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Contents

Addresses and Remarks

See also Appointments and Nominations; Resignations and Retirements
Florida, discussion at Florida Community College at Jacksonville in Jacksonville—54
Global war on terrorism, briefing—52
Indian Ocean earthquake and tsunamis, briefings on disaster relief—33, 52
Radio address—31
Social Security reform, discussion—39
U.S. Agency for International Development—35
Virginia
Briefings in Arlington—52
J.E.B. Stuart High School in Falls Church—45

Appointments and Nominations

Homeland Security Department, Secretary, remarks—38

Communications to Congress

Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996, letter on review of title III—53

Communications to Federal Agencies

Extension of Waiver of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act With Respect to Assistance to the Government of Azerbaijan, memorandum—53

Executive Orders

Providing an Order of Succession in the Office of Management and Budget—52

Interviews With the News Media

Exchange with reporters in the Oval Office—33

Proclamations

National Mentoring Month—51
To Extend Nondiscriminatory Trade Treatment (Normal Trade Relations Treatment) to the Products of Armenia—31

Resignations and Retirements

Homeland Security Department, Secretary, remarks—38

Statements by the President

Palestinian Presidential election—32
Sudan Government and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement comprehensive peace agreement—33

Supplementary Materials

Acts approved by the President—63
Checklist of White House press releases—62
Digest of other White House announcements—61
Nominations submitted to the Senate—62

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, January 14, 2005

Proclamation 7860—To Extend Nondiscriminatory Trade Treatment (Normal Trade Relations Treatment) to the Products of Armenia

January 7, 2005

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

1. Since declaring its independence from the Soviet Union in 1991, Armenia has made considerable progress in enacting market reforms and on February 5, 2003, Armenia acceded to the World Trade Organization (WTO). The extension of unconditional normal trade relations treatment to the products of Armenia will permit the United States to avail itself of all rights under the WTO with respect to Armenia. Armenia has demonstrated a strong desire to build a friendly and cooperative relationship with the United States and has been found to be in full compliance with the freedom of emigration requirements under title IV of the Trade Act of 1974 (the "1974 Act") (19 U.S.C. 2431 *et seq.*).

2. Pursuant to section 2001(b) of Public Law 108–429, 118 Stat. 2588, and having due regard for the findings of the Congress in section 2001(a) of said law, I hereby determine that chapter 1 of title IV of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2431–2439) should no longer apply to Armenia.

3. Section 604 of the 1974 Act (19 U.S.C. 2483), as amended, authorizes the President to embody in the Harmonized Tariff Schedule of the United States the substance of relevant provisions of that Act, or other acts affecting import treatment, and of actions taken thereunder.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, acting under the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States, including but not limited to section 2001(b) of Public Law 108–429, and section 604 of the 1974 Act, do proclaim that:

(1) Nondiscriminatory trade treatment (normal trade relations treatment) shall be extended to the products of Armenia, which shall no longer be subject to chapter 1 of title IV of the 1974 Act.

(2) The extension of nondiscriminatory treatment to products of Armenia shall be effective as of the date of signature of this proclamation.

(3) All provisions of previous proclamations and executive orders that are inconsistent with the actions taken in this proclamation are superseded to the extent of such inconsistency.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 9:02 a.m., January 11, 2005]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on January 12. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

January 8, 2005

Good morning. Americans continue to mourn the victims of the devastating tsunamis in the Indian Ocean. More than 150,000 lives are now feared lost, including tens of thousands of children.

Communities have been decimated from Indonesia to Thailand to India to East Africa. Thousands are missing or injured, and millions are thought to be homeless or without food and clean water.

The world has united behind this urgent cause, and the United States is taking a leading role. We're working with other governments, relief organizations, and the United Nations to coordinate a swift and effective international response. We are rushing food, medicine, and other vital supplies to the region. And we are focusing efforts on helping the women and children who need special attention, including protection from the evil of human trafficking.

This past week, I sent a delegation led by Secretary of State Colin Powell and Governor Jeb Bush of Florida to the Indian Ocean region. They surveyed the damage in several countries, met with local and regional leaders, assessed the relief efforts in place, and began to evaluate what more can be done to help. Secretary Powell reported that American relief efforts are making major visible progress.

We have made an initial commitment of $350 million in aid. And those funds are being distributed promptly to organizations on the ground. Navy vessels, including the U.S.S. *Abraham Lincoln,* have moved into the region to help provide food, medical supplies, and clean water. Helicopters and other military aircraft are meeting critical needs by airlifting supplies directly to victims in remote areas. As in so many other places, our service men and women are showing the courage and compassion of our Nation to the world.

We're also seeing the good heart of America in an outpouring of generosity here at home. Private citizens are showing their compassion in creative and inspiring ways. On a rainy day in Washington State, children sold hot chocolate by the side of the road and gave their profits to charity. Seven professional basketball players pledged to donate $1,000 to UNICEF for every point they scored in a game. American businesses have contributed cash and products, and many are matching donations by their employees. Churches, temples, synagogues, mosques, and other religious congregations are taking up special collections for disaster victims.

To draw even greater amounts of private donations, I asked former Presidents Bill Clinton and George Bush to lead a nationwide charitable fundraising drive. Their mission is to encourage contributions, both large and small, directly to the organizations with recovery efforts underway in the disaster area.

I am grateful to the courageous relief groups that have responded so quickly to this catastrophe, including the Red Cross and Red Crescent, Salvation Army, Catholic Relief Services, Save the Children, CARE, AmeriCares, and many others. Many of these organizations have long experience with natural disasters and in-depth knowledge of the recovery needs. They're in the best position to use donations wisely and effectively.

To encourage support for these groups, I have signed legislation allowing Americans to deduct from their 2004 Federal income tax cash contributions made to tsunami relief efforts this month. I urge all Americans to contribute as they are able. More information about making a donation is available on the Internet at www.usafreedomcorps.gov.

In this time of grief for so many around the world, Americans have come together to pray for the victims and families of the tsunami disaster. We think especially of the children who have been lost and the survivors searching for their families. And we offer our sustained compassion and generosity as the people of the devastated region begin to rebuild.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on January 7 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 8. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 7 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Palestinian Presidential Election

January 9, 2005

I am heartened by today's strong turnout in the Palestinian elections. Palestinians throughout the West Bank and Gaza took a key step toward building a democratic future by choosing a new President in elections that observers describe as largely free and fair.

This is a historic day for the Palestinian people and for the people of the Middle East.

America and all free nations strongly support the efforts of the Palestinian people to create lasting democratic institutions. These efforts—including today's Presidential elections and the parliamentary elections that will follow in several months—are essential for the establishment of a sovereign, independent, viable, democratic, and peaceful Palestinian state that can live alongside a safe and secure Israel. These elections are further proof that, when given a choice, all peoples seek to live in liberty and to choose their own government.

The United States stands ready to help the Palestinian people realize their aspirations. The new Palestinian President and his cabinet face critical tasks ahead, including fighting terrorism, combating corruption, building reformed and democratic institutions, and reviving the Palestinian economy. We look forward to working with him and the Palestinian people to address these challenges and to advance the cause of Middle East peace consistent with the vision I set forth on June 24, 2002, of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and security. Other countries also have constructive and vital roles to play. Israel must help to improve the humanitarian and economic situation in the West Bank and Gaza and follow through with the Disengagement Plan. The Arab states must take concrete steps with all parties to create a regional environment conducive to peace, lend financial support to the Palestinian people, and refuse to assist or harbor terrorists. The United States is looking carefully at how we can best organize and fund our own efforts to help the parties achieve a lasting peace.

Statement on the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement Comprehensive Peace Agreement

January 9, 2005

I congratulate the Government of Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on the signing of a comprehensive peace agreement. I thank all the officials of the United States Government who have worked hard to help achieve this agreement, including Secretary of State Colin Powell, former Special Envoy for Sudan, Ambassador John Danforth, and the Special Humanitarian Coordinator for Sudan, USAID Administrator Andrew Natsios. I also thank the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, which sponsored the talks, and the Government of Kenya, which hosted them, and the Governments of Norway and the United Kingdom and the African Union, which played constructive roles for peace.

Both sides should be proud of this accomplishment. The difficult work of implementation must now begin. Only the implementation of this agreement in good faith can result in long-term peace and development.

As we celebrate this positive movement toward peace in the longstanding North-South conflict, we remember the conflict in Darfur and the suffering it causes. This comprehensive peace agreement should serve as an inspiration and model for both sides in their work toward negotiating a peaceful resolution of the Darfur conflict. I call on the Government of Sudan and on all Darfur rebel groups to live up to their cease-fire commitments, to end atrocities, and to allow the free movement of humanitarian workers and supplies. The United States will continue to assist the people of Darfur in reaching a just and lasting peace.

Remarks Following a Briefing on Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunamis Disaster Relief and an Exchange With Reporters

January 10, 2005

The President. Mr. Secretary, welcome back. I want to thank Secretary Powell and Andrew Natsios and Mike Brown and Marc Grossman for taking the lead on behalf of our Government and the American people and providing relief for the victims of the tsunamis.

The Secretary has given me a extensive briefing on what he has seen, on the unbelievable damage, particularly in Banda Aceh.

He's also brought me up to date on the extraordinary efforts by the United States Government and the United States people, along with governments around the world, to provide much needed relief to those who've suffered. We're now entering a second phase of providing for rehabilitation to these affected societies as well as a reconstruction effort.

And as the Secretary said yesterday, the Government of the United States is committed to helping the people who suffer. We're committed today, and we will be committed tomorrow. The outpouring of support from the citizens of our country has been more than heartening. It has been very strong. And I want to thank those who have felt like—felt the need to contribute directly to the relief efforts. I urge them to go to the usafreedomcorps.gov web site to make sure that their cash contributions are funneled to programs which are having the necessary effect of providing relief, eventually rehabilitation and reconstruction, to those who have suffered.

And so, Mr. Secretary, I want to thank you. Andrew, I'm looking forward to going over to your headquarters to thank those NGOs who have been working hard as well as those in your agency who have worked so incredibly hard to show the compassion and decency of the American people during this time of extraordinary crisis.

I'll answer a couple of questions. Jennifer [Jennifer Loven, Associated Press].

Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunamis Disaster Relief

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. This long-term commitment by the United States to the Indian Ocean region—what specifically does that mean? Does it mean more dollars above the $350 million? What are you—what are you prepared to do?

The President. Well, we'll see. I think the important thing is to make sure that, as one person noted the other day, that the dollars are demand-driven. In other words, the key is to provide immediate relief, which we are doing, and then to work with governments and the United Nations to assess the needs, the intermediate-term needs and the long-term needs, to make sure the money that is available actually achieves a coordinated objective. And that's what we're in the process of doing.

In other words, these men went in—in to make sure that the money that we had put up is being applied to provide necessary relief. And now we're in the process of helping to rehabilitate and reconstruct the societies. And they're beginning to focus—the demand is beginning to focus, particularly on the Banda Aceh region. That is the part of the world that is going to require the most intense effort by our—by the governments around the world.

Rosey [James Rosen, FOX News].

Palestinian Presidential Elections

Q. Sir, is there a lesson—is there a lesson in the Palestinian elections that the Iraqi people should see? And what is this administration going to do to build on this election in the Middle East region?

The President. Well, first, I want to offer my congratulations to Mr. Abu Mazen. I look forward to talking with him at the appropriate time. I look forward to welcoming him here to Washington if he chooses to come here. I look forward to helping to make sure that the conference in London, a conference all aimed at helping the Palestinians develop the institutions necessary to support Abu Mazen's vision of a peaceful, active, vibrant state, to become reality. And so we are—this is a man who has been elected by what appears to be a good-sized vote. I'm heartened by the elections, and I'm also looking forward to the Iraqi elections on January the 30th.

This is an extraordinary year, when you think about it. In the first month of a new year, there will be an election in the Palestinian territory and there will be an election in Iraq. Who could have possibly envisioned an election in Iraq at this point in history? And yet we're going to have an election. And I'm sure there are—a lot of people are incredibly excited about the thought of having an election in Iraq inside the Iraqi territory, except for a handful who want to stop democracy, because they understand what an election means.

And so I'm—as a democrat, as a person who believes in democracy—a Republican

democrat, I might add—as someone who believes that everybody has a right to live in a free society and everybody wants to live in a free society, the month of January 2005 is an extraordinary month.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Israeli and Palestinian Roles Following Elections

Q. Are there any steps that Israel can take to help the Abbas position, any confidence-building measures? And Abbas called Israel the "Zionist enemy" on the campaign trail. Was that rhetoric helpful?

The President. I think Israel did help with the elections. I know the Secretary worked hard on making it clear to Israel that it was very important that voters in Jerusalem be allowed to have access to the polls. And the initial reports we got back, and on the briefing that the Secretary gave me today about the initial reports on the election, was that there was better than good movement. I mean, it was better than we thought a month ago, that the Israelis did understand the need to have an election.

I think it's going to be very important for Israel to fulfill its obligation on the withdrawal from the territories that they have pledged to withdraw from. It is essential that Israel keep a vision of two states, living side by side in peace, and that as the Palestinians begin to develop the institutions of a state, that the Israeli Government support the development of those institutions and recognize that it is essential that there be a viable economy, that there be a viable health care system, that people be—that people be allowed to start building a society that meets their hopes and needs. And Israel can play and must play an important part of the development of a Palestinian state.

At the same time, it's essential that the Palestinian leadership consolidate security forces, so that they can fight off those few who still have the desire to destroy Israel as a part of their philosophy and those few who fear there to be a free vote amongst the Palestinian people.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President-elect Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the United States Agency for International Development

January 10, 2005

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. Good morning. A little more than 2 weeks ago, the world witnessed one of the worst displays of natural destruction in history. Since that time, the world has witnessed one of history's greatest displays of compassion.

Most of you are members of this great organization, the United States Agency for International Development. Some of you are members of nongovernmental organizations. All of you are playing an important role in that compassionate response. The world has taken notice, and the American people are grateful.

Throughout the many affected regions, the loss of life and property is immense. People and nations throughout Asia and around the world are working to ease the suffering brought on by this terrible disaster. The international community has responded with generosity and compassion, and the men and women of USAID have been at the center of that response. And I'm here to thank you.

I want to thank our Secretary of State for his fantastic service to our Nation. I want to thank him for recently leading a delegation to the affected areas to express our Nation's deepest concerns. I want to thank him for keeping my little brother straight. [*Laughter*] But the Secretary is—any time he represents America does so with such dignity and strength. And Mr. Secretary, you did so again, and the world better understands our heart as a result of your trip. And I thank you for it.

And I appreciate Andrew's work. [*Applause*] Andrew, you should take that as a good sign. [*Laughter*] Either that, or it's all your close relatives who are here. [*Laughter*] But I really do want to thank Andrew for not only helping to organize the effort but

for his travels and his concern and his willingness to put in the long hours necessary to make sure that which we spend works.

And I want to thank you all for working along with Andrew. I know the response disaster team of USAID is sitting behind me. Andrew tells me that the response disaster team went into work the minute we heard about the disaster. And since then, you've been working long hours. I appreciate it very much.

We just finished meeting with a group of representatives and heads of nongovernmental organizations, NGOs, all of which are providing love and compassion and help. After that meeting, I must tell you my spirits were raised even higher than they were walking into the meeting. There is no question in my mind that the NGOs of America provide such vital, vital help in times of disaster.

A little later on, I want to make yet another appeal for people in America to donate money. But I do want to remind our fellow citizens, as you donate money to the tsunami relief effort, make sure you continue to contribute to NGOs, because those groups—we still have problems in other parts of our country and other parts of the world. It is essential that your contribution not replace the ongoing contributions you're making to help the NGOs of America. You should view the tsunami relief effort as extra help, to help solve the problem, so that we don't short-change the compassionate needs—the needs for compassion elsewhere in our country and the world.

Colin and brother Jeb earlier, and Andy came by and reported to me what they have seen. The pictures do not do the devastation justice. They don't tell the whole story of what we've seen on TV, what these people have seen in person. The devastation was on a scale that none of them had ever experienced. I think Colin referred to Banda Aceh as something the equivalent of Hiroshima. They reported that the efforts are well-coordinated. In other words, there's a huge problem, but the good news is, is that the efforts, the compassion, the money, the hope, is well-coordinated and that your work is making a difference in saving lives and helping people who need help. That's what you're here to do, and it's working.

USAID personnel in the region responded the very day the disaster struck. So not only did the response team get set up, but the people around the world began to move. Your fellow colleagues and yourselves have been working day and night, 24 hours a day, and we're grateful. It's not easy. I know; it's hard, particularly in the time of year in which this hit. But you're doing your job, and for that, I'm extremely grateful.

I think the intensity of the effort reflects the enormity of the task. After all, the death toll is estimated at 150,000 people and may climb even higher. Among the dead are thousands of children, and as many as 5 million people are thought to be homeless or without food and clean water. You're coordinating airlifts of relief supplies to the affected areas. You're arranging for clean water. You're arranging for medical aid. You're arranging for psychological help. And that's important work.

USAID has delivered food, temporary shelter, hygiene kits, and supplies to help people survive. In other words, we've been focused on the relief effort. Now we're beginning to focus on rehabilitation and rebuilding. And as a result, USAID is arranging small loans for those whose livelihoods have been destroyed. We were talking about the NGOs who have been working along with USAID. I think Ruth mentioned the fact that her agency has now provided a fishing boat. In other words, we're beginning to help rebuild lives and help people get back on their feet.

The NGOs, including our faith-based organizations, had been working in these regions for decades. As the head of the NGO or the representative of the NGO, spoke—said, "Well, Mr. President, we have been there for 30 or 40 years." And as a result of having been there, there's an infrastructure in place, which is good news for those who need help.

Not only are these people, the NGOs, expressing the world's concern, the cooperation between our Government and the NGOs has been superb. And that's important. It is important because we don't want to have a duplication of effort. We want to make sure that we assess the needs and make sure that our

contributions, whether they be from the public sector or the private sector, are spent wisely. And having listened carefully to Colin and Andrew and the NGO heads, I can say to the American people that to the best extent possible, we're coordinating our efforts.

We're not only coordinating our efforts here at home; we're also doing a better job of coordinating our efforts with other governments and international NGOs. We made an initial commitment of $350 million for relief efforts. That's a commitment from the Federal Government. And the NGOs, in turn, are using some of those funds effectively to meet the needs of the people on the ground. In other words, what we have done is we've made a commitment at the Federal level, and we said how best to spend that money. And the best way to spend that money is to actually spend it with people who know what they're doing on the ground. We don't need to try to—now is not the time to try to come up with a new way of solving old problems. Now is the way to use people who have been solving problems in an effective way to help people on the ground. And that's exactly what we're doing.

Our military is doing a fantastic job, by the way. I want to thank our commanders on the ground, and I want to thank our troops who are representing the best of America. Navy vessels, including the U.S.S. *Abraham Lincoln,* have moved into the region, and they are providing food and medical supplies and clean water. Helicopters and military aircraft are meeting critical needs by airlifting supplies directly to the victims. After all, many of the victims have lived in remote areas. And so many other places, our servicemen—like in so many other places, those who wear our uniform are showing the great decency of America. And I thank them for that. I can't tell you how much our Government and the people of America appreciate the good work our military is doing to help relieve the suffering from this crisis.

The NGOs with which I met tell me about the incredible outpouring of generosity here at home. And I want to thank all those who have contributed to the NGOs. I particularly want to thank two former Presidents, 41 and 42—[*laughter*]—or Dad and Bill—[*laughter*]—for stepping up and helping to raise money. It's important that Presidents Clinton and Bush do what they have done, and I can't thank them enough for taking time out of their busy schedules to send out an appeal to the citizens of our country.

Listen, people want to help. I repeat, make sure that this help doesn't take the place of other help you're giving, but if you do want to continue to help, and I ask you to do so, please go to usafreedomcorps.gov on the web page, and that's a way to make sure your money—shows you where to send your money and to make sure it's properly used. And as well, hopefully the legislation I sign that will allow taxpayers to deduct this month's contribution for tsunami relief from your 2004 tax returns is further incentive, kind of a little kick to the heart. [*Laughter*]

The United States Government and the NGOs that have worked so hard for so long in the region are committed to this area of the world for a long time. This is one of these projects that's not going to happen overnight. The intense scrutiny may dissipate and probably will, but our focus has got to stay on this part of the world. We have a duty—we have made a commitment, and our commitment is a long-term commitment to help these good folks in the part of the world that got affected get back on their feet.

Well after the immediate danger passes, USAID is still going to be in the hard-hit areas. And I thank you for that. See, you're going to be helping the people improve their schools and develop health services and mitigate conflict and reinvigorate local economies and help build institutions of democracy so people can live in peace and freedom.

As our Government's leader in relief and reconstruction, USAID and its predecessors have done this kind of work before. You have done big jobs in the past, such as the Marshall plan. And we're committed to not only solving this problem, but we're committed to the work that goes on year-round in nearly a hundred countries, countries that include Iraq and Afghanistan, where you're helping to build—to bring a better future to millions of people who have been newly liberated and to regions in the world like Darfur in the Sudan, where you're helping to reduce deaths and violence in that troubled region.

The efforts of USAID is essential for the foreign policy of the United States of America. Your efforts and the efforts of others, especially to create jobs, promote markets, improve health, fight HIV/AIDS, and help democracy take root, are instrumental to making the world a better place and to protecting the American people.

From Sudan to Sumatra, the world has seen America at its best through the work you do. Sometimes you don't get thanked enough. I don't know how many times a President has been by to say thanks, but I'll tell you this: It's my distinct honor to come by and say thanks. I appreciate your compassion. I appreciate your love for your fellow human being, and thank you for the work you do.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:32 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; and Andrew S. Natsios, Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development.

Remarks on the Nomination of Michael Chertoff To Be Secretary of Homeland Security

January 11, 2005

Good morning. I'm pleased to announce my nomination of Judge Michael Chertoff to be the Secretary of Homeland Security.

Mike is a talented and experienced public servant. In his stellar career, he has been a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit; he's been an Assistant Attorney General of the United States; he's been the U.S. Attorney for New Jersey; a Federal prosecutor in New York City; and a law clerk to Supreme Court Justice William Brennan. He's been confirmed by the Senate three times.

In all of his roles, Mike has shown a deep commitment to the cause of justice and an unwavering determination to protect the American people. Mike has also been a key leader in the war on terror. On September the 11th, 2001, he was managing the Criminal Division of the Department of Justice, an 800-person operation devoted to enforcing our Nation's criminal laws. In the days after September the 11th, Mike helped trace the terrorist attacks to the Al Qaida network. He understood immediately that the strategy on the war on terror is to prevent attacks before they occur. His energy and intellect put him at the center of many vital homeland security improvements, especially increased information sharing within the FBI and with State and local officials.

He's faced countless challenging decisions and has helped to protect his fellow Americans while protecting their civil liberties. I'm grateful that the judge has agreed to bring his exceptional judgment and integrity to an urgent new responsibility. I'm confident that he will be a strong, effective leader for the Department of Homeland Security.

Two years ago, we created this new Department to ensure a comprehensive, unified effort to protect the American people against new dangers. Since that time, the employees of the Department have carried out the largest reorganization of the Government in a half a century. Under the direction of Secretary Tom Ridge, the Department of Homeland Security has improved airline security, enhanced the protection of our borders and ports of entry, and taken vital steps to safeguard the Nation's critical infrastructure. Tom Ridge has the gratitude of our entire Nation. I thank him for his leadership. I appreciate his hard work.

The Department of Homeland Security will also continue working to reduce the Nation's vulnerabilities to weapons of mass destruction and cyberterrorism. We are engaged in a daily mission to prepare effective responses to any future attack and to closely coordinate homeland security efforts with State and local officials. Our Nation is still at war. We're focused. We're taking decisive actions on the homefront that are critical to winning this war.

When Mike is confirmed by the Senate, the Department of Homeland Security will be led by a practical organizer, a skilled manager, and a brilliant thinker. As head of the Criminal Division and as a U.S. Attorney in New Jersey, Mike built an impressive record of cutting through redtape and moving organizations into action. He's worked cooperatively with the Federal and State and local law enforcement officials. He will always be a friend to America's first-responders.

Mike is a strong and decent man. As an attorney, he has prosecuted organized crime and corporate fraud. He stood against racial profiling. He's worked with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund to represent poor inmates on death row. He's earned the respect of lawyers of many backgrounds and of politicians on both sides of the aisle. This is the third time I've asked Mike to serve our Nation, and I'm grateful he's agreed. I'm also grateful to Meryl, Mike's wife, and his family. I urge the Senate to promptly confirm this outstanding nominee as America's second Secretary of Homeland Security.

Congratulations, Mike.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:03 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Meryl Chertoff, wife of Secretary-Designate Chertoff. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary-Designate Chertoff. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks in a Discussion on Social Security Reform

January 11, 2005

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated. Listen, thanks for coming today. As you can see, I am joined by some fellow citizens here on the stage who have come to talk about one of the great causes of our generation, and that is how to strengthen and save Social Security for generations to come.

I know this is an issue that some would rather not be talking about. It's an issue that is kind of—I think some think has got too much political danger attached to it, and so therefore let's just kind of, maybe, move it down to the next group of people coming to Washington, or maybe things will get better by ignoring it. That's not what I think. And today I want to talk about why we have an issue with Social Security, why I believe those of us who have been elected to office have an obligation to do something about it, and then I want—and give some ideas, some constructive ideas to Congress as to how to deal with the issue, and then I want others to share with me their ideas.

And we've got some people who have come a long way—flown all the way to Washington, DC, to share some thoughts with the President. And I think you'll find their stories interesting. I certainly did when we had a little discussion a little bit ago.

First, let me tell you how much, I understand, Social Security has meant for generations of Americans. I mean, Franklin Roosevelt, in thinking boldly, envisioned a Social Security system where Social Security would help seniors with their retirement. And the system worked for a lot of people. And it's been a—an incredible achievement, if you think about a piece of legislation being relevant for nearly 70 years.

The problem is, is that times have changed since 1935. Then, most women did not work outside the house, and the average life expectancy was about 60 years old, which, for a guy 58 years old, must have been a little discouraging. [*Laughter*] Today, Americans, fortunately, are living longer and longer. I mean, we're living way beyond 60 years old, and most women are working outside the house. Things have shifted.

The Social Security system is not a personal savings account. The Social Security system is not an account where money is earned. The Social Security system is an account where money comes out to pay for retirees and is put in the system by people who are working. And that's changed. More and more retirees have taken out money relative to the number of people putting money in. In the fifties, there were 16 workers for every beneficiary, so the system was in pretty good shape. Today, there's three workers for every beneficiary. Relatively quickly, there's going to be two workers for every beneficiary. And that's a problem. And that's a problem because in the year 2018, in order to take care of baby boomers like me and—[*laughter*]—some others I see out there—[*laughter*]—the money going out is going to exceed the money coming in.

That's not a good thing. It means that you're either going to have to raise the taxes of people or reduce the benefits. And the longer you wait, the more severe the pain is going to be to fulfill the promise for a younger generation of workers coming up.

As a matter of fact, by the time today's workers who are in their mid-twenties begin to retire, the system will be bankrupt. So if you're 20 years old, in your mid-twenties, and you're beginning to work, I want you to think about a Social Security system that will be flat bust, bankrupt, unless the United States Congress has got the willingness to act now. And that's what we're here to talk about, a system that will be bankrupt.

Now, I readily concede some would say, "Well, it's not bankrupt yet. Why don't we wait until it's bankrupt?" The problem with that notion is that the longer you wait, the more difficult it is to fix. You realize that this system of ours is going to be short the difference between obligations and money coming in by about $11 trillion, unless we act. And that's an issue. That's trillion with a "T." That's a lot of money, even for this town.

And so I'm looking forward to working with Congress to act. We've got an expert from the Social Security system that will talk about "the problem." And I'm going to talk about "the problem." You know, "the problem" is that some in Congress don't see it as "the problem." They just kind of think that maybe things will be okay. But the structure of Social Security is such that you can't avoid the fact that there is a problem. And now is the time to get something done.

Now, I've talked about this, and I want the people to clearly understand, if you're a senior receiving your Social Security check, nothing is going to change. Those days of politicizing Social Security, I hope, are in the past. A lot of people who ran for office and if they even mentioned the word Social Security, there would be TV ads and fliers and people knocking on doors saying, "So-and-so is going to ruin Social Security for you." There is plenty of money in the system today to take care of those who have retired or near retirement. The issue really is for younger folks.

That's why we've got some younger folks up here. Not all of us are younger folks, are we? [*Laughter*] Most of them are younger folks. I no longer qualify. [*Laughter*] But younger people are listening to this issue. You know, I've traveled a lot. I campaigned on this issue of Social Security and the need to strengthen it and reform it. I didn't shy away from it in 2000. I certainly didn't shy away from it in 2004. I laid it out there for the people to hear. I said, "Vote for me, and I'm going to work with Congress, see if we can't get something done to solve the system."

This is part of what—this is part of fulfilling a campaign pledge. I wouldn't be sitting here if the people said, "We don't want anybody to touch it. We think it's okay." Most younger people in America think they'll never see a dime. That's probably an exaggeration to a certain extent, but a lot of people who are young, who understand how Social Security works, really do wonder whether they'll see anything. My attitude is, once we assure the seniors who are—receive Social Security today that everything is fine, I think we've got a shot to get something done, because younger Americans really want to see some leadership.

I said we're not going to run up the payroll taxes. I think running up payroll taxes will slow down economic growth. This economy is beginning to kick in. It's beginning to make sense. I think we can solve the problem without increasing payroll taxes.

I also threw out another interesting idea—it's certainly not my idea, because others have talked about it—and that is to allow younger workers, on a voluntary basis, to take some of their own money and set it aside in the form of a personal savings account, a personal savings account which is their own, a personal savings account which would earn a better rate of return than the money—their money currently held within the Social Security trust, a personal savings account which will compound over time and grow over time, a personal savings account which can't be used to bet on the lottery or a dice game or the track. In other words, there will be guidelines. There will be certain—you won't be allowed just to take that money and dump it somewhere. In other words, there will be a safe way to invest, to be able to realize the compounding rate of interest.

I've heard some say, "Well, this is risky to allow people to invest their own money." It's risky to let people—say, "You can take your money that's supposed to be for a retirement account and put it on the lottery." I

realize that. But it's not risky. Federal employees—the Thrift Savings Plans invest under certain guidelines, and I don't hear them screaming, "It's risky." It makes sense to try to get a better rate of return on your money, if you expect there to be a Social Security system which is going broke. And that's what we're talking about.

Owning your own personal savings account does two other things. One, it allows you to pass on your savings to whoever you choose. You can't do that in Social Security today. If you pass away earlier than expected, that money that you put in the system is gone. And at the same time that you manage your own account, you own your own account. I love promoting ownership in America. I like the idea of encouraging more people to say, "I own my own home. I own my own business. I own and manage my health accounts, and now I own a significant part of my retirement account." Promoting ownership in America makes sense to me to make sure people continue to have a vital stake in the future of our country.

And so I want to thank you all for coming today to give me a chance to address the Social Security issue. I plan on talking about it a lot. This isn't the first time I've talked about it since the campaign is over, and it's certainly not going to be the last, because I believe it is a vital issue. And I know that if we don't address the problem now, it will only get worse with time. And I believe there is a fundamental duty, for those of us who have been given the honor of serving the American people, to solve problems before they become acute and not to pass them on to future Presidents and future generations.

Now, I want to talk to Andrew Biggs. He is the Associate Commissioner for Retirement Policy at the Social Security Administration. To me, that says expert. [*Laughter*] I don't know if that's fair to call you an expert or not.

[*At this point, Andrew Biggs made brief remarks.*]

The President. Yes, that's good. How old are you?

Mr. Biggs. I'm 37.

The President. Man, I wish I was 37—[*laughter*]—37, talking to the President. That's great. [*Laughter*] You ought to be concerned. I mean, you're one of these people—yes, good. Well, I appreciate you helping.

You see, what he just said is, "There is a problem." I happen to believe people who have been elected to office who ignore problems will face the price at the ballot box. See, I think more and more people recognize we have a problem. We've got a 37-year-old person here describing a problem. More and more people understand we have a problem. And the more people see it, the more it's expected we do something about it. And as Andrew said, he said, "We better start now." That's why it's important that we have this dialog. And that's why I'm going to continue dialoging and talking to the leadership in Congress about, "Let's solve it now. Let's do our duty."

Let me talk to Scott Ballard. He is from the great State of Washington. That's a long way away.

Scott Ballard. That's right.

The President. Brought your lads with you, I noticed.

Mr. Ballard. Yes.

The President. Your sons. Yes, they had never been to Washington. I said, "Have you ever been to Washington?" He said, "I live in Washington." [*Laughter*]

Mr. Ballard. Yes. [*Laughter*]

The President. Pretty good line, you know? I meant the District of Columbia, Washington. So what do you do, Scott?

Mr. Ballard. Well, my brother and I own and operate a private ambulance service. It was started by our parents in 1967. And my brother and I purchased it from them in 1986.

The President. And why are you here, besides bring your lads to the other Washington?

[*Mr. Ballard, co-owner, Ballard Ambulance, Wenatchee, WA, made brief remarks.*]

The President. So, like, if they were here, what would your younger employees say about Social Security? Do they ever talk about it? Do they ever think about it? Do they ever——

[*Mr. Ballard made further remarks.*]

The President. That's kind of an interesting thought, isn't it—when you see on paper the value of something, you begin to actually pay attention to what causes values to go up, good policies that enhance growth. And what Scott just said is, he talked about the first change in retirement in America was the movement toward defined contribution plans, like 401(k)s, which really has promoted an ownership society, hasn't it? I mean, people wake up, and they look at their account and say, "I'm so sure this person's policies are beneficial to my being able to earn a better rate of return." People pay attention because it's their own money. That's kind of one of the benefits of a personal account in Social Security.

[*Mr. Ballard made further remarks.*]

The President. Right. Good. I appreciate you sharing that. Yes, make sure you tell your customers—tell your customers nothing changes with Social Security for them. And tell your younger workers they can do something about it. They can write their Senators; they can write their Congresspeople. You can let them know you expect the Members of the United States Congress to hear the fact that there's a problem and then to do something about it. That's what they can do.

We've got with us Bob McFadden. Looking sharp. [*Laughter*] I didn't come close, I know. [*Laughter*] Thanks for coming. I appreciate you taking time to be here. You are from Medford, New Jersey.

Robert McFadden. Yes, sir.

The President. And why have you come from Medford, New Jersey, to share some thoughts?

[*Mr. McFadden, solutions executive, IMS Health, Medford, NJ, made brief remarks.*]

The President. The 1 or 2 percent that the money inside the Social Security trust now earns—is that right? Is he right at 1—is it even as high as 1 percent?

Mr. Biggs. No, it's—right now it is low because interest rates are low. Over the long term, we're looking at around 3 percent. So you still do have a——

The President. So it's more than double. But right now, it's like——

Mr. Biggs. Oh boy.

The President. Yes, never mind. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Biggs. You caught me. [*Laughter*]

The President. Don't worry about it. [*Laughter*] You can still keep your job. [*Laughter*] Go ahead. Seven and a half percent since 1924—that's a great rate of return. Imagine if you're 50 years old and you start—if you start—if you hold that money for 50 years at that rate, it compounds and grows and ends up being a lot of money, is what you're saying.

Mr. McFadden. Yes, sir.

The President. Yes, okay. I'm glad I invited you. [*Laughter*]

[*Mr. McFadden made further remarks.*]

The President. Let me say this. You brought up a very interesting point. There's kind of an assumption that only a certain group of people at a certain income can manage an account. It's as if you've got to have a net worth of X before savings becomes a real part of your life. I reject that. Bob rejects that.

Secondly, the interesting—there's a—African American males die sooner than other males do, which means the system is inherently unfair to a certain group of people. And that needs to be fixed. It's not a—[*applause*].

Mr. McFadden. I agree, Mr. President, because from the minimal research that I've done, the average African American male right now is—the life expectancy is 69, and I may be off a little bit. But if you're telling me that it's 69 and the age is going to go to 67, you do the math. [*Laughter*]

The President. Right.

Mr. McFadden. I mean, that's 2 years, so—[*laughter*].

The President. Glad you came. Thanks. Welcome, girls. Glad you all came.

Okay, I thought we would try to find somebody who represents the youth movement. I'm not saying you all are old, but we did find us a dairy farmer from the great State of Utah, Josh Wright. Welcome, Josh. Thanks for coming. He asked me if I could fix the BCS. [*Laughter*] I said no, I'm not going there, Josh. I'm staying on Social Security. It may be a little easier to fix, anyway. [*Laughter*]

Josh Wright. But he said that they wouldn't be able to take Texas, and——

The President. Wait a minute. You don't need to talk about private conversations. [*Laughter*] Okay, you're a dairy farmer?

Mr. Wright. That's correct.

The President. Good. Milking those cows.

Mr. Wright. Yes. Not today, obviously. I made my dad stay home and do it. But we have a dairy farm in central Utah, and you can fit the whole town in this building here.

The President. Kind of like Crawford.

Mr. Wright. There's a lot more cows than there are people at my place, so I spend a lot of time talking to animals. [*Laughter*] And I hear——

The President. Are they talking back yet? [*Laughter*] When they start talking back, give me a call. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Wright. Not when I have a stick in my hand, they don't say a lot. [*Laughter*]

The President. That's right.

[*Mr. Wright, dairy farmer, Millard County, UT, made brief remarks, concluding with a mention of his grandfather.*]

The President. Do you think he's listening? Have they got C–SPAN out there in Utah?

Mr. Wright. I don't know. [*Laughter*]

The President. See that red dot?

Mr. Wright. Yes, I see it now.

The President. That's him, if he's listening.

Mr. Wright. He's probably watching the horse channel. He loves that channel. [*Laughter*]

The President. I appreciate you coming.

Mr. Wright. Thank you for letting me.

The President. If nothing happens, at your age it will be bust by the time it comes time for you to retire. That's why we have a person in the mid-twenties here, besides the fact the guy's got a pretty good sense of humor. [*Laughter*] If nothing takes place, if Congress says, "Oh, don't worry. We'll just push it down the road. Why do we need to deal with it. There's no crisis"—if nothing happens and we don't start moving on it now, by the time Josh gets to retirement age, the system will be flat broke.

And that's not right, it doesn't seem like to me. It seems like people who have been elected to office must say, "We want it to be wholesome and healthy, like it has been for other generations." Oh, I know there's a lot of politics here in Washington, and people are—some are afraid to touch it. Some don't want to touch it. Some provide excuses not to touch it. I know, I've heard it before. But I believe that the President has a responsibility for setting the agenda, and I believe people who have been elected to the House of Representatives and the United States Senate has an obligation to confront problems head on.

By the way, tell the old man 1946 was a great year.

Mr. Wright. It was a great year.

The President. Yes, you wouldn't be sitting here if it wasn't, you know. Anyway. [*Laughter*]

We've got a mom and her daughter with us. I'm so glad you both came. Thanks for being here. Sonya is the daughter. Rhode is the mom. And I want the Stone women to talk about their lives and how it relates to Social Security. If you don't mind, Sonya, why don't you start? What do you do?

[*Sonya Stone, CFO partner, Tatum Partners, Vienna, VA, made brief remarks.*]

The President. Good. A CFO, like, you know something about numbers?

Sonya Stone. I know a little bit about numbers, and I——

The President. I presume you've looked at the numbers.

[*Sonya Stone made further remarks.*]

The President. Sure. I think it's important for people to understand compounding rate of interest. In other words, if you take a dollar, set it aside, and it grows at 3 percent over 30 years or 40 years and compare that to the same dollar that grows at 7 percent on an average basis over 30 years, there is a huge difference in money.

So it matters how much money—how much interest or how much rate of return your money earns. We're kind of throwing around these words as if everybody understands compounding rate of interest and rate of return, but what people need to understand is that the money that's now—your money in the Government is earning much

less than it's capable of generating under safe conditions. "Safe conditions," I think that's what you're saying.

[*Sonya Stone made further remarks.*]

The President. Good, thanks. Well done. Now what about your—introduce your mom.

Sonya Stone. I would like to introduce my mom. This is my mother, Rhode Stone. And she is grandmother of three and originally from Helsinki, Finland, and has been here over 40 years.

The President. Fantastic. Same age as my mother.

Sonya Stone. Just turned 80.

The President. Is she still giving you instructions?

Sonya Stone. Every day, and I do my best.

The President. It never stops, does it? [*Laughter*] No.

Rhode Stone. It shouldn't stop.

The President. That's right. [*Laughter*] Let her rip.

[*Rhode Stone made brief remarks.*]

The President. Thank you for saying that. Good job.

Yes, I think one of the interesting things that Rhode talked about is the need for people to understand that Social Security is a part of retirement income. That's why it was created, and therefore, the idea of developing the habits early—necessary to make sure you've got that which is necessary to live on, such as saving money, is important. I happen to believe that once personal savings accounts are part of the Social Security system, that it will encourage other savings to take place as well. People will be able to see the benefits of savings, understand how important it is as a dad to save for two beautiful little girls, to start setting aside money for college education is a way to save, not necessarily for retirement in this case, but to be a good dad and do your duty as a father.

And so I appreciate that point. In other words, it's a point that says that people have got to understand you have a responsibility to set aside money so that you can live comfortably. And it worked in your case. Thankfully you had a wise husband.

Rhode Stone. I wish we would have had a chance to put——

The President. As additional—as addition to the savings you set aside out of the personal savings accounts. I agree.

And that's—so it's a—this is a—I hope you have come away with a better understanding of the importance of this issue. I mean, we've got people of all generations here, people who say, "Look, this is an issue." And the fundamental question confronting the people elected to the United States Congress is, will they act? I will assure you, I'm going to ask them to act. I think that one of the reasons I'm sitting here is because I said to the people of the country, "We have an issue with Social Security. We have a problem. I think it's important to be a problem-solver. Give me 4 more years, and I intend to work with people of both parties and solve problems, and there is a problem with Social Security."

I see a problem. I also see a solution. And I realize that it's going to require bipartisan cooperation. And I look forward to working with members of both political parties in both Houses to come together and do our duty. I realize it's not going to be easy. This isn't easy. If it were easy, it would have already been done. It kind of makes it fun, though, isn't it—take on the tough jobs.

Members who will work—constructively work with us will be able to look back and say, "I did my duty. I came to Washington to be more than just a placeholder. I came to Washington to analyze a problem, to deal with a problem, and to leave a legacy behind of fixing the problem." And so I'm looking forward to working with the Members of Congress.

I want to thank our panelists who are here. I want to thank our audience for coming. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:50 a.m. at the Andrew W. Mellon Auditorium. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks at J.E.B. Stuart High School in Falls Church, Virginia

January 12, 2005

Thanks for the warm welcome. Dr. Riddile, thank you for inviting me and Laura to come to your great school. He said, "We're not very far from the White House." I said, "Fine. I'll just drive over." It turns out, I didn't see any traffic. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank all the students who are here today. Thank you for coming to let an old guy speak to you. Dr. Riddile said, "Make one thing—make sure you do one thing, Mr. President." I said, "What is that?" He said, "Keep the speech short. Students can't wait to get back into class." [*Laughter*] Here we go.

I also want to thank the folks that Laura and I got to meet earlier—teachers and superintendent, parent. They explained to us why their school is so good. And we're here because this is a great school. I'll talk a little bit about that later on. But one thing for certain is that the philosophy of this school needs to be the philosophy of every school, and that is, you believe in the best for every student and you do what is necessary to make sure that every child—not groups of children but every child—can read and write and add and subtract and every child has got the potential to achieve his or her dreams in America.

The first thing I want to do is congratulate the leadership of this school, the principal, the teachers, and the involved parents for a job well done.

I want to thank Laura for traveling with me today. She's been traveling with me for a long time. [*Laughter*] And for a public school librarian, the highway has been a little bumpier than she probably thought. But she is—she shares the same passion I do, and that is to put systems in place to encourage every child to learn to read. And so thank you for coming, looking forward to working with you on education matters during the next 4 years.

I want to thank Rod Paige, who's joined us. Rod is the outgoing Secretary of Education. Four years ago when I was looking at the Cabinet, I decided to pick somebody who had been on the frontlines of educational excellence. Rod was the former superintendent of schools in the Houston Independent School District. That's the frontlines, and the results of his hard work are noticeable in Houston. And I want to thank you, Rod, for not only serving in Houston but coming from the great State of Texas to serve our country for 4 years.

I don't know whether the Senators will think this is breaking protocol, but Margaret Spellings is traveling with me today. Let's just say she is my domestic policy adviser and, if the Senate so decides, will succeed Rod as the Secretary of Education. I don't know where you are, Margaret. There you are. Thanks, yes. I suspect that if confirmed, the seat will improve. [*Laughter*]

Again, I want to thank Mel Riddile for being such a fine principal. He's what I would call an educational entrepreneur. You can't have a good school unless you've got a good leader. And the principal is the leader of the school, and I appreciate you. I appreciate your spirit. I appreciate your vision, and I appreciate the high standards.

And I want to thank the superintendent of schools for recognizing that this good man is a good principal. And I want to thank you for being here, Jack. Jack Dale—Dr. Jack Dale is with us, who is the superintendent of the Fairfax County public school district. Thanks for taking on a big job.

I was pleased to see that United States Senators from the great State—or the Commonwealth of Virginia have joined us. Senator John Warner is with us today. I'm honored you're here, Senator. Thank you for coming. Senator George Allen is with us. Thank you for being here, George. Congressman Tom Davis, proud you're here. A member of the Stuart PTA, I presume? At one time—after all, his daughter Shelley graduated from the high school here. I want to thank you all for coming.

I appreciate the attorney general of the great State of Virginia joining us, Jerry Kilgore. I want to thank all the State and local officials. Thanks once again to the students and parents for allowing me to come today.

This is one of the first stops in the year 2005 for me. And there's a reason why it's one of the first stops, is we are dedicated to doing everything we can at the Federal

level to improve public education. You can't have a hopeful America without a public school system that's working to the best of its abilities. I'm optimistic we can achieve that, and I'm optimistic we can achieve a lot of things. I'm optimistic we can spread freedom and therefore peace around the world. I'm optimistic that we can continue to protect our homeland.

I'm looking forward to working with our fellow citizens to continue to spread the great compassion of America. I want to thank those of you in this audience who have contributed to the tsunami relief effort. I appreciate so very much our fellow citizens for joining President Clinton and President Bush in lending your heart, through your money, to help those who suffer. The Federal Government will continue to remain focused on making sure the victims of that natural disaster get the best help possible.

I'm going to continue to work in 2005 to keep this economy of ours strong so people can find work. And one way to do so is to keep your taxes low and to reduce the burden of junk lawsuits and needless regulations on our Nation's employers. Looking forward to making sure that, to the best of our ability, that health care is more affordable and available.

It's hard for me to come to a high school class and look at our youngsters and say, "The Social Security system is in good shape," when I understand it's not. To the seniors of America, nothing is going to change when it comes to your Social Security check. But if this Congress doesn't join this administration in working to reform and strengthen Social Security, we will not be able to look at the high school seniors of today and say, "We have done our duty in protecting Social Security for you," for after all, the system will be bankrupt by the year 2040. And now is the time for the United States Congress to join with the administration to save and strengthen Social Security for generations to come.

To keep this country prosperous and to keep this country hopeful, we've got to make sure these public schools of ours stay strong. And we started on that road to strengthening every public school 3 years ago, when I signed the No Child Left Behind Act. The theory of this law is straightforward—it's pretty easy to understand—that in return for Federal dollars, we are asking for results. That makes sense if you're a taxpayer. It makes sense, frankly, if you're an innovative teacher and a strong principal. We're leaving behind the old attitude that it's okay for some students just to be shuffled through the system. That's not okay. And 3 years ago, we began to change the system that too often had given up on a child, primarily those children whose mothers or dads didn't speak English as a first language or those children who may be growing up in inner-city America, whose mom or dad didn't have big income levels. This administration believes and most people in America believe that every child can learn.

And so we're raising the standards for every public school in America. If you believe every child can learn, then it makes sense to raise the bar, not lower the bar. If you believe every child can learn, then it makes sense to measure to determine whether every child is learning. That's called accountability, accountability for results. Accountability is so crucial to achieve our goal for every child learning to read, write, and add and subtract. Accountability helps to correct problems early, before it is too late. Accountability enables a good teacher to test a curriculum as to whether or not that curriculum is working. Accountability allows principals and teachers to determine whether methodology is working. Accountability also is a way to make sure parents stay involved in the educational systems across our country.

You know, for a while, in certain districts, a parent—you'd ask a parent, "How is your school doing?" And the parent's natural reaction is, "It's the best there is." In some cases, like the parents here at Stuart High, they're right. But in some cases, because there was no accountability system, they were wrong. Accountability system allows a parent or a local official or concerned citizen to compare results from one school to another within a district and from one district to another within a State. And that's important, because by putting parents in the center of the school system, it not only encourages parental responsibility; it enables parents to demand reform when there—reform needs to be done.

It enables parents, when they see excellence, to do what every parent should do, and that is thank the teacher and the principal for a job well done.

Accountability systems don't work unless there are consequences. And so in the No Child Left Behind Act, if a school fails to make progress, parents have options. They can send their child to free after-school tutoring, or they can send their child to a different public school.

For the past 3 years, thanks to Rod Paige's hard work, these reforms have been put into action. All 50 States, plus the District of Columbia and Puerto Rico, have drawn up plans to measure performance in every school. And the reporting process is beginning to work.

But more importantly than the process of putting reform in place is that we're beginning to see results. If you measure, you get to determine whether or not we're achieving things. Fourth grade math test scores across this Nation went up nine points between the years 2000 and 2003. Eighth graders improved by five points in the same period. In other words, because we measure, I can now stand up and say we're beginning to close an achievement gap in America. We've got reading scores—reading scores for fourth graders increased in the vast majority of States that tested between 1998 and 2003, including Virginia. African American and Hispanic and Native American children are beginning to learn to read. There is a significant achievement gap in America, and that is not right. And we're closing that gap. And you know how we know, is because we measure, because we're willing to devise measurement systems, not at the Federal level but at the State level.

The results in Virginia are strong. Last school year, 69 percent of the schools met their target for progress. That's up 10 percentage points from the previous year. That's great. Except I'm now focused on the other 31 percent, and I know the government here in Virginia will be as focused as well. Sixty-nine percent and an increase of 10 percent is really good news.

But one day, I hope to be able to stand here in my term—or a future President or a future Governor—and say, "We're up to 100 percent success in the great State of Virginia." That's what we want. We're not interested in mediocrity. We're interested in excellence, so not one single child is left behind in our country.

African American and Hispanic students in your State improved their scores in reading and math. Things are happening in America. Things are happening in Virginia. A lot of it has to do with good principals and hard-working teachers, and I understand that.

You know, the people of this country are probably saying, "Why did you come to Stuart High School?" And let me tell you why. It wasn't so long ago that Stuart High School was a troubled school. I can't remember what the words the principal used. I think he said that they deemed it to be a failure, if I'm not mistaken. Nobody—at least the people in this school didn't want to be called a failure. So you set out to do something about it. In 1997, the test scores were the lowest in Fairfax County and among the lowest in all of Virginia.

By focusing on results and stressing the importance of reading, by making sure that the measurement systems focuses on each individual child, by not tolerating excuses for failure, this school has been turned around. And how do we know? See, I can say that with certainty—in other words, I'm not guessing. I'm not saying, "Oh, you know, the principal looks like a pretty good guy, and the teachers sounded smart, and the students are cheering loudly." [*Laughter*] I know because you measure. The test scores in reading and math are now above the State average, and the trend lines are excellent. Dr. Riddile told me what you would expect. He said, "I am really proud of the students here." He said, "We're willing to do what it takes for the students to succeed." I like that attitude, and I hope the parents like that attitude as well. "Whatever it takes for the students to succeed." He said, "It's not magic. It takes hard work and smart work."

And that's something other schools can do. I'm here at Stuart High School because I want other schools who have got a student population as diverse as Stuart High School does to know that success and excellence is possible. And the goal for our high schools around our country is for them to achieve the same good results you've achieved here

at Stuart. Seems like a realistic goal, and yet, many of our Nation's high schools face serious challenges.

Out of 100 ninth graders in our public schools, only 68 will complete high school on time. Now, we live in a competitive world, and a 68 percent graduation rate for ninth graders is not good enough to be able to compete in this competitive world. In math and science, the problem is especially urgent. A recent study showed that American 15-year-olds ranked 27th out of 39 countries in math literacy. I don't know about you, but I want to be ranked first in the world, not 27th.

I view the results in our high school as a warning and a call to action. And I believe the Federal Government has a role to play. As you can tell, I believe the Federal Government had a role to play in primary education, and I believe the Federal Government has a role to play in secondary education. Up to now, the reforms, as I've explained to you, focused on the primary schools. Today I propose a $1.5 billion initiative to help every high school student graduate with the skills necessary to succeed.

Before you get too nervous, please understand that I strongly believe in local control of schools. I don't believe you can have innovation at Stuart High School if the Federal Government is trying to teach you how to run your school.

The role of the Federal Government is to serve as a funding source for specific projects and an instigator for accountability systems. The accountability system is, of course, devised by local people. The State of Virginia has devised its own accountability system. I don't believe in a Federal test. I believe a Federal test leads to Federal control, and I believe Federal control of the public school systems leads to failure. And so I believe the Federal Government has an obligation to help in a way that helps local districts and local schools achieve our objectives.

Some of that money ought to be—that I've just announced will go to early intervention programs. Under this plan, high school teachers will analyze eighth grade test data for incoming ninth grade students so that when they see a student at risk of falling behind, the teachers and the parents can get together and design a program to help make sure that child can catch up, before it's too late. I believe in programs being flexible and uniquely tailored to each student's needs, just like you do here at Stuart High School. And so this program will enable and help school districts and schools intervene early, assess and design programs that meet the needs of that particular student.

To support intervention plans, I believe we need to improve the way the Federal Government funds high schools. The Federal Government—oh, we've got a lot of programs designed to help high school students; over the years, programs have developed. The problem is they're like silos. They're prescriptions that may not meet the needs of the local high school or the local school district—you know, a program to promote vocational education or to prepare for college preparation or to encourage school restructuring. They all sound fine, and they're all important. But they may not be what is necessary for a particular school district or a high school to achieve the objective of teaching every child to read and write and add and subtract. So I believe we ought to consolidate the high school improvement programs so that States have the flexibility to choose the program that works best for their students.

See, we've got to be careful about prejudging results in Washington, DC. We ought to say, "You can achieve the results, and here's the flexibility necessary to do so." And by giving you flexibility, it means we're more likely to achieve the results that we all want.

To ensure that the intervention programs are working and graduates are prepared, we need to be certain that high school students are learning every year. So the second component of my high school initiative is to measure progress with tests in reading and math in the ninth, tenth, and eleventh grade. Listen, I've heard every excuse in the book not to test. My answer is, how do you know if a child is learning if you don't test? We've got money in the budget to help the States implement the tests. There should be no excuse saying, "Well, it's an unfunded mandate." Forget it. It will be funded. I've heard people say, "You're teaching the test." If you teach a child to read, they'll pass the test. Testing is important. Testing at high school

levels will help us to become more competitive as the years go by. Testing in high schools will make sure that our children are employable for the jobs of the 21st century. Testing will allow teachers to improve their classes. Testing will enable schools to track. Testing will make sure that diploma is not merely a sign of endurance but the mark of a young person ready to succeed.

The principal of this great school said we spell hope: R-E-A-D. I thought that's a pretty darn good slogan. And the reason why that's a good slogan is, to make sure every high school student has a chance to realize his or her dreams, each graduate must read—must know how to read. You can't—you cannot achieve in America if you cannot read, and yet too many of our children cannot read. And so I'm asking Congress to increase funding for my Striving Readers Initiative to $200 million. We'll use these resources to help more than 100 school districts train teachers in research-based methods so they can provide effective interventions for middle and high school students struggling in reading.

There is such a program here at Stuart. One reason why Stuart is doing so well is because you've got an intervention program when it comes to reading. How do I know? I met with the intervener. [*Laughter*] I met with the person who designed the reading program. I met with the person whose force of personality is so huge that not only are people working on reading in reading classes, but they're doing so at P.E. and math. And that is the reading coach, Sandy Switzer, who is with us today. Thank you for your—she knows what she's talking about. And as a result, the high school students here are reading.

And it sounds odd, doesn't it, for the President to stand up and say, "We need to focus on reading in high school." But that's the state of affairs. Someday, when No Child Left Behind is fully implemented and kicked in, there are not going to need to be early intervention programs or intervention reading programs in high school. But today, we need them. And therefore, this program will help school districts make sure that at the very minimum, a high school graduate has got the capacity to read.

I met with Zenab Abu-Taleb today. She is from Syria. And three of her daughters—one has gone to this school, and two others—by the way, one of them is going to college, which is a fantastic achievement for the family. And she was talking about what it means to have her daughters in Ms. Switzer's reading program. And I'm not going to put words in her mouth, but I will describe the excitement that she had in her voice when she talked about the fact that her girls are learning to read, are becoming literate. She did something pretty smart, though, by the way, and I hope other parents around the Nation follow suit. She said to her girls, "You will be reading more than you watch TV." [*Laughter*] That's pretty hard to do.

She's excited by the fact that Ms. Switzer and the teachers here are using research-based reading programs. I'm sure some of you are aware of these reading debates that go on around the country. Endless hours of air time are spent—"This one works. This one doesn't work." The only way you can know is you measure.

And so Ms. Switzer has taken a program that achieves measurable results and is spreading it all across this school. And as a result, the students here are improving dramatically when it comes to reading. And as a result, test scores in other subjects are improving dramatically as well. Congratulations for a job well done.

To make sure that people can find work in the 21st century, high school graduates also need a firm grasp on math. I'm proposing a $120 million initiative to improve high school math. With these funds, school districts will set up programs to train math teachers in methods proven to succeed. Every student should be prepared in math so that every graduate has the skills necessary to succeed.

I talked to Stuart Singer. He's a math teacher here. You may have heard of him. He's only been here 32 years. [*Laughter*] He recognizes what I recognize, that the best jobs are those that require math, some sense of understanding of math. And too many of our students don't understand that—understand math. And we've got to get it right. I want to thank you for teaching, Stuart. Stuart, by the way—you're not going to believe

this—falls in the incredibly-small-world category. He graduated from SMU in Dallas the same year that Laura graduated from SMU in Dallas. I asked them if they ever went to the bar together, but—[*laughter*]—both of them said no, they were in the library, which—[*laughter*]—probably distinguishes their college career from mine. [*Laughter*]

One of the things we must be willing to always do is raise the bar. We've got to continue to raise the bar in our high schools. And one of the best ways to do so is by promoting advanced placement and the international baccalaureate programs. At Stuart High, you've got a fantastic IB program. It really means that you're willing to challenge every student. That's what it says. It just says we're not going to be—we just simply will not accept the status quo, that we're going to try to bring innovative programs to this school to continue to raise the bar, to challenge students as best as we possibly can.

Stuart, by the way, offers an IB course—or IB courses. He talks about former students that have come back from college that have taken the IB classes, and he says the sacrifice—they say the sacrifice is worth it. It makes a big impact. And that's important.

And so for the students here wondering whether or not the American experience or the American future belongs to you—absolutely. But it's up to you to decide to continue to soar and to seek new heights. And this school, one reason Stuart succeeds is because the school continually raises standards and raises expectations.

And that's what we need to do around the country. Every student with the passion and ability to take an AP or IB class should have the opportunity to do so. That's why we've increased Federal support for AP and IB programs—a 73 percent increase over the current amount is what I'm proposing. These programs will help school districts train teachers to offer college-level courses. In other words, you can't offer a program in a high school unless the teachers are trained to do so.

And we also need to help low-income students pay for the tests. It does not make any sense that a family budget, when it comes to taking AP tests or IB tests, should stand between a student's dreams and the ability to take the test.

Another way to encourage students to take demanding courses is through the State Scholars Program. In Virginia, you have a similar program which gives high schoolers an incentive to take advanced courses in math and science and other subjects. That makes a lot of sense. Taking high-level courses like these makes the graduates more likely to succeed. And so it makes sense for the Federal Government to work with the State government and the State government to work with the local districts to continue to provide incentives to encourage students to take tougher and tougher courses, to take a more rigorous course load. And so we're going to continue to fund State Scholars Programs around the country because they get results.

And I believe another way to encourage students to take rigorous classes is to enhance the Pell grant scholarships for low-income students who've completed the State Scholars Program. High achieving students who take rigorous course loads will receive up to an additional thousand dollars during each of their first 2 years in college.

Let me talk about our Nation's teachers. I was the Governor of Texas once, and one our great Governors was Sam Houston. And he had been a United States Senator and a Governor. He was actually the President of Texas. We were a country once. [*Laughter*] He had a lot of interesting jobs. He was quite a colorful character. They asked him, toward the end of his life, what was the most important thing he had ever done. He said, "Being a teacher." I want to thank the teachers who are here. You've got a tough job, but you have a vital job.

By the way, I want to thank the parents who take an interest in your child's education. A mom or a dad is the child's first teacher. And a school—I bet you've got a pretty strong PTA here, and I want to thank the parents for staying involved with the school. The teachers, I know, appreciate it. I'm sure the principal appreciates it—most of the time. [*Laughter*] But I appreciate your involvement. It means a lot.

Lastly, I want to thank the Congress for sending a bill called the Crayola Credit,

which reimburses teachers for up to $250 of out-of-pocket classroom expenses. It's an important signal that we care about our teachers. It's a proper use of Federal legislation.

We also passed a good piece of legislation that expanded loan forgiveness from $5,000 to $17,500 for talented math, science, and special ed teachers who teach at low-income schools. I thought that was a good piece of legislation. Unfortunately, it's about to expire. So I would hope the Congress—we can work with the Congress to make loan forgiveness permanent. It sends the right signals to our teachers and helps school districts that are looking for good teachers to attract those teachers.

And finally, I believe the Federal Government can put a program together to help reward success for our teachers. I proposed a new $500 million incentive fund to reward teachers who get results. Teachers could qualify for an award by raising student performance or closing the achievement gap or volunteering to teach in low-income schools. That will be up to the local districts, to decide how to disburse the money. But I think it makes sense to encourage excellence by providing a $5,000 bonus to nearly 100,000 outstanding teachers across the country. The program won't be administered at the Federal level. It will be administered at the State and local level. But it's a way to help say to teachers, "Thanks for a job well done. Here's a little extra because of merit. Here's our way of saying thanks for doing what you want to do, which is provide excellence."

And so here's some practical ideas for the Congress to consider as we head into a new session, to make sure that the good folks of this country understand that we're committed to education reform at all levels. We're making great progress because of the No Child Left Behind Act. I will vigorously defend the No Child Left Behind Act. We will not accept rolling back the accountability systems in the No Child Left Behind Act, because I believe the accountability systems are beginning to make a huge difference in the lives of children from all walks of life across this country.

Here's some ideas to help ninth graders when they're coming into high school, so we can assess their problems and meet their needs before they lose hope, so the 68 percent graduation number soars. Here's a way to help reward teachers. Here's a way to provide good incentives. Here's a way to make sure that we achieve what we all want, the best school system in the world.

Thank you for letting me come by to visit. May God bless you all. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:31 a.m. in the school's main gymnasium.

Proclamation 7861—National Mentoring Month, 2005

January 12, 2005

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

All Americans are grateful for the special people who played a positive role in their childhood. Whether a relative, teacher, coach, or community leader, a dedicated mentor can profoundly change a young person's life. During National Mentoring Month, we recognize the role models who have influenced lives, and we continue to support programs that help the young people of America.

Mentoring programs pair a child in need with a caring adult who can help that child understand the importance of making the right choices in life. It is one of the best ways to send young people the right messages. Through friendship and encouragement, mentors can help prepare young Americans for a hopeful future.

My Administration has supported mentoring programs for young people at risk. In August 2004, my Administration made available over $45 million in grants to help provide mentors for children with parents in prison. In addition, my Administration provided $48 million in school-based grants in 2004 to provide at-risk youth with mentors to assist them in the successful transition from elementary to secondary school.

One mentor can change a life forever. I encourage all of our citizens to dedicate their time and talents to mentoring a young person. By providing help and hope to our

youth, mentors help foster a more compassionate society that values every life and leaves no child behind.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim January 2005 as National Mentoring Month. I call upon the people of the United States to recognize the importance of mentoring, to look for opportunities to serve as mentors in their communities, and to celebrate this month with appropriate activities and programs.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twelfth day of January, in the year of our Lord two thousand five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-ninth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., January 14, 2005]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on January 18.

Remarks to Reporters Following Briefings in Arlington, Virginia

January 13, 2005

Global War on Terrorism and Indian Ocean Earthquake and Tsunamis Disaster Relief

The President. Mr. Secretary, thank you very much for the briefing that we just had. The Secretary arranged for a briefing from Admiral Fargo and our commanders on the ground who are providing organization and handling the relief effort for the victims of the tsunamis. I got to tell you, our military is making a significant difference in providing relief and aid and help and compassion for those who have suffered. I am very impressed, Mr. Secretary, by how quickly we have responded and the assets that you have ordered deployed to help these people. And there's a lot of talk about how some in the world don't appreciate America. Well, I can assure you that those who have been helped by our military appreciate America.

We also talked about the war on terror. We're constantly reviewing our strategy as to how to defeat the enemy—fully recognize that the war on terror will require a coordinated effort within our own Government as well as a coordinated effort with the countries around the world which understand the stakes of this war. I am pleased with the response from around the world, appreciate so many nations understanding that we must work together to defeat these killers. I'm mindful of the fact that we have—constantly have got to review our plans and never lose our will.

So, Mr. Secretary, thanks for the briefing. It was a very good briefing, and you're doing a fine job on behalf of the American people.

Secretary Rumsfeld. Thank you, sir.

The President. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:21 a.m. at the Pentagon. In his remarks, he referred to Adm. Thomas B. Fargo, USN, commander, U.S. Pacific Command.

Executive Order 13370—Providing an Order of Succession in the Office of Management and Budget

January 13, 2005

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America and pursuant to the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998, 5 U.S.C. 3345 *et seq.*, it is hereby ordered that:

Section 1. During any period when the Director of the Office of Management and Budget (Director) and the Deputy Director of the Office of Management and Budget (Deputy Director) have died, resigned, or otherwise become unable to perform the functions and duties of the office of Director, the following officers of the Office of Management and Budget, in the order listed, shall perform the functions and duties of the office of Director, if they are eligible to act as Director under the provisions of the Federal Vacancies Reform Act of 1998, until such time as at least one of the officers mentioned above is able to perform the functions and duties of the office of Director:

Deputy Director for Management;
Executive Associate Director;
Associate Director (National Security Programs);

Associate Director (General Government Programs);
Associate Director (Human Resource Programs);
Associate Director (Natural Resource Programs);
General Counsel;
Administrator for Federal Procurement Policy;
Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs;
Controller, Office of Federal Financial Management; and
Administrator of the Office of Electronic Government.

Sec. 2. *Exceptions.* (a) No individual who is serving in an office listed in section 1 in an acting capacity, by virtue of so serving, shall act as Director pursuant to this order.

(b) Notwithstanding the provisions of this order, the President retains discretion, to the extent permitted by law, to depart from this order in designating an acting Director.

George W. Bush

The White House,
January 13, 2005.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., January 18, 2005]

NOTE: This Executive order will be published in the *Federal Register* on January 19.

Memorandum on Extension of Waiver of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act With Respect to Assistance to the Government of Azerbaijan

January 13, 2005

Presidential Determination No. 2005–18

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Extension of Waiver of Section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act with respect to Assistance to the Government of Azerbaijan

Pursuant to the authority contained in title II of the Kenneth M. Ludden Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2002 (Public Law 107–115), I hereby determine and certify that extending the waiver of section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act of 1992 (Public Law 102–511):

- is necessary to support United States efforts to counter international terrorism;
- is necessary to support the operational readiness of United States Armed Forces or coalition partners to counter international terrorism;
- is important to Azerbaijan's border security; and
- will not undermine or hamper ongoing efforts to negotiate a peaceful settlement between Armenia and Azerbaijan or be used for offensive purposes against Armenia.

Accordingly, I hereby extend the waiver of section 907 of the FREEDOM Support Act.

You are authorized and directed to notify the Congress of this determination and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register.*

George W. Bush

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Review of Title III of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996

January 13, 2005

Dear _____ :

Consistent with section 306(c)(2) of the Cuban Liberty and Democratic Solidarity (LIBERTAD) Act of 1996 (Public Law 104–114) (the "Act"), I hereby determine and report to the Congress that suspension for 6 months beyond February 1, 2005, of the right to bring an action under title III of the Act is necessary to the national interests of the United States and will expedite a transition to democracy in Cuba.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Richard G. Lugar, chairman, and Joseph R. Biden, Jr., ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Ted Stevens, chairman, and Robert C. Byrd,

ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Henry J. Hyde, chairman, and Tom Lantos, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; and Jerry Lewis, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 14. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks in a Discussion at Florida Community College at Jacksonville in Jacksonville, Florida

January 14, 2005

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for having me. [*Laughter*] It's an honor to be here. I—it's kind of nice to be introduced by your brother. [*Laughter*] I'm real proud of Jeb. I asked Jeb to take on an important assignment, and that is to travel to the countries that had been hit by the tsunamis. He went with Colin Powell. I couldn't think of two better representatives of the United States of America to show the compassion and heart of the people of the United States of America.

For those of you who have given your hard-earned dollars to help the victims, I want to thank you for that. I also want to remind you, there's a lot of other work to be done at home and around the world. Please don't let your gift to help the tsunami victims shortchange other vital programs to help feed the hungry and to provide comfort for those who have been—those who need help.

And so Jeb, thanks for doing a good—looking forward to seeing you in Washington here pretty soon. They'll turn down the bed for you. [*Laughter*]

I—Steve, thanks for having me. I'm really looking forward to talking about the importance of the community college system in the United States and in Florida to help make sure that we train people for jobs. That's what we're here to talk about, how to help people improve their lives. And the community college system is a vital part of a hopeful America. So thanks for having me.

I want to thank all the folks who teach here. I want to thank the folks who put up with my entourage. [*Laughter*] It's quite large these days. [*Laughter*]

I'm proud to be traveling in the limo today with Mel Martinez, the new United States Senator. I flew down today with Ander Crenshaw, the fine United States Congressman. And also, the mayor came out to say hello. And I appreciate the mayor. Mayor Peyton, thanks for joining us. I appreciate you coming.

So there I was with the Senator, the Congressman, the mayor, and the Governor, and guess what we talked about? [*Laughter*] We talked about the importance of Jacksonville, Florida, to the security of the United States of America. And I appreciate so very much the very strong presentation these leaders made about the importance of Mayport. I listened very carefully. I know full well that Jacksonville is the home port that most in the United States Navy want to be based at. I fully understand the importance of Mayport and the Navy to the economy of Jacksonville, Florida.

I want to thank you, Mr. Mayor, for your willingness to take time out of your schedule to brief me on the realities of the situation here. And I'll take your message back to Washington, DC.

I want to thank John Winn, the commissioner of education from this great State of Florida. Just do what the Governor tells you to do. I want to thank—[*laughter*]—isn't that what you told me to say, Jeb? [*Laughter*] I want to thank David Armstrong, who's the chancellor of the Community Colleges and of Workforce Education. I want to thank all the State and local officials who are here. I want to thank our panelists. I think you're going to find some interesting stories here. I'm going to try to tell you something about education. They can tell you firsthand what is—some of them can tell you firsthand what it's like to go to school at the community college. I think you're going to find it fascinating. I certainly did, during our discussion.

I met a fellow named Steve Miller, who mentors low-income high school students and helps them prepare for college. Where are you, Steve? There he is, right there.

Thanks for coming out. Listen, he is a volunteer, and one of the things—one of the important—one of the strengths—the strength of America is the heart and soul of our citizens. We like to talk about our military representing the strength of America—and it does to a certain extent—and the size of our wallets representing the strength of America. But the true strength of the United States of America lies in the hearts and souls of our citizens. And I want to thank Steve for taking time out of his life to mentor a child. It's a fantastic gift, and I appreciate the example you have set. And if you want to serve our country, love your neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself.

I—we've got a lot on the agenda. Obviously, winning the war on terror is still on my mind. And I want to appreciate those of you who wear our Nation's uniform for your sacrifice and for joining our great country's cause of freedom.

We will stay on the hunt to bring killers to justice before they hurt us. In the long run, we will defeat the enemy by spreading freedom. And it's been a remarkable 3 months for freedom around the world. People in Afghanistan voted for a President. People in the Palestinian Territory voted for a new leader. And on January the 30th, amazingly enough, the people of Iraq will be going to the polls to elect leadership that will guide this country forward.

And I'm so optimistic about the future, because I believe deep in everybody's soul is the desire to live in a free world. I know that mothers of all religions want to raise their child in a peaceful society. And I firmly believe that the more freedom spreads, the more peace will spread. And so I want to thank those in the military for helping us to achieve a grand mission during historic times.

At home, we've got to keep this economy growing, and that's why we're going to keep the taxes low. I'm looking forward to Congress to—passing a smart budget, one that recognizes we got to be wise about how we spend your money and deal with our deficit. I'm looking forward to Congress to make sure that—working with Congress to make sure America is the best place for the small business to grow and flourish. That means we need legal reform; we need class-action reform, asbestos reform, and medical liability reform.

We've got a lot to do. I noticed we've got some young—younger folks here today. There you—yes. I can't help but look at you and realize we have a responsibility to do something about Social Security. If you're retired, you don't have anything to worry about Social Security, because you're going to get your check. You can forget about the old days of saying, "Well, if they talk about Social Security, I'm not going to get my check." The Social Security trust has got plenty of money in it to take care of those who have retired or near retirement.

But if you're a youngster in America, you better understand that by the time—if you're in the twenties and by the time you retire, if nothing is done about Social Security, the system will be bust. In other words, there won't be anything available for you.

And so I'm going to work with Congress to take on this big problem. We have a problem, and now is the time to fix it. The longer we wait, the harder it is to fix it. And we have a duty to the youngsters of America to make sure the retirement system is available for them.

And we have a duty to continue to make sure every child is educated in this country. There are some I've heard that say, "Well, maybe we ought to change the No Child Left Behind Act." Forget it. The No Child Left Behind Act is working. We've set high standards. We believe every child can learn, and we're going to measure to make sure that every child is learning. And when they're not, we'll correct problems early, before it's too late.

And here in Florida, I just—I can't tell you how proud I am of Jeb and his education initiatives because they're so hopeful. He, like others, just refuses to shuffle kids through the system without making sure there's excellence available for every child.

And so I look forward to continuing the education reform, the spirit of high standards to the high school systems in America. I want to work with Congress to get some positive initiatives passed, because we have a duty in the country to make sure that the next generation not only has a retirement system but is educated and literate.

Now, to make sure America is the most competitive place in the world, the best place to do business, a place where people can work, we've got to make sure education systems actually educate willing workers for the jobs which exist. And that's why I'm here at the community college system today. The community college system is flexible. It is available. It's got the ability to change a curriculum to meet the needs. It's the demand-driven education system, which works. I believe government ought to fund that which works and de-fund that which does not work.

And the community college system is viable. And that's why I worked with Congress to get 250 million passed last time. It's still in the budget for this time. I'm looking forward to working with Mel and Ander to make sure the community college programs—the job training programs is really what they are—remains viable.

You see, it used to be that they'd say to a State, "Just go educate people." And so all that mattered was the number of people educated. Now we're saying, "Educate people for jobs which exist so that you're actually helping people, not conforming to an empty bureaucratic standard."

And that's why, since the community colleges are able to do that, I'm confident—and encouraging our Secretary of Labor to continue moving forward with high-growth job training initiative grants. I know you've received some from the Federal Government, I think about $4 million worth. It's money well-spent. I can confidently tell the taxpayers that the money spent here is making a difference. Somebody else is going to tell you who has got more authority on the subject than I do. That's the person who runs the school.

I want to talk about an interesting program that I'm going to submit to Congress, here real quickly, and that is how to make sure the Pell grants work better. Pell grants are really important. Pell grants make it possible for people to go to school who otherwise won't go to school. I'm about to talk to some Pell grant recipients here. We've added about a million students in the last 4 years to the Pell grant program. I think that is money really well-spent.

I'm going to reform the student loan program to make it more—or ask Congress to reform it to make it more effective and efficient, and thereby saving money. We've got a unique way of saving money, and that saved money from the administration of the student loan program will be plowed into the Pell grant program. There's a $4.3 billion shortfall in the Pell grant program. We intend to use the savings from changing how student loans are granted and administrated—administered to closing that deficit.

We want to increase the Pell grants by $100 a year over—$100 per year over the next 5 years. We want to continue to say to students who take rigorous course loads throughout Florida and the country that when you do so and you qualify for a Pell grant, you'll get an extra $1,000 on your Pell grant. In other words, we want to raise the standards and provide incentives for people to aim high in life. And that's what the Pell grants can be used for. And so I'm looking for Congress to get this new program and initiative in place.

And finally, I know many of you here are involved with the Workforce Investment Act. It needs to be reformed. It needs to be changed so more people are trained. Right now, the Workforce Investment Act is—trains about 200,000 people. I think with some reasonable reforms, some flexibility in the program, less proscription by the United States Congress on how the program is administered, we can double the number of people trained under the Workforce Investment Act for the same amount of money. And that's what we intend to work with Congress on doing.

So that's what I'm here to talk about, what Congress can—how we can work together to make sure this community college system is viable and vibrant but really to make sure people can find work. That's what it is, to make sure the education system focuses on the needs of the students. Government can help, the Federal Government can help. But it's going to require a collaborative effort between the Federal Government, the State government, and the local government.

And that's why I'm so proud that Susan Pareigis is with us today. What do you do?

Susan Pareigis. I work for your brother. [*Laughter*]

The President. That's a heavy lift. [*Laughter*] Fine lad, but it's a heavy lift. [*Laughter*]

Ms. Pareigis. I'm the director for the Agency for Workforce Innovation, and we are really trying here at the local level and at the State level to make sure that we marry the jobs, as you describe, in the marketplace, that we have the students coming out of the education system with the skills and the training that they need at the job site.

The President. All right. And so give us some idea of what you and brother are doing to make sure the community college—how do you help the community college system?

[*At this point, Ms. Pareigis, director, Florida Agency for Workforce Innovation, Tallahassee, FL, made further remarks.*]

The President. Yes, see, this is a really important point. Government tends to change incrementally, and as it does, there's another set of rules and another set of regulations. And then, sure enough, after a while, you wake up and the money has got a lot of strings to it, and—which makes it hard for Governors and Susan to do their job. And so, one of the things this administration will do throughout our budget, in particular—today we're talking about the Workforce Investment Act—is to provide as much flexibility as possible. That way, we can say with certainty to the taxpayer, "We're results-oriented people." As opposed to focusing on the process, we think government ought to focus on the results and give flexibility to those who are charged with making sure we achieve results. And so I want to appreciate you bringing up the flexibility issue.

I look forward to working with the Congress to provide as much flexibility as possible. It's very important for those who write the law to understand you've got to make sure you align authority and responsibility. And a good way to do so at the Federal level is to pass the power back to those who we're holding responsible for spending the money. Thank you for bringing it up.

Ms. Pareigis. Thank you very much.

The President. You got anything else? I notice you're on the President's National Hire Veterans Committee. Thanks for joining.

Ms. Pareigis. Thank you for letting me serve. I would tell you that we work with our veterans on a daily basis within the State of Florida. We think they're very strong candidates for the job community, and we're glad to have them.

The President. You've got a lot of great veterans here in the Jacksonville area, I know that.

Okay, speaking about aligning authority and responsibility—Mr. President. [*Laughter*]

Dr. Steve Wallace. Yes, sir.

The President. Steve Wallace. How long have you been here?

Dr. Wallace. Seven and a half years, Mr. President.

The President. Great. Let her rip. Here's your chance to tell us. [*Laughter*]

Dr. Wallace. Well, first of all, Mr. President, on behalf of the 60,000 students and 4,000 employees of Florida Community College, we welcome you here. We are thrilled——

The President. Thousand?

Dr. Wallace. Yes, sir.

The President. That's good. That's a lot.

Dr. Wallace. I also want to thank you for your extraordinary support of America's community colleges.

The President. Well, thanks for saying that. I appreciate that. I'm proud to do so. You know why? Because they work.

Dr. Wallace. And we're getting better all the time.

The President. That's good. So give us a sense for—what has changed? What do you see in your future? Why are 60,000 people coming here? I mean, it's a pretty good sign when that many people have made a conscious decision to come to your school. Something must be going right.

[*Dr. Wallace, president, Florida Community College at Jacksonville, made further remarks.*]

The President. It's pretty interesting, isn't it, when you think about it. So you get—a group of employers come to the community college and say, "Here's what we're looking for," and the community college is able to

adjust its curriculum, which is sometimes hard to do in educational—in the educational world, adjust its curriculum to meet the needs. That's what you're saying, I think.

Dr. Wallace. Absolutely.

The President. Whew. Got it right. [*Laughter*] You got anything else you want to tell me while you got me? Never mind. [*Laughter*]

Should we go to Eric? You ready?

Eric Mitchell. Yes, sir.

The President. Eric, where do you go to school?

Mr. Mitchell. I currently attend Florida Community College in Jacksonville.

The President. Fabulous. Tell us a little bit—I'm not going to ask you how old you are. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Mitchell. Currently, I'm an engineer here with the Jacksonville Fire Department.

The President. Fantastic.

[*Mr. Mitchell, student, Florida Community College, and firefighter/engineer, Jacksonville Fire and Rescue, Jacksonville, FL, made further remarks.*]

The President. Right. And so, first you had to make up your mind, obviously. I guess the easier path would have said, "Well, I'm doing okay. I think I'll just do what I'm doing." Somehow, something clicked and said, "I think I'm going to go back to school," right?

Mr. Mitchell. Right.

The President. Well, see, government can't make you do that. [*Laughter*] It's called personal ambition. That comes from your soul. Anyway, so you decide—so what happens?

Mr. Mitchell. So I decided to go back to school, and an opportunity arose within the department to obtain my paramedic license. And so that's what I'm doing currently right now. And the way that I'm funding that is actually through financial aid, student loans and the Pell grant as well as, this semester, a scholarship.

The President. Fantastic. So, in other words, there's help. If somebody's out there listening, you're looking—kind of an older guy here, graduated in '95. Not really old—[*laughter*]—compared to me and the old president there—[*laughter*]—but a little older. And you're probably wondering whether or not it makes sense to go back to school. And you're saying, "Well, gosh, I can't afford it." There's plenty of help. You received it.

Mr. Mitchell. Yes, I did.

The President. And that's helpful. I mean, he's got a son to raise. He's probably wondering how to make sure that he can do—be the dad, provide, and at the same time go back to school. There's help—you've got to know that—the Pell grant program, the loan program. And now, as I understand it, this is kind of an upgrade. In other words, you're able to say if you get this degree, it enables you to maybe make a little more money?

Mr. Mitchell. Correct, correct. It opens doors for advancement, as far as promotional. And with 85 to 90 percent of our call volume being EMS-related, it actually makes me better at my job.

The President. Yes, see, this is important for people to understand, and that is that—there's a lot of talk about productivity in our society. Productivity translates to higher wages over time. And one way to become more productive is to get an additional education. And that's what Eric has done. And so he's taking time; he's getting loans. But he's going to make a lot more money than he's making today. I'm not going to tell you how much more, because he's afraid the IRS man is watching. [*Laughter*] I won't tell him.

But I appreciate you coming back to school. I think it means a lot to hear a story about somebody who has been out of school for a while, working in the fire department, sees an opportunity, comes to the community college. It says a lot about you, and it says a lot about the community college. There is a program tailored to meet this man's needs, which I appreciate.

All right, here we go. Kim wasn't so sure, when I came barging in the room, that this was such a cool idea after all. [*Laughter*] Right? Name, please. [*Laughter*] This is Kim Wilkerson, a student at the Florida Community College. Right?

Kim Wilkerson. Yes. Hello.

The President. Let her go. Went to high school?

Ms. Wilkerson. Yes, sir. [*Laughter*]

The President. She said she likes short answers. [*Laughter*] How many children do you have? One. [*Laughter*] This is a great story, by the way. We're about to get to it. I'm not telling—I mean, it is—[*laughter*]—went to high school and was working for quite a while and decided to go back to school.

Ms. Wilkerson. I decided to go back in 1999 after I had my daughter. And I worked dead-end jobs, and I realized that a college education was the best way to go to provide for her and myself.

The President. Just stop right there. It's kind of like what we call personal responsibility, where—so what—how did you know what to do? I mean, so it's time to go back to college. There's two issues: One, what do you major in, and how is it paid for. That's what people are going to be asking. They say, "Well, I've heard Kim. She said she had to go back to college." Were you able to get financing?

Ms. Wilkerson. Yes, sir. I've got Pell grants and loans.

The President. Good, so that's made it a little easier to go back?

Ms. Wilkerson. Yes, sir. Without that, it would have been impossible to go.

The President. That's why Pell grants are important. That's why we want to expand them. That's why we want to make sure they're available, so that people feel comfortable going back. Then how did you know what to do? I mean, how did you know what to major in, what subject to take? Was there help here at the community college, for example, a kind of career counseling?

Ms. Wilkerson. Yes. My first choice was addictions counseling. And I realized I really didn't want to go into that. And I went to the Advanced Technology Center and talked with Mr. Lance Wallace, and he gave me a tour.

The President. Is Wallace here? He should be. He's about to get national publicity, and he didn't show up. [*Laughter*]

Anyway, so there's a place where you could go get counseling. The reason we're going through this is that if somebody is listening, there's help. So you go get counseling.

Ms. Wilkerson. Yes, sir. I go talk with Lance, and he explains the program that I went into, which is computer engineering technology.

The President. That sounds pretty sophisticated, computer engineering technology. Was it intimidating when you first heard that?

Ms. Wilkerson. Yes.

The President. Yes. And you've mastered it.

Ms. Wilkerson. Yes. Well, I'm on my way to mastering it. [*Laughter*]

The President. Good. That's good. That's what——

Ms. Wilkerson. And I will have it mastered, so——

The President. There you go. That's the right attitude. And so the person said, "These are the kind of jobs which exist," I presume—Wallace.

Ms. Wilkerson. Yes.

The President. So, like, if you get the degree, you're liable to find a job in this field, and it interests you.

Ms. Wilkerson. Yes, sir.

The President. And you said, "Let's get after it."

Ms. Wilkerson. Oh, yes.

The President. And what's really interesting is that you were being paid maybe $16,000 a year, kind of, in the jobs that you had previously? Is that what you had mentioned to me?

Ms. Wilkerson. Yes, sir.

The President. And when you get your degree, you'll be eligible for jobs which start at $61,000 a year?

Ms. Wilkerson. Yes, sir.

The President. Is that right?

Ms. Wilkerson. Yes, sir.

The President. No doubt in my mind you're going to succeed. Probably be number one in your class, when it's all said and done.

Ms. Wilkerson. I am definitely trying.

The President. Yes, well, even if you're not, there's others of us who had—weren't number one, either—[*laughter*]—if you know what I mean. How about the story, though, seriously? Somebody who has worked a series of jobs, has a responsibility as a mom, hears about the availability of the program. She gets help—I presume the school helps people with the loans and Pell

grants and, "This is what you quality for." You've got a whole office for that.

Dr. Wallace. We have a whole network of offices.

The President. And she gets a little—takes some time to—it must have been a little frightening, I would suspect. Or not—I mean, I don't want to put words in your mouth. [*Laughter*] So were you confident coming in? I mean, seriously.

Ms. Wilkerson. I was very afraid at first.

The President. Yes, see, I was right.

Ms. Wilkerson. But with great family support, I made it.

The President. Now, you're doing great. This is a fantastic—this is an important story. It's an important story for a lot of reasons. It's an important story because it shows how effective the community college system can be. It's an important story for those of us at the Federal level who are deciding Pell grants, because a Pell grant has—it sounds like—but it's—there's a human dimension to it when you start hearing how they're applied—Pell grants are applied. And it's an important story because if you so desire, there's a pathway for a better tomorrow. And I really want to thank you for sharing it with us. It's great.

Ms. Wilkerson. You're welcome. Thank you.

The President. Really good job.

Ms. Wilkerson. Thank you.

The President. Finally, we've got Jim McCollum with us. Jim works for——

Jim McCollum. BellSouth.

The President. That's good. And I believe there is a responsibility in corporate America to work with the community college system and other agencies to help people help themselves. And explain what you do, Jim. I think people find this to be very interesting.

Mr. McCollum. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. Make it a little easier to pay the phone bills.

[*Mr. McCollum, regional director, Corporate and External Affairs, BellSouth, Amelia Island, FL, made further remarks.*]

The President. That's great, yes. Thanks. It's a competitive world. Telecommunications is competitive, and these companies are constantly having to update their skill levels. In other words, it used to be if you could handle a shovel, you're in pretty good shape when it came to employment. I'm talking about way back. [*Laughter*] Now, all of the sudden, the skill set is completely different and it's changing. And one of the things that Jim said I think is interesting is that we're constantly trying to make our—work with our employees to help them become more productive. In other words, it's ongoing education. Education is not just a moment that you quit. There's a constant process, and the community college system fits in nicely with that. I presume you're pretty well linked up with the president there.

Mr. McCollum. Well, I also—I do know Dr. Wallace. I also have the opportunity to be—to serve on the board for his Advanced Technology Center, and if I could explain that——

The President. I wish you would. Helps you.

Mr. McCollum. Rather than just opening another division of the college to meet the needs of future work skills, we collaborated the local, political, and private and public and educational sectors, and with Susan and Governor Bush in Tallahassee, and said, "Let's look at the type of jobs and type of companies that we want to bring to northeast Florida." And we did that, and we said, "Okay, here's the type of companies," and we did studies. And then we said, "Okay, what are those specific skill sets?"

We went to Dr. Wallace, met with them, and they said, "Well, why don't we just develop the technology center," which we did. And it addresses those very specific companies that we want to bring in here so that when we do, they will be graduating employees that will come out and go to work.

The President. Yes, that's really smart. Nice going, Mayor. This is a smart chamber of commerce—people who are responsible for attracting capital and jobs to a community—is one which effectively utilizes the community college system. If people—a company knows that they're going to find a skilled workforce, they're coming.

And I appreciate you bringing up that point. It makes sense. So how many businesses are actively involved with the community college system, would you say? Are you the right person to ask? Maybe Dr. Wallace knows that.

Mr. McCollum. We've got 4,000 businesses that are members of the Jacksonville Regional Chamber of Commerce, and I don't know the exact number within——

The President. A lot?

Mr. McCollum. But I would say 75 percent would be a very easy number.

The President. No wonder this is such a vibrant community. It is utilizing all its assets to continually—to make this—Jacksonville an attractive place for a lot of reasons, and—got anything else you want to say?

Mr. McCollum. Just thank you for being here, and thank you for the job you're doing.

The President. Yes, thanks. Listen, I—— [*applause*]—thanks. I want to thank our—the folks sitting up here, willing to get in front of all the cameras and talk. [*Laughter*] You can get used to it. [*Laughter*]

But I hope you found this interesting. I certainly did. I love to see success. And I think part of my job is to herald success, and part of the job of those of us who have been elected is to focus on success, which means results. And we're getting fantastic results all around our country from our wonderful community college system.

Jeb told me that coming to—when I came to Jacksonville, I'd see one of the great community college systems in the country. I suspect he's right, Dr. Wallace. You get a lot of credit for it. And you get a lot of credit for being able to attract well-motivated, incredibly smart students.

So I want to thank you all for coming today. May God bless you all. May God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:59 p.m. at the South Campus. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Mayor John Peyton of Jacksonville, FL; and J. David Armstrong, Jr., chancellor, Florida Community Colleges & Workforce Education, Florida Department of Education.

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.

January 8

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

January 10

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing and met with the National Security Council.

Later in the morning, at the U.S. Agency for International Development, the President met with presidents of international relief organizations to discuss relief efforts following the December 26, 2004, earthquake and tsunamis in the Indian Ocean.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with Secretary of Energy Spencer Abraham. Later, also in the Oval Office, he met with Secretary of Veterans Affairs Anthony J. Principi.

Later in the afternoon, the President received a briefing and participated in a discussion on efforts to improve tsunami monitoring and warning systems in response to the December 26, 2004, earthquake and tsunamis in the Indian Ocean. Later, in the Oval Office, he participated in an interview with The Wall Street Journal.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President-elect Mahmoud Abbas of the Palestinian Authority to congratulate him on his January 9 election victory.

The President announced that he has named Allan B. Hubbard as Assistant to the President for Economic Policy and Director of the National Economic Council.

The President announced that he has named Candida Perotti Wolff as Assistant to the President for Legislative Affairs.

January 11

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government

to discuss the upcoming elections in Iraq. He then had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President met with Attorney General John Ashcroft. Later, he met with Defense Minister Sergey Borisovich Ivanov of Russia.

Later in the afternoon, the President participated in an interview with The Washington Times.

The President announced his intention to nominate Michael Chertoff to be Secretary of Homeland Security.

The President declared an emergency in Indiana and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by record/near record snow on December 21–23, 2004.

The President declared an emergency in Ohio and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by record snow on December 22–24, 2004.

January 12

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he and Mrs. Bush traveled to Falls Church, VA. Upon arrival at J.E.B. Stuart High School, they met with school officials and international baccalaureate program students.

Later in the morning, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush participated in an interview with Barbara Walters of ABC's "20/20" show for later broadcast.

January 13

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Arlington, VA.

Later in the morning, the President returned to Washington, DC.

In the afternoon, in the Roosevelt Room, the President met with teachers and a principal to discuss education priorities. Later, he met with Secretary of State Colin L. Powell.

Later in the afternoon, the President participated in an interview with USA Today. He then participated in an interview with representatives of regional media.

The President announced that he has named Jim Towey as Assistant to the President and Director of the Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives.

January 14

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Ghazi al-Ujayl al-Yawr of the Iraqi Interim Government to discuss President al-Yawr's visit to Europe and the upcoming elections in Iraq. He then had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Jacksonville, FL, arriving in the afternoon.

Later in the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to designate Kent R. Hill as Acting Assistant Administrator for Global Health at the U.S. Agency for International Development.

The President announced his intention to appoint William T. Ryan as a member of the Board of Directors of the Rural Telephone Bank.

The President announced his intention to nominate David A. Balton for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for Oceans and Fisheries.

The President announced his intention to nominate Joseph R. DeTrani for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Special Envoy for the Six Party Talks.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as

items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released January 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Released January 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Indiana

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Ohio

Released January 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Fact sheet: No Child Left Behind: High-Quality, High School Initiatives

Released January 13

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Released January 14

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Fact sheet: Strengthening Higher Education for a Successful Workforce

Acts Approved by the President

NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.