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The Morning Update

This morning, President Bush met with the President of Panama and discussed the two countries' efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, promote economic development, and advance free trade in the Western Hemisphere. After holding a joint press availability, the President will participate in a series of events around Panama City including a wreath-laying ceremony at the American cemetery and visit to the Panama Canal.

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8:30 am: THE PRESIDENT meets with the President of Panama

EST Palacio de Las Garzas | Panama City, Panama

9:20 am: THE PRESIDENT holds a Joint Press Availability with the President of Panama

EST Casa Amarillo | Panama City, Panama

10:10 am: THE PRESIDENT participates in a Wreath Laying Ceremony

EST Corozal American Cemetery | Panama City, Panama

10:55 am: THE PRESIDENT tours the Miraflores Locks

EST Miraflores Locks Visitor's Center | Panama City, Panama

11:30 am: THE PRESIDENT participates in a Roundtable on Panama's Future

EST Salon Miraflores | Panama City, Panama_

1:35 pm: THE PRESIDENT attends a Baseball Event with Panamanian Youth

EST Ciudad Del Saber | Panama City, Panama

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From Today's Morning Headlines

President Bush Discusses The Promotion Of Democracy And Free Enterprise In Latin America. "President Bush challenged Latin American leaders on Sunday to choose between competing visions, one that would ensure social justice through democracy and free enterprise and another that would reverse progress by eroding democratic institutions and heightening fear. In a speech Bush gave at a hotel in the Brazilian capital, his most pointed words seemed to be aimed at Venezuelan President Hugo Chavez, who has been harshly critical of the U.S.-backed vision of a free trade zone that would stretch from Alaska to the tip of Argentina. Bush said the plan he supports for the region would ensure social justice through representative government, open markets and 'faith in the transformative power of freedom in individual lives.' The opposing vision, he said, 'seeks to roll back the democratic progress of the past two decades by playing to fear, pitting neighbor against neighbor and blaming others for their own failures to provide for their people.' ... 'Our goal is to promote opportunity for people throughout the Americas, whether you live in Minnesota or Brazil,' Bush said. 'And the best way to do this is by expanding free and fair trade.'" (Michael A. Fletcher, "In Brazil, Bush Continues Trade Push," *The Washington Post*, 11/7/05)

Sen. Joseph Biden (D-DE) Calls Filibuster Of Judge Alito Unlikely. "A veteran Democrat on the Senate Judiciary Committee says he doubts his party will try to block a final vote on President Bush's nomination of conservative jurist Samuel Alito to the Supreme Court. Alito, a federal appellate judge, should get a simple up-or-down majority vote on his appointment, Sen. Joseph Biden, D-Del., said Sunday on ABC's 'This Week.' 'My instinct is we should commit,' Biden said, playing down prospects that Democrats will try to begin a filibuster that would require 60 of the 100 senators to approve Alito's selection to replace retiring Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. Bush's fellow Republicans hold 55 seats. 'I think that judgment won't be made until the bulk of us have had a chance to actually see (Alito) and speak to him. But I think the probability is that

(a vote) will happen,' Biden added." ("Alito Filibuster Unlikely, Democrat Says," *The Associated Press*, 11/7/05)

The New York Times Profiles Judge Alito's Judicial Philosophy. "An examination of several chapters in his life suggests he is conservative by temperament, upbringing and experience - conditions that appear to have shaped his approach to life and his work more than any narrow ideological niche. ... J. L. Pottenger Jr., a friend of Judge Alito's at Princeton and Yale who is now a professor at Yale, said: 'The reason I'm hoping he gets confirmed, even though I am a liberal, maybe an ultraliberal, is because I think he's an honest, well-intentioned guy who believes in judicial restraint in the model of Supreme Court Justice John Harlan and I can't really argue with that as a judicial philosophy. I don't think he's an ideologue. I don't think he's going to be out there trying to roll back the clock.'" (Janny Scott, "Court Choice Is Conservative By Nature, Not Ideology," *The New York Times*, 11/7/05)

Gas Prices Dropping To Pre-Katrina Levels. "Retail gas prices plunged an average of 23 cents nationwide in the past two weeks, marking a return to pre-Hurricane Katrina levels, according to a survey. The weighted average price for all three grades declined to \$2.45 a gallon on Friday, said Trilby Lundberg, who publishes the semimonthly Lundberg Survey of 7,000 gas stations around the country. Self-serve regular averaged \$2.43 a gallon nationwide. The price for midgrade was \$2.53, while premium-grade hit \$2.63. The average pump price for all three grades on Aug. 29, the day Katrina made landfall on the Gulf Coast, was \$2.65, according to the survey. The lowest average price in the nation for regular unleaded among the stations surveyed was \$2.06 a gallon in Tulsa, Okla. The highest was \$2.74 in Miami." ("Gas Prices Return To Pre-Katrina Levels," *The Associated Press*, 11/6/05)

U.S. Treasury Secretary John Snow Says The President And His Administration Are On Track To Reduce The Budget Deficit. "Since taking office, President Bush has worked to restrain spending and get our nation's fiscal house in order. The president has succeeded in reducing the rate of growth in nonsecurity federal spending every year of his administration. This year, his budget proposed reducing nonsecurity spending below the previous year's level for the first time since the Reagan administration. Maintaining this focus on fiscal discipline is necessary if we are to meet the president's goal of cutting the deficit in half by 2009. The right way to achieve deficit reduction is with strong economic growth and restrained spending. To continue on a steady path of economic growth, we must sustain the low tax environment that has brought our economy so much success recently. The American economy has grown at a sustained pace of 3.3 percent or more for 10 straight quarters. Even in the third quarter of this year, a quarter that endured hurricanes and soaring gas prices, our economy grew at a solid 3.8 percent rate." (Sec. John Snow, Op-Ed, "U.S. On Track To Reduce Budget Deficit," *The Atlanta Journal-Constitution*, 11/7/05)

Senate Intelligence Chairman Pat Roberts (R-KS) Says Multiple Sources Have Confirmed That There Was No Pre-War Intelligence Manipulation. "But he did make clear that past work by his committee and other commissions did not point to any evidence that made him believe that intelligence had been distorted. As part of a report released last year by his committee that found widespread intelligence failures on Iraq's weapons capabilities, 'we interviewed over 250 analysts and we specifically asked them: "Was there any political manipulation or pressure?" Answer: "No,"' Mr. Roberts said on 'Face the Nation' on CBS. Studies by the independent Robb-Silberman commission, appointed by the president, as well as the similar Butler commission in Britain reached the 'same conclusion,' said Mr. Roberts, who has been a staunch supporter of the administration's policies on Iraq." (Eric Lichtblau, "No Evidence Of Pressure On Iraq Data, Senator Says," *The New York Times*, 11/7/05)

U.S. Strategies Slowing The Flow Of Foreign Fighters Crossing Into Iraq. "U.S.-led offensives in western Iraq have helped lead to a 50% drop in the number of foreign fighters slipping across the Syrian border, a U.S. general said. 'Clearly, the effect we're most concerned about is foreigners coming and murdering other Iraqis and attacking coalition and Iraqi forces,' said Lt. Gen. John Vines, commander of multinational ground forces in Iraq. 'Indicators are that a significantly reduced number of them are entering the country.'" (Rick Jervis, "U.S. Slowing Flow Of Foreign Fighters Into Iraq," *USA Today*, 11/7/05)

Joint U.S.-Iraqi Offensive Sweeps The Syrian Border Area For Insurgents. "U.S. and Iraqi security forces swept through an area near the Syrian border to root out foreign fighters Sunday, the second day of one of the largest military offensives since the U.S.-led invasion in 2003. About 3,500 troops participated in the operation in the region in and around Qaim, which the military has dubbed Steel Curtain. This is the second time in about a month that U.S.-led troops have stormed the expansive desert area in a full-fledged assault intended to expose fighters linked to the insurgent group al Qaeda in Iraq. The offensive began Saturday, with troops battling insurgents in Husaybah, essentially a suburb of Qaim, about 200 miles northwest of the Iraqi capital." (Jackie Spinner, "U.S.-Iraqi Force Sweeps Syrian Border Area," *The Washington Post*, 11/7/05)

This Weekend From The White House

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