

capability of making weapons. He had terrorist ties. The decision I made was the right decision. The world is better off without Saddam Hussein in power. And I find it interesting, in the political process, that some say, "Well, I voted for the intelligence," and now they won't say whether or not it was the right decision to take Saddam Hussein out. It's the right decision, and the world is better off for it.

Listen, thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:33 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Acting CIA Director John E. McLaughlin; and Police Commissioner Raymond W. Kelly and Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg of New York City. The President also referred to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States (9/11 Commission); and the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction (Silberman/Robb Commission).

### **Remarks on Signing the United States-Australia Free Trade Agreement Implementation Act**

*August 3, 2004*

**The President.** Welcome. Please be seated. I'm honored to welcome you all to the White House this morning, as I sign the legislation implementing the historic free trade agreement between Australia and the United States.

For nearly a century, our two nations have been allies in war and partners in peace. Prime Minister Howard's superb leadership has helped ensure that the friendship between our two peoples remains strong, that our commitment to political and economic freedom remains firm.

The U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement is a milestone in the history of our alliance. It expands our security and political alliance by creating a true economic partnership. It will create jobs and opportunities in both our nations. It will fuel economic growth throughout the Pacific Rim, and it will strengthen our common ties of family and friendship.

I appreciate so very much those in my Cabinet who have worked hard to make this

agreement come true: Secretary of State Powell, Secretary of Agriculture Ann Veneman, Secretary of Commerce Don Evans, and, of course, Ambassador Bob Zoellick, who is the U.S. Trade Representative.

Just as an aside, Zoellick has done heroic work, as has his staff, to see to it that the world trades more freely and America is treated fairly when it comes to trade.

I appreciate Ambassador Michael Thawley, the Ambassador of Australia to the United States, for his tireless efforts in representing his country's best interests as we negotiate this trade agreement. Mr. Ambassador, you are a credit to your country.

I'm also proud that Senator Orrin Hatch is with us. Senator, I appreciate you taking time to come and represent the United States Congress. This agreement received strong bipartisan support. It represents that members of both parties understand the benefits of trade to our country. Welcome, Senator, I appreciate you coming.

We support free and fair trade. I support free and fair trade, because it has the power to create new wealth for whole nations and new opportunities for millions of people. Sound policy can help unleash the initiative and talent of free people. Open trade is sound policy. It has a record for creating jobs and raising living standards and lowering consumer prices.

My administration is working with the Congress to extend the benefits of free trade throughout the western hemisphere, in Africa, and into the Middle East. We renewed the African Growth and Opportunity Act, which promotes economic reforms and reduces trade barriers on goods from the nations of sub-Saharan Africa. Working with Congress, we entered into a new free trade agreement with Morocco and Chile. We're encouraging the free flow of trade across the Pacific. Last year I had the honor to sign a free trade agreement with Singapore, America's first with an Asian Pacific nation. Today I'm honored to sign legislation enacting the second.

The total annual two-way trade in American and Australian goods and services stands at \$28 billion. Australia is America's 10th

largest export market. Our trade with Australia is important to every American. It is vital to our economy. The U.S.-Australia Free Trade Agreement is a recognition of that importance and a commitment by both our nations to work in partnership for common prosperity. This agreement will immediately eliminate duties on 99 percent of all U.S.-manufactured exports to Australia. That is the largest immediate reduction of tariffs on manufactured goods ever achieved in an American free trade agreement.

America's manufacturers estimate that eliminating these tariffs will increase the export of manufactured goods by nearly \$2 billion per year. That will mean new jobs for American workers. This agreement will also be good for America's farmers. It will eliminate all duties on American agricultural products entering Australia. Today, American farmers export almost \$700 million worth of goods to Australia. And because of this agreement, that total will rise.

Free and fair trade means more than eliminating tariffs on existing trade. We must also work to open up new sectors of our economies to competition and trade. This agreement opens important sectors of Australia's economy, such as telecommunications, government procurement, express delivery, computers, tourism, energy, construction, financial services, and entertainment. And the agreement strengthens protections for intellectual property and promotes electronic commerce.

One of the great economic achievements since the end of the cold war has been the success of free and fair trade in raising up the world's poor, bringing hope to the world's hopeless, promoting freedom among the world's oppressed, and creating jobs at home and abroad. The same advantages that this agreement will bring to the United States and Australia can and should be available to the developing world. Our two nations are committed to the reduction of trade barriers and other restrictions that are keeping too much of the world from the kind of prosperity and opportunity that the developed world takes for granted.

On Saturday, that commitment yielded an important result that will benefit manufacturers and farmers from America, Australia,

and the world. For the last several days, our trade ministers in Geneva have worked tirelessly to achieve an agreed framework for the WTO's Doha's negotiation. This framework provides a roadmap for these ongoing talks. Among other things, it commits WTO members to the elimination of export subsidies on agricultural products. And it commits them to start new work on the overhaul, streamlining, and transparency of customs rules. There is more work to be done, but Prime Minister Howard and I remain committed to the success of the Doha negotiations.

The United States and Australia have never been closer. We're allies in the war on terror. We're partners in the effort to help democracy take root in Afghanistan and Iraq and throughout the world. We understand that free societies will be peaceful societies. We long for peace. I appreciate Prime Minister Howard. He's a strong partner in peace. We understand that over the long term, the only way to create a safer world is to create a better world. We share a belief in the need to help others.

This trade agreement serves the interests of our countries. It serves the interests of the United States and Australia. It serves the interests of citizens with ambition and initiative and entrepreneurial instincts in both our countries. It advances the principle of free and fair trade. I am grateful to the Prime Minister, John Howard, for his good work and his vision and his friendship.

And it's now my honor to sign the U.S.-Australia Free Trade Implementation Act.

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

**The President.** Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:27 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister John Howard of Australia. H.R. 4759, approved August 3, was assigned Public Law No. 108-286.

## Remarks to the Knights of Columbus Convention in Dallas, Texas

August 3, 2004

Thanks for the warm welcome. Welcome to Texas. And thanks for inviting me so I can