

is still more to be done, and I will work with the Congress to improve upon this legislation.

For example, the bill holds Members of the Senate and Executive Branch employees to a much higher standard of conduct than Members of the House. The specific bill language is confusing, and I believe these increased restrictions would have a negative impact on recruitment and retention of Federal employees. I urge the Congress to make these standards more uniform and less confusing and to do so in a way that will not discourage public service.

In addition, this bill would have the effect of unreasonably burdening sitting President's and Vice President's reelection campaigns. I look forward to working with Congress to amend these provisions to provide a reasonable process for allocating the cost of Presidential and Vice Presidential campaign travel that is consistent with security needs.

I am pleased that the Congress has begun to make progress in bringing greater transparency to the earmarking process. However, this bill falls far short of the reform that American taxpayers deserve. I am concerned that there are potential loopholes in some of the earmark reforms included in this bill that would allow earmarks to escape sufficient scrutiny. This legislation also does not address other earmark reforms I have called on Congress to implement, such as ending the practice of putting earmarks in report language.

I thank members of both parties who worked on this legislation and look forward to working with the Congress to further advance ethics, lobbying, and earmark reform.

NOTE: S. 1, approved September 14, was assigned Public Law 110–81.

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting the Benchmark
Assessment Report**
September 14, 2007

To the Congress of the United States:

Consistent with section 1314 of the U.S. Troop Readiness, Veterans' Care, Katrina Recovery, and Iraq Accountability Appropriations Act, 2007 (Public Law 110–28) (the

“Act”), attached is a report that assesses the status of each of the 18 Iraqi benchmarks contained in the Act and declares whether satisfactory progress toward meeting these benchmarks is, or is not, being achieved.

The second of two reports submitted consistent with the Act, it has been prepared in consultation with the Secretaries of State and Defense; the Commander, Multi-National Force—Iraq; the United States Ambassador to Iraq; and the Commander, United States Central Command.

George W. Bush

The White House,
September 14, 2007.

**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.

September 8

In the morning, at the InterContinental Sydney in Sydney, Australia, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Club InterContinental Lounge of the InterContinental Sydney, he had a working breakfast with Prime Minister John Howard of Australia and Prime Minister Shinzo Abe of Japan.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to the Sydney Opera House, where, in the Concert Hall Southern Foyer, he participated in an official welcome with Prime Minister Howard. Then, in the Utzon Room, he participated in the APEC Leaders Dialogue with the APEC Business Advisory Council.

In the afternoon, the President participated in a photo opportunity with APEC leaders. Then, at the Guillaume at Bennelong Restaurant, he had lunch with APEC leaders. Later, he participated in the APEC Leaders official photograph.

Later in the afternoon, in The Studio, the President participated in APEC Leaders Retreat I.

In the evening, in the Concert Hall, the President attended a cultural performance. Later, on the Granite level of the Concert Hall Northern Foyer, he viewed a fireworks display and the Parade of Tall Ships. He then participated in the APEC Official Leaders dinner.

Later in the evening, the President traveled to Hickam Air Force Base, HI, crossing the international dateline and arriving in the morning, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Caroline Tom. In the afternoon, he traveled to Naval Station Pearl Harbor, where, in the dining room of the Admiral's residence, he had lunch with military commanders. He then returned to Washington, DC, arriving the following morning.

The President declared a major disaster in North Dakota and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and a tornado from August 26–27.

September 10

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a video teleconference with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

In the afternoon, the President met with Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael O. Leavitt to discuss the initial report by the Interagency Working Group on Import Safety.

September 11

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, at St. John's Episcopal Church, he attended a service of prayer and remembrance to commemorate the sixth anniversary of the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Then, at 8:46 a.m., on the South Lawn, he and Mrs. Bush participated in a moment of silence to honor the anniversary of the attacks.

The President announced that he has named Henry C. Lozano as Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of USA Freedom Corps.

September 12

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Family Theater, he participated in a speech preparation

session for his September 13 address to the nation.

In the afternoon, in the Family Theater, the President participated in a speech preparation session for his September 13 address to the Nation.

The President announced that he has nominated Daniel V. Speckhard to be Ambassador to Greece.

The President announced that he has nominated Thomas F. Stephenson to be Ambassador to Portugal.

The President announced that he has nominated William H. Frist and Kenneth Francis Hackett to be members of the Millennium Challenge Corporation.

The President announced that he has nominated William Delahunt, George E. Pataki, and Ted Poe to be U.S. Representatives to the 62d Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The President announced that he has nominated Kelly G. Knight and Rodger D. Young to be Alternate U.S. Representatives to the 62d Session of the United Nations General Assembly.

The President announced his intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Board of Trustees of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts: Judith Ann Eisenberg; David Girard-diCarlo; C. Michael Kojaiian; Donna Garff Marriott; William C. Powers; and Joseph E. Robert, Jr.

September 13

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he participated in a photo opportunity with the 2007 Secretary of Defense Employer Support Freedom Award recipients.

September 14

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Marine Corps Base Quantico in Quantico, VA.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. He then traveled to Camp David, MD.

The President declared a major disaster in Iowa and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding from August 17–September 5.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted September 12

William Delahunt, of Massachusetts, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the Sixty-second Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

William H. Frist, of Tennessee, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation for a term of 3 years, vice Christine Todd Whitman, resigned.

Kenneth Francis Hackett, of Maryland, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Millennium Challenge Corporation for a term of 2 years (reappointment).

Kelly G. Knight, of Kentucky, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the Sixty-second Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

George E. Pataki, of New York, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the Sixty-second Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Ted Poe, of Texas, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the Sixty-second Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Daniel V. Speckhard, of Wisconsin, a career member of the Senior Executive Service, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Greece.

Thomas F. Stephenson, of California, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United

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States of America to the Portuguese Republic.

Rodger D. Young, of Michigan, to be an Alternate Representative of the United States of America to the Sixty-second Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

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 September 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Deputy Press Secretary Dana Perino, Deputy National Security Adviser Jim Jeffrey, Deputy National Security Adviser for International Economic Affairs Dan Price, and Council of Environmental Quality Chairman Jim Connaughton on APEC meetings

Statement by the Deputy Press Secretary on disaster assistance to North Dakota

Fact sheet: More Than 8.2 Million Jobs Created Since August 2003

Released September 9

Fact sheet: Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) 2007

Released September 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Transcript of a press briefing by Health and Human Services Secretary Michael O. Leavitt and National Economic Council Director Allan B. Hubbard on import safety

Released September 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Tony Snow

Fact sheet: The Sixth Anniversary of 9/11: Remembering Lives Lost and Heroic Sacrifices Made