

Thanks for letting me come by today. I've explained the connection between Al Qaida and its Iraqi affiliate. I presented intelligence that clearly establishes this connection. The facts are that Al Qaida terrorists killed Americans on 9/11; they're fighting us in Iraq and across the world; and they are plotting to kill Americans here at home again. Those who justify withdrawing our troops from Iraq by denying the threat of Al Qaida in Iraq and its ties to Usama bin Laden ignore the clear consequences of such a retreat. If we were to follow their advice, it would be dangerous for the world and disastrous for America. We will defeat Al Qaida in Iraq.

In this effort, we're counting on the brave men and women represented in this room. Every man and woman who serves at this base and around the world is playing a vital role in this war on terror. With your selfless spirit and devotion to duty, we will confront this mortal threat to our country, and we're going to prevail.

I have confidence in our country, and I have faith in our cause because I know the character of the men and women gathered before me. I thank you for your patriotism. I thank you for your courage. You're living up to the motto, "one family, one mission, one fight." Thank you for all you do. God bless your families. God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Joseph P. Riley of Charleston, SC; Mayor Harry M. Hallman, Jr., of Mount Pleasant, SC; Mayor R. Keith Summey of North Charleston, SC; and Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq.

**Proclamation 8163—Anniversary of the Americans With Disabilities Act, 2007**

*July 24, 2007*

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

On the anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), we celebrate our progress towards an America where individuals with disabilities are recognized for their

talents and contributions to our society. We also underscore our commitment to extend the full liberties and freedoms of our great country to all Americans.

Seventeen years ago, President George H. W. Bush signed the ADA into law. This legislation became one of the most successful and compassionate reforms in our Nation's history, helping to ensure that individuals with disabilities are better able to develop meaningful skills, engage in productive work, and participate fully in the life of our Nation.

My Administration continues our work to build on this landmark legislation. In 2001, I announced the New Freedom Initiative to promote the full participation of people with disabilities in all areas of society by improving educational and employment opportunities, increasing access to assistive technologies, expanding transportation options, and promoting homeownership and integration into daily community life. The New Freedom Initiative and the ADA provide children with disabilities the tools they need to succeed in schools and communities. Working men and women living with disabilities contribute to our strong economy, and the "Ticket to Work" program and services at One-Stop Career Centers help expand employment opportunities. The DisabilityInfo.gov website connects individuals with disabilities and their families to vital information that helps more Americans share in the promises of our Nation.

**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 July 26, 2007, as a day in celebration of the 17th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act. I call on all Americans to celebrate the vital contributions of individuals with disabilities as we work towards fulfilling the promise of the ADA to give all our citizens the opportunity to live with dignity, work productively, and achieve their dreams.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-fourth day of July, in the year of our Lord two thousand seven, and of the Independence of the United

States of America the two hundred and thirty-second.

**George W. Bush**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:33 a.m., July 26, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on July 27.

**Remarks Following a Briefing by the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors**

July 25, 2007

I want to thank Secretary Shalala and Senator Dole for briefing myself and the Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Secretary of Defense on the general recommendations they'll be making to the country about how to make sure that our wounded heroes get the best possible care from the Defense Department and the Veterans Affairs Department.

I asked these two distinguished citizens to lead an extensive search about how best for this Government to respond. We owe a wounded soldier the very best care and the very best benefits and the very easiest to understand system. And so they took a very interesting approach. And that they took the perspective from the patient, as the patient had to work his way through the hospitals and bureaucracies. And they've come up with some very interesting and important suggestions that they'll be voting on later and then will be holding a press conference about afterwards.

The reason I've asked you to come in is, I do want to thank you on behalf of the Nation for doing what's right.

I also want to recognize Bob Woodruff here. He is a—he himself was wounded, severely wounded and went through the system, to a certain extent. And we welcome you back, and we're glad you're with us. And we would hope that any wounded soldier, any person in uniform would receive the kind of care and the ability to return to work, just like you have done. And so we're glad you're with us, Bob. Congratulations on the will to recover.

That will exist with our troops as well. It's amazing how courageous our men and women in uniform are, and they deserve the best. And that's the spirit in which you analyzed the system. And we welcome your recommendations, and we thank you for your service.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:34 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna E. Shalala and former Senator Bob Dole, Co-chairs, President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors; Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates; and ABC News reporter Bob Woodruff, who was injured in Iraq on January 29, 2006. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

**Remarks on a Report by the President's Commission on Care for America's Returning Wounded Warriors and an Exchange With Reporters**

July 25, 2007

*The President.* I've been running with Max and Allen—I mean, Neil. I met these guys at Walter Reed. Neil lost both legs, and he told me he's going to run with me on the South Lawn of the White House. Max lost his leg, and he told me he was going to be jumping out of airplanes with the 101st Airborne. Sure enough, he's jumping out of airplanes with the 101st Airborne, and along with Neil, he's running on the South Lawn.

This is a—running with these two men is incredibly inspirational to me. And it should be inspirational to anybody who has been dealt a tough hand. Sometimes in life you get dealt a hand that you didn't expect to play. And they got dealt a tough hand, and they're playing it with all their soul. And I appreciate you guys being here. It means a lot to me.

Today Senator Dole and Secretary Shalala delivered a report to the White House. I told the press corps that they were going to go out and hold a press conference. They've held their press conference. I'd like to make some comments on that report.