

time and energy and effort to see if we can't get a good bill through the United States Congress.

You might be able to tell, I'm kind of enthusiastic about my work. *[Laughter]* You would be, too, if you got to see what I see. See, I get to see an America from a different perspective. I get to see an America that is—loves her Government; sometimes they like the President. *[Laughter]* But they care about the country. This is a fantastic land. It is a land of decent and caring and honorable citizens who really want the best for their families and for their neighbors and for their country.

It is a huge honor to be the President of this great land. We've got some great causes ahead of us: peace and prosperity. But there is the mission also of lifting this country's spirit. And I'm dedicated to doing that. I want to call upon the best of America and American citizens. And I'm enthusiastic about that calling, because I truly believe it will leave this land a better place.

Thank you all for being here, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:17 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Vladimir Putin of Russia.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Cyprus

June 20, 2001

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

In accordance with Public Law 95-384 (22 U.S.C. 2373(c)), I submit to you this report on progress toward a negotiated settlement of the Cyprus question covering the period April 1 through May 31, 2001. The previous submission covered events during the period February 1 through March 31, 2001.

The United Nations continued in its efforts to sustain the proximity talks that started in December 1999. The United States remains committed to the United Nations effort to find a just and lasting settlement to the Cyprus problem.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 21.

Remarks at Oak Mountain State Park in Birmingham, Alabama

June 21, 2001

Thank you all very much. Please, be seated. Senator, thank you very much. It's an honor to be traveling back to Alabama today with Jeff Sessions. I'm going to spend a little time this evening touting his cause. But I will tell you, he's been a loyal friend, a strong supporter of Alabama, and a great United States Senator.

It's an honor to be with members of the Alabama congressional delegation here. We've got six of them that flew down today. These men are honest, decent, hard-working people—had five Republicans, one Democrat, all who worked together for doing what's right for Alabama. And I appreciate so very much these fine gentlemen for traveling with me today, and I'm proud to call you friends.

It's an honor to be here with the Lieutenant Governor and the attorney general of the State of Alabama. I want to thank Don Cooley and Jimmy Shivers for giving me a brief tour of this important part of the world. I want to thank the YMCA and the counselors at the YMCA and the young men and women who are teaching children right from wrong, teaching children that in life, somebody does care for them. No better spot to be learning compassion and love than in the outdoors, and it's an honor to be here.

It's good to see my friend Ray Scott. Make sure you behave yourself, Ray. *[Laughter]* I've been knowing him a long time, and I appreciate the members of the bass clubs from around Alabama for being here to work with the kids, to teach them how to fish, and to teach them to appreciate the wonders of nature.

I'm impressed by the fact that 600,000 people come to this park every year. It means it's just not a park for the few; it's a park for the many. And people come here for all

kinds of reasons. They come here to hike. They come here to spend some time with their families. They come here to fish. I wish I was coming here to fish a little more often, Ray. [Laughter]

This is a State park, maintained almost entirely by State money, operated by the people who are closest to the people, who understand the local wishes and the local needs. And you seem to be doing a pretty darn good job. It's a beautiful spot.

Thirty-six years ago the Federal Government undertook to assist parks just like this one. Congress created a program called the Land and Water Conservation Fund. Half the money was supposed to be paid to the States, to conserve and maintain their natural resources. Oak Mountain received some of that money in 1983—some of the money in 1983.

But for a long period of time, the Federal Government has been falling short on its commitment to this fund, and many States have been denied money that was promised the citizens. And that's not fair, and under the budget I have submitted to the United States Congress, that practice will stop.

In outlining my budget priorities this year, I proposed fully funding the Land and Water Conservation Fund; \$900 million will fully fund the fund. It's the highest request in the fund's history, and half of the money will go to the States, just like the authors of the law intended.

And why is that important? Why is that important? Well, one, it's a high environmental priority for me. Two, I don't believe all knowledge and wisdom resides in Washington, DC. I believe the good people of Alabama care a lot about the resources in Alabama. I know the fishermen care about clean water. I know the people who hike the trails want to have good hiking trails. I know people who picnic in the park want clean parks. And so that's why, under my vision, the amount of money that Alabama will receive to help in conservation programs would increase by 387 percent. It makes sense. It's good public policy.

I believe Federal money is most useful when it comes without strings, when it comes without dictates. And so I believe we need to give States new flexibility on how to man-

age their conservation and resources. You could use the money to buy parkland; you can use it to protect endangered species; you can use it to try to get rid of the hydrilla that clog some of our lakes.

You could have a generation of environmental programs working with landowners to protect wildlife or to protect endangered species. You know, it's interesting, the money it costs to buy a single acre of parkland, a State could encourage environmental protection over many, many acres of land by working with private property owners. There is a lot States can do with the money. And it's important for the Federal Government to understand that.

I believe trusting local people to make local decisions is the right public policy. And that's what this plan does, and that's what we do with other areas in the Federal Government, as well. One of the key components of tax relief—and I'm proud of the fact that all members of the congressional delegation and two United States Senators are all members of the congressional delegation here present; and the two United States Senators—supported tax relief. Do you know why it's important? Because it trusts people with their own money. It says that we trust the people.

As you can see, I've asked for funding an important priority, the Land and Water Conservation Fund. But another important priority was to say we trust the people of Alabama and Texas and States all across the country to spend the money as they see fit. And so for the first time in a generation, we've got historic, across-the-board tax relief, because we understand how hard the people of Alabama and the people of America are working and because we trust the people to make the right decisions for their families, the right decisions on what to do with money.

The Federal Government has set budget priorities. But with money left over, we trust the people, and it's the right thing to do. And I'm honored that you guys voted with me on this tax bill, and so will the people of Alabama.

And we're making progress in education, too. I believe we can get a good education bill finally out of the Congress. It passed the House, and it passed the Senate, and now

they're going to work out their differences. And they're going to put a bill up on my desk soon, I hope, which will be historic reform. The cornerstone of the bill says we're setting high standards, but we have more flexibility for local folks. One size does not fit all when it comes to the education of the children in America.

We have as a cornerstone accountability. We say, "If you receive Federal money, show us whether or not the children are learning to read and write and add and subtract." Instead of a system that says, "Oh, how old are you? If you're 10, we'll put you here, and if you're 12, we'll put you here." We're beginning to change the way of thinking, so we ask the question, "Before we put you anywhere, we want to know what you know. And if you don't know what you're supposed to know, we'll correct it early, before it's too late."

This is a good piece of legislation. I can't wait to sign it, and I hope the members of the conference committee do not hold it up for political reasons. They need to get it to my desk so that the public schools in Alabama and all across the country can start planning for their fall year.

I believe it's so important for us to set priorities at the Federal level, and I have set priorities. Education is a priority. Improving the military is a priority of mine. One of the priorities in our budget is to make sure the folks who wear the uniform get paid better, and I believe Congress will enact that, that folks get housed better, and we're making good progress of housing our troops, although we've got a lot of work to do.

It's also important to have a Commander in Chief who sets a clear mission for the military, and that's to be prepared to fight and win war and, therefore, prevent war from happening in the first place.

So today I've discussed some priorities of mine. And thankfully we worked together, both Members of the House and the Senate, Republicans and Democrats, to support a budget that has \$661 billion of what they call discretionary spending.

I understand the pressures in Congress. It's one thing to set a budget, but then people start spending. And my call to the Congress is: Stick to the budget. My call to the Con-

gress is: We worked hard to get a good budget, and it's important for people not to overspend that budget.

I talked to Sonny Callahan of the great State of Alabama about that subject, and he understands. He's got a tough job. He hears all kinds of requests on the Appropriations Committee. He's one of the leaders on the Appropriations Committee. But Sonny and the other Members came in the office the other day and said, "Mr. President, we're going to work to stick to the budget." That's what we told the people we would do, and that's what I expect Congress to do. And if they try to bust the budget, there's a remedy. If they get over the budget, there's a simple remedy, and that's to put the veto pen on it and send it back to the Congress until we get the budget right.

We're also making progress in changing the tone in Washington. And I think that's really important. I think it's important for folks, no matter what your political party is—Republican, Democrat, none of the above—to look at Washington and be proud of what you see.

I think it's incredibly important for those of us in positions of responsibility to conduct our debates in a way that elevates politics, that elevates public service, that sends a clear signal to the people of America that serving your country is a noble calling. And we are making some progress.

Oh, occasionally there is a shrill voice out there or two. Sometimes they say things about the President that my mother doesn't like to read about. [*Laughter*] But it takes a lot of work. You can't change a culture overnight.

But I am here to report to the good people of Alabama, we are making progress. The rhetoric is slowly but surely changing. The debates are becoming more honest. The philosophical differences are less bitter. And I believe we're getting a spirit of accomplishment in Washington, DC, that slowly but surely, people are beginning to realize we need to be judged upon the results, not upon what we say on TV, that we're a results-oriented country, and it's important for us to be judged based upon results. And slowly but surely, people are beginning to realize that they have a President who set a pretty clear

and simple agenda, profound agenda and is willing to share results and credit for results when they happen.

I am proud that this Democrat Member from Alabama voted for tax relief. He deserves just as much credit as the two men sitting next to him as a Republican. You see, party is important. But it's not nearly as important as doing what's right for the American people. It's not nearly as important as setting the right example for the children of America, as well.

Well, things are getting pretty good up there in Washington, and I'm honored to be your President. I tell you, one of the things I was sharing with the Members here coming down that I'm so proud of, and it happened here again, and it's going to happen all across the country every time I travel, is, one, the number of people who come out just to wave. People of the country respect the Presidency. Sometimes they like the President, but they respect the Presidency, and for that I am grateful. It reminds me of the huge responsibility I have, a responsibility that I'll take seriously and a responsibility that I hold dear to my heart, and that is to call upon the best of America.

And this is an appropriate setting for me to speak briefly about that. The best of America happens when some neighbor says, "What can I do to help a neighbor in need?" The best in America happens when people hear the universal call to love a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. The best of America occurs when people walk up and say, "Mr. President, I'm praying for you." The best of this country happens when decent citizens work hard to make their neighborhoods and communities a better place for every citizen, regardless of accent, background, religion, or color.

And the good news about being the President is that I am fortunate enough to be the President of a country full of people just like that, full of the best of the country.

So it's my honor to talk about kind of what's going on in the Nation's Capital, a little bit about the budget, talk about some of our successes, to outline a very important conservation and environmental policy that

will make a huge difference all across the country.

But also it's my opportunity to thank the good people of Alabama for giving me a chance to be the President of the greatest Nation on the face of the Earth.

Thank you all for coming, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:47 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gov. Steve Windom, Attorney General Bill Pryor, and Director of Parks Don Cooley of Alabama; James Shivers, superintendent, Oak Mountain State Park; and Ray Scott, founder, Bass Anglers Sportsman Society.

Statement on the Announcement of Criminal Indictments for the Khobar Towers Bombing

June 21, 2001

On June 25, 1996, a massive truck bomb exploded outside the Khobar Towers apartment complex in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, killing 19 American servicemen and injuring 372 other Americans and Saudis. For the last 5 years, the Department of Justice and the Federal Bureau of Investigation have conducted an intensive investigation of this deplorable act of terrorism.

Today the Department of Justice announced criminal indictments of 14 people, 13 Saudis and one Lebanese, for conspiring and carrying out the bombing of Khobar Towers. The Department's investigation into this matter will continue and additional charges are possible.

I applaud the work of the Department of Justice and the FBI who have spent countless hours pursuing this case. And I want to thank the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia for their assistance in this investigation. Finally, and most important, to the families of those who were killed and to those who were injured, I want to extend my personal sympathy and to assure you that your Government will not forget your loss and will continue working, based on the evidence, to make sure that justice is done.