicate with the national unity Government, especially our neighbors. Our doors are open, and our desire is strong that between us and our neighbors, we will have strong relationships based on mutual respect and staying away from everybody's internal business. Iraq is for Iraqis, and its borders will be sound, and we'll not allow anybody to violate these borders or interfere in our internal affairs.

So everybody who is trying to make Iraq their own influences appear on the account of the Iraqi people needs to recalculate, because it will not happen. And all the political forces in Iraq have agreed on that. They want to form a very strong political base to support the national unity Government. We have visions in Iraq, and we are at the steps of transformation into a new stage where we'll have security plans that we will believe will be effective and will deliver what is required.

In Iraq, we don't only deal with terrorism. We're dealing with building a whole state in all its aspect—political, economic, security, militarily—and all these are signs of maturity that are now very obvious in Iraq. And we hope that they will be complemented and supported by the international community and by our neighbors, who I hope that will be supportive not only for the benefit of Iraq, for the benefit of those countries as well.

**President Bush.** We will take a couple of questions. Abramowitz [Mike Abramowitz, Washington Post].

### ***Democracy Efforts in Iraq/Security Situation in Iraq***

**Q.** Mr. President, the memo from your National Security Adviser has raised the possibility the United States should press Prime Minister Maliki to break with Muqtada Al Sadr. Is this, in fact, your strategy? And did you raise this issue with the Prime Minister this morning?

And to the Prime Minister, I'd like to ask, the President's Adviser has said that a central problem in Iraq is your close alliance with Mr. Al Sadr, and did you make any representations to the President that you would break with Al Sadr, and could your Government survive such a break?

**President Bush.** I will let the Prime Minister talk about his relations with Al Sadr. I will tell you that he and I spent a lot of time talking about the security situation inside of Iraq. I expressed my concern about the security situation; he expressed his concern about the security situation. After all, one of his most important jobs is to provide security for the Iraqi people. Part of the Prime Minister's frustration is, is that he doesn't have the tools necessary to take care of those who break the law.

I was reassured by his commitment to a pluralistic society that is politically united, and a society in which people are held to account if they break the law—whether those people be criminals, Al Qaida, militia, whoever.

He discussed with me his political situation, and I think it is best that he talk to you about the Sadr group or any other group he wants to talk about inside of Iraq.

**Prime Minister Maliki.** Matter of fact, my coalition is not with only one entity. The national unity Government is a government formed of all the entities that participated in it. Therefore, that coalition basically represent a national responsibility.

And Mr. Sadr and the Sadrists are just one component that participate in the Parliament or in the Government. And I think participating in the Government is a responsibility, and it's a mutual commitment, and those who participate in this Government need to bear

responsibilities. And foremost upon those responsibilities is the protection of this Government, the protection of the Constitution, the protection of the law, not breaking the law.

Therefore, I do not talk about one side at the expense of the other. I'm talking about a state; I'm talking about law; I'm talking about commitments. And this should apply to all the partners in the Government who have chosen to participate in the political process.

As to the issues that would pertain to violating the law or breaking the law, we would deal with them the same way, because the most important principle is the sovereignty and the power and the establishment of the state that must be borne by the state, but only our partners should participate in that.

#### ***Insurgency and Terrorist Attacks in Iraq***

**Q.** Hizballah has denied that his forces trained Muqtada Al Sadr forces, but do you have any information if Hizballah has actually trained the forces of Muqtada Al Sadr?

**Prime Minister Maliki.** I think—[*inaudible*—expressed itself and expressed its responsibilities. And one—another time I would like to say that Iraq and all the Iraqis in the political process; nobody has the right, outside of Iraq, to interfere in the political or the security situation inside of Iraq. We invite everybody to cooperate with us, but as far as this issue related to training, Hizballah denied, and they're responsible for their denial.

**President Bush.** Our objective is to help the Maliki Government succeed. And today we discussed how to further the success of this Government. This is a government that is dedicated to pluralism and rule of law. It's a government elected by the Iraqi people under a Constitution approved by the Iraqi people, which, in itself, is an unusual event in the Middle East, by the way.

We talked today about accelerating authority to the Prime Minister so he can do what the Iraqi people expect him to do, and that is bring security to parts of his country that require firm action. It's going to—the presence of the United States will be in Iraq so long as the Government asks us to be in Iraq. This is a sovereign government. I believe that there is more training to be done.

I think the Prime Minister agrees with me. I know that we're providing a useful addition to Iraq by chasing down Al Qaida and by securing—by helping this country protect itself from Al Qaida.

Al Qaida wants a safe haven in Iraq. Al Qaida made it clear earlier that suicide bombers would increase sectarian violence. That was part of their strategy. One of our goals is to deny safe haven for Al Qaida in Iraq, and the Maliki Government expects us and wants us to provide that vital part of security.

So we'll be in Iraq until the job is complete, at the request of a sovereign government elected by the people. I know there's a lot of speculation that these reports in Washington mean there's going to be some kind of graceful exit out of Iraq. We're going to stay in Iraq to get the job done, so long as the Government wants us there.

We want the people of Iraq to live in a free society. It's in our interests. In my judgment, if we were to leave before the job is done, it would only embolden terrorists. It would only embolden the extremists. It would dash the hopes of millions of people who want to live in a free society, just like the 12 million people who voted in the Iraqi election. They want to live in a free society. And we support this Government, because the Government understands it was elected by the people. And Prime Minister Maliki is working hard to overcome the many obstacles in the way to a peaceful Iraq, and we want to help him.

Let's see—Martha [Martha Raddatz, ABC News].

#### ***Iraqi Military and Security Forces/ Transfer of Security Responsibilities***

**Q.** Mr. President, is there a time limit on meeting any of these goals for Prime Minister Maliki? And you keep mentioning that the U.S. goal is to fight Al Qaida. Does that mean you believe it's up to the Iraqis to stop the sectarian violence and quell the sectarian violence, and this is something you don't want U.S. troops involved in?

And Prime Minister Maliki, can you tell us why you canceled the meeting last night?

**President Bush.** What was the first part of your three-part question? [*Laughter*]

**Q.** Time limit on meeting goals. Is there a time limit on meeting goals?

**President Bush.** A time limit—as soon as possible. But I’m realistic, because I understand how tough it is inside of Iraq. The Prime Minister is dealing with sectarian violence. The Prime Minister is having to deal with Al Qaida. The Prime Minister is having to deal with criminal elements. And we want to help him.

And, yes, I talked about making sure that Al Qaida doesn’t take—doesn’t provide—gets safe haven in Iraq. Sure, that’s an important part of our strategy. But I also have said that the goal is a country that can defend, sustain, and govern itself. And therefore, to the extent that our troops are needed to help do that, we’re willing to do that. That’s part of the operation in Baghdad. Part of the plan in Baghdad was to prevent killers from taking innocent life.

**Q.** Including sectarian violence?

**President Bush.** Well that’s—killers taking innocent life is, in some cases, sectarian. I happen to view it as criminal as well as sectarian. I think any time you murder somebody, you’re a criminal. And I believe a just society and a society of—that holds people to account and believes in rule of law protects innocent people from murderers, no matter what their political party is.

And I discussed this with the Prime Minister, and I don’t want to put words in his mouth, but I received a satisfactory answer about the need to protect innocent life. And that’s exactly what our troops have been doing, along with the Iraqis. My plan, and his plan, is to accelerate the Iraqis’ responsibility. See, here’s a man who has been elected by the people. The people expect him to respond, and he doesn’t have the capacity to respond. And so we want to accelerate that capacity. We want him to be in the lead in taking the fight against the enemies of his own country.

And that’s exactly what we discussed today. We had a Joint Committee on Accelerating the Transfer of Security Responsibility Report. And it was a report that General Casey, who is with us today, and our Ambassador, Zal Khalilzad, who is with us today, as well as the Prime Minister’s team, delivered to both of us about how to accelerate responsi-

bility to the Iraqi Government so this person elected by the people can take the fight to those who want to destroy a young democracy.

You had a question—

**Q.** Sir, there are no time limits here?

**President Bush.** As quick as possible, Martha. As quick—I’ve been asked about timetables ever since we got into this. All timetables mean is that it is a timetable for withdrawal. You kept asking me those questions. All that does is—

**Q.** Mr. President—

**President Bush.** Hold on a second. All that does is set people up for unrealistic expectations. As soon as possible. And today we made a step toward as soon as possible by transferring a—accelerating the transfer of authorities, military authorities to the Prime Minister.

**Q.** Did you put any pressure—

**President Bush.** Hold on a second. Hold on, please, sir. Please. Thank you.

**Prime Minister Maliki.** I emphasize what the President has just said, that we have agreed together, and we are very clear together, about the importance of accelerating the transfer of the security responsibility. And be assured that the Iraqi forces and the security forces have reached a good level of competency and efficiency to protect Iraq as a country and to protect its people.

As far as the other issue related to the meeting, I have met with King Abdullah, then have met again with his Prime Minister and a group of his ministers, and we’ve discussed bilateral relations that are of concern to both nations—Iraq and Jordan—and that relationship is based on mutual friendship and being a good host and a good neighbor. And there was not part of our agenda a trilateral meeting, so there is no problem.

Please.

### ***Iraq-Iran Relations***

**Q.** Did you discuss with the President the Iranian influence that is expanding in Iraq and how, and the almost complete Iranian control over Baghdad, as the press sources seems to indicate? In Iraq, did you build this big wall between Iraq and Iranian? So and are you going to deal with—

**President Bush.** Did I—I didn't understand your first question.

**Q.** To deal with Iranian directly?

**President Bush.** Am I going to meet with the Iranians directly, is that the question?

**Q.** The question of Iraq, yes.

**Prime Minister Maliki.** As far as the first question that was mentioned by the reporter, I think these are wrong and exaggerated information, and they are being used as one of the propaganda mechanisms to give the impression of sectarian strife so that will reach a point of no return. Because we want to emphasize that we will not allow anybody to exert their control over any part of Iraq. If there is any talk about intervention in Iraq and all the discussion, all the talks about people or other nations exerting control over Iraq, this is not true. This is a political process in Iraq. We want good relationships with our neighbors; we want complementary relationships with our neighbors to protect the region from tensions. But the main principle underlying all this is the respect of the Iraqi borders and the internal affairs of Iraq.

**President Bush.** I believe the Iranians fear democracy, and that's why they destabilized Lebanon; that's why they are worried about the establishment of a Palestinian state.

I appreciate the Prime Minister's views that the Iraqis are plenty capable of running their own business and they don't need foreign interference from neighbors that will be destabilizing the country. I am very worried, as should the world, about Iran's desires to have a nuclear weapon, and therefore, will continue to work with the world to send a clear message to the Iranians, the Iranian Government, that we will—they will become more isolated. And my message to the Iranian people is, we have no beef with the Iranian people. We respect their heritage; we respect their history; we respect their traditions. I just have a problem with a government that is isolating its people, denying its people benefits that could be had from engagement with the world.

I told the Prime Minister, we'll continue to work with the world community to insist that Iran abandon its nuclear weapons programs. And I have said that if they were to verifiably suspend their enrichment program,

we would part of the EU-3 plus Russia plus China discussions. They know how to get us to the table. The choice is theirs to make. It's the choice of the Iranian Government as to whether or not they make the right decisions, for not only the sake of the diplomacy, but for the sake—more importantly, for the sake of their people.

We might as well keep going, Prime Minister.

Richard [Richard Wolffe, Newsweek]. Please, sir. Please. Thank you.

### **Prime Minister Maliki's Leadership**

**Q.** When you were in Baghdad 6 months ago, you expressed the same kind of confidence in the Prime Minister and his Government that you've expressed today. Yet there have been repeated rounds of disappointments when it comes to the Prime Minister's Baghdad Security Plan, with his plans for reconciliation. I'm wondering, if anything, if you've had any doubts over the last 6 months about the strength of his Government, about the Prime Minister's own abilities. And what gives you such confidence today to think that he can achieve what he hasn't done over the last 6 months?

**President Bush.** Well, as you mentioned, he's been in power for 6 months, and I've been able to watch a leader emerge. The first thing that gives me confidence is that he wants responsibility. A sign of leadership is for somebody to say, "I want to be able to have the tools necessary to protect my people." One of his frustrations with me is that he believes we've been slow about giving him the tools necessary to protect the Iraqi people. And today we had a meeting that will accelerate the capacity for the Prime Minister to do the hard work necessary to help stop this violence. No question, it's a violent society right now. He knows that better than anybody. He was explaining to me that occasionally the house in which he lives gets shelled by terrorists who are trying to frighten him.

And so the second point I make to you is that I appreciate his courage. You can't lead unless you have courage. And he's got courage, and he's shown courage over the last 6 months. Thirdly, he has expressed a deep desire to unify his country. You hear

all kinds of rumors about the politics inside of Iraq. I'm talking to the man face to face, and he says that he understands that a unified government, a pluralistic society, is important for success. And he's making hard decisions to achieve that.

No question, it's been tough. It would have been a lot easier had people not tried to destabilize the young democracy. His job would have been more simple had there not been terrorists trying to create sectarian violence.

Now, I want everybody to remember that it was Mr. Zarqawi of Al Qaida who said, "Let us bomb Shi'a in order to create the conditions necessary for sectarian violence." The Samarra bombing started off this new phase of violence. The Prime Minister comes in about halfway through that phase in order to—he'd been selected, and now he's dealing with a serious situation on the ground. And what I appreciate is his attitude. As opposed to saying, "America, you go solve the problem," we have a Prime Minister who's saying, "Stop holding me back; I want to solve the problem."

And the meeting today was to accelerate his capacity to do so. It's not easy for a military to evolve from ground zero, and I appreciate our forces and I appreciate General Casey, who have worked very hard to train the Iraqis so they become a capable fighting force, as well as a unifying element for Iraq. But it's one thing to put people in uniform and another thing to have clear command structure, or the capacity to move troops from point A to point B, or the capacity to make sure that the troop carrier from point A to point B has got the necessary air in its tires or oil in its engine. In other words, this is a sophisticated operation to get a unifying army stood up.

And one of the reasons I appreciate the Prime Minister is that he, on the one hand, sees that it's a sophisticated operation to get a military up from zero, but on the other hand, is frustrated by the pace. And the reason why he's frustrated is because he wants to show the people who elected him that he is willing to take the hard tasks on necessary to provide security for the Iraqi people, such as hunting down those who are killing the innocent. And the reason I came today to be able to sit down with him is to hear the

joint plans developed between the Iraqi Government, the sovereign Government of Iraq, and our Government, to make sure that we accelerate the transfer of capacity to the Prime Minister. And I know he's looking forward to more capacity being transferred so he can do his job.

Anyway, he's the right guy for Iraq, and we're going to help him, and it's in our interest to help him, for the sake of peace.

### **Situation in the Middle East**

**Q.** Mr. President—[inaudible]—what is your—[inaudible]—Prime Minister Olmert and President Abu Mazen to keep this cease-fire agreement? And what should be done—[inaudible].

**President Bush.** Well, first of all, there's no question that if we were able to settle the Palestinian-Israeli issue, it would help bring more peace to the Middle East. And therefore, our Government is focused on helping develop the two-state solution. As a matter of fact, I was the—our Government strongly believes in the two-state solution, and I believe it's in the Palestinian people's interest that they have their own state, and I believe it's in Israel's interest that there be a democracy on her border. And therefore, we're working to that end.

Look, there are extremists who want to stop the development of a Palestinian state, just like there are extremists who want to destabilize Lebanon—and we're strongly in support of the Siniora Government—just like there are extremists who want to destabilize this young democracy. Isn't it interesting that the radicals and extremists fear democracy so much that they're willing to kill innocent people? And the task at hand is to support moderate, reasonable people in their quest for free societies. And that means that Abu Mazen, who I believe wants there to be a Palestinian state living side by side with peace in Israel, deserves the support of the world. And he deserves support in peeling his Government away from those who do not recognize Israel's right to exist.

And therefore, Condoleezza Rice will be going to talk to Abu Mazen tomorrow, as well as Prime Minister Olmert, working with both parties together to see how we can advance

the vision that the Prime Minister himself talked about earlier this week.

**Q.** And your advice to both of them?

**President Bush.** My advice is, support reasonable people and reject extremists. Understand that most people want to live in peace and harmony and security. It's very important for the American people to understand that most Muslim mothers want their children to grow up in peace, and they're interested in peace. And it's in our interest to help liberty prevail in the Middle East, starting with Iraq.

And that's why this business about graceful exit just simply has no realism to it at all. We're going to help this Government. And I'm able to say that it is—that we have a government that wants our help and is becoming more capable about taking the lead in the fight to protect their own country. The only way that Iraq is going to be able to succeed is when the Iraqis, led by a capable person, says, "We're tired of it; we don't want violence; we want the peace that our 12 million people voted for." And it's in the world's interest that Iraq succeed.

Mr. Prime Minister, you want to answer some more questions? [*Laughter*] Go ahead. Hold on for a minute. Wait, wait, wait.

**Prime Minister Maliki.** We said six question; now this is the seventh—this is the eighth—eight questions. Mr. President?

**President Bush.** Yes, this guy?

### **Progress in Iraq**

**Q.** In light of the war that the United States is fighting against terror in Iraq, what has been accomplished? What do you expect to be accomplished after 3-year confrontation?

Another question—other people are accusing the United States of bringing terrorism to Iraq, and the proof is that what's going on in Iraq and what's going on in Afghanistan. The proof is that. And the biggest loser is the Iraqi citizen.

**President Bush.** It's an interesting analysis: The biggest loser for a free society is the Iraqi citizen when this society was just liberated from the grips of a brutal tyrant that killed thousands and thousands of the Iraqi citizens.

What has been accomplished is the liberation of a country from a tyrant who is now sitting in jail getting a trial that he was unwilling to give thousands of people he murdered himself, or had murdered.

Secondly, this country has a Constitution, which is one of the most modern constitutions ever written in the Middle East. This is a government that had been elected by the people. No question, it's tough. But the reason why terrorists are trying to stop the advance of freedom in Iraq is the very reason why we need to help them, because they can't stand democracies and they want to impose a hateful vision on as much of the world as possible. They want safe haven from which to launch attacks again. A safe haven in Iraq, a country that has got a lot of resources, would be very dangerous for America.

It didn't take but 19 people who were trained in Afghanistan to get on airplanes and come and kill over 3,000 citizens in my country. Threats that gather overseas must be taken seriously if we want to protect ourselves. And the best way to protect ourselves is to hunt down the terrorists and to help young democracies survive. Freedom and liberty is the great alternative to the hateful vision of those who are willing to murder innocent lives to achieve their objective.

And so you bet it's worth it in Iraq, and necessary. And I was very proud and pleased to see 12 million Iraqis go to the polls, to be able to express their desires, their wishes, as they helped put a government in place that this man now leads.

**Prime Minister Maliki.** Thank you very much.

**President Bush.** Good to see you; thank you.

**Prime Minister Maliki.** Thank you.

**President Bush.** Thank you all.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 9:43 a.m. at the Four Seasons Hotel Amman. In his remarks, he referred to King Abdullah II of Jordan; Iraqi Shiite cleric Muqtada Al Sadr; Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; Prime Minister Fuad Siniora of Lebanon; President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority; Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. Prime Minister Maliki referred to Prime Minister Marouf

al-Bakhit of Jordan. Prime Minister Maliki and some reporters spoke in Arabic, and their remarks were translated by an interpreter.

### **Joint Statement by President George W. Bush and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq**

*November 30, 2006*

We were pleased to continue our consultations on building security and stability in Iraq. We are grateful to His Majesty King Abdullah II of Jordan for hosting these meetings here in Amman.

Our discussions reviewed developments in Iraq, focusing on the security situation and our common concern about sectarian violence targeting innocent Iraqis. In this regard, the Prime Minister affirms the commitment of his government to advance efforts toward national reconciliation and the need for all Iraqis and political forces in Iraq to work against armed elements responsible for violence and intimidation. The Prime Minister also affirms his determination with help from the United States and the international community to improve the efficiency of government operations, particularly in confronting corruption and strengthening the rule of law.

We discussed the plague of terrorism in Iraq which is being fomented and fueled by Al Qaeda. The people of Iraq, like the people of the United States and the entire civilized world, must stand together to face this common threat. The Prime Minister affirmed that Iraq is a partner in the fight against Al Qaeda. We agreed that defeating Al Qaeda and the terrorists is vital to ensuring the success of Iraq's democracy. We discussed the means by which the United States will enhance Iraq's capabilities to further isolate extremists and bring all who choose violence and terror to full justice under Iraqi law.

We agreed in particular to take all necessary measures to track down and bring to justice those responsible for the cowardly attacks last week in Sadr City. The Prime Minister has also pledged to bring to justice those responsible for crimes committed in the wake of this attack.

We discussed accelerating the transfer of security responsibilities to the Government of Iraq; our hopes for strengthening the future relationship between our two nations; and joint efforts to achieve greater cooperation from governments in the region and to counter those elements that are fueling the conflict.

We received an interim report from the high-level Joint Committee on Accelerating the Transferring of Security Responsibility, and encouraged the Committee to continue its good work. We agreed that reform of the Iraqi security ministries and agencies and addressing the issue of militias should be accelerated. The ultimate solution to stabilizing Iraq and reducing violence is true national reconciliation and capable and loyal Iraqi forces dedicated to protecting all the Iraqi people.

We are committed to continuing to build the partnership between our two countries as we work together to strengthen a stable, democratic, and unified Iraq.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this joint statement. An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

### **Proclamation 8087—World AIDS Day, 2006**

*November 30, 2006*

*By the President of the United States of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

HIV/AIDS is a global health crisis and a constant struggle for many of our families, friends, and neighbors. On World AIDS Day, we underscore our commitment to fight the AIDS pandemic with compassion and decisive action.

America leads the world in the fight against HIV/AIDS, and through the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief we are combating the disease in countries around the world. Through the New Partners Initiative, we are supporting faith-based and community organizations that offer much of the health care in the developing world, so that we can reach more people more effectively.

In addition, the United States and other concerned countries are promoting a comprehensive strategy to prevent the spread of HIV/AIDS. This includes the ABC approach—encouraging abstinence, being faithful, and using condoms, with abstinence as the only sure way to avoid the sexual transmission of HIV/AIDS.

As we work to fight HIV/AIDS globally, we must also ensure our citizens at home have the resources and support they need for treatment and prevention of this disease. Today, more than 1 million Americans are living with HIV/AIDS, and many of these individuals are unaware that they are infected. We will continue to provide medical care, counseling, and testing for those in greatest need of HIV/AIDS assistance, and I have asked the Congress to reform and reauthorize the Ryan White CARE Act and provide new funding to improve distribution of HIV/AIDS medicines in America. The Federal Government is also working closely with faith-based and other community organizations to provide services to individuals with HIV/AIDS and end the stigma of AIDS.

America is blessed with scientific knowledge and compassionate citizens, and we are guided by our founding conviction that each life has matchless value. On World AIDS Day and throughout the year, we stand with our friends and partners around the world in the urgent struggle to fight this virus, comfort those who are affected, and save lives.

**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 laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim December 1, 2006, as World AIDS Day. I urge the Governors of the States and the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, officials of the other territories subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and the American people to join me in appropriate activities to remember those who have lost their lives to AIDS, to work to prevent this deadly disease, and to comfort and support those living with HIV/AIDS.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this thirtieth day of November, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and

of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirty-first.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:44 a.m., December 1, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on December 4, 2006. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this proclamation.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders  
Transmitting an Alternative Plan for  
Locality Pay Increases Payable to  
Civilian Federal Employees**

*November 30, 2006*

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

I am transmitting an alternative plan for locality pay increases payable to civilian Federal employees covered by the General Schedule (GS) and certain other pay systems in January 2007.

Under title 5, United States Code, civilian Federal employees covered by the GS and certain other pay systems would receive a two-part pay increase in January 2007: (1) a 1.7 percent across-the-board adjustment in scheduled rates of basic pay derived from Employment Cost Index data on changes in the wages and salaries of private industry workers, and (2) a 6.9 percent locality pay adjustment based on Bureau of Labor Statistics' salary surveys of non-Federal employers in each locality pay area. According to the statutory formula, for Federal employees covered by the locality pay system, the overall average pay increase would be about 8.6 percent. The total Federal employee pay increase would cost about \$8.8 billion in fiscal year 2007 alone.

Title 5, United States Code, authorizes me to implement an alternative locality pay plan if I view the adjustment that would otherwise take effect as inappropriate due to "national emergency or serious economic conditions affecting the general welfare." For the reasons described below, I have determined that it would be appropriate to exercise my statutory alternative plan authority to set an alternative January 2007 locality pay increase.

A national emergency, within the meaning of chapter 53 of title 5, has existed since September 11, 2001, that includes Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan and Operation Iraqi Freedom. The growth in Federal requirements is straining the Federal budget. Full statutory civilian pay increases costing \$8.8 billion in 2007 alone would interfere with our Nation's ability to pursue the war on terrorism.

Such cost increases would threaten our efforts against terrorism or force deep cuts in discretionary spending or Federal employment to stay within budget. Neither outcome is acceptable. Therefore, I have determined that a locality pay increase of 0.5 percent would be appropriate for GS and certain other employees in January 2007. Our national situation precludes granting larger locality pay increases at this time.

Accordingly, I have determined that under the authority of section 5304a of title 5, United States Code, locality-based comparability payments for the locality pay areas in amounts set forth in the attached table shall become effective on the first day of the first applicable pay period beginning on or after January 1, 2007. When compared with the payments currently in effect, these comparability payments will increase the General Schedule payroll by 0.5 percent.

Finally, the law requires that I include in this report an assessment of the impact of my decision on the Government's ability to recruit and retain well-qualified employees. I do not believe this decision will materially affect our ability to continue to attract and retain a quality Federal workforce. To the contrary, since any pay raise above what I have proposed would likely be unfunded, agencies would have to absorb the additional cost and could have to freeze hiring in order to pay the higher rates. Moreover, GS "quit" rates continue to be very low (2.0 percent on an annual basis), well below the overall average "quit" rate in private enterprise. Should the need arise, the Government has many compensation tools, such as recruitment bonuses, retention allowances, and special salary rates, to maintain the high quality workforce that serves our Nation so very well.

Sincerely,

**George W. Bush**

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

## **Remarks on World AIDS Day**

*December 1, 2006*

Laura and I welcome our guests—this is World AIDS Day. It's a day for the world to recognize the fact that there are 39 million people living with HIV/AIDS and a day to remember the fact that 25 million people have died of AIDS. It's a day, as well, for the United States to remember that we have a duty to do something about this epidemic, this pandemic.

And today Laura and I met with the Secretary of HHS, as well as Mark Dybul, our U.S. Coordinator for our AIDS effort, and people who are involved with helping to save lives, people from our country and people from around the world who have come to share with us the stories of compassion and courage.

This country is committed—we're committed in helping solve this problem by dedicating a lot of resources to the battle against HIV/AIDS. The American taxpayers have funded over \$15 billion to help groups around this table save lives. Before the PEPFAR program—that's the name of the program that we—that's what we call the program that we dedicate money to, to help save lives—before it became into being, there was about 50,000 people receiving life-saving drugs. Today, there are over 800,000 people receiving lifesaving drugs, and we thank those who are on the ground in the countries around the world who are using taxpayers' money to save lives. We believe that it's one thing to spend money; we also believe it's another thing to say that we expect there to be results. And the American people need to know, we're getting good results with your money, and we'll continue to spend it wisely.

We also—as we think about people affected with HIV/AIDS in countries around the world, we remember those who have got HIV/AIDS here at home. And it's very important for the American people to understand we're spending over \$18 billion to help save lives here at home. And I call upon the

Congress to reauthorize the Ryan White Act. The bill has passed the United States House of Representatives; the Senate has time to act before it goes on recess. It is an important piece of legislation that will enable us to continue our fight against HIV/AIDS domestically.

I can't thank you all enough for coming, and I thank you for being such decent, compassionate people. The pandemic of HIV/AIDS can be defeated, and the United States is willing to take the lead in that fight. But we can't do it alone. And so for our international partners, we appreciate what you do. For the faith-based community, we thank you for hearing the universal call to love a neighbor. And for the taxpayers, we appreciate your generosity in showing the world the good heart and compassion of the American people.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:41 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **Statement on Northern Ireland Agreement**

*December 1, 2006*

The United States welcomes the recent progress made by the Northern Ireland parties and the British and Irish Governments to implement the agreement reached at St. Andrews, and I recognize the leadership shown by the political party leaders. The United States fully supports the agreed way forward for Northern Ireland: a power-sharing government by the end of March next year, based on support for the rule of law and policing.

### **Executive Order 13415—Assignment of Certain Pay-Related Functions**

*December 1, 2006*

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3, United States Code, it is hereby ordered as follows:

**Section 1. Assignment of Functions.** The functions of the President under sections 4505a, 5305, and 5377 of title 5, United States Code, are assigned to the Director of the Office of Personnel Management.

**Sec. 2. Revocations.** (a) Sections 3 and 6 of Executive Order 12748 of February 1, 1991, as amended, are revoked. Sections 4, 5, 7, 8, and 9 of Executive Order 12748 are renumbered as sections 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7, respectively.

(b) Section 2 of Executive Order 12828 of January 5, 1993, is revoked. Section 3 of Executive Order 12828 is renumbered as section 2.

**Sec. 3. General Provision.** This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity against the United States, its departments, agencies, entities, officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

**George W. Bush**

The White House,  
December 1, 2006.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:49 a.m., December 4, 2006]

NOTE: This Executive order will be published in the *Federal Register* on December 5.

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### **Digest of Other White House Announcements**

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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.

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#### **November 25**

In the morning at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

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

#### **November 27**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Tallinn,

Estonia. While en route, aboard Air Force One, he had separate telephone conversations with President Hu Jintao of China, President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt, and President Jacques Chirac of France.

In the afternoon, aboard Air Force One, the President had a telephone conversation with former Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy.

In the evening, upon arrival in Tallinn, the President went to the Radisson SAS.

### **November 28**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he met with U.S. Embassy personnel and their families.

Later in the morning, the President went to Kadriorg Palace where he participated in an arrival ceremony and official photograph with President Toomas Ilves of Estonia. Later, in the State Council Hall, he met with President Ilves.

In the afternoon, the President went to the Estonian National Opera House where he had lunch with President Ilves.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to Riga, Latvia, where, upon arrival, he went to Riga Castle where he met with President Vaira Vike-Freiberga of Latvia. Later, he went to the Radisson SAS.

In the evening, the President went to the Latvian National Opera where he attended a cultural performance. He then had a working dinner with NATO members. Later, he returned to the Radisson SAS.

The President announced his designation of the following individuals as members of the Presidential delegation to attend the Inauguration of Felipe de Jesus Calderon Hinojosa as President of Mexico on December 1: former President George H.W. Bush (head of delegation); Antonio O. Garza; Alberto R. Gonzales; and Carlos M. Gutierrez.

### **November 29**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. He then met with U.S. Embassy personnel and their families. Later, he went to the Olympic Sports Centre where he participated in a working session for the North Atlantic Council.

In the afternoon, the President participated in a NATO leaders group photograph. He then had lunch with NATO leaders.

In the evening, the President traveled to Amman, Jordan, where, upon arrival, he went to the Raghadan Palace where he met with King Abdullah II of Jordan. They then had dinner.

Later in the evening, the President went to the Four Seasons Hotel Amman.

The President announced his intention to appoint Laura L. Rogers as Director of the Office of Sex Offender Sentencing, Monitoring, Apprehending, Registering, and Tracking at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to appoint Carlos Marin as Commissioner of the International Boundary and Water Commission (United States and Mexico).

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the President's Board of Advisers on Tribal Colleges and Universities: Verna Fowler; Joseph George Hiller; Richard Dennis Stephens; and Edward K. Thomas.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals to be members of the President's Board of Advisers on Historically Black Colleges and Universities: Belinda Childress Anderson; Delbert W. Baker; Brett Everett Fuller; Ivory V. Nelson; and Beverly Daniel Tatum.

The President announced his intention to designate Mary Beth Buchanan as Designate Acting Director of the Office of Violence Against Women at the Department of Justice.

The President announced that he has named Scott Stanzel as Deputy Assistant to the President and Deputy Press Secretary.

The President announced that he has named Alan Swendiman as Special Assistant to the President and Director, Office of Administration.

The President announced that he has named Christopher G. Oprison as Associate Counsel to the President.

The President announced that he has named Cheryl Stanton as Associate Counsel to the President.

**November 30**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had breakfast with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq. They then had a meeting.

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

The White House announced that the President will welcome President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa to the White House on December 8.

The President announced his intention to appoint Daniel J. Carroll, Jr., and Howard L. Lance as members of the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

The President announced his intention to designate Gary D. Forsee as Chairman of the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

The President announced his intention to designate Randall L. Stephenson as Vice-Chairman of the President's National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

**December 1**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

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**Nominations  
Submitted to the Senate**

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

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**Checklist  
of White House Press Releases**

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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.

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**Released November 27**

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Tony Snow and National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 435, S. 819, S. 1131, S. 2464, and S. 3880

**Released November 28**

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley

Fact sheet: NATO Summit 2006

**Released November 29**

Transcript of a press briefing by senior administration officials on the NATO summit

Transcript of a press briefing by a senior administration official on the President's dinner with King Abdullah II of Jordan \*

Transcript of a press briefing by senior administration officials

Transcript of a press gaggle by Counselor to the President Dan Bartlett

Transcript of a press gaggle by Assistant Secretary of State for European and Eurasian Affairs Daniel Fried

Statement by the Press Secretary: Congolese Elections

**Released November 30**

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley on the President's meeting with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq

Transcript of a press briefing by a senior administration official on the President's meeting with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq

Statement by the Press Secretary on an economic grant agreement with El Salvador

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Bush To Welcome President Thabo Mbeki of the Republic of South Africa to the White House

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\* This briefing was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 30.

**Released December 1**

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 409, H.R. 860, H.R. 1129, H.R. 3085, H.R. 5842, S. 101, S. 1140, and S. 4001

Fact sheet: World AIDS Day 2006

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**Acts Approved  
by the President**


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**Approved November 27**

S. 435 / Public Law 109-370  
Lower Farmington River and Salmon Brook Wild and Scenic River Study Act of 2005

S. 819 / Public Law 109-371  
Pactola Reservoir Reallocation Authorization Act of 2005

S. 1131 / Public Law 109-372  
Idaho Land Enhancement Act

S. 2464 / Public Law 109-373  
Fort McDowell Indian Community Water Rights Settlement Revision Act of 2006

S. 3880 / Public Law 109-374  
Animal Enterprise Terrorism Act

**Approved December 1**

H.R. 409 / Public Law 109-375  
Sierra National Forest Land Exchange Act of 2006

H.R. 860 / Public Law 109-376  
To provide for the conveyance of the reversionary interest of the United States in certain lands to the Clint Independent School District, El Paso County, Texas

H.R. 1129 / Public Law 109-377  
Pitkin County Land Exchange Act of 2006

H.R. 3085 / Public Law 109-378  
To amend the National Trails System Act to update the feasibility and suitability study originally prepared for the Trail of Tears National Historic Trail and provide for the inclusion of new trail segments, land components, and campgrounds associated with that trail, and for other purposes

H.R. 5842 / Public Law 109-379  
Pueblo of Isleta Settlement and Natural Resources Restoration Act of 2006

S. 101 / Public Law 109-380  
To convey to the town of Frannie, Wyoming, certain land withdrawn by the Commissioner of Reclamation

S. 1140 / Public Law 109-381  
To designate the State Route 1 Bridge in the State of Delaware as the "Senator William V. Roth, Jr. Bridge"

S. 4001 / Public Law 109-382  
New England Wilderness Act of 2006