

This is an important issue for our country. We got to be confident in our ability to compete. We'll be tough when it comes to the policy to make sure you're treated fairly, but I refuse to allow walls to shut our producers and entrepreneurs off from opportunities around the world. Free and fair trade is an important cornerstone of strong and valid economic policy for the creation of jobs here in America.

So that's what I'm going to be talking about when it comes to our economy. We're doing fine, but I believe we can do even better. The right policies out of Washington, DC—policies that encourage growth, not stifle growth, policies that encourage entrepreneurship, not diminish the entrepreneurial hopes, policies that educate our folks so we can fill the jobs of the 21st century—will keep the United States the economic leader of the world. And that's the way I want it, and that's the way you should want it, and that's the way Members of the United States Congress on both political parties should want it as well.

I can't tell you how neat it is to travel the world and represent the United States of America. Ours is a land that is so unique—if you think about our country where a person can start off with nothing except a dream, can start off with just a hope, and own something—own your own business, own an opportunity to thrive. And that's what we're about. That's what we have been about, and that's what we must remain about.

We've got to still be the greatest hope for mankind on the face of this Earth. We are today, and with the right policies, we'll be tomorrow.

Listen, thanks for letting me come back. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:44 a.m. in the Hilton Chicago. In his remarks, he referred to Miles White, CEO, chairman of the board, and director, Abbott Laboratories. A tape was not available for verification of the content 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.

December 31, 2005

In the morning, at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, the President had an intelligence briefing.

January 1

In the morning, the President traveled to San Antonio, TX, where, at Brooke Army Medical Center, he visited wounded soldiers and their family members and presented Purple Heart medals to nine soldiers.

In the afternoon, the President and Mrs. Bush returned to Washington, DC.

January 2

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

January 3

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing and a briefing on the situation in Tallmansville, WV, where 13 coal miners were trapped underground in the I.C.G. Sago Run Mine following an accident. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he met with the Homeland Security Council to discuss the USA PATRIOT Act.

Later in the morning, the President met with Lt. Gen. Keith W. Dayton, USA, U.S. Security Coordinator Israel-Palestinian Authority.

Also in the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with Gov. Joe Manchin III of West Virginia to discuss the situation in the Sago Run Mine.

In the afternoon, the President had lunch with Vice President Dick Cheney. Later, he met with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice.

January 4

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Gov. Joe Manchin III of

West Virginia to discuss the situation in the Sago Run Mine. He then traveled to Arlington, VA, where, at the Pentagon, he participated in a briefing on the war on terror.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, he participated in a photo opportunity with White House Fellows.

The President announced his intention to nominate Patricia A. Butenis to be Ambassador to Bangladesh.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert M. Couch to be President of the Government National Mortgage Association.

The President announced his intention to nominate John A. Simon to be Executive Vice President of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation.

The President announced his intention to appoint Robert J. Creighton as a member of the Medal of Valor Review Board (Emergency Services).

The President announced his intention to appoint Robert George Hayes as a member of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (Sport Fishing Representative).

The President announced his intention to appoint Randi Parks Thomas as a member of the International Commission for the Conservation of Atlantic Tunas (Commercial Fishing Representative).

The President announced his intention to appoint Howard H. Li as a member of the President's Advisory Commission on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

The President announced his intention to designate Myrna Blyth as chairman of the President's Commission on White House Fellowships.

The President announced his recess appointment of Floyd Hall and Enrique J. Sosa as members of the AMTRAK Reform Board.

The President announced his recess appointment of Nadine Hogan and Roger W. Wallace as members of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation (Private Representatives).

The President announced his recess appointment of Gordon England as Deputy Secretary of Defense.

The President announced his recess appointment of Benjamin A. Powell as General Counsel of the Office of the Director of National Intelligence.

The President announced his recess appointment of Ronald E. Meisburg as General Counsel of the National Labor Relations Board.

The President announced his recess appointment of Julie L. Myers as Assistant Secretary of Homeland Security (Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement).

The President announced his recess appointment of Tracy A. Henke as Executive Director of the Office of State and Local Government Coordination and Preparedness at the Department of Homeland Security.

The President announced his recess appointment of Arthur F. Rosenfeld as Federal Mediation and Conciliation Director at the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service.

The President announced his recess appointment of Ellen R. Sauerbrey as Assistant Secretary of State (Population, Refugees, and Migration).

The President announced his recess appointment of Dorrance Smith as Assistant Secretary of Defense (Public Affairs).

The President announced his recess appointment of Robert D. Lenhard, Steven T. Walther, and Hans von Spakovsky as members of the Federal Election Commission.

The President announced his recess appointment of Peter N. Kirsanow as a member of the National Labor Relations Board.

The President announced his recess appointment of Stephen Goldsmith as a member of the Board of Directors of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

The President declared a major disaster in Minnesota and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm from November 27–29, 2005.

The President declared a major disaster in North Dakota and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by a severe winter storm from November 27–30, 2005.

January 5

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan. Later, he had an intelligence briefing. He then had a telephone conversation with Coach Mack Brown of the University of Texas Longhorns football team to congratulate him on the team's Rose Bowl victory.

Later in the morning, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a photo opportunity with Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld, and former Secretaries of State and Defense.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a signing ceremony for the Violence Against Women and Department of Justice Reauthorization Act of 2005.

January 6

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Chicago, IL, where he participated in a tour of the Chicago Board of Trade.

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

The President announced his intention to nominate Richard T. Miller to be U.S. Representative in the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador, and Alternate U.S. Representative to the Sessions of the United Nations General Assembly.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jackie W. Sanders to be Alternate U.S. Representative for Special Political Affairs in the United Nations, with the rank of Ambassador, and Alternate U.S. Representative to the Sessions of the United Nations General Assembly.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mark D. Wallace to be U.S. Representative to the United Nations for Management and Reform, with the rank of Ambassador, and Alternate U.S. Representative to the Sessions of the United Nations General Assembly.

The President announced his recess appointment of John Gardner as a governor of the Board of Governors of the U.S. Postal Service.

**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 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Released January 4

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary on the death of Shaykh Maktoum bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Minnesota

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to North Dakota

Released January 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 3402

Released January 6

Transcript of a press gaggle by Deputy Press Secretary Trent Duffy and Chairman of the National Economic Council Al Hubbard

Fact sheet: Economic Growth Continues—Unemployment Falls Below 5 Percent

Fact sheet: President Bush's Agenda for Job Creation and Economic Opportunity