

things I'll do is remind the Members of Congress that this is not a political issue, that protecting America is an American issue, it's a duty we all have, and that I vow not to play politics with doing what's right.

I'll also remind the Congress that I am going to speak to the American people about this issue. Once I propose it, I'm going to take my case beyond Washington to the true influence—the real influence peddlers of America; that's the American people, the people who work every day and who've got the capacity to inform their Members of Congress or the Senate their opinion. And that's what I'm going to continue to do.

I'm going to continue to speak as plainly as I can about the need for this Department, assuring the American people that we're not interested in increasing the size and scope of the Federal Government, we're interested in efficiency. We want an organization that can work closely with local leaders such as my Mayor, Mayor Williams. We want to be able to respond better if something were to occur. We want to know how better to enforce our borders. We want to know when they're coming in the country and if they're overstaying their visas. We need to know that, in America, under this new—the new threats under which we live.

We've got to—I signed a bioterrorism bill today. I want to thank you all for coming for the signing ceremony. I saw Jim Schlesinger there, and I'm sure you're glad I cut my remarks in half, because the temperature seemed to be—[laughter]—seemed to be a little warm out there. But the idea is to better coordinate our capacity to detect weapons of mass destruction and respond to them if they occur.

And finally, we need an analytical capacity within a department that can take all the intelligence that's gathered, not only by the FBI or the CIA but all throughout our Government, and analyze it so we have a better feel for what the terrorists might be thinking and then how to respond.

And you all can play a very useful role in this—in this process. You bring a lot of heft and a lot of experience and a lot of know-how. You can definitely help us understand how best to coordinate Government activities with the private sector, and that's essential,

that we team up to do everything we need to do to protect America.

So I want to thank you for your service. I want you to know this administration is totally committed to protecting the people. Many of you are aware of the President's briefing he gets, sees—or knows what the President reads. And they're still out there; these people—you know, these killers, they're still lurking around. But they picked on a—they picked on a group of people who are plenty determined, and that's the American people.

We've got a fabulous nation. And we're tough, and we're determined, and we're united, and we're strong. And at the same time, we're showing the world that we're a compassionate nation as well. We won the first battle, or we're winning the first battle in the war of the 21st century, which was in Afghanistan. And we went into that country not as conquerors but as liberators. And I'm proud of our Nation, and I'm proud of your service to our Nation. And I want to thank you all for giving us your time.

God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:44 a.m. in the Indian Treaty Room in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Joseph J. Grano, Jr., Chair, William H. Webster, Vice Chair, and James R. Schlesinger and Washington, DC, Mayor Anthony A. Williams, members, President's Homeland Security Advisory Council. H.R. 3448, the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002, approved June 12, was assigned Public Law No. 107-188.

Remarks on Presenting the National Medals of Science and Technology

June 12, 2002

Please be seated. Thank you all very much, and welcome to the White House. It is a—it's an honor to be with so many incredibly bright and innovative people.

I want to welcome the winners. I want to welcome your family members. I want to welcome your friends, and I want to welcome those of us who are just happy to be in your presence. [Laughter] The science and technology leaders here today have turned genius

and persistence into knowledge and technology that will shape lives for decades to come. And that must make you feel pretty darn good.

Our honorees are the prophets of a better age, seeing the future before a lot of folks don't see the present. They have earned these medals, and as they do so, they earn the thanks of their fellow Americans.

I want to thank the Secretary of Commerce, Don Evans, who will be here to administer—who is here to administer the National Medal of Technology. I want to thank Secretary Rod Paige, the Secretary of Education. I want to thank the Director of the Office of Science and Technology Policy, Dr. John Marburger, for the fine job he is doing on behalf of the country. John, thank you for coming.

I want to thank the Members of the United States Congress who are here. I appreciate you all being here to cheer on the recipients from your districts.

The medals we present today are the highest honors—the highest honors—a President can bestow in the fields of science and technology. And today's honorees have earned this recognition with their tireless work. Some of the honorees are learning how to battle cancer with new therapies. Others are advancing our understanding of the Earth and the Sun. Others are creating new methods for analyzing data. All of our honorees and their colleagues throughout the United States are asking questions whose answers will improve lives, not only here at home but around the world.

Science and—scientific and technological research are a high calling for any individual. And promoting research is an important role of our Federal Government. I'm pleased that this year's budget includes the most research and development funding in the history of our country. We'll continue to support science and technology because innovation makes America stronger. Innovation helps Americans to live longer, healthier, and happier lives. Innovation helps our economy grow and helps people find work. Innovation strengthens our national defense and our homeland security, and we need a strong national defense and homeland security as we

fight people who hate America because we're free.

President Franklin Roosevelt's science adviser was a fellow named Vannevar Bush. He doesn't claim me, and I don't claim him. [Laughter] But here's what he says. He said, "Without scientific progress, the national health would deteriorate. Without scientific progress, we could not hope for improvement in our standard of living or an increased number of jobs for our citizens. Without scientific progress, we could not have maintained our liberties against tyranny." What Vannevar Bush said back then is true today.

Scientists and researchers do vital work, and they oftentimes do it outside the limelight. It's a good thing to shine the light here in the White House. Their influence extends beyond laboratories. It reaches into hospitals and homes and classrooms. And as importantly, your work inspires young Americans who study past scientific breakthroughs in order to chart their own paths of discovery.

The world of our children will be shaped by the people we honor today. On behalf of all Americans, I want to thank you for your lifelong commitment to making our world a better place.

In a few moments, Secretary Evans will help me present the National Medals of Technology, but first I ask Dr. Marburger to come to the stage to assist me with the presentation of the 2001 National Medals of Science.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:20 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Statement on Senate Failure To Permanently Repeal the Death Tax

June 12, 2002

Today's failure by the Senate to permanently repeal the death tax is a disappointment to the American people. It is wrong that, as a result of a quirk in the law, millions of Americans will be subject to the death tax beginning at the end of the decade. The Congress must fix this unfair tax and provide families with certainty so they can plan for the future.