

bring it to the Senate floor for an up-or-down vote. In this time of war, America needs the best people leading our efforts to protect the American people. With Judge Mukasey serving as Attorney General, our national security team will be stronger—and the Senate should confirm this good man as quickly as possible.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7 a.m. on November 2 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 3. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 2 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom

November 5, 2007

The President. Good morning. Laura and I are thrilled to welcome you to the White House. We welcome the Members of Congress, the members of the Cabinet, and other distinguished guests. It's an honor to be with the Medal of Freedom recipients as well as their family members and friends. We're sure glad you're here.

The Medal of Freedom is the highest civil honor that a President can bestow. By an Executive order of John F. Kennedy, the medal is designed to recognize great contributions to national security, the cause of peace and freedom, science, the arts, literature, and many other fields. The eight men and women came to this distinction by very different paths. Each of them, by effort and by character, has earned the respect of the American people and holds a unique place in the story of our time.

Our first honoree, Dr. Gary Becker, once said, "Many intellectuals, many economists use obscure language when they write. Sometimes it's a way of disguising that they are not saying a heck of a lot." This economist, however, is different. Gary Becker's many books and articles and his 19 years as a weekly columnist have provided—proved him to be a thinker of originality and clarity.

Dr. Becker has shown that economic principles do not just exist in theory. Instead, they help to explain human behavior in fields well beyond economics. He has shown that by applying these principles to public policy, we can make great strides in promoting enterprise and public safety, protecting the environment, improving public schools, and strengthening the family. Dr. Becker has explained, as well, the real value of investing in human capital. He knows full well that an educated and well-trained workforce adds to the vigors of our economy and helps raise the standard of living for all of us.

This longtime professor at the University of Chicago has helped train hundreds of talented economists. He has been a wise and challenging presence in the lives of his students, and they remain devoted to him. One close friend said, "A 15-minute conversation with Gary Becker can change your thinking forever." He is without question one of the most influential economists of the last hundred years. With today's honor, he is one of only two persons to have received both the Nobel Prize in Economics and the Medal of Freedom. The other was the late Milton Friedman. And I know that today Dr. Friedman would be very proud of his friend and student and colleague, Dr. Gary Becker. Congratulations.

The Medal of Freedom for Oscar Elias Biscet will be accepted this morning by his son, Yan Valdes. His daughter, Winnie, is also present. Dr. Biscet is not with us today because he is a political prisoner of the regime in Havana. This ceremony at the White House is being broadcast live into Cuba. To the citizens of that land, I send the respect and good wishes of the United States.

Oscar Biscet is a healer known to 11 million Cubans as a physician, a community organizer, and an advocate for human rights. For two decades, he has told the world what he has seen in Cuba: the arrogance of a one-party state; the suppression of political dissent; the coercion of expectant mothers. For speaking the truth, Dr. Biscet has endured repeated harassment, beatings, and detentions. The international community agrees that Dr. Biscet's imprisonment is unjust, yet the regime has refused every call for his release.

To the Cuban dictatorship, Dr. Biscet is a dangerous man. He is dangerous in the same way that Martin Luther King, Jr., and Gandhi were dangerous. He is a man of peace, a man of truth, and a man of faith. In captivity for most of the last 8 years, he has continued to embody courage and dignity. His example is a rebuke to the tyrants and secret police of a regime whose day is passing.

Dr. Biscet is also a young man. God willing, he'll soon regain his freedom, as justice demands. He deserves to be reunited with his wife, Elsa, and all their family. And the land they call home deserves to be free. When that day arrives, the peoples of Cuba and the United States will stand together as free men and women, and the liberated country will honor a great man with a mighty heart, Oscar Elias Biscet.

When tyrannies fall, it's often the prisoners and exiles who are called forth to lead their people. We've seen this in our own time, in the lives of President Havel and President Mandela and Prime Minister Maliki and, in the Republic of Liberia, President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf.

All of her life, President Sirleaf has been a pioneer. The daughter of a school teacher in Monrovia, she crossed the ocean as a young woman and earned three degrees in the United States. She has been a business executive, a development expert, a public official, and always a patriot. She loves Liberia, and she loves all its people. After a cabal seized power and plunged that country into years of upheaval and corruption and civil war, Ellen Johnson Sirleaf stood up for the democratic rights of her fellow citizens. She never wavered, even though the consequences were house arrest, foreign exile, death threats, and imprisonment.

When free elections returned to Liberia, the voters made history. They chose her to be the first woman ever elected to lead a nation on the continent of Africa. She was inaugurated last year, with Laura and Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice as proud witnesses. I remember asking Laura and Condi what kind of person I'd be dealing with. They said to expect a woman of depth and ability who know how to get things done. They were right. See, when the President

comes to the Oval Office, she walks in with a to-do list. *[Laughter]*

The President has the tough mind of a natural-born executive and the gentle instincts of a mother. Not surprisingly, the Liberian people have given her two affectionate nicknames. They call her the "Iron Lady," and they call her "Ma." She's begun an age of reform in a country with deep historic ties to the United States. As she said to a joint meeting of our Congress, "Liberia will become a brilliant beacon, an example to Africa and to the world of what the love of liberty can achieve."

Madam President, America is proud to stand with Liberia. And today America honors you as a woman of courage and a giver of hope. Welcome back to the White House, my friend, and congratulations.

Seventeen years ago, the Federal Government established a research project with the ambitious goal of mapping the entire human genome. The genome is best described as the code of life, the "3.1 billion-letter instruction book that conveys all kinds of information and all kinds of mystery about humankind." Those were the words of Dr. Francis Collins, Director of the National Human Genome Research Institute and the man who led the Federal project to full and thrilling success.

Many discoveries yet to be made and many scientific triumphs yet to be achieved will be directly traceable to the work of the human genome project. With genetic mapping, researchers know more than ever before about the hereditary influences behind cancer and heart disease and diabetes and many other conditions. And that understanding holds the key to earlier detection of illness, individualized treatments, and even lifesaving cures.

In scope and long-term potential, the human genome project has been compared to the Apollo project. And its leader, Dr. Collins, is a well-rounded man. Though he routinely works a 90-hour week, he is an accomplished singer and guitarist. *[Laughter]* I know this because I once heard him at the National Prayer Breakfast. You see, when a man can get up and sing in front of 3,000 people at 8 in the morning, there's something special in his DNA. *[Laughter]*

From his days being home-schooled by his mom on a farm in Virginia, Francis Collins has been relentless in the pursuit of knowledge. He said, "One of the strongest motivations of humankind is to seek answers to profound questions and [to understand] what is both seen and unseen." He has brought his extraordinary gifts to bear on the technical questions of genetics and on the ethical questions as well. Deep scientific understanding can be used for good or ill, and a lot turns on knowing the difference. Francis Collins is unafraid of the eternal questions, unswayed by fashion, and unwilling to overlook the distinction between right and wrong.

Dr. Collins has often noted that "at the DNA level, we're all 99.9 percent the same. All of us." It's a reminder that the human genome project, with all the promise it holds for tomorrow, also confirms scientifically the timeless wisdom of the brotherhood of man. Americans are rightly proud this project succeeded in our own country, and we are proud of the wise and humane American scientist behind it, Francis Collins.

Brotherhood is perhaps the greatest theme in the life and character of Dr. Benjamin Hooks. The man has always had what his friend Dr. King called the strength to love. As a civil rights activist, public servant, and minister of the Gospel, Dr. Hooks has extended the hand of fellowship throughout his years. It was not an always thing—easy thing to do, but it was always the right thing to do.

Benjamin Hooks grew up in a segregated South, where economic advantages and even common courtesies were often denied to African Americans. In the Army during World War II, he guarded European prisoners of war held in the United States. When it was time to get something to eat, whites-only restaurants would serve the prisoners, but not Sergeant Hooks. After the war, he wanted to study law, but not a single law school in Tennessee would admit a black man. So he went to DePaul University in Chicago, then came back home, determined to "break down that segregation, to end those days."

He became a lawyer and, in time, was also an ordained Baptist minister. He joined the Southern Christian Leadership Conference and was an early crusader in that great move-

ment. He also rose in the legal profession, becoming the first African American ever to serve as a judge of the Tennessee Criminal Court. He was named to the Federal Communications Commission by President Nixon.

The Nation best remembers Benjamin Hooks as the leader of the NAACP. For 15 years, Dr. Hooks was a calm yet forceful voice for fairness, opportunity, and personal responsibility. He never tired or faltered in demanding that our Nation live up to its founding ideals of liberty and equality. His testimony had special power—for the words that he spoke and for the example that he set as a man of decency and rectitude.

It's been a great journey, and he's traveled with a good and gracious woman at his side, Frances Hooks. They're a wonderful team. They've been married for 56 years.

Dr. Hooks once said, "You've got to believe that tomorrow somehow can be and will be better than today." Because he had that belief, because he held on to it, because he acted upon it, an old order has passed away. And all Americans can be grateful for the good works and the good life of Benjamin L. Hooks.

The story of an old order and the glimmers of humanity that would one day overtake it was unforgettably told in a book by Miss Harper Lee. Soon after its publication, a reviewer said this: "A hundred pounds of sermons on tolerance or an equal measure of invective deploring the lack of it will weigh far less in the scale of enlightenment than a mere 18 ounces of a new fiction bearing the title 'To Kill a Mockingbird.'"

Given her legendary stature as a novelist, you may be surprised to learn that Harper Lee, early in her career, was an airline reservation clerk. Fortunately for all of us, she didn't stick to writing itineraries. [*Laughter*] Her beautiful book, with its grateful prose and memorable characters, became one of the biggest selling novels of the 20th century.

Forty-six years after winning the Pulitzer Prize, "To Kill a Mockingbird" still touches and inspires every reader. We're moved by the story of a man falsely accused—with old prejudice massed against him and an old sense of honor that rises to his defense. We learn that courage can be a solitary business.

As the lawyer Atticus Finch tells his daughter, “Before I can live with other folks, I’ve got to live with myself. The one thing that doesn’t abide by majority rule is a person’s conscience.”

Years after “To Kill a Mockingbird” was put to film, the character of Atticus Finch was voted the greatest movie hero of all time. It won Gregory Peck the Oscar. He was said to believe the role “brought him closest to being the kind of man he aspired to be.” The great actor counted Harper Lee among his good friends, and we’re so pleased that Gregory Peck’s wife, Veronique, is with us today. Thank you for coming.

One reason “To Kill a Mockingbird” succeeded is the wise and kind heart of the author, which comes through on every page. This daughter of Monroeville, Alabama, had something to say about honor and tolerance and, most of all, love—and it still resonates. Last year, Harper Lee received an honorary doctorate at Notre Dame. As the degree was presented, the graduating class rose as one, held up copies of her book, and cheered for the author they love.

“To Kill a Mockingbird” has influenced the character of our country for the better. It’s been a gift to the entire world. As a model of good writing and humane sensibility, this book will be read and studied forever. And so all of us are filled with admiration for a great American and a lovely lady named Harper Lee.

Bob Hyde is here on behalf of his dad, the Honorable Henry J. Hyde, who was not able to be with us today. Congressman Hyde spent more than three decades as a towering figure on Capitol Hill. But he first made his name in Washington more than 60 years ago. He was on the Georgetown basketball team and played in the NCAA eastern championship game in 1943. After college and Navy service in World War II, he returned home to Illinois and earned a law degree and made his way into politics. This erudite, scholarly man has walked with kings and kept the common touch. He won 20 elections and gave steady service to the people of Illinois for 40 years.

In the House, Congressman Hyde rose to the chairmanship of two committees: Judiciary and International Relations. And from

the first day, he was a commanding presence, and he was a man of consequence. Colleagues were struck by his extraordinary intellect, his deep convictions, and eloquent voice. In committee and in the House Chamber, the background noise would stop when Henry Hyde had the floor.

He used his persuasive powers for noble causes. He stood for a strong and purposeful America—confident in freedom’s advance and firm in freedom’s defense. He stood for limited, accountable Government and the equality of every person before the law. He was a gallant champion of the weak and forgotten and a fearless defender of life in all its seasons.

Henry Hyde spoke of controversial matters with intellectual honesty and without rancor. He proved that a man can have firm convictions and be a favorite of Democrats and Republicans alike.

Henry likes quoting the adage, “Make new friends, but keep the old; one is silver, but the other is gold.” To so many on Capitol Hill, Henry Hyde’s friendship is gold. They’re quick to say it’s not the same Congress without him, but that we’re a better country because he was there. And colleagues will always admire and look up to the gentleman from Illinois, Henry J. Hyde. And, Bob, please tell your dad a lot of us in Washington love him.

For nearly 30 years, the proceedings of the House of Representatives have been televised—unfiltered, uninterrupted, unedited, and live. For this, we can thank the Cable-Satellite Public Affairs Network, or C-SPAN. And for C-SPAN, we can thank a visionary American named Brian Lamb.

C-SPAN is not what you’d call exciting TV; though some of the call-in shows do have their moments. [*Laughter*] It is, however, a tool that enlivens democracy and informs and educates citizens of all ages, at all hours.

C-SPAN channels fill 17,000 broadcast hours a year. But you can watch for years and never hear anyone say the name Brian Lamb. Even Brian never says it.

With his low-key manner, this native of Lafayette, Indiana, likes to stick with substance. He’s not there to provide commentary or give much reaction either way. Yet vast numbers of Americans consider themselves fans

of Brian Lamb. A writer from the Washington Post called it a “cult of nonpersonality.” [Laughter] The truth is, we’ve all seen him, and he’s conducted some of the most fascinating interviews we have ever heard. As one C-SPAN watcher said, when you listen to Brian “you feel like he’s just like you, only smarter.” [Laughter]

Brian Lamb has spent most of his life in broadcasting, in a career that has taken many turns. The first program he ever hosted, back in the Midwest, was called “Dance Date”—a side we haven’t seen much of. [Laughter] Brian Lamb is a Navy veteran, a former social aide here at the White House. In fact, when Brian was here a few months ago to interview a historian in the Lincoln Bedroom, the *maitre d’* of the residential staff of the White House remembered him from those days.

The network Brian Lamb created has been called “scrupulously nonpartisan” and “inherently patient.” Committee hearings and campaign events and conferences and rallies are shown from beginning to end, without editorial comment or interpretation. C-SPAN has no agenda and only one assumption: that interested viewers are intelligent and can make up their own minds about what they see and what they hear.

An informed citizenry has been the strength of America since the days of the New England townhall. C-SPAN has revived the townhall spirit for a modern, continental nation. For his enormous achievement and his personal modesty, for his high standards and his contribution to our democracy, America is grateful to Mr. Brian Lamb.

Now I call on the military aide to read the citations for the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

[Lt. Cmdr. Robert A. Roncska, USN, Navy Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals.]

The President. Thank you all for coming. Laura and I now invite you to a reception here in the State Dining Room. I hope you’ve enjoyed this ceremony as much as I have. May God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:01 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Fidel Castro Ruz of Cuba; former President Vaclav Havel of the Czech

Republic; former President Nelson Mandela of South Africa; and Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki of Iraq.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Prime Minister Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey and an Exchange With Reporters

November 5, 2007

President Bush. Mr. Prime Minister, welcome back to the Oval Office. As usual, we had a very constructive conversation. Turkey is a strategic partner and strong ally of America. I value our friendship at the state level, at the personal level.

We had a long discussion about a common concern, and that concern is the PKK. PKK is a terrorist organization. They’re an enemy of Turkey; they’re an enemy of Iraq; and they’re an enemy of the United States. We have talked about how we can work together to protect ourselves from the PKK.

We talked about the need to have better intelligence sharing. In order to chase down people who murder people, you need good intelligence. And we talked about the need for our military to stay in constant contact. To this end, the Prime Minister and I have set up a tripartite arrangement, for his number-two man in the military to stay in touch with our number-two man and General Petraeus.

The Prime Minister strongly urged that the United States work with leaders in Iraq to cut off money flows to the PKK. The point is, is that I made it very clear to the Prime Minister we want to work in a close way to deal with this problem.

We discussed a lot of other issues. I do want to thank Prime Minister Erdogan of Turkey for hosting the Neighbors Conference. It was a very important conference to help the people of Iraq realize the blessings of liberty. Thank you, sir.

And finally, I briefed the Prime Minister on Secretary Rice’s recent phone call with President Musharraf. I asked the Secretary to call him to convey this message: that we expect there to be elections as soon as possible, and that the President should remove his military uniform. Previous to his decision,