

new chapter in our partnership with the Iraqi people. The United States and our coalition partners will work with the new Iraqi Government to reassess our tactics, adjust our methods, and strengthen our mutual efforts to achieve victory in this central front in the war on terror.

The new Iraqi Government will assume growing responsibility for their nation's security. And as more Iraqi forces stand up, American forces will stand down. I want to thank all the brave Americans, both in our military and the diplomatic corps, who have served the cause of freedom in Iraq over the past 3 years. I thank their families who have sacrificed time with loved ones serving far from home. I want to thank our wounded service men and women, who have given so much to make this moment possible. And our Nation remembers the fallen heroes who gave their lives to bring liberty to Iraq and security to America. And we will honor their sacrifice by completing this mission.

There's going to be more tough fighting ahead in Iraq, and there will be more days of sacrifice and struggle. Yet the enemies of freedom have suffered a real blow today. And we've taken a great stride on the march to victory. The Iraqi people have defied the terrorist threats; Iraqi soldiers and police have fought with valor for the freedom of their country; and Iraqi leaders have laid the foundations for a democratic government of, by, and for the Iraqi people.

On behalf of all Americans, I congratulate the Iraqi people and their new leaders. The Iraqis are showing the world that democracy is worth the wait, that liberty is worth the sacrifice, and that freedom is the future of every man, woman, and child on this Earth.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2 p.m.

Remarks at the California Fuel Cell Partnership in West Sacramento, California

April 22, 2006

Thank you all. Mr. Secretary—I'm really pleased to have Norman Mineta in my Cabinet. He is a really good guy. And I thank you for your service, friend, and thank you for being here to share in this testimony to what technology is going to do for our country to make it a better place for all of us to live.

First of all, happy Earth Day to you. It's a good place to spend Earth Day, here in California. I got to spend the first part of my day riding a mountain bike in Napa Valley. It's a good place to ride—[laughter]—a little hillier than I would have liked. [Laughter] But it's a spectacular way to commune with nature. And I really appreciate you coming. I want all of us to under-

stand that we have a serious responsibility to be good stewards of our land. And this is a day we unite together to recommit ourselves to be good stewards of our land.

I appreciate the good stewardship—commitment to good stewardship at the heart of the California Fuel Cell Partnership. I bet a lot of our citizens don't understand what goes on here. This is a really interesting collaborative effort between automakers and energy companies and fuel cell technology companies and State and Federal agencies, all united toward a great mission, which is to make hydrogen-powered automobiles and trucks and buses a reality for American drivers. And that will help us be good stewards of the environment,

and that will help us become less dependent on foreign sources of oil.

Today I saw cars and buses that run on hydrogen instead of gasoline and that emit pure water instead of exhaust fumes. This Nation does not have to choose between a strong economy and a clean environment; we can have both at the same time. And investing in new technologies like hydrogen will enable this economy to be strong, people to be able to afford fuel, this country's national security not dependent on parts of the world that are unstable. And technology will once again make this country the leader in the world, and that's what we're here to celebrate.

And I want to thank Catherine Dunwoody, the executive director of the California Fuel Cell Partnership. I appreciate your commitment. You know, you can tell when somebody is pretty enthusiastic about what she's doing, a true believer. And she's a believer because she's not only a person with vision, but she is a practical person. And she has seen firsthand the progress being made.

I want to thank Congressman John Doolittle and Julie for being here. And I also want to thank Congressman Dan Lungren. Thank you all for joining us today. I appreciate your interest.

I thank the members and representatives of the California Fuel Cell Partnership. I want to thank the three guys from Ford Motor Company for giving me a tour. One guy was here; he's been 40 years, I think, at Ford. And here he is, describing what it's like to maintain a hydrogen fuel cell vehicle. I bet you didn't think you'd be talking about that 10 years ago, 20 years ago, maybe 5 years ago. Things are changing for the better, and we're here to celebrate this Nation's desire to improve the quality of life.

I would like to report to you on Earth Day that America's air is cleaner, our water is purer, and the land is better cared for. And that's important for people to know. Over the past 5 years, things have improved

with air, land, and water. And we're setting tough standards when it comes to air quality. We're implementing clean air rules that will reduce powerplant pollution by 70 percent. We've established the first-ever national cap on mercury emissions from powerplants, which will result in nearly a 70-percent decrease in those emissions as well.

Two years ago, I announced an important goal, and that is to end the no net loss policy of wetlands in the United States and increase wetlands in this country. I set a goal to restore, improve, and protect at least 3 million acres of wetlands over the next 5 years. So far we've restored, improved, and protected 1.8 million acres of wetlands. We're doing our part in the Federal Government. We have a responsibility to be good stewards of our air and our water and our land.

You know, flying in here, Congressman Lungren pointed out all the different farms. And I want to thank the farmers and ranchers for being good stewards of the land as well. They've got a lot at stake when it comes to being mindful of maintaining good land practices. I don't know if you realize this or not, but in the farm bill we—I signed and Congress passed, we provide about \$40 billion over a 10-year period to encourage our farmers and ranchers to protect wildlife and conserve our natural resources.

Flying over the mountain ranges we saw the forests. In Washington, we passed the Healthy Forest Initiative, which will help us clear out dangerous underbrush that will help reduce the risk of catastrophic fires. We've got some commonsense, practical things we're doing in Washington that I think the—I know the American people expect us to do.

You know, riding my bike today in the park reminded me of how important it is to make sure those parks are maintained and accessible to the American people. After all, it's your park system. We pledged 5 billion—\$4.9 billion over 5 years to reduce the maintenance backlog in national

parks, and we're honoring that commitment.

I'll tell you something I find very interesting. In the 36 years since the first Earth Day, air pollution in America has been reduced by 50 percent—yet our economy has tripled in size during that time. And there's one main reason why, and that's because of technology. We're a technologically competent nation. We must always be on the leading edge of research and development in this country if we expect to be good stewards of the environment and make sure our people are able to find good work. That's the challenge.

And so today we're here to honor a group of folks who are employing technology, using new ideas to help change the face of America. And it's important work we're doing here, because we've got a real problem when it comes to oil. We're addicted, and it's harmful for the economy, and it's harmful for our national security, and we've got to do something about it in this country.

And so I want to try to share some ideas with you about what we can and must do. First of all, I understand the folks here, as well as other places in the country, are paying high gas prices. And you are because the primary component of gasoline is crude oil. And we live in a global marketplace, and when the demand for crude oil goes up in China or India, fast-growing economies, if the corresponding supply doesn't meet that demand, the price of gasoline is going to go up here in America. The American people have got to understand, what happens elsewhere in the world affects the price of gasoline you pay here.

When that price of gasoline goes up, it hurts working people. It hurts our small businesses. And it's a serious problem that we've got to do something about. The Federal Government has a responsibility, by the way, to make sure there is no such—there is no price gouging, and we're watching real careful to make sure that people are treated fairly.

We're going to have a tough summer because people are beginning to drive now during tight supply. The Energy Department predicts gas prices are going to go up. Part of the reason, of course, is the escalating price of crude oil. Another reason why is, we haven't had any refinery capacity in the United States in a long period of time. When you don't have refining capacity and demand goes up, you're going to see a price increase. And so this country has got to be wise about how we permit refineries and encourage additional refining capacity as well as, you well know here in this State, we're changing the fuel mixes from MPBE to ethanol.

It was right to get rid of MPBE—MPBE was polluting water. It's a product that wouldn't biodegrade. It was a—its a terrible pollutant. And we're replacing that with ethanol, but there's a transition period that has to take place. And all these factors remind us that we got to do something about our dependence on oil. That's what the lessons at the pump say today.

I told you about national security. Let me talk a little bit about that. We get a lot of our oil from places that are unstable, and we get our oil sometimes from people that don't particularly care for us. That's what I mean about national security problems. We do not want to be reliant upon unstable parts of the world. We don't want the lives of our people affected because some nation may not like us.

And so here's a strategy to deal with it: One, we're spending a lot of money at the Federal level to encourage research and development, with the goal of getting away from oil. Spent \$10 billion over the last 5 years to develop cleaner and cheaper and more reliable energy sources. The goal is, as I mentioned in my State of the Union, to promote hydrogen and hybrid vehicles and ethanol. In other words, what technology will enable us to do is change our driving habits, is to figure out new ways to utilize fuels so that they're not—so we can get away from oil-based fuels.

I strongly believe hydrogen is the fuel of the future. That's what we're talking about. Hydrogen is used in a fuel cell that can power a car that uses no gasoline, produces no pollution or greenhouse gas emissions. Hydrogen vehicles can be twice as efficient as gasoline vehicles. Hydrogen can be produced from domestic energy sources, which means it has the potential—a vast potential—to dramatically cut our dependence on foreign oil. Hydrogen is clean; hydrogen is domestically produced; and hydrogen is the wave of the future. And the people here at the California Fuel Cell Partnership understand that.

What's interesting is that they're—because of this collaborative effort, there are now 100 hydrogen-powered vehicles on California roads. That may not seem a lot to some of you, but what you're witnessing here is the beginning of a major change in the driving habits of the American people. That's what you're seeing. We're in a facility that is just at the beginning stage of some of the most exciting technological changes this country will ever see. Hydrogen cars are being used by companies like UPS, the governments of San Francisco and Los Angeles, UC-Davis and Irvine.

I met the bus man here and—where is bus man? There he is, yes. He is one enthusiastic guy. [*Laughter*] He is—he truly believes that urban America is going to be transformed in a very positive way because of hydrogen-powered buses. And if you don't believe me, just ask him. [*Laughter*]

We saw a fueling station today where vehicles come—the drivers drive in here to get hydrogen. About 6,000 automobiles have been fueled at this station since it's been up and running. I appreciate Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger's declaration that California plans to build a hydrogen highway. Of all the States in the United States that has been on the leading edge of technological change, it's been California. That's a positive declaration on his part. Basically what he's saying is we want California to continue to lead this country

when it comes to innovative change. And we support him.

I believe that today's children will one day take a driver's test in a hydrogen-powered, pollution-free car. That's the goal of the United States. And it's a big goal, but it's an attainable goal. All you got to do is look at the progress that has been made thus far. In 2003, I pledged that we would spend \$1.2 billion over 5 years for hydrogen research and development, and we're on track to meet that goal.

One of the reasons I have come here is because I want the American people to understand that their tax dollars are yielding important results, that we are making progress, that the idea of having a hydrogen-powered automobile is not a foolish dream. It's a reality that is going to come to be. The funding is getting results. Since 2003, researchers have used Federal funding to double the lifetime of the hydrogen fuel cell stacks that power cars. In order for this to work, there has to be longevity—you just can't be changing your fuel cell stacks all the time. There has to be durability in order for this to be a product that people will want to buy.

We've cut the cost of manufacturing hydrogen fuel cells in half. That's pretty rapid progress when you think that the funding started in 2003, and the cost of the fuel cells have been reduced in half. And that is important. In order for this to become a part of life, these fuel cells have to be affordable. People have got to be able to buy them in order for them to be able to function properly. And we're making progress. We're heading for a hydrocarbon economy—from a hydrocarbon economy to a hydrogen economy. And that's a very positive development.

There's another positive development taking place in America today, and that's the advent of the hybrid vehicle. And it's a good way to reduce our oil consumption right now. Hybrid vehicles have both a gasoline-powered engine and an electric battery, and they travel about twice as far on

a gallon of fuel as gasoline-only vehicles. We can affect our dependence on oil by encouraging people to purchase hybrid vehicles. And that's why the Federal Government passed a law that says you get a tax credit of up to \$3,400 for a hybrid vehicle purchase. In other words, we're trying to make it worthwhile for you to go out and purchase a hybrid vehicle, through the use of a tax credit.

What's really going to be interesting, however, is what's called plug-in hybrid vehicles. And we're spending \$31 million annually to speed up research into these battery technologies. And what this means is, is that we're trying to develop a battery that will power your vehicle, where you plug it in at night, and you drive the first 40 miles on electricity alone. Now, think about what that means for big cities. A lot of people don't drive more than 40 miles a day in big cities. So all of a sudden, you've now—we're developing a technology that says, you'll drive by the use of electricity, and you won't use gasoline at all.

And one way to affect consumption is to speed up the development of these plug-in hybrids, and we're doing just that at the Federal level. It's a promising technology that will help people change the way they drive. It'll be a transition to the hydrogen fuel cell batteries.

Finally, I want to talk a little bit about ethanol. I'm a big proponent of ethanol. I like the idea of America's farmers being able to grow fuel. I like the idea of people saying, "My corn crop is up, and therefore, we're less dependent on oil from somewhere." And that's what we're beginning to do. We're beginning to change driving habits of the American people by changing the fuel mix in their cars. Any vehicle can use ethanol with a concentration of less than 10 percent. With minor modifications, cars and trucks can become what's called flex-fuel vehicles that run on a fuel blend called E-85, which is a mix of 85 percent ethanol and 15 percent gasoline.

And there are a lot of E-85 fueling stations now, particularly in the Midwest where they grow a lot of corn. But the idea is to be able to use your money to figure out how to use other materials to be able to manufacture ethanol. And we're close to some interesting breakthroughs. We're close to breakthroughs to be able to make ethanol from wood chips and stalks and switchgrass and other natural materials. And it makes a lot of sense if we're trying to get off oil, and it makes sense to use taxpayers' money to research ways to use switchgrass, for example, to become a fuel for your automobile. I think it does.

Catherine reminded me, however, in my discussions with her, that switchgrass can also be used to manufacture hydrogen. She wanted me to make sure—[laughter]—that in my description of what is possible in the United States that we—make sure one technology does not pirate money for another technology. And it's not going to happen. What's going to happen is we'll have research on all fronts to achieve a grand national objective. And there's no doubt in my mind we'll be able to achieve this objective.

We've done a lot of things in this country in the past. We've changed ways of life in—to make life qualitatively better for American people because we're innovators, and we're thinkers, and we get things done. And on this Earth Day, what I wanted to come to California to say is, we're in the process of dreaming big dreams for the American people but dreams that will be accomplished. We can't lose our nerve. We shouldn't lose our vision. We should remember where we've been and where we're going. And we're going to a day—and no doubt in my mind—where the United States of America will not be dependent on oil, will be good stewards of the environment, which will benefit the quality of life of the American people.

Thank you for letting me come by to talk to you. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:41 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Julia Harlow, wife

of Rep. John T. Doolittle of California; and Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger of California.

Remarks at a Republican National Committee Reception in Indian Wells, California

April 22, 2006

Please be seated. Thanks for coming. The lesson of the 1994 fundraiser is I should have had a better chairman. [*Laughter*] I want to thank you all for coming. I really appreciate your support for the Republican Party. We're the party that is the party of ideas, a party of optimism, and a party of people who know how to solve problems, which is exactly what we're doing.

I, first, wish Laura were here; she's not, of course. About four people go through the photo-op line indicated that they kind of would rather have Laura here than me. [*Laughter*] Yes, well—I can understand why. She is really a fine person, and she sends her best to all her friends here.

I thank my friend Brad. You know, one of the great things about our life is that we've had friends before I got into politics, and they're going to be our friends after we're in politics. And Brad Freeman is such a person, and I value his friendship. I want to thank him for organizing this event.

I want to thank all the folks who helped make this a very successful event. One reason why we are successful as a party is because we've got a great party chairman who understands that our message is one that should reach into every neighborhood; ours is one that is inclusive; ours is one that is hopeful—and that's Ken Mehlman. I want to thank you for coming, Ken.

I appreciate Duf Sundheim, party chairman here in California. I saw Duf yesterday at Cisco Systems, saw him here in the desert. What are you doing tomorrow, Duf? [*Laughter*] But thank you for your service; appreciate it very much.

I'm confident that Arnold Schwarzenegger will be reelected to Governor of this important State.

I am always a better person after I've been in the presence of Mary Bono. She is the Congresswoman from this district; she is smart; she's capable; she's doing an excellent job for the constituents here. I don't know if you realize this, but today is Earth Day, and Mary has led the way to make sure that some of the most valuable territory, some of the most valuable country in this part of the world are preserved for generations to come, and I want to thank you for your leadership. I also want to thank you for your strong stand in the war on terror. You're doing a fine job.

Connie Mack, from the great State of Florida, is with us. Congressman, good to see you; thank you for coming. Proud you're here. Good friend of the brothers, and mine too.

Bruce McPherson, the secretary of State is with us. Bruce, thank you for coming. Appreciate you being here, sir. I call him Senator; now we call you Secretary. It's good to see Mary as well.

Chuck Poochigian is with us. Chuck is running for the State attorney general. Chuck, good luck to you. Thank you. My old buddy, proud to see you. Thanks for coming. Thanks for bringing Debbie with you as well.

Steve Poizner is with us, running for the insurance commissioner. Steve—there he is. Good luck to you.

I just said hello to Congressman Brian Bilbray. Where are you, Brian? Thanks for