

people, that in Peru this treaty would not exclude the poorest of the Peruvian workers. On the contrary, using the words of the great Abraham Lincoln, it will be a free trade agreement of the people, by the people, and for the people.

Thank you very much.

[At this point, President Bush signed the bill.]

President Bush. Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:52 p.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to former Office of Management and Budget Director Robert J. Portman; El Salvador's Ambassador to the U.S. Rene Antonio Leon Rodriguez; Honduras's Ambassador to the U.S. Roberto Flores Bermudez; Chile's Ambassador to the U.S. Mariano Fernandez; Mexico's Ambassador to the U.S. Arturo Sarukhan Casamitjana; Canada's Ambassador to the U.S. Michael Wilson; Guatemala's Ambassador to the U.S. Guillermo Castillo; the Dominican Republic's Ambassador to the U.S. Flavio Dario Espinal Jacobo; Colombia's Ambassador to the U.S. Carolina Barco Isakson; Panama's Ambassador to the U.S. Federico Antonio Humbert Arias; and South Korea's Ambassador to the U.S. Lee Tae-sik. H.R. 3688, approved December 14, was assigned Public Law 110-138. The Office of the Press Secretary released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the Resignation of Candida Wolff and the Appointment of Daniel Meyers as Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs

December 14, 2007

One of the most challenging jobs in any White House is managing the President's relationship with Congress. There are 535 Members of Congress, 2 parties, and 46 Committee chairmen—but only one Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs. Candi Wolff has done a remarkable job of working with Congress and advancing my legislative agenda.

As my chief adviser on congressional affairs, Candi has helped bring about many significant accomplishments, including energy legislation, trade agreements, tax relief, vital national security measures, and the confirma-

tion of two Supreme Court Justices. Her dedication and enthusiasm have resulted in policies that protect the American people, hold the line on spending, strengthen our economy, and support our troops. Candi has earned the respect of Members of Congress and her colleagues.

I have relied upon Candi's sound judgment, extensive experience, and thorough understanding of Capitol Hill as I have made decisions that affect the lives of all Americans. As Candi's service at the White House comes to an end, I appreciate her years of hard work and friendship. Laura and I wish Candi, her husband, Mark, and their two daughters Veronica and Claire all the best.

I am pleased to announce that Dan Meyer will succeed Candi as Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs. After serving as a House and Senate staffer for more than 15 years, including as chief of staff to the Speaker of the House, Dan knows how to help get things done in Congress. As a member of the legislative affairs office at the White House, he has been a capable leader who is well respected by Members on both sides of the aisle and committed to reaching solutions on important issues. I am confident he will perform well in this new position. I look forward to continuing to work with him.

Statement on the Resignation of William McGurn and the Appointment of Marc Thiessen as Assistant to the President for Speechwriting

December 14, 2007

As Assistant to the President for Speechwriting, Bill McGurn has worked tirelessly to help communicate my agenda to the American people and the world. Bill is a serious thinker and a gifted writer whose command of language and knowledge of history have helped shape a wide variety of my speeches. I have counted on Bill to help me prepare State of the Union Addresses, policy announcements, and speeches to the Nation. In all our work together, I have valued Bill's creativity, insight, and sound judgment. And I have appreciated his friendship, generous spirit, and sense of humor.

As he moves on to the next stage of his career, Bill can be proud of his service at the White House. The son of a marine, Bill loves his country and has served it well. Laura and I have come to know Bill's wife, Julie, and their daughters Grace, Maisie, and Lucy, and we wish Bill and his family all the best.

I am pleased to announce that Bill's deputy, Marc Thiessen, will succeed him as Assistant to the President for Speechwriting. Marc has done superb work in the speechwriting office for more than 3 years. Before coming to the White House, he served as chief speechwriter to Secretary Rumsfeld. Marc is a talented writer and experienced communicator who will do an outstanding job in his new position. I look forward to continuing to work with him.

Statement on the Formation of the National Council of the Damascus Declaration

December 14, 2007

I applaud the recent formation of the national council of the Damascus Declaration in Damascus, Syria. The brave men and women who formed this council reflect the desires of the majority of Syrian people to live in freedom, democracy, and peace, both at home and alongside their neighbors in the region.

The Syrian regime continues to hold hundreds of prisoners of conscience and has arrested more than 30 national council members in the past few days. All those detained should be released immediately.

The Syrian regime continues to deny its citizens fundamental human rights, including freedom of expression, freedom of movement, and the right to elect a representative government responsive to their needs. The formation of the national council is an encouraging sign to all people who support freedom and democracy. We support the national council's principles of nonviolent struggle and open membership to all the people of Syria who believe the time has come for change.

Memorandum on Waiver of Reimbursement Under the U.N. Participation Act to Support UNAMID Efforts in Darfur

December 14, 2007

Presidential Determination No. 2008-7

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Waiver of Reimbursement Under the U.N. Participation Act to Support UNAMID Efforts in Darfur

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 10(d)(1) of the United Nations Participation Act of 1945, as amended (22 U.S.C. 287e-2(d)(1)), I hereby determine that transfer to the United Nations/African Union Mission in Darfur (UNAMID) of camps and other items furnished as assistance for the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS) and assistance required to preserve continuity of functions during the immediate transition from AMIS to UNAMID without reimbursement from the United Nations is important to the security interests of the United States.

You are authorized and directed to report this determination to the Congress and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

George W. Bush

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the Deployments of United States Combat-Equipped Armed Forces Around the World

December 14, 2007

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

I am providing this supplemental consolidated report, prepared by my Administration and consistent with the War Powers Resolution (Public Law 93-148), as part of my efforts to keep the Congress informed about deployments of U.S. combat-equipped Armed Forces around the world. This supplemental report covers operations in support of the war on terror and Kosovo.