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country and your devotion to a cause larger than yourself. I've seen your discipline, your idealism, and your sense of honor. I know that every mission you are given will be carried out with skill and unselfish courage.

The first time the U.S.S. *Enterprise* was ever deployed in a crisis was October 1962, when President John F. Kennedy ordered it to quarantine Cuba, which was arming itself with nuclear missiles aimed at our Nation. President Kennedy understood that dangers to freedom had to be confronted early and decisively. He said of the cold war, "These are extraordinary times. We face an extraordinary challenge. Our strength as well as our convictions have imposed upon this Nation the role of leader in freedom's cause."

Today, at the dawn of a new century, America is still the leader in freedom's cause. And our generation is called to a central role in this Nation's history. As Americans, we can be confident: The American people are strong and resolute. The American Armed Forces are brave and ready, and in freedom's cause, we will prevail.

May God bless you all. May God bless our family—your families—and may God continue to bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. at the Echo Foxtrot Pier. In his remarks, he referred to Adm. Robert J. Natter, USN, Commander, U.S. Atlantic Fleet; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Welfare Reform Legislation

February 13, 2003

I commend the House for acting quickly on bipartisan welfare reform legislation that builds upon our successful efforts that have moved millions of Americans from welfare to work. This compassionate approach will help many more Americans realize a better life of independence, hope, and dignity that comes with having a job. It will also promote strong families and healthy marriages, while freeing States to seek innovative ways to improve services to those who are transitioning from the welfare rolls to the workforce.

I now urge the Senate to act without delay to strengthen our efforts to help our fellow Americans on welfare achieve independence through work.

Statement on Congressional Action on 2003 Appropriations Legislation

February 13, 2003

I commend the Congress for finishing work on the 2003 appropriations bills. This budget will provide valuable resources for priorities such as homeland security, military operations, and education, while adhering to the spending restraint set forth in my budget. I look forward to signing this legislation and to continuing a course of fiscal discipline.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of William Donaldson as Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission

February 13, 2003

I applaud the Senate for acting quickly to confirm William Donaldson to be the Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission. In this new role, he will continue to crack down on corporate wrongdoing, work to protect investors, and restore confidence in our capital markets. I also thank Chairman Shelby, Senator Sarbanes, and the Senate leadership and commend them for their efforts.