

The full Congress will not be back from spring vacation until the week of April 16th. That means the soonest the House and Senate could get a bill to my desk will be sometime late this month, after the adverse consequences for our troops and their families have already begun. For our troops, the clock is ticking. If the Democrats continue to insist on making a political statement, they should send me their bill as soon as possible. I will veto it, and then Congress can go to work on a good bill that gives our troops the funds they need, without strings and without further delay.

We have our differences in Washington, DC, but our troops should not be caught in the middle. All who serve in elected office have a solemn responsibility to provide for our men and women in uniform. We need to put partisan politics aside and do our duty to those who defend us.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8:20 a.m. on April 6 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 7. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 6 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks to Reporters at Fort Hood, Texas

April 8, 2007

Easter

The President. Laura and I just had the honor of celebrating Easter Sunday with members of our Armed Forces. I had a chance to reflect on the great sacrifice that our military and their families are making. I prayed for their safety; I prayed for their strength and comfort; and I prayed for peace.

This is a joyous day for many people around the world, and it's a day for us to reflect on the many blessings in our lives. And we thank the General and the troops at Fort Hood for welcoming me and Laura, and Mother and Dad, and my mother-in-law. We wish all Americans a peaceful weekend, and we wish our troops all the very best.

Thank you.

The First Lady. Happy Easter.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. at the 13th Sustainment Command Chapel.

Remarks During a Tour of the Border and an Exchange With Reporters in Yuma, Arizona

April 9, 2007

The President. You know, it's interesting; this is the spot I came to in May of 2006. Colburn told me then that we were in the process of developing a modernization strategy. None of this existed prior to my arrival in May. And they told me they were developing a strategy that would prevent people from charging across to try to get to the neighborhood over here. And that strategy has been implemented.

It is a combination of roads, lighting, and fencing, all aiming at making sure that we have a border that's protected. And it's amazing the progress that's been made. And we have come back to this spot because it's where I was the last time. And I was most impressed by your strategy, even more impressed by the fact that it's now being implemented. And the men have reported that the number of arrests are down, which is an indication that fewer people are trying to cross the border at this part of—along the border. And so we're making some pretty good progress.

And the reason we've come here is to show the American people that the plan that we've announced is now being implemented. And there is still more work to be done, but, nevertheless, a lot of progress is being made. I'm going to talk a little bit later about making sure that we complete the strategy by having a comprehensive immigration bill. I will save my words until then. But in the meantime, I wanted you to see the progress—see firsthand the progress that we're making here on the border.

Anyway, thank you for your time.

U.S. Border Patrol

Q. What most impresses you, Mr. President?

The President. The hard work being done.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:36 a.m. at the Yuma Sector, U.S. Border Patrol. In his remarks, he referred to Ronald S. Colburn, Chief Patrol Agent, Yuma Sector, U.S. Border Patrol. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks on Border Security and Immigration Reform in Yuma

April 9, 2007

The President. Thank you all. Thank you all very much. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. Thanks for the warm weather. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. Twenty-eight degrees in Washington.

The President. Yes, 28 degrees in Washington; that's right. I appreciate you sharing that with me. [*Laughter*] Sometimes it's a little hotter than that in Washington. [*Laughter*] But I'm glad to be back here in Yuma. Thank you so very much for your hospitality. Thanks for your service to the country. I appreciate so very much the work you're doing day and night to protect these borders. And the American people owe you a great debt of gratitude.

The Border Patrol is really an important agency. I know some people are wondering whether or not it makes sense to join the Border Patrol. My answer is, I've gotten to know the Border Patrol; I know the people serving in this fine agency—I would strongly urge our fellow citizens to take a look at this profession. You're outdoors; you're working with good people; and you're making a solid contribution to the United States of America. And I want to thank you all for wearing the uniform and doing the tough work necessary, the work that the American people expect you to do.

Last May, I visited this section of the border, and it was then that I talked about the need for our Government to give you the manpower and resources you need to do your job. We were understaffed here. We weren't using enough technology to enable those who work here to be able to do the job the American people expect. I returned to check on the progress, to make sure that the check

wasn't in the mail—it, in fact, had been delivered.

I went to a neighborhood that abuts up against the border when I was here in May. It's the place where a lot of people came charging across. One or two agents would be trying to do their job and stopping a flood of folks charging into Arizona, and they couldn't do the job—just physically impossible. Back at this site, there's now infrastructure; there's fencing. And the amount of people trying to cross the border at that spot is down significantly.

I appreciate very much Ron Colburn and Ulay Littleton. They gave me the tour. Colburn, as you know, is heading up north. He's going to miss the weather. [*Laughter*] More importantly, he's going to miss the folks he worked with down here. I appreciate both of their service; I appreciate the tour. The efforts are working. This border is more secure, and America is safer as a result.

Securing the border is a critical part of a strategy for comprehensive immigration reform. It is an important part of a reform that is necessary so that the Border Patrol agents down here can do their job more effectively. Congress is going to take up the legislation on immigration. It is a matter of national interest, and it's a matter of deep conviction for me. I've been working to bring Republicans and Democrats together to resolve outstanding issues so that Congress can pass a comprehensive bill and I can sign it into law this year.

I appreciate the hard work of Secretary Michael Chertoff, the Secretary of the Department of Homeland Security. I appreciate Commissioner Ralph Basham. He's the main man in charge of U.S. Customs and Border Protection. David Aguilar, Chief of the Border Patrol, is with us. David, thank you for the job you're doing. Lieutenant General Steven Blum, Chief of the National Guard Bureau—I want to thank the Governor of the State of Arizona, Janet Napolitano. I appreciate you being here, Governor. Thank you for taking time from the session to be down here. And it means a lot when the Governors take an active interest in what's going on in the borders of their respective States.

I appreciate so very much Senator Jon Kyl. Kyl is one of the most respected United