

to prevent this practice, the elected branches of our Government have affirmed a basic standard of humanity, the duty of the strong to protect the weak. The wide agreement amongst men and women on this issue, regardless of political party, shows that bitterness in political debate can be overcome by compassion and the power of conscience. And the executive branch will vigorously defend this law against any who would try to overturn it in the courts.

America stands for liberty, for the pursuit of happiness, and for the unalienable right of life. And the most basic duty of Government is to defend the life of the innocent. Every person, however frail or vulnerable, has a place and a purpose in this world. Every person has a special dignity. This right to life cannot be granted or denied by Government, because it does not come from Government. It comes from the Creator of life.

In the debate about the rights of the unborn, we are asked to broaden the circle of our moral concern. We're asked to live out our calling as Americans. We're asked to honor our own standards, announced on the day of our founding in the Declaration of Independence. We're asked by our convictions and tradition and compassion to build a culture of life and make this a more just and welcoming society. And today we welcome vulnerable children into the care and protection of Americans.

The late Pennsylvania Governor Robert Casey once said that when we look to the unborn child, the real issue is not when life begins but when love begins. This is the generous and merciful spirit of our country at its best. This spirit is reflected in the Partial-Birth Abortion Ban Act of 2003, which I am now honored to sign into law.

God bless.

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

The President. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:40 p.m. at the Ronald Reagan Building and International Trade Center. In his remarks, he referred to Edward Cardinal Egan, Archdiocese of New York. S. 3, approved November 5, was assigned Public Law No. 108-105. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Convention on International Interest in Mobile Equipment and the Protocol on Matters Specific to Aircraft Equipment

November 5, 2003

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith, for Senate advice and consent to ratification, the Convention on International Interest in Mobile Equipment and the Protocol on Matters Specific to Aircraft Equipment, concluded at Cape Town, South Africa, on November 16, 2001. The report of the Department of State and a chapter-by-chapter analysis are enclosed for the information of the Senate in connection with its consideration.

The essential features of the Convention and Aircraft Protocol are the establishment of an international legal framework for the creation, priority, and enforcement of security and leasing interests in mobile equipment, specifically high-value aircraft equipment (airframes, engines, and helicopters), and the creation of a worldwide International Registry where interests covered by the Convention can be registered. The Convention adopts "asset-based financing" rules, already in place in the United States, enhancing the availability of capital market financing for air carriers at lower cost. The Convention's and Protocol's finance provisions are consistent with the Uniform Commercial Code with regard to secured financing in the United States.

This new international system can significantly reduce the risk of financing, thereby increasing the availability and reducing the costs of aviation credit. As a result, air commerce and air transportation can become safer and environmentally cleaner through the acquisition of modern equipment facilitated by these instruments. The new international system should increase aerospace sales and employment, and thereby stimulate the U.S. economy.

Negotiation of the Convention and Protocol has involved close coordination between the key Federal agencies concerned with air transportation and export, including the Departments of State, Commerce, and Transportation, as well as the EXIM bank,

and U.S. interests from manufacturing, finance, and export sectors.

Ratification is in the best interests of the United States. I therefore urge the Senate to give early and favorable consideration to the Cape Town Convention and Aircraft Protocol, and that the Senate promptly give its advice and consent to ratification, subject to the seven declarations set out in the accompanying report of the Department of State.

George W. Bush

The White House,
November 5, 2003.

Remarks on the 20th Anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy

November 6, 2003

Thank you all very much. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. Thanks for inviting me to join you in this 20th anniversary of the National Endowment for Democracy. Staff and directors of this organization have seen a lot of history over the last two decades. You've been a part of that history. By speaking for and standing for freedom, you've lifted the hopes of people around the world, and you've brought great credit to America.

I appreciate Vin for the short introduction. I'm a man who likes short introductions, and he didn't let me down. But more importantly, I appreciate the invitation. I appreciate the Members of Congress who are here, Senators from both political parties, Members of the House of Representatives from both political parties. I appreciate the ambassadors who are here. I appreciate the guests who have come. I appreciate the bipartisan spirit, the nonpartisan spirit of the National Endowment for Democracy. I'm glad that Republicans and Democrats and independents are working together to advance human liberty.

The roots of our democracy can be traced to England and to its Parliament, and so can the roots of this organization. In June of 1982, President Ronald Reagan spoke at Westminster Palace and declared the turning point had arrived in history. He argued that

Soviet communism had failed precisely because it did not respect its own people, their creativity, their genius, and their rights. President Reagan said that the day of Soviet tyranny was passing, that freedom had a momentum which would not be halted. He gave this organization its mandate: to add to the momentum of freedom across the world. Your mandate was important 20 years ago. It is equally important today.

A number of critics were dismissive of that speech by the President. According to one editorial of the time, "It seems hard to be a sophisticated European and also an admirer of Ronald Reagan." [*Laughter*] Some observers on both sides of the Atlantic pronounced the speech simplistic and naive and even dangerous. In fact, Ronald Reagan's words were courageous and optimistic and entirely correct.

The great democratic movement President Reagan described was already well underway. In the early 1970s, there were about 40 democracies in the world. By the middle of that decade, Portugal and Spain and Greece held free elections. Soon there were new democracies in Latin America, and free institutions were spreading in Korea, in Taiwan, and in East Asia. This very week in 1989, there were protests in East Berlin and in Leipzig. By the end of that year, every communist dictatorship in Central Europe* had collapsed. Within another year, the South African Government released Nelson Mandela. Four years later, he was elected President of his country, ascending, like Walesa and Havel, from prisoner of state to head of state.

As the 20th century ended, there were around 120 democracies in the world, and I can assure you, more are on the way. Ronald Reagan would be pleased, and he would not be surprised.

We've witnessed, in little over a generation, the swiftest advance of freedom in the 2,500-year story of democracy. Historians in the future will offer their own explanations for why this happened. Yet we already know some of the reasons they will cite. It is no accident that the rise of so many democracies

* White House correction.