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you going to stop them from getting a nuclear weapon?

The President. Well, the international community must come together to make it very clear to Iran that we will not tolerate the construction of a nuclear weapon. Iran would be dangerous if they have a nuclear weapon. I brought this subject up in the G–8; we had a good discussion on the subject with near universal agreement that we all must work together to prevent Iran from developing a nuclear weapon.

And secondly, I appreciate those courageous souls who speak out for freedom in Iran. They need to know America stands squarely by their side. And I would urge the Iranian administration to treat them with the utmost of respect.

Stretch [Richard Keil, Bloomberg News].

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, do you plan to send Dr. Rice to the Middle East soon, particularly given the situation——

The President. I'll let you know when we decide to do so. We, of course, have got Ambassador Wolf in the region now, and he's working hard with both parties. And I called President Mubarak today to ask him to work with the Palestinian Authority to consolidate their security forces under Prime Minister Abbas so that the Prime Minister can achieve the goals that he set out, which is for the dismantlement of terror and what hopefully will be a peaceful Palestinian state.

Thank you all.

Q. You do anticipate sending——

The President. I said, I'll let you know when we send her.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:23 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Assistant Secretary of State for Nonproliferation John S. Wolf; President Hosni Mubarak of Egypt; and Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Estate Tax Legislation

June 18, 2003

I commend the House of Representatives for acting to permanently eliminate the death tax. The death tax results in unfair double taxation of income and it hurts America's small businesses, which are the engine of job creation. Today's vote is a victory for fairness, job creation, and certainty for family businesses, farmers, and ranchers.

Permanently eliminating the death tax is an important step toward increasing fairness in the Tax Code and promoting economic security. I urge the Senate to act on this important matter so that we can eliminate this unfair tax once and for all.

Remarks at the Congressional Picnic

June 18, 2003

The President. Listen, thank you all for coming. Laura and I and Dick and Lynne are so happy you all are here. And we're really happy it's not raining. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. [*Inaudible*]

The President. I bet you are.

First, we're so thrilled that Dennis Edwards and the Temptations Review has joined us tonight. We expect to see some serious rug-cutting or, in this case, grass-cutting. [*Laughter*]

We do want to thank the families who are here. We're so grateful for the wives and husbands of the Members of the Senate and the Congress for being so patient with your loved ones and for supporting them in their service to the United States of America. We want to thank the sons and daughters as well for understanding your dad and your mom are serving something greater than themselves in life.

I want to thank all the Members of Congress from both political parties for doing such a fine job on behalf of the United States of America. You know what I know: We're blessed to live in a great country. And one