

Remarks at the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner

April 26, 2008

Thank you all. Thank you very much. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Please excuse me if I'm a little sleepy—3:00 a.m. this morning, the red phone rang. [Laughter] It was the damn wedding planner. [Laughter]

Two weeks from tonight is Jenna's wedding, so I'm a little wistful this evening. Plus, this is my last White House correspondents' dinner as President. You know, I'm not sure what I'm going to do next. After he left office, Vice President Gore won an Oscar and the Nobel Peace Prize. [Laughter] Hey, I don't know, I might win a prize—Publishing Clearinghouse or something. [Laughter]

But thanks for inviting me. Our entertainment tonight is Craig Ferguson. You know, this is a small world. Craig was once in a punk band called Bastards from Hell, which is what Dick and I are going to call our band. [Laughter] Craig is Scottish by birth; so is Barney. [Laughter] Two months ago, Craig became an American citizen. I'm honored to call you, fellow American.

Ladies and gentlemen, surprisingly, I've enjoyed these dinners. [Laughter] So tonight I thought we'd reminisce a bit. The first couple of years I came to this dinner, I was really into slide shows.

[At this point, a video was shown.]

Next year, a new President will be standing up here. I have to say, I'm kind of surprised we don't have more Presidential candidates here tonight—like any. [Laughter] Senator McCain is not here. He probably wanted to distance himself from me a little bit. [Laughter] You know, he's not alone. Jenna's moving out too. [Laughter]

The two Democratic candidates aren't here either. Senator Clinton couldn't get into the building because of sniper fire, and Senator Obama's at church. [Laughter]

But I'm sure whoever the next President is will show up at these dinners, especially like the dinners in 2005 and 2006, when we had a couple of surprises up our sleeves.

[A video was shown.]

We've had a lot of fun nights over the years. Do you remember the year I mentioned Ozzy Osbourne, and he stood up on a chair and blew me a kiss? [Laughter] So few leaders get that kind of experience. [Laughter] You know, I love the mixed crowds here. It's an interesting crowd. You know, just think—Pamela Anderson and Mitt Romney in the same room. [Laughter] Isn't that one of the signs of the apocalypse? [Laughter]

Which brings me to Dick—[laughter]—for 8 years as Vice President, Dick has ridden shotgun. That's probably not the best analogy. [Laughter] But he is a dear friend, and he's been the greatest straight man in the history of the world. [Laughter] Dick, I don't know what I would have done for material without you. [Laughter]

[A video was shown.]

What I like best about these evenings is the laughter and the chance to thank you for the work you do for the country. I also view this as a good chance to put aside our differences for a few hours.

And one thing we all share, whether we're native citizens or new citizens like Craig, is a tremendous appreciation for our people in uniform, an appreciation symbolized by the United States Marine Band, which is celebrating its 210th anniversary this year. I love the band, and so I'm going to say my farewell to you by doing something I've always wanted to do. And I do it in the spirit of our shared love for this country.

[The remarks concluded as President Bush conducted the United States Marine Band.]

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 8 p.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to entertainers Craig Ferguson and Ozzy Osbourne; actress Pamela Anderson; and former Republican Presidential candidate Mitt Romney. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 28.

**Remarks Following a Discussion
With President Alvaro Colom
Caballeros of Guatemala**

April 28, 2008

President Bush. It's been my honor to welcome to the Oval Office the President and First Lady of a close friend of the United States. Mr. President, thank you for coming.

We've had a good discussion about a variety of issues. We discussed bilateral relations between Guatemala and the United States, which are very strong. We are friends. We treat each other with respect. Our objective is—with U.S. foreign policy—is to have a neighborhood that is peaceful and prosperous, where social justice is important; want to achieve social justice through good health policy, good education policy, and good judicial policy. The United States is pleased to help this Government, as best as we possibly can, help the average citizen get a good education and have good health care.

We talked about how CAFTA is working. Exports to the United States have increased; exports from the United States have increased. And that's good.

We talked about security and the need for the region—Mexico, the United States, and the countries of Central America—to fight drug trafficking. I told the President that we are working hard to reduce demand for drugs here in America. And at the same time, we want to work in conjunction with strong leaders to make sure these drug traffickers don't get a stronghold. And that's why it's very important for Congress to fund the Merida project.

We talked about the reforms that the Government is instituting inside of Guatemala, including tax reform and reform to make sure that people who break the law are held to account.

I was particularly pleased to note that the Guatemalan Government and its leadership is promoting laws to make sure women are treated well and that violence against women is prosecuted.

And so—and we're going to talk a little later on about the Millennium Challenge Account. And by the way, we were talking about blueberries, and—so that blueberries are able to come off-season here to the United

States, which is a positive development for Guatemalan farmers.

And finally, of course, the President brought up the issue of immigration. And he wanted to urge me to think about TPS—TPS for citizens, as well as comprehensive immigration reform. I assured him that I will consider his request. And I assured him that I believe comprehensive immigration reform is in our Nation's best interests.

And so we've had a good discussion, and right after this press availability, I'll be taking he and the First Lady to lunch. And I'm looking forward to serving them lunch, and I bet you're looking forward to eating lunch. [Laughter] Thanks for coming.

President Colom. I want to thank President Bush for his hospitality. We've spent a couple of days working here, and we are very happy to hold this meeting in which we have discussed strengthening our relationship with an—already a strong relationship, in fact.

We discussed, as the President mentioned, the fight against drug trafficking. We are doing everything necessary to eliminate drug trafficking and drug traffickers from our territory.

We discussed the issue of social investment. We have received support from USAID. We—our two countries have common aims in this regard.

We also discussed the issue of our migrants. We brought up TPS with the President. We will be awaiting a response on that.

We described our recent tax reform to the President. That is something we're starting in Guatemala because we need to ensure that we have the public funds to be able to carry out the reforms in the areas of social justice and others that we have discussed.

We want to express our appreciation for the support that we have received from the United States to combat drug trafficking. Recently, we received four helicopters. This has been extremely helpful to us. We've also achieved good success on this front with the recent cocaine seizures. In fact, an operation was just carried out last night, a very large one, very successful. And on that, we are working not just with the United States but also with Mexico and the entire neighborhood in Central America, because all of us