

The President. I've got a steady pace. I'm calling as I can. I talked to the Prime Minister of India today. It was a phone call that I was going to make, regardless of the natural disaster that took place there. Obviously, a lot of the conversation today was about the aid that our country is sending. A 747 from AID has landed this morning; another one is on its way. We're sending some military planes over, as well. I assured him that our Nation was deeply concerned for the citizenry that had lost their lives. It was not the appropriate time to discuss policy beyond that.

And I will be making other calls, touching base with world leaders. I'll do a lot of that, of course. Good diplomacy really depends upon good personal relations, whether or not we agree with each other on a lot of issues or not. And I'm going to continue the diplomacy that reaches out to people on a regular basis.

Attorney-General-Designate John Ashcroft

Q. On Senator Ashcroft, are you worried that there are going to be more—do you feel he's going to be confirmed, still?

The President. I do believe he's going to be confirmed. But one of my charges is to run the executive branch of Government. And it's important for our Cabinet officers to be confirmed so they can start

doing their job of organizing their departments. Once we get our Cabinet officials through, I'm sure I'll be speaking to the Senate about moving the number twos and threes through, as well, so that we can take hold of this Government. And one of the things I'll be doing when our Cabinet meets is talking about the need for each Cabinet member to be fiscally sound with the taxpayers' money. It's hard to deliver that message when somebody hasn't been confirmed.

So I would just hope there are no further delays. There's been a lot of discussion, a lot of debate. There's been a lot of questionnaires presented and answers filled out. And it's now time for the vote, it seems like to me.

Q. Did you get the Vice President a birthday present?

The Vice President. Not yet. [Laughter]

The President. As a matter of fact—[laughter]—some used coffeecake, perhaps, Mr. Vice President? [Laughter]

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Atal Behari Vajpayee of India. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the Swearing-In Ceremony for Paul H. O'Neill as Secretary of the Treasury

January 30, 2001

The President. Well, I'm pleased to welcome Nancy O'Neill and the O'Neill family here. Thank you all for coming. It's an honor for both the Vice President and I to say some words about the Secretary of Treasury. With Paul over at the Treasury, he is literally a next-door neighbor. And I'm going to see a lot of him right here

in this office. He'll be a valued adviser and a steady hand.

Secretary O'Neill has served in this office before, at the Office of Management and Budget. He understands the workings and responsibilities of the executive branch. More than that, he understands the private sector, where he and others like him have been driving our country's economic boom.

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In a distinguished career, Paul has earned a reputation as a straight shooter and an innovator, and I'm proud to welcome him as the chief financial officer of this Nation.

Paul and I share a great goal: to make sure that all Americans can find high paying, high quality jobs. And we share a vision of how to get there. Our prosperity depends on free trade, less regulation, and America's strong place in our global economy. More than ever, American jobs depend on America's standing in the world. I value Paul's vast experience in the world economy. I value his background in employing American workers, and I value his steadiness, his conviction, and his authority.

We also share a belief that broad, responsible tax cuts are an important step we can take to regain the momentum of our economy. When we reduce the income tax burden, we must do so for everybody who pays taxes. When we have a Government surplus, we must prioritize and spend responsibly and return some of that surplus to the people who worked for it. Because our Government has a surplus does not mean that every American family has a surplus. In fact, many families are feeling

squeezed by high energy prices and credit card debt. We need to give them their own money back, to help families manage their own account, to pay down their own personal debts. Our tax cut will give the biggest percentage reductions to people who struggle to get into the middle class and American families who struggle to stay there.

I believe in leaving more dollars with the people who earned them, and so does Secretary O'Neill. And I'm proud that those dollars will soon bear the signature of Secretary Paul O'Neill.

Congratulations, Mr. Secretary.

[*At this point, Secretary O'Neill made brief remarks.*]

The President. Mr. Secretary, thank you.

Why don't we have a family picture, too, if you'd like one. Come on up.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:06 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Nancy O'Neill, wife of Secretary O'Neill. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary O'Neill.

Remarks at the Fishing School January 30, 2001

Thank you, Tom, very much for having us. And it's such an honor to have John DiIulio on my staff. For those of you who don't know John, he's a pioneer in working with Republicans and Democrats and people who really care about political parties to revitalize neighborhoods and places where hope may have been lost, by rallying faith-based organizations. And so, John, I'm so honored that you've sacrificed for the country. It's good to see Steve Goldsmith here, who is a partner as well.

A little over a week ago, a few miles from here, I was honored to be inaugurated

your President. I'm here today to repeat the promise I made on the steps of the Capitol: I will work to build a single nation of justice and opportunity. I'm going to need some help to do that. And so I'm so honored four Members of the United States Congress are here: Senator Joe Lieberman from the great State of Connecticut; Senator Rick Santorum from Pennsylvania; Congressman Mark Souder of Indiana; Congressman Tony Hall of Ohio.

I'm also pleased that two members of my Cabinet came: one, Mel Martinez, my