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that the negotiating strategy achieves the objective of pointing out where guilt needs to be as well as achieving the objective of no nuclear weapon. And I felt good about our visits.

I did visit with Condi yesterday, and I'm about to go visit with her again in the Oval Office to discuss not only this issue but other key issues, including Lebanon, where the message is loud and clear from the United States and France and many other nations that Syria must withdraw not only her troops but her secret service forces out of Lebanon now. And I look forward to talking to Condi about getting an amplification on her visit with our allies overseas. I look forward to not only hear their words; I want to hear about their body language. I want to hear about their enthusiasm for the project. I think I'm going to find it was quite high because the people now understand that if you believe in democracy, why not let the democracy in Lebanon flourish and grow? And the United States of America strongly supports democracy all around the world, including Lebanon. And it cannot flourish so long as Syrian troops are there. It's time for Syria to get out.

Listen, thank you all. I appreciate seeing you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:11 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to John D. Negroponte, nominee to be Director of National Intelligence; former Senators Connie Mack, Chairman, and John B. Breaux, Vice Chairman, President's Advisory Panel on Federal Tax Reform; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Ayman Al-Zawahiri, founder of the Egyptian Islamic Jihad and senior Al Qaida associate; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Khalid Sheik Mohammed, senior Al Qaida leader responsible for planning the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack, who was captured in Pakistan on March 1, 2003; Ramzi bin al-Shibh, an Al Qaida operative suspected of helping to plan the September 11, 2001, terrorist attack, who was captured in Karachi, Pakistan, on September 11, 2002; and President Vladimir Putin of Russia.

Remarks on the Nomination of Stephen L. Johnson To Be Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency

March 4, 2005

The President. Good morning. I am pleased to announce my nomination of Stephen Johnson to be the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Steve Johnson is a talented scientist and skilled manager with a lifelong commitment to environmental stewardship. He has 24 years of experience at the EPA, spanning all four decades of the Agency's history. Since late January, he has served as Acting Administrator. He knows the EPA from the ground up and has a passion for its mission, to protect the health of our citizens and to guarantee the quality of our air, water, and land for generations to come. I've come to know Steve as an innovative problemsolver with good judgment and complete integrity. I'm proud to ask him to become the first career EPA employee to hold the office of Administrator, and I'm glad he's agreed to do so.

When confirmed by the Senate, Steve will also become the first professional scientist to lead the EPA. He will use that background to set clear, rational standards for environmental quality and to place sound scientific analysis at the heart of all major decisions. Steve shares my conviction that we can improve the Earth while maintaining a vibrant and competitive economy. He will work cooperatively with leaders in government, industry, and environmental advocacy to continue using our resources wisely. He will listen to those living closest to the land, because they know our environmental needs best.

For the last 4 years, Steve has served at the side of EPA Administrators Mike Leavitt and Christie Todd Whitman, and he shares in their record of achievement. Today, America's air and water are cleaner than in 2001. The clean diesel rule we finalized will cut emissions from heavy-duty vehicles by more than 90 percent over the next 10 years. Our brownfields initiative has helped restore

more than a thousand abandoned industrial sites to productive use in their community. We've taken landmark steps toward improving water quality in one of our Nation's most treasured natural resources, the Great Lakes.

All Americans are benefiting from the EPA's practical approach and emphasis on results, and Steve will build on that progress. His immediate task is to work with Congress to pass my Clear Skies Initiative. This innovative legislation will reduce powerplant pollution by 70 percent without disrupting the economy or raising electricity prices. The bill will give Governors the flexibility they need to meet strict new air quality standards, improve public health, and protect vulnerable ecosystems from acid rain. Clear Skies is a commonsense, pro-environment, pro-jobs piece of legislation, and Congress needs to get it to my desk this year.

Steve will also bring valuable experience that will help us improve our homeland security. As an expert on pesticides, he helped design new regulations to improve food safety. In his new role, Steve will lead Federal efforts to ensure the security of our drinking water supply. My budget includes a new program to better monitor urban water systems, so we can detect contamination as quickly as possible. EPA personnel are playing an important role in the war on terror, so my budget increases support for EPA homeland security programs by more than 70 percent this year.

As he embarks on all these duties, Steve has the trust and admiration of his longtime colleagues, the thousands of hard-working EPA employees across the country. He is also fortunate to count on the love and support of his wife, Debbie, and their children and grandchildren, who are with us here today—and his mother- and father-in-law. [*Laughter*]

I ask the Senate to confirm this nomination promptly. I look forward to welcoming Steve Johnson to my Cabinet as America's 11th Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency.

Congratulations, Steve. Appreciate you.

[*At this point, Administrator-Designate Johnson made brief remarks.*]

The President. Good job, sir.

Administrator-Designate Johnson. Thank you.

The President. You bet.

Administrator-Designate Johnson. Thank you very much, sir.

The President. Smile—smile for the camera. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:45 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Debbie Johnson, wife of Administrator-Designate Johnson. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Administrator-Designate Johnson.

Remarks in a Discussion on Strengthening Social Security in Westfield, New Jersey

March 4, 2005

The President. Thanks for coming. Okay, let's get to work. Thanks for coming. A hundred years since a President has been here. I don't know what took the other ones so long to get here. [*Laughter*] Mr. Mayor, thanks. Mayor Greg McDermott, I appreciate your inviting me here, appreciate you being at the airport. I appreciate you and the local officials putting up with the entourage. Thank you all for coming.

My regret is Laura is not with me. She is doing great, though. She is a fabulous woman, and I'm a lucky guy that she has agreed to marry me.

I've got some things I want to talk about. I want to talk about freedom and peace. I want to talk about growing this economy. I want to talk about Social Security.

Before I do so, I do want to say thanks to Congressman Mike Ferguson for his great leadership in the House of Representatives. And Maureen—good to see you, Maureen. I see her. She's doing great. Thanks for coming.

Rodney Frelinghuysen is with us. Rodney, thank you, sir. Rodney and I were talking about, on Air Force One, how hard it is to be a baby boomer and trying to jog. [*Laughter*] Part of the problem we're going to face in Social Security is there's a lot of baby boomers like me and Rodney who are getting