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in an internment camp. As a young man, he wore his country's uniform in Korea and Japan. From there, he went on to become a mayor, a Congressman, and a Cabinet Secretary.

I thank him for accepting my invitation to serve again, and I'm honored to have him by my side.

Mr. Secretary.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:30 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary Mineta's wife, Danealia. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary Mineta.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Iraq

February 8, 2001

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Iraq that was declared in Executive Order 12722 of August 2, 1990.

George W. Bush

The White House,
February 8, 2001.

Remarks at J.C. Nalle Elementary School and an Exchange With Reporters

February 9, 2001

The President. Good morning, everybody. How are you?

Students. Good morning.

The President. Thanks for letting me come by to say hello. Shall we get started?

Teacher Nancy Tentman. Boys and girls, we have a very special guest this morning. We are honored this morning to have the President of the United States here with us in our classroom, and he will be reading a story to us this morning. He's here on his visit to promote reading.

The President. I am here to promote reading. Thanks for letting me come by and read. First, I want to introduce the Secretary of Education, Dr. Rod Paige. He's a friend of mine. I knew Rod in Texas. He and I were from Texas. And I asked him to come up and become the Secretary of Education because he did such a fine job of being the superintendent of schools in Houston.

And we're all speaking about superintendents—we've got the superintendent of the Washington, DC, schools with us, Dr. Paul Vance.

Superintendent Paul Vance. Good morning, boys and girls.

Students. Good morning.

The President. Thanks for having us here at Nalle. I'm so glad to see your principal, Ms. Dobbins. She's a pretty special person, isn't she?

One of the things that happens when you get over 50—and I'm over 50—is you have trouble seeing. [*Laughter*] So in order for me to read this book called "More Than Anything Else," I had to put on my glasses.

This is also Black History Month. And what's important about Black History Month is to read about different heroes who have made a difference in making history and to realize there are fantastic role models. So this is a combination of history plus reading. So thanks for letting me come by.

One reason I like to highlight reading is, reading is the beginnings of the ability to be a good student. And if you can't read, it's going to be hard to realize dreams; it's going to be hard to go to college. So when your teachers say, "read," you ought to listen to her.

Ms. Tentman. Thank you.

The President. Also, I hope you read more than you watch TV. That's pretty hard. Does anybody do that, read more than they watch TV? [*Laughter*] It's good to read more than you watch TV. That's how you learn, and it's very important to practice.

Are you ready to go?

Students. Yes.

The President. Has anybody read this book yet?

Students. No.

[*The President read to the students.*]

The President. And that's the end of the story. And the story is about a young fellow who grew up very poor and worked really hard. But he knew something. He knew, if he learned to read, he could change his life. I think it's a great story, don't you?

Students. Yes.

The President. It's a story that teaches the power of reading and what it means. So that's what's important, to be able to read, because you can read somebody else's experiences too. And you can share. And this is the story of an unbelievable young man who became a great reader and a great leader.

So thanks for having me come. Anybody got any questions?

Ms. Tentman. Mr. President, we have a tradition here in our classroom that whenever we read a book—we have a reading chain here in our classroom. In each book we write the title and the author, and we'd be honored if you would join us in our reading chain by adding that book to our reading chain.

The President. I will do that. Thanks for letting me do that.

Good to see everybody.

[*The President signed a link for his book and added it to the classroom's reading chain, and then he autographed the book.*]

Ms. Tentman. Alright. Thank you so much. And we'll add that.

The President. I'm going to leave this here for you, too, as a gift.

Ms. Tentman. Okay. Thank you so much.

The President. Thanks, I appreciate it.

Ms. Tentman. And we will add this, boys and girls, to the end of our chain, and the President has signed it, "More Than Anything Else."

The President. How about that? It's pretty nice, isn't it? Thanks for having me come.

One of the reasons I came is, I think it's important for the Capital to stay focused on public education and public education reforms. One of the key ingredients in our package we sent up to the Congress is a reading initiative. I'm so impressed about what Ms. Dobbins is doing at this school, what the superintendent is insisting upon—accountability-based reading system.

And she told me that they've got a collaborative effort here with the National Institute of Health, which has developed curriculum based upon the science of reading. And it's impressive that the school and the District are willing to set high standards and ask the fundamental question: What works in education; are willing to implement curriculum that works; and then are willing to be held accountable for implementing the curriculum.

And thank you for letting me come. I appreciate you coming.

I'll be glad to answer a few questions.

Racial Profiling

Q. Mr. President, would you be interested in establishing a panel along the vein of what President Johnson did, to look into racial profiling or, perhaps, considering an Executive order banning racial profiling?

The President. I'll look at all opportunities, starting with the gathering of information, where the Federal Government can help jurisdictions, gather information, compile information to get the facts on the table to make sure that people are treated fairly in the justice system.

Defense Budget

Q. Mr. President, do you have any—[*inaudible*]—of agreeing to the Pentagon's request that you increase your defense spending, your defense budget, or give a supplemental for 2000?

The President. I've sent the message that I think it's very important for us to not have an early supplemental. Secondly, Secretary Rumsfeld is beginning a review of the defense, a top to bottom review of what's happening in today's military, reviewing missions, reviewing opportunities for change, beginning to look at the transformation policy. And I will look forward to finding out what his report says.

I will be traveling the country next week, talking about some increases in the defense spending, along the lines of what I promised during the course of the campaign, starting with better pay for the men and women who wear the uniform.

Q. But they're saying it's going to affect military readiness.

The President. What's going to affect military——

Q. They're saying that they need more money—excuse me—they're not going to be able to be prepared for——

The President. Well, that's part of the review process. I hear—there are a lot of voices on a lot of subjects regarding the budget. We have yet to submit our budget; I will later on. But I have said during the campaign, I have said since I've been sworn in, it's important for us to do a top to bottom review, to review all missions, spending priorities, and that's exactly what the Secretary of Defense is going to do. And before people jump to conclusions, I think it's important to get that review finished.

Justice Department Budget

Q. What about the Justice Department? Are you asking for specific cuts in—[*inaudible*].

The President. We're looking at all—we've asked our Secretaries on all Cabinets to take a review of their full budgets, and we'll submit a budget here later on.

Office of National AIDS Policy

Q. Mr. President, on the subject of the AIDS Office, there are still some misunderstanding about whether there is going to be an AIDS czar, like——

The President. Well, there's going to be a focus on AIDS, and people can apply any title they want. But there's going to be a person in my office who has got the responsibility of coordinating the AIDS policy throughout the Federal Government.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. What did you say to Mr. Arafat?

The President. Oh, I had a good talk with Mr. Arafat. I've also had talks with other leaders throughout the region, and I urged calm. I said it was very important to give the newly elected leader of Israel a chance, a chance to form a government and a chance to do what he said he wanted to do, which is to promote the peace in the region. And I certainly hope that people recognize that change does not necessarily mean that the peace process won't go forward.

I think we ought to take Mr. Sharon for his word, and that is he wants to promote peace in the Middle East. I look forward to watching him put a government together and then fulfilling what he said he would do.

Q. Are you concerned about the violence yesterday, the bombings?

The President. I'm concerned about all kinds of violence. But I firmly believe that the best policy is to encourage leaders to just remain resolute in their willingness to promote the peace and give the Sharon government a chance to form a government and then to be able to do what he said he wanted to do, which is to promote peace in the Middle East.

Have a good weekend, everybody.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:21 a.m. in Ms. Tentman's classroom. In his remarks, he referred to Gloria Dobbins, principal, J.C. Nalle Elementary School; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; and Prime Minister-elect Ariel Sharon of Israel.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

February 4

The President traveled from Camp David, MD, to Farmington, PA, to attend a Democratic Party retreat.

February 5

The President had a working luncheon with Federal Reserve Board Chairman Alan Greenspan.