

because their dividends might be taxed twice. So this is a stimulus package that is very positive.

But I'm very optimistic about the future of this country—the economic future, and I'm optimistic about our chances to achieve peace.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:51 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Joint Statement Between the United States of America and Afghanistan *February 27, 2003*

President Bush and President Karzai reaffirm their common vision for an Afghanistan that is prosperous, democratic, at peace, contributing to regional stability, market friendly, and respectful of human rights. They affirm their ironclad and lasting partnership in pursuit of this vision, and will work together to ensure that Afghanistan is never again a haven for terrorists and that no resurgence of terrorism threatens Afghanistan.

The United States has demonstrated its commitment to Afghanistan, providing U.S. forces to combat terror and secure stability, and granting over \$900 million in assistance since 2001. Working together, Afghans, Americans, and our international partners have made great progress in ridding Afghanistan of Al Qaida and Taliban elements. We averted famine for some 7 million Afghans last year, and have begun the essential and challenging work of rebuilding after decades of dictatorship, war, and extremism. As a sign of confidence in the future, some 2 million refugees have returned to Afghanistan over the past year. But much remains to be done. This year will mark a shift toward long-term reconstruction projects and the rebuilding of Afghan institutions. The United States will be a full partner in this transition, helping to secure stability and supporting reconstruction throughout the country, including roads, schools, clinics, and agriculture. We

will continue our work together, with other partners, to gather the resources that will hasten the day when all Afghans lead prosperous and secure lives.

President Karzai has declared 2003 to be a year of national institution building for Afghanistan, a year when the economic and social benefits of peace are extended throughout the country.

Afghans are enjoying newfound freedoms and hope for a brighter tomorrow. The United States will work with Afghanistan to extend the accomplishments of the Bonn Accord of December 2001 and the Emergency Loya Jirga of June 2002 so that Afghans can build a democratic, constitutional government within the context of Afghanistan's unique culture and history.

The United States military will continue with its primary mission to prevent terrorist elements from undermining the security environment, while also building the Afghan national army—a central priority for both governments—and facilitating reconstruction. President Karzai strongly favors the creation by the United States and other coalition partners of a number of Provincial Reconstruction Teams that will work closely with Afghan government ministries, UN agencies, and NGOs in advancing common reconstruction objectives while also working with the graduate battalions of the Afghan National Army to advance the mission of enhancing security nationwide.

President Bush reaffirms that the United States will continue to be a full partner in Afghanistan's reconstruction and, with the support of Congress, continue with a comprehensive program of U.S. assistance to Afghanistan at levels commensurate with the past. To support President Karzai's goal of seeing a transition to broad-based reconstruction efforts, the United States will focus its efforts on particular projects in the areas of transportation, agriculture, education, and health.

- The United States has committed \$80 million to the rebuilding of the Kabul-Kandahar-Herat road—Afghanistan's main transportation artery. Japan and Saudi Arabia are joining us in this project. The United States, in partnership with Norway, will also provide \$12 million to build a bridge over the river between Afghanistan and Tajikistan, forming a key road link.
- Agricultural projects will include a package of irrigation programs, including \$6 million to assist Afghanistan in managing water systems that are already being repaired under cash-for-work programs and a \$15 million project to restore irrigation systems and other essential services.

- In the area of education, the United States is initiating a \$60 million program to build or repair 1000 schools, print 15 million textbooks, train 30,000 teachers, and offer accelerated learning programs to 60,000 students.
- Health is also a priority sector for U.S. assistance, with \$133 million planned for a three-year program that will construct or rehabilitate 550 primary health care centers, expand access to health services in rural areas, and address the basic health care needs of women and children.

The United States and Afghanistan will work together toward that day when Afghanistan is fully secure and self-sufficient. In Afghanistan as elsewhere, the United States covets no resources and seeks no special advantage. President Bush and President Karzai reaffirm the bond of friendship that unites the peoples of America and Afghanistan in the common pursuit of a safer, freer, and more prosperous world for the benefit of all.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

## Statement on Proposed Legislation To Implement the Clear Skies Initiative *February 27, 2003*

In my State of the Union Address, I urged Congress to enact my aggressive and innovative plan to cut air pollution, the Clear Skies Initiative. Clear Skies will cut powerplant emissions by 70 percent—much further, faster, more cost-effectively and with more certainty than current law.

Today, with the reintroduction of my legislation, Clear Skies takes an important step towards delivering health and environmental benefits to Americans. I am pleased that Chairman Tauzin and Chairman

Barton have introduced Clear Skies in the House and Chairman Inhofe and Chairman Voinovich have introduced it in the Senate.

In the last 30 years, America has dramatically improved air quality. Clear Skies is the next step in this positive trend towards bringing cleaner air and better health to more of our citizens. We have learned a lot about what approaches work best, and now is the time to put those lessons to use.