

nest egg you own is for—is to be a part of a retirement system. In other words, the Government is going to be able to afford something, and on top of that will be your own nest egg. It's a part of the retirement system. And that asset base that you build will not only help you in retirement, but if you so choose, you can leave it to whomever you want, which is, I think, a vital part of having a vibrant society, that assets are passed from one generation to the next.

Good job.

Mr. Knudsen. Thank you.

The President. You want to have the final word, or you want me to?

Mr. Knudsen. I can go ahead and talk a little more if you would like. [Laughter] I think the other key thing that most people are forgetting is the fact that if I felt that I wasn't wise enough to invest my money and I wasn't confident in myself, I have the option not to accept the personal account and leave the system as it is and take the system. So I have the option of doing it if I care to or not.

The President. Precisely right. I appreciate you understanding that. I got the final word. [Laughter]

Mr. Knudsen. Okay.

The President. First of all, I want to thank our panelists for joining us. I hope you found this to be an educational discussion about a problem that we need to solve now. If you're over 55 years old, you'll get your check. I don't care what the propaganda says. I don't care what the pamphleteers say. I don't care what the ads say. You're going to get your check. Now, if you're a younger person here at this fine community college, you need to be asking the people in the United—you don't have to worry about your Senator and Congressman, but you need to be a part of people saying, "We have a problem. You all got elected for a reason. Now, what are you going to do about it to make sure the Social Security system is permanently solved."

Thanks for coming today. I appreciate your time. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:23 p.m. at Kirkwood Community College. In his remarks, he referred to Mick Starcevich, president, and Steve Ovel, executive director of governmental relations, Kirkwood Community College; Iowa State Senator Chuck Larson; Mayor Paul D. Pate of Cedar Rapids, IA; and former professional baseball player Rocky Colavito.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Trade Negotiations

March 30, 2005

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with section 2103(c)(2) of the Trade Act of 2002, I ask that the Congress extend trade promotion authority procedures for 2 years, and I enclose a report prepared by my Administration on trade negotiations conducted under those procedures.

Trade promotion authority is essential to expanding opportunities for American businesses, workers, and farmers. Working with

the Congress, my Administration has completed trade agreements with 12 nations on 5 continents that will open a combined market of 124 million consumers for America's farmers, manufacturers, and service providers.

We must continue to pursue bilateral and regional agreements to open new markets, and we must complete negotiations in the World Trade Organization to reduce global

barriers to trade. We will continue to enforce vigorously the trade laws so that American businesses and workers are competing on a level playing field.

Free and fair trade creates jobs, raises living standards, and lowers prices for families here at home. Trade agreements also deepen our partnerships with countries that want to trade in freedom. I look forward

to the continued close cooperation with the Congress in pursuing these objectives.

Sincerely,

GEORGE W. BUSH

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate.

Remarks Prior to a Briefing on the Findings of the Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction

March 31, 2005

Death of Theresa Marie Schiavo

Today millions of Americans are saddened by the death of Terri Schiavo. Laura and I extend our condolences to Terri Schiavo's families. I appreciate the example of grace and dignity they have displayed at a difficult time. I urge all those who honor Terri Schiavo to continue to work to build a culture of life, where all Americans are welcomed and valued and protected, especially those who live at the mercy of others.

The essence of civilization is that the strong have a duty to protect the weak. In cases where there are serious doubts and questions, the presumption should be in the favor of life.

Intelligence Capabilities

The most solemn duty of the American President is to protect the American people. Since September the 11th, 2001, we've taken bold and vigorous steps to prevent further attacks and overcome emerging threats. We face a new and different kind of enemy. The threats today are unprecedented. The lives of our citizens are at stake. To protect them, we need the best intelligence possible, and we must stay

ahead of constantly changing intelligence challenges.

So last year I issued an Executive order creating an independent Commission to look at America's intelligence capabilities, especially our intelligence about weapons of mass destruction. I asked two fine Americans to chair this Commission, Judge Laurence Silberman and former Senator Chuck Robb. They have done an excellent job. I appreciate your service to our country.

I also want to thank the other members of the Commission, Senator John McCain, Rick Levin, Harry Rowen, Walt Slocombe, Bill Studeman, Judge Patricia Wald, Chuck Vest, and Lloyd Cutler. I want to thank them for their hard work. They spent a lot of time on this project. I asked these distinguished individuals to give me an unvarnished look at our intelligence community, and they have delivered.

This morning the Commission presented me with their recommendations, which are thoughtful and extremely significant. The central conclusion is one that I share: America's intelligence community needs fundamental change to enable us to successfully confront the threats of the 21st century.