AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:55 a.m. at the Baltimore Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Julian Bond, chairman, Kweisi Mfume, president and chief executive officer, Myrlie Evers-Williams, former chairwoman, Benjamin Hooks, former executive director, Elaine Jones, Legal Defense and Education Fund director-counsel, and Rev. Wendell Anthony, Detroit branch president, NAACP; Mayor Martin J. O'Malley of Baltimore; Mayor John F. Street of Philadelphia, PA; Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; civil rights leader Rev. Jesse Jackson; Coretta Scott King, widow of Martin Luther King, Jr.; Gov. Mel Carnahan of Missouri; and Doug Bouldin, family nurse practitioner.

Remarks on Presenting the Congressional Gold Medal to Father Theodore M. Hesburgh

July 13, 2000

Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker; Senator Daschle, Senator Thurmond, Senator Bayh, Senator Lugar, Congressman Roemer. Thank you all for your efforts today. Chaplain Coughlin and distinguished Members of the Congress and, of course, Chaplain Ogilvie. I'd like to say a special word of welcome to the Notre Dame Glee Club, who sang the National Anthem without benefit of musical background. Most of us need the music to cover up the mistakes we make, and they were wonderful.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to begin by thanking you for your gracious leadership on this and many other occasions like this, and especially today. I want to also thank you for your work for democracy and freedom and helping to save it in the oldest republic in Latin America, Colombia. I just signed the legislation that you passed in a bipartisan way, and I thank you for that.

I want to say, I have heard many speeches today about a man I admire very much, a servant and child of God, a genuine American patriot, and a citizen of the world and a person that Hillary and I were fortunate to get to know several years before we moved here to Washington. Father, she told me this morning to tell you hello and congratulations. We hope that now that you've got one more award, you'll still be nice to all your ordinary friends who admire you so much. [*Laughter*]

In 1987, when Father Hesburgh retired after 35 years as president of Notre Dame, the New York Times wrote this: "The Hesburgh era is ended, and the Hesburgh legend begins." Well, today, we have seen the legend growing. We've heard a lot about the recognition of his accomplishments, beginning with President Johnson's bestowal of the Medal of Freedom and going through these degrees. You know, this is getting to be like a fish story; there will be 200 degrees before we finish this ceremony today. [*Laughter*]

But I will say again, I think that all of your friends, the people who have known you over the years and admired everything you've done for civil rights and world peace and for Notre Dame, they'd say that the most important thing about you and the greatest honor you will ever wear around your neck is the collar you have worn for 57 years. From the age of 6, you wanted to be a priest—in his words, a mediator between God and humankind. "A priest belongs to no one," he said, "so he can belong to everyone."

Father's first job at Notre Dame was chaplain of the married veterans who enrolled on the GI bill. He said he loved the job. He had two or three baptisms every Sunday, and he bargained with the local obstetricians to get volume discounts for Notre Dame babies. [*Laughter*]

One of his charges rushed into delivery only 6 months pregnant. The baby was taken by caesarean with a heartbeat but no breath. The medical team could not bring breath. But the instant Father Hesburgh baptized the baby with cold baptismal water, the baby began to cry loudly. That premature baby is now a 6-foot, 2-inch graduate of the University of Notre Dame.

Father Hesburgh never let one value be an excuse for not achieving another. You heard Senator Daschle say that he gave Notre Dame a great university with a great football team. Once he was criticized by some clergy for his emphasis on academic improvement, and he said this: "Piety is no substitute for competent scholarship."

The legendary Robert Maynard Hutchins of the University of Chicago once said that Father Hesburgh's improvements at Notre Dame constituted, and I quote, "one of the

most spectacular developments in higher education in the last 25 years."

But the thing that was most important is that he saw himself as a child and servant of God. The thing that I have always been most impressed by is that even as President of Notre Dame, he never stopped being a priest. The light from his third-floor office under the Golden Dome was often glowing late at night. Students seeking counseling or conversation could climb the fire escape, tap on the window, and get a post-midnight visit. He called it his "open window policy." I'm thinking of adopting it now.

Once at Notre Dame, a young Jewish student from Boston left campus 2 weeks into the semester because two freshmen hurt him deeply with their anti-Semitic slurs. The freshmen were sent to Father Hesburgh. Here is what he did: "Pack your bags," he said, "and go to Boston. You either convince that young man to come back to Notre Dame, or you don't come back to Notre Dame." They all came back, and they all graduated. Now, that is leadership.

I say again, Father, we value everything you have done and all your public service. We know it is built on the bedrock of faith. For, faith, in your words, enables us to rise above ourselves with the help of God.

For all of us who have been privileged to know you in any way, in any of your many capacities, the thing that we know is that your greatness, which led to all this achievement, was rooted in your peculiar understanding of our common humanity and our common tie as children of God. You have done your church, your country, your family, and your friends very proud, and we thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:40 p.m. in the Rotunda at the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Rev. Daniel P. Coughlin, Chaplain, U.S. House of Representatives.

Remarks on Departure for Camp David, Maryland, and an Exchange With Reporters

July 13, 2000

Vietnam-U.S. Bilateral Trade Agreement

The President. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Just a few moments ago, Ambassador Barshefsky and Minister Vu Khoan signed an agreement between the United States and Vietnam that will dramatically open Vietnam's economy, further integrate it into the international community, and increase trade between our two nations. And so from the bitter past, we plant the seeds of a better future.

This is another historic step in the process of normalization, reconciliation, and healing between our two nations. Improvements in the relationship between the United States and Vietnam have depended from the beginning upon progress in determining the fate of Americans who did not return from the war.

In 1994, with the support of the Members of Congress standing with me here and others, I lifted the trade embargo on Vietnam in response to its cooperation on the POW/MIA issue. A year later I normalized diplomatic relations between our two nations to further this goal. As further progress was made in 1996, I appointed former Congressman Pete Peterson, himself a former prisoner of war, to be our United States Ambassador in Vietnam.

With the indispensable help of key congressional allies, especially Senator John Kerry and Senator John McCain, Senator Bob Kerrey and Senator Chuck Hagel and Senator Chuck Robb, Representative Rick Boucher, Representative Reyes, who is here, Representative Manzullo, Representatives Lane Evans, Kolbe, Bereuter, and McDermott, this process has worked.

Since 1993, we have undertaken 39 joint recovery operations with Vietnam, and the number of 40 is underway as we speak. One hundred and thirty-five American families have received the remains of their loved ones, and we're in the process of identifying another 150 possible sets of remains. Time and again, the Vietnamese people have shared their memories with Americans. And we, too, have sought to help Vietnam in its own search for answers.

Our Nation has also felt a special sense of responsibility to those people in Vietnam whose families were torn apart during and after the war. In the last few years, we've made tremendous progress in resettling tens of thousands of Vietnamese refugees in the