

human rights. We must fight HIV/AIDS and other diseases and reduce poverty.

Each task will require good relations with nations around the world, and each will require a Secretary who will lead by character and conviction and wisdom. To meet these times and tasks, America has its best in Dr. Condoleezza Rice, now Secretary Condoleezza Rice, our 66th Secretary of State.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:58 a.m. at the Department of State. In his remarks, he referred to former U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Andrew Young; and President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary Rice.

Remarks to the “Congress of Tomorrow” Luncheon in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia

January 28, 2005

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated.

Deborah, thanks for the kind introduction. I’m kind of warming up for the State of the Union—[laughter]—some verbal jumping jacks. Thanks for letting me come by. I’m going to have a few remarks, then I’ll answer questions for a while.

Mr. Speaker, thank you for your leadership. Thank you for your friendship. This country has had no better Speaker than Denny Hastert.

Appreciate Senator Ted Stevens—thank you for your tenure and your leadership as well. I’m glad you’re here. I thank my friend from the great State of Texas Tom DeLay for his leadership. I appreciate you, Mr. Leader. Mitch McConnell, the Senate majority whip—Senator McConnell, thank you, sir, appreciate you. Congressman Blunt, the House whip. Thank you, Congressman, glad you’re here, appreciate you. How is your son doing?

Representative Roy Blunt. He’s doing great.

The President. Good, huh?

Representative Blunt. He’s taking a page out of your book.

The President. Yes, I like a guy who follows in his father’s footsteps. [Laughter]

Senator Kyl, who’s the chairman of the Republican policy committee—thank you, sir. Deborah Pryce, who you know, and Rick Santorum—thank you both for organizing this event. Thank the members of my Cabinet who are here, John Snow and Josh Bolten. I’m looking forward to working with you.

As you know, David Hobbs has handled legislative affairs for my administration for a couple of years. He’s worked very closely with the leadership and the Members of both the House and the Senate. He has decided to move on. He will be replaced by Candi Wolff. I know you look forward to working with Candi. She is a fine soul. And we’re going to miss David Hobbs, and I appreciate him for his—I appreciate his long service.

A couple points I’d like to make. First, I think we’ve proven to the country we know how to set an agenda and work together to achieve it. In other words, people ought to view this team we’ve put together, the relationship between the executive branch and the legislative branch, as people who are—come to Washington, DC, to solve problems. And we have done so over the last 4 years, and we will continue to do so for the next 4 years.

I look forward to addressing the Nation. I will remind the country we’re still at war. And I want to thank the Congress for providing the necessary support for our troops who are in harm’s way. I will also tell the people once again that I strongly believe that the way to defeat hatred and terrorism is to spread freedom. And I believe everybody in the world deserves to be free.

I look forward to discussing ways to keep this recovery going so people can find work. I look forward to talking to the country about the need to address big reforms like Social Security. I will continue to articulate the faith-based agenda, the compassion agenda so that people can find hope in our country. I’ll remind the people we’re a great nation. We can achieve anything we set our mind to. And I will tell them like I’m telling you, it’s such an honor to be the President of the United States.

Thank you for letting me come. I look forward to answering your questions.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:06 p.m. at the Greenbrier. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Matt Blunt of Missouri, son of Representative Roy Blunt. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

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 22

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the evening, at the Capitol Hilton Hotel, the President and Mrs. Bush attended the Alfalfa Club Dinner.

January 23

In the morning, the President traveled to Camp David, MD.

January 24

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced that the President will host a working dinner for President Jacques Chirac of France in Brussels, Belgium, on February 21.

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

The President announced his designation of the following individuals as members of the Presidential delegation to Poland to attend the 60th Anniversary of the Liberation of Auschwitz-Birkenau: Vice President Dick Cheney (head of delegation); Lynne Cheney; Victor Ashe; Representative Tom Lantos; Annette Tillemann Lantos; Feliks Bruks; Deborah Lipstadt; Fred Schwartz; and Elie Wiesel.

January 25

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, in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building, the President met with African American leaders and pastors. Later, he participated in an interview with the Boston Herald.

Later in the afternoon, in the Cabinet Room, the President met with Republican Members of the Senate Finance Committee and Senate Republican leadership to discuss Social Security and other legislative priorities.

In the evening, the President met with the Joint Chiefs of Staff and combatant commanders. He then hosted a dinner for them and their spouses on the State Floor.

January 26

In the morning, the President had separate telephone conversations with President Luiz Inacio Lula of Brazil and King Juan Carlos I of Spain. He then had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Bethesda, MD.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, in the Cabinet Room, he met with members of the Congressional Black Caucus.

Later in the afternoon, in the Residence, the President met with Republican Members of the House Ways and Means Committee and House Republican leadership to discuss Social Security and other legislative priorities.

In the evening, the President had a telephone conversation with Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the United Nations to discuss the upcoming elections in Iraq.

January 27

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