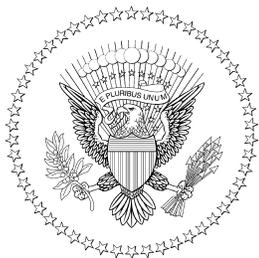


Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, August 13, 2007
Volume 43—Number 32
Pages 1047–1070

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Editor's Note: The President was in Kennebunkport, ME, on August 10, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

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, August 10, 2007

Remarks Following a Tour of the Interstate 35W Bridge Damage in Minneapolis, Minnesota

August 4, 2007

On behalf of the citizens of America, I bring prayers from the American people to those who suffered loss of life as a result of the collapse of the 35W bridge here in the Twin Cities. I bring the prayers of those who wonder about whether they'll ever see a loved one again.

First, I want to thank the Governor and the mayor and the Senators, Members of the Congress for working in a coordinated way to respond to this tragedy. I have met with the chief of police and the sheriff, rescue workers, people who represent men and women who are working as hard as they possibly can to save life and to find life, to go under these murky waters to find the facts.

And it's going to take a while, but I have been impressed by not only their determination but have been impressed by their compassion. I have met people that were on the bridge—I met a man who was on the bridge when it collapsed. His instinct was to run to a schoolbus of screaming children and to help bring them to safety.

We have an amazing country, where people's instinct, first instinct, is to help save life. There's—a lot of people's first instincts here in the Twin Cities was to save the lives of somebody who was hurting. And I know the people of this community thank their fellow citizens who did that.

I'm here with the Secretary of Transportation because our message to the Twin Cities is, we want to get this bridge rebuilt as quick as possible; that we understand this is a main artery of life here; that people count on this bridge and this highway system to get to work. There's a lot of paperwork involved with government. One of our jobs is to work with the Governor and the mayor and the Senators and the Members of the

Congress to cut through that paperwork and to see if we can't get this bridge rebuilt in a way that not only expedites the flow of traffic but in a way that can stand the test of time.

I make no promises on a timetable. I do promise that Mary Peters, the Secretary of Transportation, is going to be in charge of this project. I do promise she's going to listen to the local authorities to find out what the folks here need. I do promise that when she sees roadblocks and hurdles in the way of getting the job done, she'll do everything she can to eliminate them.

Out of these tragedies can come a better life. And I, having visited with the people here, believe that not only are they committed to a better life, not only are they committed to turning something ugly into something good, but it's going to happen.

So I'm proud to be with you. Thank you for your leadership. God bless the people of this part of the world. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:40 a.m. at the Lower Street Anthony Falls Lock and Dam, St. Paul District. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota; Mayor R.T. Rybak of Minneapolis, MN; Senators Norm Coleman and Amy Klobuchar of Minnesota; Timothy Dolan, chief, Minneapolis Police Department, MN; Richard W. Stanek, sheriff, Hennepin County, MN; and Gary Babineau, a truckdriver from Blaine, MN, who helped rescue schoolchildren trapped by the bridge collapse.

Statement on Senate Passage of Intelligence Reform Legislation

August 4, 2007

Last night the United States Senate passed legislation to give our intelligence professionals the legal tools and authority they need to keep America safe. I appreciate the hard work they did to find common ground to pass this critical bill. Today the House of Representatives has an opportunity to consider

that bill, pass it, and send it to me for my signature. Protecting America is our most solemn obligation, and I urge the House to pass this bill without delay.

NOTE: The statement referred to S. 1927.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Intelligence Reform Legislation

August 4, 2007

Tonight the House joined the Senate in passing legislation that will close a critical gap in our intelligence collection, and I appreciate their efforts to complete the legislation before the August recess. The Director of National Intelligence, Mike McConnell, has assured me that this bill gives him what he needs to continue to protect the country, and therefore, I will sign this legislation as soon as it gets to my desk.

I also want to remind Congress that our work on reforming the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act is not complete. When Congress returns in September, we need to work together on additional reforms, including the important issue of providing meaningful liability protection to those who are alleged to have assisted our Nation following the attacks of September 11, 2001.

NOTE: The statement referred to S. 1927.

Statement on Congressional Passage of Intelligence Reform Legislation

August 5, 2007

When our intelligence professionals have the legal tools to gather information about the intentions of our enemies, America is safer. And when these same legal tools also protect the civil liberties of Americans, then we can have the confidence to know that we can preserve our freedoms while making America safer.

The Protect America Act, passed with bipartisan support in the House and Senate, achieves both of these goals by modernizing the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act. Over the past three decades, this law has not kept pace with revolutionary changes in tech-

nology. As a result, our intelligence professionals have told us that they are missing significant intelligence information that they need to protect the country.

S. 1927 reforms FISA by accounting for changes in technology and restoring the statute to its original focus on appropriate protections for the rights of persons in the United States and not foreign targets located in foreign lands.

Today, we face a dynamic threat from enemies who understand how to use modern technology against us. Whether foreign terrorists, hostile nations, or other actors, they change their tactics frequently and seek to exploit the very openness and freedoms we hold dear. Our tools to deter them must also be dynamic and flexible enough to meet the challenges they pose. This law gives our intelligence professionals this greater flexibility while closing a dangerous gap in our intelligence gathering activities that threatened to weaken our defenses.

We know that information we have been able to acquire about foreign threats will help us detect and prevent attacks on our homeland. Mike McConnell, the Director of National Intelligence, has assured me that this bill gives him the most immediate tools he needs to defeat the intentions of our enemies. And so in signing this legislation today, I am heartened to know that his critical work will be strengthened, and we will be better armed to prevent attacks in the future.

I commend Members of Congress who supported these important reforms and also for acting before adjourning for recess. In particular, I want to thank Mitch McConnell and John Boehner for their strong leadership on this issue and Senators Kit Bond and Dianne Feinstein for coming together in the Senate on an effective bipartisan solution. In the House of Representatives, Pete Hoekstra and Heather Wilson were instrumental in securing enactment of this vital piece of legislation before the August recess, and I thank them for their leadership.

While I appreciate the leadership it took to pass this bill, we must remember that our work is not done. This bill is a temporary, narrowly focused statute to deal with the most immediate shortcomings in the law.

When Congress returns in September, the intelligence committees and leaders in both parties will need to complete work on the comprehensive reforms requested by Director McConnell, including the important issue of providing meaningful liability protection to those who are alleged to have assisted our Nation following the attacks of September 11, 2001.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this statement.

The President's News Conference With President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan at Camp David, Maryland

August 6, 2007

President Bush. Good morning. Thank you; be seated. Welcome.

I appreciate a man I've come to admire, President Karzai, for joining us. Laura and I had the honor of hosting the President for dinner last night. He and I spent a lot of this morning just sitting down alone talking about our common interests, common concerns. President Karzai is an optimistic man. He's watched his country emerge from days of darkness to days of hope.

President Karzai. Absolutely.

President Bush. I appreciate your stewardship. I appreciate your commitment to empowering your people. I appreciate your strong stance for freedom and justice, and I'm proud to call you an ally in this war against those who would wreak havoc in order to deny people a chance to live in peace.

We're working closely together to help the people of Afghanistan prosper. We work together to give the people of Afghanistan a chance to raise their children in a hopeful world, and we're working together to defeat those who would try to stop the advance of a free Afghan society.

We spent a fair amount of time talking about our security strategy. You might remember, it was last winter that people were speculating about the Taliban spring offensive and about how the Taliban had regrouped and were going to go on the attack

inside Afghanistan. There was a spring offensive, all right—it was conducted by U.S., NATO, and equally importantly, Afghan troops. And we went on the offense because we understand that it is in our mutual interests to deny extremists the opportunity to derail this young democracy.

There is still a fight going on, but I'm proud to report to the American people that the Afghan Army is in the fight. The Government is in the fight, and the Army is in the fight. Afghan national security forces are increasing in strength; there's about 110,000 Afghans now defending their nation. And more Afghans are stepping up to serve, and it's in the interest of the United States to help you develop that national army and local police that will send a clear message to the people of Afghanistan that the governments can help provide an opportunity for people to raise their children in a peaceful world.

There are a lot of forces there in Afghanistan supporting this Government, and our 23,500 troops are proud to stand side by side with 26,000 troops from other nations. And we applaud those countries who have committed their troops to help Afghanistan succeed. We've committed more than \$23 billion since 2001 to help rebuild the country. I think our citizens will be interested to know, for example, that 7,000 community health care workers have been trained that provide about 340,000 Afghan men, women, and children a month with good health care.

I remember talking a lot about how the Taliban prevented young girls from going to school in Afghanistan. American citizens recoil with horror to think about a government that would deny a young child the opportunity to have the basics necessary to succeed in life. Today, there are nearly 5 million students going to school in Afghanistan, a third of whom are girls. Still work to be done, don't get me wrong, but progress is being made, Mr. President, and we're proud of you, proud of the work you're doing.

We talked about the need to stem the narcotics trade. I'm sure the President will comment on this. He understands that it's very important for farmers to be incented to grow crop other than poppy, and that he knows

full well the United States is watching, measuring, and trying to help eradicate poppy cultivation. We spent more than a fair amount of time on it; we spent a lot of time on it. And it's important that we get this right. Mr. President, I appreciate your commitment to not only dealing with the poppy growers and the poppy crop but also dealing with corruption. It's very important that our societies emerge in such a way that the people have confidence in the capacity of government to conduct the affairs—conduct their affairs in a way that's aboveboard and honest and transparent.

And finally, I do want to congratulate you on the joint jirga that's coming up. This is a meeting between President Karzai, President Musharraf, and representative elements from parts of their respective countries, all coming together to talk about reconciliation and how we can work together—how you can work together to achieve common solutions to problems. And the main problem is to fight extremism, to recognize that history has called us into action. And by fighting extremists and radicals, we help people realize dreams. And helping people realize dreams helps promote peace. That's what we want.

You come from a part of the world, Mr. President, where there's a long history of violence and a long history of people seeking freedom. It's in the interests of the United States to be on the—tip the scales of freedom your way. You only do so with strong leadership, and I appreciate the leadership you're providing. So welcome to Camp David.

President Karzai. Thank you very much. Thank you very much, Mr. President, for receiving me in Camp David. You and the First Lady are generous and kind hosts, and thank you very much for that.

Mr. President, I am here today to once again thank you and the American people for all that you have done for Afghanistan, for our liberation first, and then for our stability and prosperity. We have gone a long way.

I have been here many times before in America, thanking the American people for what they have given to Afghanistan. I have spoken of roads; I have spoken of schools; I have spoken of clinics; I have spoken of health services; I have spoken of education; I have spoken of agriculture; I've spoken of

lots of achievements. I've also had requests for help that you have delivered to us.

But today I'm going to speak about only one achievement that means so much for the Afghan people and, surely, to you and the rest of the world. That is that Afghanistan today, with the help that you have provided and our other allies have provided, can save—is saving the life of at least 50,000 infants after they are born and the life of 85,000 children under 5.

Mr. President, when you and I begin to think of the mothers who can have their babies safe today, then we know the value and the importance of this achievement. And thank you very, very much for this tremendous help. Afghanistan would have not had 85,000 children living today had you not been there to help us with the rest of the world.

President Bush. Thank you, sir.

President Karzai. That's a massive achievement, and I am happy about it. I'm sure you are too, and so are women and mothers around the world.

Mr. President, as we have gone a long way, progress has been made. We still continue to fight terrorism; our enemy is still there—defeated, but still hiding in the mountains. And our duty is to complete the job; to get them out of their hideouts in the mountains, and to bring justice to the people of Afghanistan, to the people of America, and to the people around the world who are threatened by these terrorists.

One of the significant steps that we have taken together with Pakistan to have an effective fight against terrorism, an effective fight against extremism and radicalism, was discussed during the dinner that you kindly hosted for me and President Musharraf. And the result of that is going to be seen in 2 days from today, the 9th of August, where in Kabul, we will have the joint Pakistan-Afghanistan jirga. I hope very much that this jirga will bring to us what we need, which I think it will. And thank you very much for this opportunity—you cause us to have a meeting and to have a result of that.

Mr. President, we have a long journey ahead of us. But what we have traveled so far has given us greater hope for a better future, for a better life. The Afghans are still suffering, but there are millions of Afghans

who are enjoying a better and more secure life, who can send their children to school, and who can work in their fields. And thank you very much for that.

Yes, we do have the problem of poppies and narcotics in Afghanistan. Afghanistan is committed to fighting it because this evil is first hurting us and then youth in the rest of the world. So this is for Afghanistan to work against and for the rest of us to work against. We are committed. It will take time; we are realistic about that. But the fight is there, and I hope your assistance will continue to be delivered to Afghanistan to fight narcotics. We have raised our army, indeed. We are working on our police. Our police needs a lot of improvement. And I'm glad that you have committed to helping us with the raising of better police in Afghanistan.

The fight against corruption is going on. We have developed a mechanism, worked through a commission headed by the Chief Justice of Afghanistan that will be ready in 2 months from now and will be announced to the Afghan people on hows and measures and the timeframe that we will need to have an effective fight against corruption in Afghanistan.

The rest, life, is going on well, with a lot of hope. We have a better administration, more capabilities. We can do lots of things on our own, and I'm sure your continued assistance will make life better for us. And thank you very much, Mr. President. Nice of you to receive me here.

President Bush. Thanks for coming. A couple of questions. Deb [Deb Riechmann, Associated Press].

War on Terror/Pakistan

Q. Mr. President, if you had actionable intelligence about the whereabouts of top Al Qaida leaders in Pakistan, would you wait for Musharraf's permission to send in U.S. forces, even if it meant missing an opportunity to take them out? Or have you and Musharraf worked out some deal about this already?

And President Karzai, what will be your top concern when you meet with Musharraf later this week?

President Bush. I am confident that with actionable intelligence, we will be able to

bring top Al Qaida to justice. We're in constant communications with the Pakistan Government. It's in their interest that foreign fighters be brought to justice. After all, these are the same ones who were plotting to kill President Musharraf. We share a concern. And I'm confident, with real, actionable intelligence, we will get the job done.

President Karzai. When President Musharraf visits Afghanistan on the 9th of August to inaugurate the joint Pakistan-Afghanistan convention, or jirga, together with me, we will be discussing further improvements and relations between the two countries. The two countries are neighbors; they've been having extensive relationships with each other. We will be discussing improvement of those relations—on all aspects of them. We will also be discussing the possible outcome of the joint jirga between the two countries and how effectively, then, we can carry on the fight against terrorism in both countries and in the region as a result of that jirga. So it's a—it's going to be, I'm sure, a good meeting, ma'am.

Afghan press?

War on Terror

Q. I will ask in Pashto, and then I will translate my question. My question is for Mr. Karzai.

[At this point, the reporter asked a question in Pashto, after which he provided his own translation as follows.]

I will repeat in English too. Four years ago, in a press conference, Mr. President Karzai said Taliban do not pose any threat to Afghan people. So who do you think supported Taliban to threaten the security by doing kidnapings and taking the Government officials, and why?

President Karzai. Four years ago, I did say that, and I continue to say that. The Taliban do pose dangers to our innocent people; to children going to school; to our clergy; to our teachers; to our engineers; to international aid workers. They are not posing any threat to the Government of Afghanistan; they are not posing any threat to the institutions of Afghanistan or to the buildup of institutions of Afghanistan. It's a force that's defeated; it's a force that is frustrated; it's a

force that is acting in cowardice by killing children going to school.

Who is supporting them is a question that we have been working on for long time and since then. And I hope that the jirga between us and Pakistan will give us solutions to some of the questions that we have.

President Bush. One thing is for certain: We know the vision—their vision of how to govern. They've been in power. They've had the opportunity to show the world how they think and what they do. It's instructive for people to speak to a mother of a young girl about what life was like under the Taliban. These are brutal, coldblooded killers.

President Karzai. Yes.

President Bush. That's what they are. And the fundamental question facing those of us who believe in freedom is whether or not we confront them, and whether or not it's worth it—the effort—to spread an alternative to their hateful vision. And we've come to the conclusion it is. And that's why President Karzai stands right here at Camp David, discussing common concerns, common opportunities, about how to defeat a vision of darkness. That's what they are. They just don't believe in freedom. They don't believe it's possible to live in a society where people are allowed to express themselves in free fashion.

And it's really part of an ongoing challenge that the free world faces. The real question is whether or not those of us who have the blessings of liberty will continue to pursue policies—foreign policy, security policy aimed at not only protecting our homeland but aimed at laying a condition for peace to prevail.

Caren [Caren Bohan, Reuters].

Afghan Civilian Casualties/Iran

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. President Karzai said yesterday that he believed Iran was playing a helpful role in Afghanistan. Was he able to convince you in your meetings that that was the case, or do you still have concerns about Iran's role? And I have a question for President Karzai as well. Just wondering if the President was able to give you the assurances that you sought about the effort to reduce civilian casualties in Afghanistan?

President Bush. Let me comment on the civilian casualties, if I might. First, I fully understand the angst, the agony, and the sorrow that Afghan citizens feel when an innocent life is lost. I know that must cause grief in villages and heartbreak in homes. Secondly, I can assure the Afghan people, like I assured the President, that we do everything that we can to protect the innocent; that our military operations are mindful that innocent life might be exposed to danger, and we adjust accordingly.

Thirdly, it is the Taliban who surround themselves with innocent life as human shields. The Taliban are the coldblooded killers. The Taliban are the murderers. The Taliban have no regard for human life. And therefore, we've spent some time talking about—as the President rightly expressed his concerns about civilian casualty. And I assured him that we share those concerns.

Secondly, it's up to Iran to prove to the world that they're a stabilizing force, as opposed to a destabilizing force. After all, this is a Government that has proclaimed its desire to build a nuclear weapon. This is a Government that is in defiance of international accord, a Government that seems to be willing to thumb its nose at the international community and, at the same time, a Government that denies its people a rightful place in the world and denies its people the ability to realize their full potential. So I believe that it's in the interests of all of us that we have an Iran that tries to stabilize, not destabilize, an Iran that gives up its weapons ambitions. And therefore, we're working to that end.

The President knows best about what's taking place in his country, and of course, I'm willing to listen. But from my perspective, the burden of proof is on the Iranian Government to show us that they're a positive force. And I must tell you that this current leadership there is a big disappointment to the people of Iran. The people of Iran could be doing a lot better than they are today. But because of the actions of this Government, this country is isolated. And we will continue to work to isolate it because they're not a force for good, as far as we can see. They're a destabilizing influence wherever they are.

Now, the President will have to talk to you about Afghanistan. But I would be very cautious about whether or not the Iranian influence there in Afghanistan is a positive force—and therefore, it's going to be up to them to prove to us and prove to the Government that they are.

President Karzai. I had a good discussion with President Bush on civilian casualties. I'm very happy to tell you that President Bush felt very much with the Afghan people, that he calls the Afghan people allies in the war against terror and friends, and that he is as much concerned as I am, as the Afghan people are. I was very happy with that conversation.

Q. Mr. Karzai—can I ask my question in Dari first?

President Karzai. Please, yes.

Suicide Bombings

[The reporter asked a question in Dari, after which she provided her own translation as follows.]

Q. You have recently become a father, and also, you have recently pardoned a teenager who suicide himself, and you said he washed—he was brainwashed.

President Karzai. Brainwashed, yes.

Q. Yes. What do you think about the future of Afghanistan in view of this problem?

President Karzai. Well, ma'am, the man—the boy, I should say, that I pardoned was a 14-year-old boy from Pakistan's South Waziristan Agency. He was sent by his father to a madrassa to get education because he could not any more afford to have him in school, because his mother had a heart ailment, and they had to spend money on her treatment.

Having sent the boy to a madrassa, he disappeared from there. After a few months, his father heard that he was arrested in Afghanistan, and then he came to Afghanistan. And having seen that this was a teenage—rather, legally underage innocent boy used by terrorists to kill himself and to kill other innocent people, I felt that it was the right decision to pardon him, to give him a new opportunity for education and a new life, and to send a message to his mother that your child is going to be back with you. I am very glad I did that.

But this gives us a lesson about those who are the enemies of all of us, the enemies of people who use young children, who brainwashes them, and who forces them to kill themselves.

The message should be clear to the rest of the world about the evil that we are fighting, the heartless people that we are fighting, who don't even have any feeling for young children, for babies, for teenagers. Most of that, we know today, that the terrorists are buying and selling suicide bombers. We have received calls in our Government offices by handlers of suicide bombers that they want to sell them to us. So it's become a trade, a mean trade; merchants of death are around there. So it's our job to get rid of them.

President Bush. Thank you very much.

President Karzai. Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:17 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan. President Karzai referred to Abdul Salaam Azimi, Chief Justice of Afghanistan.

Proclamation 8164—Women's Equality Day, 2007

August 6, 2007

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

On Women's Equality Day, we commemorate the adoption of the 19th Amendment to our Constitution and the strong leadership of extraordinary women who have made America a more perfect Union by advancing women's suffrage.

At the Seneca Falls Convention of 1848, a group of visionaries gathered to proclaim the ideas that "all men and women are created equal" and "endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights." That gathering grew into a national movement that led to the ratification of the 19th Amendment, guaranteeing women the right to vote. This achievement reflects the vision and determination of the suffragists who stood for a freer society and changed our Nation's history.

Since the passage of the 19th Amendment, pioneers such as Margaret Chase Smith and Sandra Day O'Connor rose above obstacles and broke down barriers to equality. Today, American women are shaping our Nation and the world by serving in all walks of life. Many brave women volunteer to wear the uniform of the United States, and they serve as an inspiration to all.

Our Nation is grateful for the bold leadership of American women who have opened doors of opportunity for women of future generations. On Women's Equality Day we honor the suffragists and all those who seek to expand equality in our world.

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 August 26, 2007, as Women's Equality Day. I call upon the people of the United States to celebrate the achievements of women and observe this day with appropriate programs and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this sixth day of August, 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, 8:45 a.m., August 8, 2007]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on August 9.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Economic Advisers

August 8, 2007

Good afternoon, Mr. Secretary. Thank you for your hospitality. We're pleased to be here at the Treasury Department.

This morning I spoke with Governor Huntsman of Utah. He gave me an update on the efforts to rescue the trapped miners. I told him our Nation's thoughts and prayers are with the miners and their families and that the Federal Government will help in any way we can.

I just finished a productive meeting with members of my economic team. We dis-

cussed our thriving economy and what we need to do to keep it that way. We care a lot about whether our fellow citizens are working and whether or not they've got money in their pockets to save, spend, or invest as they see fit. We talked about America's role in the global economy.

My administration follows a simple philosophy: Our economy prospers when we trust the American people with their own paychecks. When I came to office in 2001, our Nation was headed toward a recession. And so we acted. We acted on the philosophy I just described, and we cut the taxes across the board. And the American people have used this money to fuel an economic resurgence.

Since 2003, our economy has added more than 8.3 million new jobs and almost 4 years of uninterrupted growth. The economy continues to grow at a steady pace, and during the most recent quarter, it grew at an annual rate of 3.4 percent. Unemployment is low. Real after-tax income has increased by an average of more than \$3,400 per person since I took office.

Tax cuts let Americans keep their own money; it stimulates entrepreneurship. And we have a debate here in Washington over tax cuts. Democrats in Congress want to increase taxes and turn them into additional Government programs, and I strongly oppose that approach.

We want the people to keep more of their own money because we understand that the American economy, entrepreneurs and small-business owners are the ones who create jobs. The genius of our free market economy is that it grows from the bottom up, through the college student who starts up a business in a parent's garage, or a stay-at-home mom who works out of a home office, or the small-business owner who dreams of growing his or her enterprise into a big business.

The entrepreneurial spirit has helped our economy keep pace with new technologies, and America is a leader in innovation. Twelve years ago, eBay did not exist. Today, eBay is a global business that reported nearly \$6 billion in net revenues last year. Hundreds of thousands of Americans now make part of their living by selling products on that web

site. eBay is an entrepreneurial success story that has helped thousands of Americans become entrepreneurs themselves.

Recently in Nashville, I met a woman who runs a bun company. She cooks bread. Her name was Cordia Harrington. She carved out a foothold in the industry and has built five small businesses. Her businesses employ 260 people. She makes a good product. My point is, this is the enterprising spirit that we must support and encourage here in Washington, DC.

I appreciate the fact that Hank Paulson agreed to join my administration after a long career as one of the world's most successful investment bankers. Here's how he puts it. He said, "This is far and away the strongest global economy I've seen in my business lifetime." In other words, not only is our economy strong but so are the economies around the world. You know, when you grow your economy and—it's good news for the Treasury and good news for the deficit.

When people earn money, tax revenues go up. This year, tax revenues are expected to be \$167 billion higher than last year's because the economy is growing. Growing tax revenues combined with spending restraint has helped us drive down the Federal deficit, and we were able to do so without raising the taxes on the people who work or without raising taxes on small-business owners or farmers. Estimates show the deficit will drop to \$205 billion this year. That is well below the average of the past 40 years as a percentage of our economy.

Earlier this year, I proposed a budget that will completely eliminate the Federal deficit within the next 5 years and produce surplus by 2012. We can achieve this, but it's going to require spending restraint, and it's going to require keeping taxes low to keep this economy growing.

Not everybody agrees with this approach. There's been a heated debate so far in Congress, and I suspect there will be a lot of heat when they come back, because Democrats in Congress got a significant appetite for more Federal spending. They passed a budget resolution that includes an extra \$205 billion in discretionary spending over the next 5 years. That averages out to about \$112 million per day, \$4.7 million per hour,

\$78,000 per minute. Put another way, it's about \$1,300 in higher spending every second of every minute of every hour of every day of every year for the next 5 years.

Now, somebody is going to have to pay for it. And that, of course, will be the hard-working American people will have to pay for that excessive spending. If the majority in Congress gets it way, American families, small businesses will face a massive tax hike. It would amount to the largest tax increase in American history.

Now, look, I recognize the Democrats control the Congress and, with it, the power of the purse. I also have some power, and it's called the veto. And I have the votes in Congress to sustain vetoes, and therefore, I will use the veto to keep your taxes low and to keep Federal spending under control.

When Members of Congress return from their August recess, they'll have less than a month to pass the 12 spending bills needed to keep the Federal Government running before the end of the fiscal year on September 30th. They need to pass these spending bills, one at a time, before the deadline. In a time of war, I ask them to start by sending me the spending bill for the Department of Defense, so I can sign that into law.

There's some long-term challenges to our economy, and we need to work together to address those challenges. One way to address the challenges is to continue opening up markets for America's goods and services, and the best way to do that is to expand free trade. We've negotiated new free trade agreements with Peru, Colombia, Panama, and Korea. And now the Congress needs to carry out its responsibilities and approve these agreements.

We're going to work hard to conclude the Doha round of trade negotiations, all aiming to open up new opportunities for U.S. producers and aiming to fulfill a great calling, and that is to help eliminate poverty around the world.

We need to reform our health care system by making private health insurance more affordable and available. We need to reduce our dependence on foreign oil by promoting alternative fuels. We need to confront the rising cost of entitlement programs like Medicare and Medicaid and Social Security.

I look forward to working with Republicans and Democrats to come up with sensible solutions to solve these problems, so that we can say we solved the problems, and not pass them on to future generations.

I'm an optimistic person, particularly when it comes to the ability of Americans to create and dream and work hard. I'll be less optimistic if Congress has its way and raises taxes on the American people. And that's why we're going to work hard not to let them do so. We'll keep good policies in place. We want this to be the land of dreamers and doers. I love the stories of the small-business owner in Nashville or the idea that eBay didn't exist 12 years ago and now is a booming, thriving enterprise. The purpose of government is to make it more possible for people to realize dreams and to enhance the entrepreneurial spirit. That has been the policies of this administration, and it will continue to be the policies of this administration.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:44 p.m. at the Department of the Treasury. In his remarks, he referred to Cordia Harrington, chief executive officer, the Bun Companies.

The President's News Conference

August 9, 2007

The President. Good morning, thank you. When I came into office in 2001, our Nation was headed into a recession, so we cut the taxes across the board. And hard-working Americans have used this tax relief to produce strong and lasting economic growth.

Since we began cutting taxes in 2001, our economy has expanded by more than \$1.9 trillion. Since the tax cuts took full effect in 2003, our economy has added more than 8.3 million new jobs and almost 4 years of uninterrupted growth. Inflation is low; unemployment is low; real after-tax income has grown by an average of more than \$3,400 per person since I took office. The American economy is the envy of the world, and we need to keep it that way.

Our economy is growing in large part because America has the most ambitious, educated, and innovative people in the world—men and women who take risks, try out new

ideas, and have the skills and courage to turn their dreams into new technologies and new businesses. To stay competitive in the global economy, we must continue to lead the world in human talent and creativity.

So in my 2006 State of the Union Address, I announced the American Competitiveness Initiative, and I called on Republicans and Democrats in Congress to join me in this effort to encourage innovation throughout our economy. As part of this initiative, I asked Congress to expand America's investment in basic research, so we can support our Nation's most creative minds as they explore new frontiers in nanotechnology or supercomputing or alternative energy sources. I asked Congress to strengthen math and science education, so our children have the skills they need to compete for the jobs of the future. I asked Congress to make permanent the research and development tax credit, so we can encourage bolder private-sector initiatives in technology.

Today I'm going to sign into law a bill that supports many of the key elements of the American Competitiveness Initiative. This legislation supports our efforts to double funding for basic research in physical sciences. This legislation authorizes most of the education programs I called for in the initiative I laid out at the State of the Union. These programs include Math Now proposals to improve instruction in mathematics and the Advanced Placement program my administration proposed to increase the number of teachers and students in AP and international baccalaureate classes.

These are important steps forward, and so I'm going to sign the bill. I'm looking forward to it. Yet the bill Congress sent to my desk leaves some of the key priorities unfulfilled and authorizes unnecessary and duplicative programs. I will continue to focus my budget requests on the key priorities in the bill I outlined and will work with Congress to focus its spending on those programs that will be most effective.

I will continue to press Congress to approve the remaining measures of the American Competitiveness Initiative. These measures include the Adjunct Teacher Corps program to encourage math and science professionals to take time out of their lives and

teach in our schools and to inspire the youth to become more interested in math and science. I believe Congress ought to make the research and development tax credit a permanent part of the Tax Code, to encourage investment.

The bill I will sign today will help ensure that we do remain the most competitive and innovative nation in the world. I thank Members of Congress from both parties who worked hard to secure its passage. I particularly want to thank Senators Pete Domenici, Jeff Bingaman, Lamar Alexander, and John Ensign, as well as Congressmen Bart Gordon and Vern Ehlers.

You know, this bill shows that we can work together to make sure we're a competitive nation. There's a lot of areas where we can seek common ground coming this fall, and I'm looking forward to working with members of both parties to do that.

Thank you for coming. I'll be glad to answer some of your questions, starting with you, Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Transportation Infrastructure

Q. Mr. President, former chairman of the House Transportation Committee, Republican Don Young, says there are about 500 bridges around the country like the one that collapsed in Minneapolis last week. And Young and other Transportation Committee members are recommending an increase in Federal gasoline taxes to pay for repairs. Would you be willing to go along with an increase in gasoline taxes of 5 cents a gallon or more?

The President. First of all, Secretary Peters is gathering information and will report to the White House and report to the Nation about what she finds about whether there are any structural design flaws that may be applicable to other bridges. She's in the process of gathering this information now.

The American people need to know that we're working hard to find out why the bridge did what it did, so that we can assure people that the bridges over which they will be traveling will be safe. That's step one.

You know, it's an interesting question about how Congress spends and prioritizes highway money. My suggestion would be that

they revisit the process by which they spend gasoline money in the first place.

As you probably know, the public works committee is the largest committee—one of the largest committees in the House of Representatives. From my perspective, the way it seems to have worked is that each member on that committee gets to set his or her own priority first, and then whatever is left over is spent through a funding formula. That's not the right way to prioritize the people's money. So before we raise taxes which could affect economic growth, I would strongly urge the Congress to examine how they set priorities. And if bridges are a priority, let's make sure we set that priority first and foremost before we raise taxes.

Situation in Pakistan

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. One of your chief allies in the war on terrorism, President Musharraf of Pakistan, has faced so much instability and civil strife recently that there has been talk of declaring a state of emergency. How concerned are you about President Musharraf's situation and whether this might undermine Pakistani efforts against the Taliban and Al Qaida elements in the bordering areas of his country, which have been roundly criticized recently?

The President. You know, I've seen the reports of what they call an emergency declaration. I have seen no such evidence that he's made that decision. In my discussions with President Musharraf, I have reminded him that we share a common enemy, extremists and radicals who would like to do harm to our respective societies. In his case, they would like to kill him, and they've tried.

I have made it clear to him that I would expect there to be full cooperation in sharing intelligence, and I believe we've got good intelligence sharing. I have indicated to him that the American people would expect there to be swift action taken if there is actionable intelligence on high-value targets inside his country. Now, I recognize Pakistan is a sovereign nation, and that's important for Americans to recognize that. But it's also important for Americans to understand that he shares the same concern about radicals and extremists as I do and as the American people do.

So my focus in terms of the domestic scene there is that he have a free and fair election. And that's what we have been talking to him about, and I'm hopeful they will.

Yes, we'll just go down the line here. Yes, you.

Pat Tillman

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You speak often about taking care of the troops and honoring their sacrifice. But the family of Corporal Pat Tillman believes there was a coverup regarding his death, and some say perhaps he was even murdered, instead of just friendly fire. At a hearing last week on Capitol Hill your former Defense Secretary, Donald Rumsfeld, other officials used some version of "I don't recall" 82 times. When it was his term to step up, Pat Tillman gave up a lucrative NFL career, served his country, and paid the ultimate sacrifice. Now you have a chance to pledge to the family that your Government, your administration will finally get to the bottom of it. Will you make that pledge to the family today, that you'll finally, after seven investigations, find out what really happened?

The President. Well, first of all, I can understand why Pat Tillman's family, you know, has got significant emotions, because a man they loved and respected was killed while he was serving his country. I always admired the fact that a person who was relatively comfortable in life would be willing to take off one uniform and put on another to defend America. And the best way to honor that commitment of his is to find out the truth. And I'm confident the Defense Department wants to find out the truth too, and we'll lay it out for the Tillman family to know.

Q. But, Mr. President, there have been seven investigations and the Pentagon has not gotten to the bottom of it. Can you also tell us when you, personally, found out that it was not enemy fire, that it was friendly fire?

The President. I can't give you the precise moment. But obviously, the minute I heard that the facts that people believed were true were not true, that I expect there to be a full investigation and get to the bottom of it.

2008 Presidential Election/Al Qaida in Pakistan

Q. Sir, on Monday at Camp David, when you met with President Karzai from Afghanistan, you were asked if you had actionable intelligence in Pakistan of top Al Qaida leaders, would you take action unilaterally, if in fact you felt that President Musharraf simply, for one reason or another, just simply couldn't get his people there in time, would you move in? And you said, if we had actionable—good, actionable intelligence, we would get the job done.

My question, one, is, who is "we"? Does that we include the Pakistanis or—because the question says, Musharraf wouldn't be able to be in—would you do it unilaterally? And one reason this is a hot question this week is that one of the Democratic Presidential candidates, Barack Obama, talked about taking unilateral action. He kind of got beaten up by people in the Democratic Party and by Mitt Romney in your party, Romney comparing him to Dr. Strangelove. I don't know if you would agree with that, or if you would feel—

The President. John [John Cochran, ABC News], I suspect that over the course of the next months, when I hold a press conference, you'll be trying to get me to engage in Presidential politics; trying to get me to opine about what candidates are saying, whether they be Republicans or Democrats. And hopefully I'll be disciplined enough not to fall prey to your question, not to fall into that trap.

To the question you asked and to my answer in Camp David, I said I'm confident that we—both the Paks and the Americans—will be able to work up a plan, based upon actionable intelligence, that will bring the top Al Qaida targets to justice. I meant what I said. We spend a lot of time with the leadership in Pakistan, talking about what we will do with actionable intelligence. And the question was, am I confident that they will be brought to justice? And my answer to you is, yes, I am confident.

Q. Are you confident—permit me to have one followup, sir?

The President. Sure.

Intelligence/Pakistan

Q. I assume the CIA—

The President. See, we're getting into kind of a relaxed period here. I'll try to be more accommodating to fellows like you.

Q. It's widely assumed that the CIA operatives are in Pakistan, cooperating with the Pakistanis, and that they're sharing everything with you and vice versa. Is that a fair assumption?

The President. John, what's fair is—what you must assume is that I'm not going to talk about ongoing intelligence matters.

Progress in Iraq

Q. Mr. President, I was talking with a journalist about an hour ago in Baghdad who says to be a cynic in Iraq is to be naive at this point; that there is discernable progress, undeniable progress on the battlefield, but there is just as discernable and undeniable lack of progress on political reconciliation. Given the premise of the surge is to give the Iraqi Government breathing space to get its business done, given that they're not getting their business done, are the American people entitled to hear from you more than, "I've told Prime Minister Maliki he's got to do better"?

The President. As you know, General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker will be coming back to report on the findings of the success of the surge. The surge success will not only include military successes and military failures but also political successes and political failures. And my own perspective is, is that they have made some progress but not enough. I fully recognize this is a difficult assignment. One of the things that—it's difficult because of years of tyrannical rule that have created a lot of suspicions. And there's a lot of—these folks need to trust each other more.

Secondly, from my perspective, we're watching leaders learn how to be leaders. This is a new process for people to be democratic leaders. Now, no question they haven't passed some of the law we expected them to pass up to now. That's where a lot of people will focus their attention. On the other hand, there is a Presidency Council, with people from different political parties, trying to work through some of these difficult

issues, trying to work through the distrust that has caused them not to be able to pass some of the law we expect.

And the July 15th report that I submitted to Congress, there were indications that they had met about half the benchmarks and some of the political benchmarks they were falling short. One of the things I found interesting is that the assembly—their elected Parliament has passed about 60 pieces of legislation this year, some of which are directly relevant to reconciliations, like judicial reform, some of which were unwinding Saddam's laws in the past.

One of the questions I recently asked about, is there a functioning government? Is there—a lot of Americans look at it and say, "There's nothing happening there. There's, like, no government at all," I expect they're saying. So I asked about the budgeting process. In other words, is there a centralized budgeting system that takes the oil revenues? As I understand, about 97 percent of the Iraqi revenues to date come from oil. And do they have a rational way of spending that money for the good of society? Now most of the money, it turns out, is going into their military operations, operating expenses and capital expenses.

But one of the things I found interesting in my questions was there is revenue sharing. In other words, a central Government revenue sharing to Provincial governments. It surprised me, frankly, because the impression you get from people who are reporting out of Iraq is that it's, like, totally dysfunctional. That's what your—I guess your kind of—your friend or whoever you talked to is implying.

In 2006, the central Government allocated \$2.3 billion to the Provinces. You know, I'm not exactly sure how the funding formula worked, but a quick analysis, there is no question that Shi'a and Sunni Provinces and Kurdish Provinces were receiving money. Of the 2.3 billion, 1.9 had been obligated or spent. Now, some of that money is being better spent now because of bottom-up reconciliation that's taken place in places like Anbar, particularly with the help of our Provincial Reconstruction Teams. The PRTs are helping. That's not to say what—my point to you there is that there needs still to be

work in making sure that the Provincial governments are functioning well, to earn the trust of the people. It's not just the central Government that we're working with; we're also working with Provincial governments to make sure that people have—are inspired to believe that the state is in their interest.

The point I'm making to you on this, Jim [Jim Axelrod, CBS News], is that there is a lot of work left to be done, don't get me wrong. If one were to look hard, they could find indications that—more than indications, facts that show the government is learning how to function. People say we need an oil revenue sharing law. I agree with that; that needs to be codified. However, there is oil revenue sharing taking place, is my point. There's a lot of work to be done, and the fundamental question facing America is, is it worth it? Does it matter whether or not we stay long enough for a ally in this war against radicals and extremists to emerge? And my answer is, it does matter. Long-term consequences will face our country if we leave before the job is done. How the troops are configured, what the deployment looks like will depend upon the recommendations of David Petraeus.

David [David Gregory, NBC News].

National Economy/Home Loan Industry/ Financial Literacy

Q. Mr. President, I want to get your thoughts about the volatility in the financial markets, but specifically, a series of questions. Do you think that housing prices will continue to fall? Do you think that the inability of people to borrow money the way they used to is going to spill over into economy generally? And what are you prepared to do about it? And specifically, are you considering some kind of government bailout for people who might lose their homes?

The President. David, I'm wise enough to remind you that I'm not an economist, and that I would ask you direct predictions and forecasts about economic matters to those who make a living making forecasts and predictions. I suspect you'll find, "on the one hand; on the other hand," in how they predict. [Laughter]

Now, what I focus on are the fundamentals of our economy. My belief is that people will

make rational decision based upon facts. And the fundamentals of our economy are strong. I mentioned some of them before. Job creation is strong; real after-tax wages are on the rise; inflation is low. Interestingly enough, the global economy is strong, which has enabled us to gain more exports, which helped the second-quarter growth numbers to be robust at 3.4 percent.

Another factor one has got to look at is the amount of liquidity in the system. In other words, is there enough liquidity to enable markets to be able to correct? And I am told there is enough liquidity in the system to enable markets to correct. One area where we can help consumer—and obviously anybody who loses their home is somebody with whom we must show enormous empathy.

The word "bailout," I'm not exactly sure what you mean. If you mean direct grants to homeowners, the answer would be no, I don't support that. If you mean making sure that financial institutions like the FHA have got flexibility to help these folks refinance their homes, the answer is yes, I support that.

One thing is for certain, is that there needs to be more transparency in the—in financial documents. In other words, a lot of people sign up to something they're not exactly sure what they're signing up for. More financial literacy, I guess, is the best way to put it. We've had a lot of really hard-working Americans sign up for loans, and the truth of the matter is, they probably didn't fully understand what they were signing up for. And therefore, I do believe it's a proper role for Government to enhance financial education initiatives. And we're doing that; we've got money in the budget to do that.

Let's see here—

Housing Market

Q. Can I just ask one followup, sir? Come on. [Laughter]

The President. Sure.

Q. Because you weren't this circumspect when you were talking to reporters yesterday about the economy.

The President. How do you know? You weren't there, David.

Q. Well, you're right, I wasn't, but—

The President. I'm curious to know why you weren't there. Ask Baker [Peter Baker, Washington Post], he was there. [Laughter]

Q. Only economics reporters were allowed.

The President. I think I pretty much said the same thing yesterday, in all due respect.

Q. What's going on in the housing market, is it a correction or a crisis, in your view? Can you assess that?

The President. Yesterday I did comment upon that, that there was a—I talked about the different scenarios that I had been briefed on about whether or not there would be a precipitous decline in housing or whether it would be what one would call a soft landing. And it appeared at this point that it looks we're headed for a soft landing. And that's what the facts say.

Thank you. Mike [Michael Emmanuel, FOX News].

Iran-Iraq Meeting/Iran

Q. Mr. President, thank you. There is more evidence of Iranian weapons ending up in Iraq and ultimately killing U.S. troops. And I'm wondering today, sir, if you have a message to the regime in Tehran about these weapons ending up in Iraq and obviously doing harm to American citizens?

The President. One of the main reasons that I asked Ambassador Crocker to meet with Iranians inside Iraq was to send the message that there will be consequences for people transporting, delivering EFPs, highly sophisticated IEDs that kill Americans in Iraq. Prime Minister Maliki is visiting in Tehran today. His message, I'm confident, will be, "Stabilize; don't destabilize." And the sending of weapons into Iraq is a destabilizing factor. That's why we—yes, we've sent the message Peter here and in that meeting.

Holly [Holly Rosenkrantz, Bloomberg News].

Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac Corporations

Q. Sir, getting back to the credit crunch caused by defaults of subprime mortgages, should Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac be allowed to buy mortgages beyond their current

limits or play any additional role that could help revive mortgage finance?

The President. As you know, we put up a robust reform package for these two institutions, a reform package that will cause them to focus on their core mission, first and foremost; a reform package that says, like other lending institutions, there ought to be regulatory oversight. And therefore, first things first when it comes to those two institutions. Congress needs to get them reformed, get them streamlined, get them focused, and then I will consider other options.

Baker.

Guantanamo Bay Detainees

Q. Thank you, sir. A two-part question. The New Yorker reports that the Red Cross has found the interrogation program in the CIA detention facilities used interrogation techniques that were tantamount to torture. I'm wondering if you have read that report, and what your reaction to it is? And the second part of the question is, more than a year ago, you said that you wanted to close the detention facility at Guantanamo, and a year later, nothing has actually happened in that regard. Your Vice President, Attorney General, and Homeland Security Secretary are reported to be resisting such a move. I wonder if you could tell us who's really in charge on this issue, are you doing anything about it, do you expect Guantanamo to be open or closed when you leave office?

The President. I did say it should be a goal of the Nation to shut down Guantanamo. I also made it clear that part of the delay was the reluctance of some nations to take back some of the people being held there. In other words, in order to make it work, we've got to have a place for these people to go. I don't know if you noticed a resolution of the Senate the other day, where all but three Senators said we don't want these prisoners in the country. I don't know if it was a 97-3 vote, but it was something-to-3 vote. In other words, part of the issue, Peter, is the practical issue of what do we do with the people? And you say nothing has taken place. I strongly disagree with that. First of all, we are working with other nations to send folks back. Again, it's a fairly steep order. A lot of people don't want killers in

their midst, and a lot of these people are killers.

Secondly, of course, we want to make sure that when we do send them back, they're treated as humanely as possible. The other issue was whether or not we can get people to be tried. One of the things I'm anxious about, want to see happen, is that there to be trials. Courts have been involved with deciding how to do this, and Defense is trying to work out mechanisms to get the trials up and running. And the sooner we can get that up and running, the better it is, as far as I'm concerned. I don't want to make any predictions about whether Guantanamo will be available or not. I'm just telling you it's a very complicated subject.

And I laid out an aspiration. Whether or not we can achieve that or not, we'll try to. But it is not as easy a subject as some may think on the surface. Again, I refer to you to the Senate vote. When asked whether or not you want to shut down Guantanamo and, therefore, receive some of those prisoners in your home State, there didn't seem to be a lot of support for it. Like, three people said, "It's okay by me," in the Senate.

Your other question, sir?

International Committee of the Red Cross Report on the Treatment of Prisoners of War

Q. Red Cross report?

The President. I haven't seen it. We don't torture.

Yes, Jim [Jim Rutenberg, New York Times].

Iran-Iraq Meeting/Iran

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I'd like to pivot off of what you were talking about earlier, with Prime Minister Maliki's visit to Iran. Reports out of Iran today, out of Iran, say that Prime Minister Maliki told President Ahmadi-nejad that he appreciated Iran's positive and constructive stance. The pictures from the visit are very warm. I'm wondering, do you and your Iraqi counterparts see eye to eye on Iran? And what kind of message do those images send to your allies in the region and Americans who are skeptical about the Prime Minister's role?

The President. Jim, I haven't seen the reports. Before I would like to comment upon how their meetings went, I would like to get a readout from our Embassy, who, of course, will be in touch with the Prime Minister and get his readout. And so it's a—you're asking me to be a little speculative on the subject. I haven't seen the picture.

Look, generally the way these things work is you try to be cordial to the person you're with, and so you don't want the picture to be kind of, you know, duking it out; okay, put up your dukes. That's an old boxing expression. [Laughter]

Q. Once more, please?

The President. And so, I don't know, Jim. You've obviously followed this a lot. You've seen the reports. I'm sure you're confident that what you've asked me is verifiable. I'm not surprised that there's a picture showing people smiling.

Q. However—

The President. Let me finish, please. And so it's a—anyway, let me get the facts on what happened. Now if the signal is that Iran is constructive, I will have to have a heart to heart with my friend, the Prime Minister, because I don't believe they are constructive. I don't think he, in his heart of heart, thinks they're constructive either. Now maybe he's hopeful in trying to get them to be constructive by laying out a positive picture. You're asking me to speculate.

Should I be concerned of a picture—should the American people be concerned about Iran? Yes, we ought to be very concerned about Iran. They're a destabilizing influence. They are a Government that has—its declared policy is very troubling, obviously, when they announce—when Ahmadi-nejad has announced that the destruction of Israel is part of its foreign policy.

That's something, obviously, we cannot live with. They have expressed their desire to be able to enrich uranium, which we believe is a step toward having a nuclear weapons program. That, in itself, coupled with their stated foreign policy, is very dangerous for world stability. They are funders of Hizballah. Hizballah is intent upon battling forces of moderation. It's a very troubling nation right now.

Iran can do better. The Government is isolating its people. The Government has caused America and other nations, rational nations, to say, “We will work together to do everything we can to deny you economic opportunity because of the decisions you are making.” My message to the Iranian people is, you can do better than this current Government; you don’t have to be isolated; you don’t have to be in a position where you can’t realize your full economic potential. And the United States of America will continue to work with our friends and allies in the Security Council and elsewhere to put you in a position to deny you your rightful place in the world, not because of our intention, because of your Government’s intention.

So it is a very—it’s a difficult issue, Jim. And American people should be concerned about Iran. They should be concerned about Iran’s activity in Iraq, and they ought to be concerned about Iran’s activity around the world.

Iraq/Iran

Q. In your previous conversations with Prime Minister Maliki, have you been confident that he shares your view on Iraq?

The President. On Iran?

Q. Yes.

The President. Yes. He knows that weaponry being smuggled into Iraq from Iran and placed in the hands of extremists over which the Government has no control, all aimed at killing innocent life, is a destabilizing factor. He absolutely understands that.

I don’t know if you saw yesterday, there was a—we talked to General Petraeus, or I talked to General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker yesterday. I noticed in the papers today there was a description of a military operation that took place in Sadr City. The military operation in Sadr City was going after extremist elements, Shi’a extremist elements. And it was a very robust operation. Obviously, it—well, I shouldn’t say obviously—it was done with the full understanding of the Maliki Government.

Now, I don’t know whether this extremist element had been fueled by Iran, but I do know that Maliki is committed against extremist elements who are trying to create enough chaos and confusion that this young

Government and young democracy is not able to progress. So the first thing I looked for was commitment against the extremists. The second thing is, does he understand with some extremist groups there is connections with Iran, and he does. And I’m confident.

Now, is he trying to get Iran to play a more constructive role? I presume he is. But that doesn’t—what my question is—well, what my message to him is, is that when we catch you playing a nonconstructive role, there will be a price to pay.

Let’s see here, Mark [Mark Smith, Associated Press Radio].

Tax Reform

Q. Mr. President, are you considering a plan to cut corporate taxes? Do you believe America’s corporations are not making enough money these days?

The President. Actually, we had an interesting discussion on this subject. And if you read carefully the penetrating report by the financial reporter—kind of like semi-financial reporter—[laughter]—you’ll find that it was—I was talking about an idea that has begun to surface as a result of meetings being held at the Treasury Department.

And the whole reason to look at corporate rates is to determine whether or not they make us less competitive in a global economy. And if so—in other words, if the conclusion is, is that our tax structure makes it harder for businesses to compete, therefore making it harder for people to find work over time, then we need to address the competitive imbalance in our Tax Code.

I also made it clear that we’re at the very early stages of discussion and that, in my own judgment, anything that would be submitted to Congress—if submitted at all—would have to be revenue neutral. And therefore, what we’d really be talking about is a simplification of a very complex Tax Code that might be able to lower rates and, at the same time, simplify the Code, which is, like, shorthand for certain deductions would be taken away—in other words, certain tax preferences in the Code.

My view all along has been, the more simple the Code, the better—whether it be in the individual income tax side or the corporate tax side. However, I would readily

concede to you this is a difficult issue, because the reason there is tax preferences in the first place are there are powerful interests that have worked to get the preference in the Code. And as I remarked to the distinguished group of writers I was talking to yesterday, it's much easier to get something in the Code than get it out of the Code.

But I do think it's in the interests to constantly evaluate our competitive advantages and disadvantages. And what Hank Paulson told me was that there's a lot of folks who really believe the Tax Code creates a competitive disadvantage, and therefore, it's certainly worth looking at.

Q. On the subject of tax preferences, what about carried interest? Do you think that taxing those at capital gains rates is fair? A lot of people think it's not.

The President. First of all, I think, Mark, that what ends up happening is that in trying to deal with one particular aspect of partnerships is that you end up affecting all partnerships. And partnerships are an important vehicle to encourage investment and capital flows; they've been important vehicles to encourage the entrepreneurial spirit. In other words, small businesses have been organized as limited partnerships. So we're very, very hesitant about trying to target one aspect of limited partnerships for fear of the spillover it'll have in affecting small-business growth. So we don't support that.

Ann [Ann Compton, ABC News].

Cooperation With Congress/Legislative Agenda

Q. You've been clear about saying that you will veto overspending by Congress when they come back next month to do appropriations bills. You've also been clear you don't want to raise taxes. Can you do justice to the kind of programs the Government needs for bridges, for housing, and also continue to spend as much as you do in the war in Iraq?

The President. One can meet priorities if they set priorities. The problem in Congress is they have trouble actually focusing on priorities. Appropriators take their title seriously, and they all feel like they got to appropriate, which means there's a myriad of priorities. So the role of the President, it

seems to me, is to help Congress focus on that which is important. We have a debate over that which is important, of course, but one thing that we shouldn't have a debate over is whether or not it's important to fund our troops in this war against radicals, extremists, the war on terror. And I think we'll be able to get that kind of cooperation. I would hope that they would get the defense bill to my desk as quickly as possible.

Part of my concerns, of course, is that there are different sets of priorities in both bodies. And it seems like to me that the Congress needs to come together, solve their differences—solve their differences first, and then bring them to the White House and see if we can find accommodation. I have proven in the past though, Ann, that one is able to set priorities—keep taxes low, grow the economy—and reduce the deficit. In other words, we have cut taxes, causing economic growth, which caused there to be this year alone 187 billion more tax dollars coming into the Treasury; the deficit is reduced to 1.5 percent of GDP, which on a 40-year historical average is very low, or is low, below the average; and we've proven that you can set priorities and meet obligations. And so the Congress needs to learn to do that itself.

Congressional Support for the U.S. Armed Forces

Q. But you're confident that you can continue to sustain the kind of level of spending that you've invested in, in Iraq?

The President. I would certainly hope so, because when you say, sustain the level of spending, you're mainly talking about making sure our troops have what it takes to do the job we've asked them to do. I know there's a lot of Members who don't agree with the decisions I've made. I would certainly hope they would agree, however, that once someone is in combat or in harm's way, that they get the full support of the Federal Government. That's exactly what their families expect, and that's what the Commander in Chief expects as well.

I. Lewis Libby/Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales/Congressional Priorities

Q. Mr. President, I wanted to ask you about accountability. You're a big believer in

it; you've talked about it with regard to the public schools. But given the performance of Iraqi leaders, given your decision to commute the sentence of Lewis Libby, you've also stood by the Attorney General recently—there have been a lot of questions about your commitment to accountability. And I'm wondering if you could give the American people some clear examples of how you've held people accountable during your Presidency?

The President. Lewis Libby was held accountable. He was declared guilty by a jury, and he's paid a high price for it.

Al Gonzales—implicit in your questions is that Al Gonzales did something wrong. I haven't seen Congress say he's done anything wrong. As a matter of fact, I believe, David [David Greene, National Public Radio], we're watching a political exercise. I mean, this is a man who has testified; he's sent thousands of papers up there. There's no proof of wrong. Why would I hold somebody accountable who has done nothing wrong? I mean, frankly, I think that's a typical Washington, DC, assumption. Not to be accusatory—I know you're a kind, open-minded fellow—but you suggested holding the Attorney General accountable for something he did wrong.

And as a matter of fact, I would hope Congress would become more prone to deliver pieces of legislation that matter, as opposed to being the investigative body. I mean, there have been over 600 different hearings, and yet they're struggling with getting appropriations bills to my desk.

The Presidency/War on Terror in Iraq

Q. If I could follow—sorry. Given the decision to commute the sentence of Libby and given the performance of Iraqi leaders, is it fair for people to ask questions about your commitment to accountability?

The President. I would hope people would say that I am deliberate in my decisionmaking; I think about all aspects of the decisions I make; and I'm a fair person.

Back to Iraq, no question they haven't made as much progress as I would have hoped. But I also recognize how difficult the task is. And I repeat to you the fundamental question is, does it matter whether or not

there is a self-governing entity that's an ally in the war on terror in Iraq? Does it matter? Does it matter to a guy living in Crawford, Texas? Does it matter to your children? As you know from these press conferences, I have come to the conclusion that it does matter. And it does matter because enemies that would like to do harm to the American people would be emboldened by failure.

I recognize there's a debate here in America as to whether or not failure in Iraq would cause there to be more danger here in America. I strongly believe that's the case. It matters if the United States does not believe in the universality of freedom. It matters to the security of people here at home if we don't work to change the conditions that cause 19 kids to be lured onto airplanes to come and murder our citizens.

The first question one has to ask on Iraq is, is it worth it? I could not send a mother's child into combat if I did not believe it was necessary for our short-term and long-term security to succeed in Iraq. Once you come to the conclusion that it's worth it, then the question you must ask is, how difficult is the task of a young democracy emerging? Those who study the Articles of Confederation would recognize that there are difficult moments in young democracies emerging, particularly after, in this case, tyrannical rule.

That's not to say that, Dave, we shouldn't be pushing hard for all opportunities for reconciliation. But for those of us who believe it's worth it, we'll see progress. For those who believe it's not worth it, there is no progress. And that's going to be the interesting debate. And what it's going to come down to is whether or not the United States should be in Iraq and in the region in a position to enable societies to begin to embrace liberty for the long term. This is an ideological struggle.

Now, I recognize some don't view it as an ideological struggle, but I firmly believe it is an ideological struggle. And I believe it's a struggle between the forces of moderation and reasonableness and good and the forces of murder and intolerance. And what has made the stakes so high is that those forces of murder and intolerance have shown they have the capacity to murder innocent people in our own country. I put that in the context of accountability.

In the case of Iraq, it's a lot more complicated than just the passage of four laws, even though I would hope they would get the four laws passed. But again, I repeat the threshold question, does it matter; does it matter to our security here at home? And the answer is, absolutely, it does. It does. And then the second question really for a lot of Americans is, can we succeed? And, in my mind, the answer to that is, absolutely; not only we must succeed, we can succeed.

Listen, thank you all for your time. I appreciate it.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 10:33 a.m. in the James S. Brady Press Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters; Gen. David H. Petraeus, USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; U.S. Ambassador to Iraq Ryan C. Crocker; Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq; President Mahmud Ahmadi-nejad of Iran; and I. Lewis Libby, former Chief of Staff to the Vice President. He also referred to H.R. 2272, the America COMPETES Act. A reporter referred to Republican Presidential candidate Mitt Romney.

Statement on Signing the America COMPETES Act

August 9, 2007

Today I signed into law H.R. 2272, the "America Creating Opportunities to Meaningfully Promote Excellence in Technology, Education, and Science Act." This legislation shares many of the goals of my American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI). ACI is one of my most important domestic priorities because it provides a comprehensive strategy to help keep America the most innovative nation in the world by strengthening our scientific education and research, improving our technological enterprise, and providing 21st century job training.

Since I announced ACI in January 2006, Congress has risen to the competitiveness challenge in a bipartisan way. House and Senate appropriators started the funding for ACI basic research programs in fiscal year 2007, and so far in this year's appropriations process, they are fully funding my fiscal year 2008 budget request for the National Science Foundation, the Office of Science in the De-

partment of Energy, and the National Institute of Standards and Technology at the Department of Commerce.

This bipartisan spirit of cooperation continues with the legislation I signed. This legislation supports our efforts to double funding for basic research in the physical sciences. And the bill authorizes most of the education programs I called for in ACI, including the Math Now proposal that improves instruction in mathematics and the Advanced Placement program that increases the number of teachers and students participating in AP and International Baccalaureate classes.

I am, however, disappointed that Congress failed to authorize my Adjunct Teacher Corps program to encourage math and science professionals to teach in our schools. I am also disappointed that the legislation includes excessive authorizations and expansion of Government. In total, the bill creates over 30 new programs that are mostly duplicative or counterproductive—including a new Department of Energy agency to fund late-stage technology development more appropriately left to the private sector—and also provides excessive authorizations for existing programs. These new programs, additional requirements and reports, and excessive authorizations will divert resources and focus from priority activities aimed at strengthening the basic research that has given our Nation such a competitive advantage in the world economy. Accordingly, I will request funding in my 2009 budget for those authorizations that support the focused priorities of the ACI, but will not propose excessive or duplicative funding based on authorizations in this bill.

While this legislation includes many unnecessary and misguided programs, in many important ways it heeds my call to action of nearly 2 years ago to take steps to ensure the ongoing competitiveness of our Nation. Congress, however, still has more work to do to improve our Nation's competitiveness. In addition to giving priority to full ACI funding in this year's appropriations bills, I call on Congress to complete work on the remaining components of ACI, including modernizing and making permanent the research and development tax credit, authorizing the

Adjunct Teacher Corps program, and increasing our ability to attract and retain the best and brightest high-skilled workers from around the world.

I thank members of both parties in Congress who worked on this legislation, and I appreciate the willingness of members to remove or otherwise address several of the administration's serious concerns associated with this legislation. I will continue to work with the Congress to ensure that we keep America competitive through appropriate and strong support for science and technology.

NOTE: H.R. 2272, approved August 9, was assigned Public Law No. 110-69.

**Memorandum on Reimbursement
for Former President Gerald R. Ford
Funeral Expenses**

August 9, 2007

*Memorandum for the Director of the Office
of Management and Budget*

Subject: Reimbursement for Former
President Gerald R. Ford Funeral Expenses

Pursuant to the authority vested in me as the President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States including Public Law 110-5, the Revised Continuing Appropriations Resolution, 2007, I hereby authorize the expenditure from the appropriation, "Unanticipated Needs:"

To	Amount
Gerald R. Ford Foundation,	\$230,600.08
Executive Office of the President White House Office account,	\$24,808.00

To defray expenses incurred as a result of the funeral services for former President Gerald R. Ford.

I hereby determine that this expenditure is necessary to meet unanticipated needs in furtherance of the national interest.

GEORGE W. BUSH

**Letter to Congressional Leaders
Transmitting the District of
Columbia's Fiscal Year 2008 Budget
Request**

August 9, 2007

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

Pursuant to my constitutional authority and as contemplated by section 446 of The District of Columbia Self-Governmental Reorganization Act as amended in 1989, I am transmitting the District of Columbia's 2008 Budget Request Act. This transmittal does not represent an endorsement of the contents of the D.C. government's requests.

The proposed 2008 Budget Request Act reflects the major programmatic objectives of the Mayor and the Council of the District of Columbia. For 2008, the District estimates total revenues and expenditures of \$8.38 billion.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

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

**Statement on Improving Border
Security and Immigration Within
Existing Law**

August 10, 2007

Today members of my Cabinet announced a series of important new administrative actions to address border security and immigration challenges. These reforms represent steps my administration can take within the boundaries of existing law to better secure our borders, improve worksite enforcement, streamline existing temporary-worker programs, and help new immigrants assimilate into American society.

Although the Congress has not addressed our broken immigration system by passing comprehensive reform legislation, my administration will continue to take every possible step to build upon the progress already made in strengthening our borders, enforcing our worksite laws, keeping our economy well-

supplied with vital workers, and helping new Americans learn English.

I appreciate the work of Secretary Chertoff and Secretary Gutierrez in implementing these important reforms, which will improve our security and enrich our Nation.

NOTE: The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language version of this statement.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

August 4

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Minneapolis, MN, where he took an aerial tour of the damaged Interstate 35W bridge. He then took a walking tour of the affected area.

Later in the morning, the President met with family members of victims of the bridge collapse.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Camp David, MD.

August 5

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush welcomed President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan.

In the evening, the President and Mrs. Bush had dinner with President Karzai.

August 6

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

August 7

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President had lunch with Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, and his Defense Policy and Programs and Foreign Policy teams.

Later in the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister John Howard of Australia.

August 8

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Gov. Jon M. Huntsman, Jr., of Utah to discuss the situation in the Granddall Canyon Mine.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to the Treasury Department. He then had lunch with his economic advisers.

In the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with Barry Bonds, left fielder, San Francisco Giants, to congratulate him on breaking the Major League Baseball career home run record. He then participated in separate interviews with Neil Cavuto of FOX News and economic reporters.

Later in the afternoon, the President returned to the White House.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Bush will welcome President Nicolas Sarkozy of France to Kennebunkport, ME, for a private lunch on August 11.

The President announced his designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to attend the funeral of former Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa of Japan on August 28: J. Dennis Hastert (head of delegation); and John Thomas Schieffer.

The President declared a major disaster in Maine and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding on July 11–12.

August 9

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush traveled to the Bush family home in Kennebunkport, ME.

August 10

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

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

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released August 4

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Scott M. Stanzel and Secretary of Transportation Mary E. Peters

Released August 6

Statement by Deputy Press Secretary Tony Fratto on FISA modernization

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 3311

Fact sheet: Combating Terrorism Worldwide

Fact sheet: The Protect America Act of 2007

Released August 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Statement by the Press Secretary: President and Mrs. Bush To Welcome the President of France and Mrs. Sarkozy

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 3206

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Maine

Released August 9

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 1260, H.R. 1335, H.R. 1384, H.R. 1425, H.R. 1434, H.R. 1617, H.R. 1722, H.R. 2025, H.R. 2077, H.R. 2078, H.R. 2127, H.R. 2309, H.R. 2563, H.R. 2570, and H.R. 2688

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 1099

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 2272

Fact sheet: America COMPETES Act of 2007

Released August 10

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on the unanimous vote by the United Nations Security Council to renew the mandate for the United Nations Assistance Mission in Iraq

Fact sheet: Improving Border Security and Immigration Within Existing Law

Acts Approved by the President

Approved August 5

S. 1927 / Public Law 110–55
Protect America Act of 2007

Approved August 6

H.R. 3311 / Public Law 110–56
To authorize additional funds for emergency repairs and reconstruction of the Interstate I–35 bridge located in Minneapolis, Minnesota, that collapsed on August 1, 2007, to waive the \$100,000,000 limitation on emergency relief funds for those emergency repairs and reconstruction, and for other purposes

Approved August 8

H.R. 3206 / Public Law 110–57
To provide for an additional temporary extension of programs under the Small Business Act and the Small Business Investment Act of 1958 through December 15, 2007, and for other purposes

Approved August 9

H.R. 1260 / Public Law 110–58

To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 6301 Highway 58 in Harrison, Tennessee, as the “Claude Ramsey Post Office”

H.R. 1335 / Public Law 110–59

To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 508 East Main Street in Seneca, South Carolina, as the “S/ Sgt Lewis G. Watkins Post Office Building”

H.R. 1384 / Public Law 110–60

To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 118 Minner Avenue in Bakersfield, California, as the “Buck Owens Post Office”

H.R. 1425 / Public Law 110–61

To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 4551 East 52nd Street in Odessa, Texas, as the “Staff Sergeant Marvin ‘Rex’ Young Post Office Building”

H.R. 1434 / Public Law 110–62

To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 896 Pittsburgh Street in Springdale, Pennsylvania, as the “Rachel Carson Post Office Building”

H.R. 1617 / Public Law 110–63

To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 561 Kingsland Avenue in University City, Missouri, as the “Harriett F. Woods Post Office Building”

H.R. 1722 / Public Law 110–64

To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 601 Banyan Trail in Boca Raton, Florida, as the “Leonard W. Herman Post Office”

H.R. 2025 / Public Law 110–65

To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 11033 South State Street in Chicago, Illinois, as the “Willye B. White Post Office Building”

H.R. 2077 / Public Law 110–66

To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 20805 State Route 125 in Blue Creek, Ohio, as the “George B. Lewis Post Office Building”

H.R. 2078 / Public Law 110–67

To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 14536 State Route 136 in Cherry Fork, Ohio, as the “Staff Sergeant Omer T. ‘O.T.’ Hawkins Post Office”

H.R. 2127 / Public Law 110–68

To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 408 West 6th Street in Chelsea, Oklahoma, as the “Clem Rogers McSpadden Post Office Building”

H.R. 2272 / Public Law 110–69

America COMPETES Act

H.R. 2309 / Public Law 110–70

To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 3916 Milgen Road in Columbus, Georgia, as the “Frank G. Lumpkin, Jr. Post Office Building”

H.R. 2563 / Public Law 110–71

To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 309 East Linn Street in Marshalltown, Iowa, as the “Major Scott Nisely Post Office”

H.R. 2570 / Public Law 110–72

To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 301 Boardwalk Drive in Fort Collins, Colorado, as the “Dr. Karl E. Carson Post Office Building”

H.R. 2688 / Public Law 110–73

To designate the facility of the United States Postal Service located at 103 South Getty Street in Uvalde, Texas, as the “Dolph Briscoe, Jr. Post Office Building”

S. 1099 / Public Law 110–74

To amend chapter 89 of title 5, United States Code, to make individuals employed by the Roosevelt Campobello International Park Commission eligible to obtain Federal health insurance