Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Chemical Weapons Convention Inspections

February 5, 2001

Dear _____ *:*

Attached is a report to the Congress on Chemical Weapons Convention inspections in the United States, submitted pursuant to section 309 of the Chemical Weapons Convention Implementation Act of 1998.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Letters were sent to Jesse Helms, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Orrin G. Hatch, chairman, and Patrick Leahy, ranking member, Senate Committee on the Judiciary; Richard Shelby, chairman, and William Duhnke, ranking member, Senate Committee on Intelligence; Henry J. Hyde, chairman, and Tom Lantos, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; F. James Sensenbrenner, Jr., chairman, and John Conyers, Jr., ranking member, House Committee on the Judiciary; Porter J. Goss, chairman, and Nancy Pelosi, ranking member, House Committee on Intelligence. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 7. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks at the Tax Family Reunion and an Exchange With Reporters

February 7, 2001

The President. Well, Debora, thank you very much. I'm so honored to see you. And thank you for bringing your son and daughter here. The Vice President and I have been looking forward to this family reunion—tax family reunion. The nice thing about this reunion is you don't have any annoying relatives to deal with. [*Laughter*] But we're glad to welcome you to the White House.

One of the best parts of the campaign was to meet the hard-working Americans who really make up the backbone of our country. I'd go to the different cities around our great Nation and get off the airplane, and there'd be a tax family. And it was our way to put a face on a piece of important public policy. It was our way to say, behind all the numbers we were talking about, and to talk about budget, there were real, live Americans who will benefit.

And I want to thank you all for coming back. I look forward for you to—look forward to thanking you in person. I look forward to you to see the people's house, the place that Laura and I are now fortunate to call home.

I have one message for all the folks that were our tax families and all the folks from around the country: You helped me make my case, and now I intend to make good on my promise. I want it to be said that ours is a plan that fulfills a campaign promise. And that's important. A lot of people look toward the political process and say, "Oh, these candidates just say something and really don't mean it." When I campaigned for meaningful tax relief, I meant it. And tomorrow I'll submit a plan based upon exactly what I said on the campaign trail. I look forward to working with Congress to get the plan passed.

During the course of the campaign, I said it's as if our Nation had erected a toll booth right in the middle of the road of the middle class, making it hard for people to access the middle class, making it hard for hard-working Americans to realize more money for their own. And so we're going to start dismantling that toll booth, brick by brick. It begins by simplifying the code. We'll reduce the rates from five to four.

It recognizes that our tax code is unfair. It is unfair to people who struggle to get ahead. It is unfair for the single mom who lives on the outskirts of poverty, who's working hard to provide for her family. For every additional dollar she makes above $25,000, she pays a higher marginal rate on that dollar than someone who's wealthy. And that's not right, and it's not fair. It's not what America is all about, as far as I'm concerned. Our tax code makes the code more fair.

It is also fair that everybody who pays taxes should receive relief. And that's why we drop all rates. We drop the top rate, and we drop the bottom rate, and we expand the child credit from $500 to $1,000. Under our plan, a family of four making $50,000 a year will receive a 50-percent cut in the taxes they pay to the Federal Government. The average tax load will decrease by $2,000—from $4,000 to $2,000.

As Debora said, she calculated our plan, and she saves $1,000. Maybe for some, the number 1,000 doesn't mean much, and maybe for some, 2,000 doesn't mean much. But for thousands of Americans it means a lot.

I want to assure my friends, the tax families who are here, that we will submit a budget as expected to the United States Congress, a budget that sets aside all the payroll taxes for Social Security, a budget that sets clear priorities, a budget that pays down the national debt, and a budget that has got room for a meaningful, substantial tax reduction.

And there's a lot of talk about debt in this town, and it should be talked about—national debt. And our plan pays down debt. But I also want the Members of Congress to understand that there are a lot of folks struggling to get ahead who have got high consumer debt. There's a lot of people who are burdened by credit card debt in America. And when you couple that debt overhang with high energy prices, more and more of the backbone of this country struggle to save and struggle to get ahead.

So this tax relief package not only is a way to make sure our economy remains strong; it's a package that understands people need to have more of their own money. It says that with strict budgeting and prioritizing our budget, that when we have surpluses, we must remember who pay the bills in America. And it's these folks who pay the bills in this country. And they deserve relief.

And so I call upon Congress, when they think about tax relief, to think about the members of our tax family who represent all the people of our country, who work hard to get into the middle class and to stay in the middle class.

It's an honor to be your President. I'm so thrilled you all are here to say hello to us. I can't wait to greet you inside.

Thanks for coming, and God bless you all.

Tax Cut Legislation

Q. Mr. President, Republican leaders are pushing for an even larger tax cut, sir. Do you think that's advisable?

The President. The tax cut is the right size. I believe it's the right size. And I think it's going to be very important for us and the Members of Congress to work together. But I'm going to make my case that the size of the tax relief package I propose is right.

Q. So you're saying it would be inadvisable, in your judgment, based on looking at the numbers of the surpluses, et cetera?

The President. I think for those who want to diminish the size of the tax cut, that would be inadvisable, and for those who want to increase the size of the tax cut would be inadvisable. It's the right size.

Office of National AIDS Policy

Q. Could you tell us how it is, sir, that your Chief of Staff didn't know what your plans were for the Office of National AIDS Policy and the President's Initiative for One America?

The President. We're going to have a—we're concerned about AIDS inside our White House, make no mistake about it. And ours is an administration that will fight for fair, just law in the country.

Last question.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, how concerned are you about the outbreak of violence following the election of Ariel Sharon? And also, can you tell us how you might take a different approach than President Clinton and his administration when it comes to Middle East peacemaking?

The President. We're going to play the hand we've been dealt. And we're going to play it well, with one thing in mind, that we promote peace in the Middle East. And I've talked to leaders in the Middle East, urging calm, and so has the Secretary of State.

And I just got off the phone with Prime Minister Barak and told him he fought the valiant fight, and he assured me he would support the Government's attempts to bring calm in the region. And we will continue to reach out to the parties in that region to promote an environment of stability and calm, to give the Sharon government a chance to do what he said he was going to do, which was to try to form a unity government and reach out to the parties to promote peace in the region.

See you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:37 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Debora Meskauskas, single mother, who met the President during the Presidential campaign, and her children Bridget and Mark; and Prime Minister Ehud Barak and Prime Minister-elect Ariel Sharon of Israel.

Proclamation 7406—American Heart Month, 2001

February 7, 2001

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The year 2001 once seemed so distant that it became a symbol of science fiction. But today, researchers studying heart and other cardiovascular diseases have made 2001 a year when science rivals fiction.

Only 50 years ago, Americans were acknowledged to be suffering from an epidemic of heart disease. So little was known about the disease that it was thought part of the normal process of aging. Luck played a larger role in surviving a heart attack or hypertension than did medicine—and those who survived were forced to lead restricted lives.

But thanks to scientific advances and education, the death rate from coronary heart disease has fallen by nearly 60 percent since its peak in the mid-1960s. This startling improvement resulted not only from advances in the treatment of heart disease but also from gains in knowledge about its prevention. Scientists also have opened up new fields, including that of gene research. Their work promises to bring great improvements in the prevention and treatment of heart disease.

But problems remain. In particular, how can the rewards of scientific advances be brought to all Americans? Racial, ethnic, and geographic gaps still exist in the burden of disease. The number one killer of women is cardiovascular disease.

Another challenge is the increase in certain conditions and heart disease risk factors. Obesity and physical inactivity pose still other problems. More than half of American adults are overweight and obese, about one in four are sedentary, and another third are not active enough to reach a healthy level of fitness.

Meeting such challenges takes both will and technology. For example, researchers recently found that small changes in lifestyle that boost moderate-level physical activity can protect cardiorespiratory fitness and blood pressure as much as a structured exercise program. These are changes that all Americans can adopt.

Sudden death from cardiac arrest has also been a major health threat. Yet fortunately, more Americans are learning the warning signs of cardiac arrest. Calling 9–1–1 immediately and administering cardiopulmonary resuscitation (CPR) until an electric shock to the heart can be given to restore a normal heartbeat—a practice known as defibrillation—combined with early advanced care can result in long-term survival rates as high as 40 percent for certain types of cardiac arrest.

The Federal Government seeks to improve Americans' heart health by supporting research and public education through its National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, part of the National Institutes of Health. The American Heart Association, through its research and education programs and its vital network of dedicated volunteers, also plays a crucial role in bringing about much-needed advances.

Americans have always believed in the power of science to improve lives, and it is their support and the use of scientific advances that has reduced the epidemic of heart disease. It will be through continued scientific efforts that we find even more answers and reduce the rate of heart disease even further.

In recognition of the importance of the ongoing fight against cardiovascular disease, the Congress, by Joint Resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 843; 36 U.S.C 101) has requested that the President issue an annual proclamation designating February as "American Heart Month."

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim the month of February 2001 as American Heart Month. I invite the Governors of the States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, officials of other areas subject