

to make the best decisions about what to do with your hard-earned dollars, because when you do, your family is better off, our economy grows, and prosperity and opportunity spread throughout our great land.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 9:15 a.m. on March 31 at the LeBlanc Spa and Resort

Remarks Following a Meeting on Health Care Initiatives and an Exchange With Reporters *April 4, 2006*

The President. America needs a health care system that empowers patients to make rational and smart decisions for themselves and their families, a health care system in which the relationship between the patient and the provider are central, not a health care system where decisions are made by the Federal Government.

So we've been having a discussion here today about how to make sure our health care system meets certain objectives: one, empowering the patients; two, how do we have a system that helps control rising costs in health care?

And one of the interesting and innovative ways to do that is through health savings accounts. Health savings accounts are good for the uninsured; they're good for small businesses; they're good for larger corporations. And people around the table here have been sharing their experiences with how folks are saving money through health savings accounts. And I would urge the small-business owner or the individual who is concerned about his or her health care to take a look at a health savings account.

We talked about the importance of cost savings through these important products, but we also talked about how we can work with the United States Congress to strengthen them, to make them more appealing, to give people more choices in the

in Cancun, Mexico, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 1. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 31 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

marketplace, to say to the American people, "We trust your judgment. We trust you to make the right decision for you and your families."

And so I want to thank you all for coming for this most interesting discussion. And I'll be glad to take a couple of questions.

Nedra [Nedra Pickler, Associated Press].

Representative Thomas D. DeLay

Q. Yes, sir. Thank you. I'm wondering if we can get your reaction to Tom DeLay's resignation? Do you think it hurts the Republican Party or your ability to get work done in Congress?

The President. I had a talk last night on my way back from the ball game with Congressman DeLay. He informed me of his decision. My reaction was, it had to have been a very difficult decision for someone who loved representing his district in the State of Texas. I wished him all the very best, and I know he's looking forward to—he's looking to the future.

My own judgment is, is that our party will continue to succeed because we're the party of ideas. And one of the most important ideas is to make sure that health care is available and affordable for the citizens of this country. One way to do so is to

trust the patients, trust the American people when it comes to making rational decisions for health care for them and their families. And that's exactly what we've been discussing here at the table.

Caren [Caren Bohan, Reuters].

White House Staff

Q. Thank you, sir. Your new Chief of Staff takes over soon, and I'm wondering, is there likely to be far-reaching changes in the staff at the White House? And is Secretary Snow expected to stay on?

The President. Secretary Snow is here at the table. He's been a part of this discussion. I'm glad you brought him up. He has been a valuable member of my administration, and I trust his judgment and appreciate his service.

I've, as you know, accepted the resignation of Andrew Card, my long-time friend, a person who will go down in the annals as one of the really fine Chiefs of Staff in the history of the White House. I've asked Josh Bolten to take his place. Josh has served us very well as the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. I told Josh that he is—will organize the White House in such a way that he is comfortable with and that meets my needs. And my needs are to have good, crisp information so I can make decisions on behalf of the American people.

And I look forward to Josh's recommendations as to how to get this White House to—for the last 2½ years of my administration, to continue to function in an effective way. And it functioned very effectively under Andy Card, by the way. I'm most proud of his administration and proud of the team that he assembled.

Dick [Richard Stevenson, New York Times].

Iraq

Q. Mr. President, the situation in Iraq continues to be fraught with violence. You have expressed impatience in recent days of the progress towards forming a coalition

government. Do you think, as some people on the ground there are saying in the Iraqi political firmament, that it's getting very close to the point of no return?

The President. I believe that people ought to pay attention to the fact that 3 months ago, or a little over 3 months ago, 12 million people went to the polls and said, "I want to live in a democracy." And there is a group of folks in Iraq that want to stop the advance of democracy, and therefore, they're willing to use violence to do so. The one way to help bring confidence to the Iraqi people that those few will not be able to determine the future of that country is for there to be a unity government that steps up and says, "I'm willing to lead."

And so I sent Secretary Rice to Iraq with that message. And the message is, is that the people of Iraq have voted, and now it's time for the elected leaders to stand up and do their job. So we look forward to working with them to put together a unity government, a government that will reject the sectarian violence, will reject the militias, reject Zarqawi and the terrorists that are trying to create enough chaos so that America loses nerve. And I'm not going to lose my nerve as the President, because we're doing the right thing in establishing a democracy in that country. And by establishing a democracy, we're laying the foundation for peace.

And that's what we want. We want there to be peace. We want our children not to have to grow up under the threat of violence coming out of the Middle East. And one of the lessons of September the 11th, 2001, is that—this sense of—that tyranny is okay, but underneath the surface there was resentment—and the way—and anger that became the breeding grounds for these killers. And the best way to defeat that is with the light and hope of democracy. And you bet it's tough in Iraq, and it's tough because people are trying to stop the advance of democracy. And I'm convinced we're making progress there. But

I do urge the folks on the ground to get that unity government in place so that the Iraqi people have confidence in their future.

I thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:19 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Treaty Between the United States and Uruguay Concerning the Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investment

April 4, 2006

To the Congress of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification, I transmit herewith the Treaty between the United States and the Oriental Republic of Uruguay Concerning the Encouragement and Reciprocal Protection of Investment, with Annexes and Protocol, signed at Mar del Plata, Argentina, on November 4, 2005. I transmit also, for the information of the Senate, the report prepared by the Department of State with respect to the Treaty.

The Treaty is the first bilateral investment treaty (BIT) concluded since 1999 and the first negotiated on the basis of a new U.S. model BIT text, which was completed in 2004. The new model text draws on long-standing U.S. BIT principles, our experience with Chapter 11 of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and the executive branch's collaboration with the Congress in developing negotiating objectives on foreign investment for U.S. free trade agreements. The Treaty will establish investment protections that will create more favorable conditions for U.S. investment in Uruguay and assist Uruguay in its efforts to further develop its economy.

The Treaty is fully consistent with U.S. policy towards international and domestic investment. A specific tenet of U.S. investment policy, reflected in this Treaty, is that

U.S. investment abroad and foreign investment in the United States should receive national treatment and most-favored-nation treatment. Under this Treaty, the Parties also agree to customary international law standards for expropriation and for the minimum standard of treatment. The Treaty includes detailed provisions regarding the computation and payment of prompt, adequate, and effective compensation for expropriation; free transfer of funds related to investment; freedom of investment from specified performance requirements; and the opportunity of investors to choose to resolve disputes with a host government through international arbitration. The Treaty also includes extensive transparency obligations with respect to national laws and regulations, and commitments to transparency and public participation in dispute settlement. The Parties also recognize that it is inappropriate to encourage investment by weakening or reducing the protections afforded in domestic environmental and labor laws.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Treaty and give its advice and consent to ratification.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
April 4, 2006.