

Statement on the Appointment of President Jakaya Mrisho Kikwete of Tanzania as President of the African Union and Foreign Minister Jean Ping of Gabon as Chair of the Commission of the African Union

February 5, 2008

I congratulate President Jakaya Kikwete of Tanzania on his appointment as the new President of the African Union, as well as Foreign Minister Jean Ping of Gabon on his appointment as the new Chair of the Commission of the African Union. I am confident that the African Union and the people of Africa will be well-served by the leadership and vision President Kikwete and Minister Ping will bring to these important posts.

The African Continent has experienced important progress in recent years. Economic growth is at historic highs; democracy is taking root in many countries; and efforts to combat HIV/AIDS, malaria, and other infectious diseases are showing results. Difficult challenges remain, including ending genocide in Darfur, restoring peace and stability to Kenya, and bringing freedom to the Zimbabwean people. The United States looks forward to working closely with President Kikwete, Minister Ping, and the African Union to address these challenges and to build on recent achievements to secure a better future for all Africans.

Laura and I look forward to beginning our visit to Africa next week.

Message on the Observance of the Lunar New Year, 2008

February 5, 2008

I send greetings to those celebrating the Lunar New Year, the Year of the Rat.

Throughout our country and around the world, men and women of Asian descent welcome the Lunar New Year with a spirit of giving and renewed hope. This holiday, filled with vibrant traditions, celebrates new beginnings and recognizes the enduring wisdom of ancestors. During this special time of year, millions of people reunite with family and friends, reflect on the past, and look forward to a future of prosperity and opportunity.

The Lunar New Year also reminds us of the richness of Asian culture and the significance of its history. By preserving and sharing their heritage, Asian Americans enhance the American experience and contribute to our country's legacy of diversity.

Laura and I send our best wishes for peace, health, and happiness in the New Year.

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.

Memorandum on Security Clearances

February 5, 2008

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs
Subject: Security Clearances

The Federal Government needs a qualified, trusted workforce available to successfully execute its missions. However, longstanding practices used in the security processing of individuals and contractors to work for the Government pose challenges to the speed with which these individuals can begin their work or move from one role to another. Specifically, the processes for determining eligibility for access to classified information, determining suitability for Federal employment, determining eligibility to work on a Federal contract, and for granting access to federally controlled facilities and information systems, created for separate purposes, rely on similar background data. Yet the processes for collecting and analyzing this data are not sufficiently standardized or coordinated to allow for individuals to efficiently move between agencies and positions of Government covered by one or more of these processes.

I have determined that the significant opportunities to improve these processes, and the expected benefits of doing so, argue for aggressive efforts to achieve meaningful and lasting reform. Without altering the distinct lines of authority for establishing policies and procedures relating to security clearance, Federal employment suitability, and related

determinations, such reform should ensure that the executive branch executes these authorities within a framework that maximizes efficiency and effectiveness while protecting the information collected from unauthorized use or disclosure. Embedding that framework in policies, practices, and infrastructure will ensure that the reform effort and its benefits will continue into the future.

Efforts toward achieving this integration are already underway, sponsored by the Director of National Intelligence, Secretary of Defense, Director of the Office of Personnel Management, and the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, and coordinated by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. These efforts span near-term improvement opportunities up to a blueprint for a transformed clearance process. I direct that their continued close coordination and integration produce a comprehensive reform proposal that:

- Establishes modernized and comprehensive credentialing, security clearance, and suitability processes that employ updated and consistent standards and methods;
- To the extent consistent with applicable law, ensures that investigative standards for security clearance and suitability investigations support and build on each other without requiring duplicative steps;
- Enables these innovations with enterprise information technology capabilities that ensure the most effective and efficient performance across the Federal Government;
- Updates Government information record systems and, as necessary, applicable laws and regulations, to ensure that information maintained by executive departments and agencies and required for investigation and adjudication is available and can be shared rapidly across Government, while still protecting privacy-related information;
- Ensures that a reformed and aligned investigative system maximizes the potential for common ground in the adjudication of those programs whose security and suitability determinations are simultaneous; and,
- Ensures that all resulting decisions are in the national interest, protect national security, and provide the Federal Government with an effective workforce.

Under Executive Order 13381, I assigned to the Director of the Office of Management and Budget responsibility for improving the process for determining eligibility for access to classified national security information. Under Executive Orders 10450 and 10577, as amended, and related statutory authorities, the Office of Personnel Management is assigned various responsibilities related to personnel security investigations and suitability. These and all other current executive orders remain in force. However, recommendations may be made to align or otherwise alter policies and procedures to ensure the effective, efficient, and timely investigation and adjudication of security clearances and suitability for employment for all personnel performing work for or on behalf of the Federal Government.

I hereby direct the Director of the Office of Management and Budget, the Director of the Office of Personnel Management, the Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs, the Director of National Intelligence, and the Secretary of Defense, to submit to the President an initial reform proposal not later than April 30, 2008, that includes, as necessary, proposed executive and legislative actions to achieve the goals of reform described above. This proposal should be followed promptly by any additional proposals this group believes necessary to fulfill its mission.

Nothing in this memorandum alters or impedes the ability to carry out the authorities of the executive departments and agencies to perform their responsibilities under existing law, including, but not limited to, the authority of the Director of the Office of Personnel Management under 5 U.S.C. 1103(a)(7) to recommend executive orders amending the civil service rules governing suitability for employment in the competitive service and the excepted service of the United States, and the authority of the Assistant Attorney General, Office of Legal Counsel, Department of Justice, under 28 C.F.R. 0.25(b) to draft, revise, and advise as to the

form and legality all executive orders prior to submission to the President.

The heads of executive departments and agencies are directed to provide all information and assistance requested by the Director of the Office of Management and Budget in this important endeavor.

George W. Bush

Notice—Continuation of the National Emergency Blocking Property of Certain Persons Contributing to the Conflict in Cote d'Ivoire

February 5, 2008

On February 7, 2006, by Executive Order 13396, I declared a national emergency and ordered related measures blocking the property of certain persons contributing to the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire, pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701–1706). I took this action to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States constituted by the situation in or in relation to Cote d'Ivoire, which has been addressed by the United Nations Security Council in Resolution 1572 of November 15, 2004, and subsequent resolutions, and has resulted in the massacre of large numbers of civilians, widespread human rights abuses, significant political violence and unrest, and attacks against international peacekeeping forces leading to fatalities. Because the situation in or in relation to Cote d'Ivoire continues to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States, the national emergency declared on February 7, 2006, and the measures adopted on that date to deal with that emergency, must continue in effect beyond February 7, 2008. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing for 1 year the national emergency declared in Executive Order 13396.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

George W. Bush

The White House,
February 5, 2008.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 1:49 p.m., February 5, 2008]

NOTE: This notice was published in the *Federal Register* on February 6.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency Blocking Property of Certain Persons Contributing to the Conflict in Cote d'Ivoire

February 5, 2008

Dear Madam Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice to the *Federal Register* for publication, stating that the national emergency and related measures blocking the property of certain persons contributing to the conflict in Cote d'Ivoire are to continue in effect beyond February 7, 2008.

In March 2007, the Ougadougou Political Agreement was signed by the two primary protagonists in Cote d'Ivoire's conflict. Although considerable progress has been made in implementing this agreement, the situation in or in relation to Cote d'Ivoire poses a continuing unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States.

For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to continue the national emergency and related measures blocking the