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Editor's Note: The President was at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, on February 3, the closing date of this issue. Releases and announcements issued by the Office of the Press Secretary but not received in time for inclusion in this issue will be printed next week.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

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Week Ending Friday, February 3, 2006

The President's Radio Address

January 28, 2006

Good morning. The United States Senate is now considering my nomination of Judge Sam Alito to be an Associate Justice on the Supreme Court. As Americans saw in his confirmation hearings, Sam Alito is a man of great character and integrity. He has more prior judicial experience than any Supreme Court nominee in more than 70 years. He understands that the role of a judge is to strictly interpret the law, not to advance a personal or political agenda. And throughout his extraordinary career, Sam Alito has earned the tremendous respect of his colleagues and attorneys across the political spectrum.

This past Wednesday, I met with a distinguished group of 39 former law clerks to Judge Alito. During Judge Alito's 15 years on the bench, these fine men and women have worked side by side with him, providing legal research, discussing and debating pending cases, and seeing firsthand how he arrives at decisions. They are uniquely qualified to assess what kind of Supreme Court Justice Sam Alito would be, and they are united in their strong support of Judge Alito's nomination.

One of Judge Alito's former clerks, who describes herself as a left-leaning Democrat, says this about Sam Alito: "He's a man of great decency, integrity, and character. I believe very strongly he deserves to be confirmed as the Court's next Associate Justice." Another former clerk worked on Senator Kerry's Presidential campaign. She says this about Judge Alito: "His approach to judging is not about personal ideology or ambition but about hard work and devotion to law and justice." In fact, Judge Alito has the strong support of all 54 of his former clerks, regardless of their political beliefs. They know him well, and they know he'll make an outstanding Supreme Court Justice.

Judge Alito has also earned broad support from his fellow judges on the Third Circuit Court of Appeals. Seven of them took the extraordinary step of testifying on his behalf before the Senate Judiciary Committee. Former Chief Judge Ed Becker, who sat with Judge Alito on more than 1,000 cases, said this about his colleague: "He's a real judge, deciding each case on the facts and the law, not on his personal views." Another colleague on the Third Circuit who was appointed by President Clinton said this about Judge Alito: "He is a fair-minded man, a modest man, a humble man, and he reveres the rule of law." This judge went on to say that, if confirmed, Judge Alito "will serve as a marvelous and distinguished Associate Justice."

Judge Alito received the American Bar Association's highest possible rating—a unanimous "well-qualified." The ABA based its rating on its assessment of Judge Alito's integrity, professional competence, and judicial temperament. In the past, leading Democratic Senators have called the ABA rating the gold standard for judicial nominees.

This past week, Judge Alito gained the endorsement of Pennsylvania's Democratic Governor, Ed Rendell. Governor Rendell said he was not pleased with the partisan way some of his fellow Democrats have handled Sam Alito's nomination. Democratic Senator Robert Byrd of West Virginia announced he was voting for Judge Alito, and he said that many people in his State were calling the treatment of Judge Alito by some Democrats "an outrage and a disgrace." Another Democratic Senator expressed concern that the Senate confirmation process in recent years has become "overly politicized, to the detriment of the rule of law."

The Senate has a constitutional responsibility to hold an up-or-down vote on Judge Alito's nomination. Throughout its 216-year history, the Senate has held an up-or-down vote on every Supreme Court nominee with majority Senate support. Judge Alito has

demonstrated that he is eminently qualified to serve on our Nation's highest Court, and America is fortunate to have a man of his integrity and intellect willing to serve.

I'm grateful to Judge Alito, his wife, Martha, and the Alito children for their patience and dignity during the process. And I look forward to the Senate voting to confirm Judge Sam Alito as the 110th Justice of the Supreme Court.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:50 a.m. on January 27 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 28. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 27 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Revising Budget Amendments for the Department of Veterans Affairs

January 28, 2006

Dear Mr. Speaker:

My Administration is committed to ensuring that our Nation's veterans continue to receive timely and high-quality health care.

On July 14, 2005, I submitted an FY 2006 budget amendment to the Congress of $1.977 billion to cover increased costs in the Department of Veterans Affairs medical care system. I did not designate the funds as an emergency requirement when I submitted the FY 2006 budget amendment. While I believe this funding should be categorized as part of the VA's base budget, it is critical that this funding be made available to meet veterans' needs. As a result, to provide the needed funds to veterans in a timely manner and consistent with the 2006 Military Quality of Life and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act, Public Law 109–114, I hereby revise that request to designate $1.225 billion of the amount proposed in that amendment as an emergency requirement. I appreciate your cooperation in working with me to ensure the highest quality of care for our veterans.

Additional information on this action is set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget. The details of the FY 2006 amendment were included in the previous transmittal.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 30.

Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters

January 30, 2006

The President. I want to thank the members of my Cabinet for being here. We just had a really good discussion about the year 2006. Tomorrow night I'm going to be speaking to the Congress, giving the country my State of the Union Address. I can't tell you how upbeat I am about our future, so long as we're willing to lead.

We talked about how to make sure that America continues to spread the peace and to protect ourselves. I heard from the Secretary of Defense and Deputy Secretary of State about very positive initiatives—not only in the Middle East but in the Far East as well. We talked about how to make sure this economy of ours stays the strongest economy in the world and that we recognize we can't just sit back and hope for the best, that we've got to lead. And so we had a good discussion about matters such as health care and energy and education, all of which I'll address tomorrow night.

I'm looking forward to speaking to the country. We've got a lot to be proud of. We've got a lot of work to do. One of the things I will do is call for Congress and the executive branch to have a good, honest dialog but to speak candidly with each other, but to do so in a way that brings credit to the process. And I'll do my best to elevate the tone here in Washington, DC, so we can work together to achieve big things for the American people.

I'll answer a couple of questions. Nedra Pickler [Associated Press].

Iran

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. The talks between Iran and the EU–3 appear to be making little progress. A senior British official there said that they detect nothing new in their approach. What can be done now?

The President. Well, obviously, one option is for the Perm 5 to work together to bring Iran to the U.N. Security Council. That's an option. And we're going to continue to work with our friends and allies to present a united front to the Iranians. And the message is: Give up your nuclear weapons ambitions. And the good news is, most of the world recognizes that Iran, being the nontransparent society that it is, a Government that had violated IAEA rules, is one that cannot be trusted with technology that could enable it to develop a nuclear weapon. And so we're united in our goal to keep the Iranians from having a weapon, and we're working on the tactics necessary to continue putting a united front out.

The other thing is that we want the people of Iran to be able to live in a free society. And so tomorrow night, I am going to talk about this issue and make clear the policy of the United States.

Patsy [Patricia Wilson, Reuters].

Palestinian Elections/Hamas

Q. Mr. President, Israeli officials are seeking an international boycott of a Palestinian Government that includes Hamas. Do you support this? And if so, isn't that punishing the Palestinian people for exercising the democratic rights that you've called for in the region?

The President. The Hamas party has made it clear that they do not support the right of Israel to exist. And I have made it clear, so long as that's their policy, that we will not support a Palestinian Government made up of Hamas. We want to work with a Government that is a partner in peace, not a Government that is—whose declared intentions might be the destruction of Israel.

Secondly, this new democracy that's emerging in the Palestinian Territories must understand that you can't have a political party that also has got an armed wing to it; that democracies yield peace. And so the second half of our message to Hamas is: Get rid of your arms; disavow terrorism; work to bring what you promised to the people of the Palestinian Territories. Listen, these folks ran on the campaign, "We're going to get rid of corruption," and that "We're going to provide services to the people," and that's positive. But what isn't positive is that they've got parts of their platform that will make it impossible for them to be a peaceful partner.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:06 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Statement on Senate Action To Vote on the Nomination of Samuel A. Alito, Jr., To Be an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court

January 30, 2006

I am pleased that a strong, bipartisan majority in the Senate decisively rejected attempts to obstruct and filibuster an up-or-down vote on Judge Sam Alito's nomination. The Senate has a constitutional responsibility to hold an up-or-down vote on every judicial nominee, and throughout its 216-year history, the Senate has held an up-or-down vote on every Supreme Court nominee with majority Senate support. Judge Alito is extraordinarily well-qualified to serve on our Nation's highest Court, and America is fortunate that this good and humble man is willing to serve. I look forward to the Senate voting to confirm Sam Alito as the 110th Justice of the Supreme Court.

Proclamation 7977—Fourth Anniversary of USA Freedom Corps, 2006

January 30, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Americans enjoy great liberty and prosperity, and with these blessings comes an obligation to reach out to those in need. Over the past 4 years, USA Freedom Corps has

worked to rally America's armies of compassion and bring together individuals and organizations committed to volunteer service. More than 65 million people volunteered in 2005, an increase of 6.5 million since 2002. As we celebrate the fourth anniversary of USA Freedom Corps, we recognize the many Americans who have stepped forward to help others, and we underscore our commitment to serving our Nation and people around the world.

USA Freedom Corps was created to build on the countless acts of service, sacrifice, and generosity that followed the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. In the wake of the devastating tsunami of 2004 and hurricanes of 2005, Americans have continued to demonstrate that the true strength of our Nation lies in the hearts and souls of our citizens. By reaching out to aid the victims of these tragedies, people across our country helped rebuild shattered lives and communities. Their acts of service again demonstrated that by loving our neighbors as ourselves, we can offer hope and healing to those who suffer.

USA Freedom Corps is dedicated to expanding volunteer service and extending the goodwill of the American people. To help support our communities, respond to crises at home, and spread compassion around the globe, USA Freedom Corps works to strengthen public service programs such as the Peace Corps, Senior Corps, AmeriCorps, and Citizen Corps. USA Freedom Corps encourages and promotes the good work of non-profit, faith-based, and community organizations. Through the President's Greeter Program and the President's Volunteer Service Award, USA Freedom Corps and the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation recognize Americans who have made serving their neighbors a central part of their lives. USA Freedom Corps has also created a comprehensive network of volunteer opportunities to help more Americans find ways to get involved in serving their communities.

Through USA Freedom Corps, my Administration will continue to build a culture of service, citizenship, and responsibility in our country. To learn more about opportunities for volunteering, citizens can visit the USA Freedom Corps website at www.volunteer.gov. By working together for a cause greater than self, we can strengthen our Nation, one person, one neighborhood, and one community at a time.

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 the Fourth Anniversary of USA Freedom Corps. I call upon the citizens of this great country to find ways to volunteer and help their fellow Americans. I commend the efforts of USA Freedom Corps and all those who have already answered the call to serve, and I encourage all Americans to donate their time, energy, and talents to the work ahead.

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

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., February 1, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on February 2.

Statement on the Death of Coretta Scott King

January 31, 2006

Laura and I are deeply saddened by the death of Coretta Scott King. Mrs. King was a remarkable and courageous woman and a great civil rights leader. She carried on the legacy of her husband, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., including through her extraordinary work at the King Center. Mrs. King's lasting contributions to freedom and equality have made America a better and more compassionate nation. Laura and I were fortunate to have known Mrs. King, and we will always treasure the time we spent with her. We send our condolences and prayers to the entire King family.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Samuel A. Alito, Jr., To Be an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court

January 31, 2006

I am pleased that the Senate has voted to confirm Judge Sam Alito as the 110th Justice of the Supreme Court. Sam Alito is a brilliant and fair-minded judge who strictly interprets the Constitution and laws and does not legislate from the bench. He is a man of deep character and integrity, and he will make all Americans proud as a Justice on our highest Court. The son of an Italian immigrant, Judge Alito's appointment to the Supreme Court is the realization of the American dream for this good man and his family. I congratulate Judge Alito, his wife, Martha, the Alito children, and Judge Alito's mother, Rose, on this historic achievement and momentous day in the life of our country.

Judge Alito replaces Justice Sandra Day O'Connor. Justice O'Connor was the first woman ever to sit on the Supreme Court, and she is one of the most admired Americans of our time or any time. Our Nation is grateful to Justice O'Connor for her extraordinary and dedicated public service, and Laura and I wish her and John all the best.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of Ben S. Bernanke To Be Chairman of the Federal Reserve System

January 31, 2006

I am pleased that the Senate has voted to confirm Ben Bernanke to be the next Chairman of the Federal Reserve. Ben is a man of impeccable credentials, sound policy judgment, and strong character—and he will make an outstanding Chairman. Ben has provided wise counsel and good advice as a member of my economic team, and he will serve our Nation with great distinction at the Federal Reserve.

America's economy is strong for a lot of reasons, and one reason is the excellent work done by the men and women of the Federal Reserve. Under the leadership of Chairman Ben Bernanke, the Federal Reserve will continue to help provide Americans with a high quality of living.

Address Before a Joint Session of the Congress on the State of the Union

January 31, 2006

Thank you all. Mr. Speaker, Vice President Cheney, Members of Congress, members of the Supreme Court and diplomatic corps, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens: Today our Nation lost a beloved, graceful, courageous woman who called America to its founding ideals and carried on a noble dream. Tonight we are comforted by the hope of a glad reunion with the husband who was taken so long ago, and we are grateful for the good life of Coretta Scott King.

Every time I'm invited to this rostrum, I'm humbled by the privilege and mindful of the history we've seen together. We have gathered under this Capitol dome in moments of national mourning and national achievement. We have served America through one of the most consequential periods of our history, and it has been my honor to serve with you.

In a system of two parties, two chambers, and two elected branches, there will always be differences and debate. But even tough debates can be conducted in a civil tone, and our differences cannot be allowed to harden into anger. To confront the great issues before us, we must act in a spirit of goodwill and respect for one another—and I will do my part. Tonight the state of our Union is strong, and together we will make it stronger.

In this decisive year, you and I will make choices that determine both the future and the character of our country. We will choose to act confidently in pursuing the enemies of freedom, or retreat from our duties in the hope of an easier life. We will choose to build our prosperity by leading the world economy, or shut ourselves off from trade and opportunity. In a complex and challenging time, the road of isolationism and protectionism may seem broad and inviting, yet it ends in danger and decline. The only way to protect our people, the only way to secure the peace, the only way to control our destiny is by our

leadership. So the United States of America will continue to lead.

Abroad, our Nation is committed to an historic, long-term goal: We seek the end of tyranny in our world. Some dismiss that goal as misguided idealism. In reality, the future security of America depends on it. On September the 11th, 2001, we found that problems originating in a failed and oppressive state 7,000 miles away could bring murder and destruction to our country. Dictatorships shelter terrorists, and feed resentment and radicalism, and seek weapons of mass destruction. Democracies replace resentment with hope, respect the rights of their citizens and their neighbors, and join the fight against terror. Every step toward freedom in the world makes our country safer, so we will act boldly in freedom's cause.

Far from being a hopeless dream, the advance of freedom is the great story of our time. In 1945, there were about two dozen lonely democracies in the world. Today, there are 122. And we're writing a new chapter in the story of self-government—with women lining up to vote in Afghanistan, and millions of Iraqis marking their liberty with purple ink, and men and women from Lebanon to Egypt debating the rights of individuals and the necessity of freedom. At the start of 2006, more than half the people of our world live in democratic nations. And we do not forget the other half—in places like Syria and Burma, Zimbabwe, North Korea, and Iran—because the demands of justice and the peace of this world require their freedom as well.

No one can deny the success of freedom, but some men rage and fight against it. And one of the main sources of reaction and opposition is radical Islam—the perversion by a few of a noble faith into an ideology of terror and death. Terrorists like bin Laden are serious about mass murder, and all of us must take their declared intentions seriously. They seek to impose a heartless system of totalitarian control throughout the Middle East and arm themselves with weapons of mass murder.

Their aim is to seize power in Iraq and use it as a safe haven to launch attacks against America and the world. Lacking the military strength to challenge us directly, the terrorists have chosen the weapon of fear. When they murder children at a school in Beslan or blow up commuters in London or behead a bound captive, the terrorists hope these horrors will break our will, allowing the violent to inherit the Earth. But they have miscalculated: We love our freedom, and we will fight to keep it.

In a time of testing, we cannot find security by abandoning our commitments and retreating within our borders. If we were to leave these vicious attackers alone, they would not leave us alone. They would simply move the battlefield to our own shores. There is no peace in retreat, and there is no honor in retreat. By allowing radical Islam to work its will, by leaving an assaulted world to fend for itself, we would signal to all that we no longer believe in our own ideals or even in our own courage. But our enemies and our friends can be certain: The United States will not retreat from the world, and we will never surrender to evil.

America rejects the false comfort of isolationism. We are the nation that saved liberty in Europe and liberated death camps and helped raise up democracies and faced down an evil empire. Once again, we accept the call of history to deliver the oppressed and move this world toward peace. We remain on the offensive against terror networks. We have killed or captured many of their leaders—and for the others, their day will come.

We remain on the offensive in Afghanistan, where a fine President and a National Assembly are fighting terror while building the institutions of a new democracy. We're on the offensive in Iraq with a clear plan for victory.

First, we're helping Iraqis build an inclusive government, so that old resentments will be eased and the insurgency will be marginalized. Second, we're continuing reconstruction efforts and helping the Iraqi Government to fight corruption and build a modern economy, so all Iraqis can experience the benefits of freedom. And third, we're striking terrorist targets while we train Iraqi forces that are increasingly capable of defeating the enemy. Iraqis are showing their courage every day, and we are proud to be their allies in the cause of freedom.

Our work in Iraq is difficult because our enemy is brutal. But that brutality has not stopped the dramatic progress of a new democracy. In less than 3 years, the nation has gone from dictatorship to liberation, to sovereignty, to a Constitution, to national elections. At the same time, our coalition has been relentless in shutting off terrorist infiltration, clearing out insurgent strongholds, and turning over territory to Iraqi security forces. I am confident in our plan for victory; I am confident in the will of the Iraqi people; I am confident in the skill and spirit of our military. Fellow citizens, we are in this fight to win, and we are winning.

The road of victory is the road that will take our troops home. As we make progress on the ground and Iraqi forces increasingly take the lead, we should be able to further decrease our troop levels. But those decisions will be made by our military commanders, not by politicians in Washington, DC.

Our coalition has learned from our experience in Iraq. We've adjusted our military tactics and changed our approach to reconstruction. Along the way, we have benefitted from responsible criticism and counsel offered by Members of Congress of both parties. In the coming year, I will continue to reach out and seek your good advice. Yet there is a difference between responsible criticism that aims for success and defeatism that refuses to acknowledge anything but failure. Hindsight alone is not wisdom, and second-guessing is not a strategy.

With so much in the balance, those of us in public office have a duty to speak with candor. A sudden withdrawal of our forces from Iraq would abandon our Iraqi allies to death and prison, would put men like bin Laden and Zarqawi in charge of a strategic country, and show that a pledge from America means little. Members of Congress, however we feel about the decisions and debates of the past, our Nation has only one option: We must keep our word, defeat our enemies, and stand behind the American military in this vital mission.

Our men and women in uniform are making sacrifices and showing a sense of duty stronger than all fear. They know what it's like to fight house to house in a maze of streets, to wear heavy gear in the desert heat, to see a comrade killed by a roadside bomb. And those who know the costs also know the stakes. Marine Staff Sergeant Dan Clay was killed last month fighting in Fallujah. He left behind a letter to his family, but his words could just as well be addressed to every American. Here is what Dan wrote: "I know what honor is—it has been an honor to protect and serve all of you. I faced death with the secure knowledge that you would not have to. Never falter. Don't hesitate to honor and support those of us who have the honor of protecting that which is worth protecting."

Staff Sergeant Dan Clay's wife, Lisa, and his mom and dad, Sara Jo and Bud, are with us this evening. Welcome.

Our Nation is grateful to the fallen, who live in the memory of our country. We're grateful to all who volunteer to wear our Nation's uniform. And as we honor our brave troops, let us never forget the sacrifices of America's military families.

Our offensive against terror involves more than military action. Ultimately, the only way to defeat the terrorists is to defeat their dark vision of hatred and fear by offering the hopeful alternative of political freedom and peaceful change. So the United States of America supports democratic reform across the broader Middle East. Elections are vital, but they are only the beginning. Raising up a democracy requires the rule of law and protection of minorities and strong, accountable institutions that last longer than a single vote.

The great people of Egypt have voted in a multiparty Presidential election, and now their Government should open paths of peaceful opposition that will reduce the appeal of radicalism. The Palestinian people have voted in elections, and now the leaders of Hamas must recognize Israel, disarm, reject terrorism, and work for lasting peace. Saudi Arabia has taken the first steps of reform; now it can offer its people a better future by pressing forward with those efforts. Democracies in the Middle East will not look like our own because they will reflect the traditions of their own citizens. Yet liberty is the future of every nation in the Middle East because liberty is the right and hope of all humanity.

The same is true of Iran, a nation now held hostage by a small clerical elite that is

isolating and repressing its people. The regime in that country sponsors terrorists in the Palestinian territories and in Lebanon, and that must come to an end. The Iranian Government is defying the world with its nuclear ambitions, and the nations of the world must not permit the Iranian regime to gain nuclear weapons. America will continue to rally the world to confront these threats.

Tonight let me speak directly to the citizens of Iran: America respects you, and we respect your country. We respect your right to choose your own future and win your own freedom. And our Nation hopes one day to be the closest of friends with a free and democratic Iran.

To overcome dangers in our world, we must also take the offensive by encouraging economic progress and fighting disease and spreading hope in hopeless lands. Isolationism would not only tie our hands in fighting enemies, it would keep us from helping our friends in desperate need. We show compassion abroad because Americans believe in the God-given dignity and worth of a villager with HIV/AIDS or an infant with malaria or a refugee fleeing genocide or a young girl sold into slavery. We also show compassion abroad because regions overwhelmed by poverty, corruption, and despair are sources of terrorism and organized crime and human trafficking and the drug trade.

In recent years, you and I have taken unprecedented action to fight AIDS and malaria, expand the education of girls, and reward developing nations that are moving forward with economic and political reform. For people everywhere, the United States is a partner for a better life. Shortchanging these efforts would increase the suffering and chaos of our world, undercut our long-term security, and dull the conscience of our country. I urge Members of Congress to serve the interests of America by showing the compassion of America.

Our country must also remain on the offensive against terrorism here at home. The enemy has not lost the desire or capability to attack us. Fortunately, this Nation has superb professionals in law enforcement, intelligence, the military, and homeland security. These men and women are dedicating their lives, protecting us all, and they deserve our support and our thanks. They also deserve the same tools they already use to fight drug trafficking and organized crime, so I ask you to reauthorize the PATRIOT Act.

It is said that prior to the attacks of September the 11th, our Government failed to connect the dots of the conspiracy. We now know that two of the hijackers in the United States placed telephone calls to Al Qaida operatives overseas. But we did not know about their plans until it was too late. So to prevent another attack—based on authority given to me by the Constitution and by statute—I have authorized a terrorist surveillance program to aggressively pursue the international communications of suspected Al Qaida operatives and affiliates to and from America. Previous Presidents have used the same constitutional authority I have, and Federal courts have approved the use of that authority. Appropriate Members of Congress have been kept informed. The terrorist surveillance program has helped prevent terrorist attacks. It remains essential to the security of America. If there are people inside our country who are talking with Al Qaida, we want to know about it, because we will not sit back and wait to be hit again.

In all these areas—from the disruption of terror networks, to victory in Iraq, to the spread of freedom and hope in troubled regions—we need the support of our friends and allies. To draw that support, we must always be clear in our principles and willing to act. The only alternative to American leadership is a dramatically more dangerous and anxious world. Yet we also choose to lead because it is a privilege to serve the values that gave us birth. American leaders—from Roosevelt to Truman to Kennedy to Reagan—rejected isolation and retreat, because they knew that America is always more secure when freedom is on the march.

Our own generation is in a long war against a determined enemy, a war that will be fought by Presidents of both parties, who will need steady bipartisan support from the Congress. And tonight I ask for yours. Together, let us protect our country, support the men and women who defend us, and lead this world toward freedom.

Here at home, America also has a great opportunity: We will build the prosperity of

our country by strengthening our economic leadership in the world.

Our economy is healthy and vigorous and growing faster than other major industrialized nations. In the last 2½ years, America has created 4.6 million new jobs—more than Japan and the European Union combined. Even in the face of higher energy prices and natural disasters, the American people have turned in an economic performance that is the envy of the world.

The American economy is preeminent, but we cannot afford to be complacent. In a dynamic world economy, we are seeing new competitors like China and India, and this creates uncertainty, which makes it easier to feed people's fears. So we're seeing some old temptations return. Protectionists want to escape competition, pretending that we can keep our high standard of living while walling off our economy. Others say that the government needs to take a larger role in directing the economy, centralizing more power in Washington and increasing taxes. We hear claims that immigrants are somehow bad for the economy—even though this economy could not function without them. All these are forms of economic retreat, and they lead in the same direction, toward a stagnant and second-rate economy.

Tonight I will set out a better path: An agenda for a nation that competes with confidence; an agenda that will raise standards of living and generate new jobs. Americans should not fear our economic future because we intend to shape it.

Keeping America competitive begins with keeping our economy growing. And our economy grows when Americans have more of their own money to spend, save, and invest. In the last 5 years, the tax relief you passed has left $880 billion in the hands of American workers, investors, small businesses, and families. And they have used it to help produce more than 4 years of uninterrupted economic growth. Yet the tax relief is set to expire in the next few years. If we do nothing, American families will face a massive tax increase they do not expect and will not welcome. Because America needs more than a temporary expansion, we need more than temporary tax relief. I urge the Congress to act responsibly and make the tax cuts permanent.

Keeping America competitive requires us to be good stewards of tax dollars. Every year of my Presidency, we've reduced the growth of nonsecurity discretionary spending, and last year you passed bills that cut this spending. This year my budget will cut it again, and reduce or eliminate more than 140 programs that are performing poorly or not fulfilling essential priorities. By passing these reforms, we will save the American taxpayer another $14 billion next year and stay on track to cut the deficit in half by 2009.

I am pleased that Members of Congress are working on earmark reform, because the Federal budget has too many special interest projects. And we can tackle this problem together, if you pass the line-item veto.

We must also confront the larger challenge of mandatory spending, or entitlements. This year, the first of about 78 million baby boomers turn 60, including two of my Dad's favorite people—me and President Clinton. [*Laughter*] This milestone is more than a personal crisis—[*laughter*]—it is a national challenge. The retirement of the baby boom generation will put unprecedented strains on the Federal Government. By 2030, spending for Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid alone will be almost 60 percent of the entire Federal budget. And that will present future Congresses with impossible choices—staggering tax increases, immense deficits, or deep cuts in every category of spending. Congress did not act last year on my proposal to save Social Security, yet the rising cost of entitlements is a problem that is not going away. And every year we fail to act, the situation gets worse.

So tonight I ask you to join me in creating a commission to examine the full impact of baby boom retirements on Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. This commission should include Members of Congress of both parties, and offer bipartisan solutions. We need to put aside partisan politics and work together and get this problem solved.

Keeping America competitive requires us to open more markets for all that Americans make and grow. One out of every five factory jobs in America is related to global trade, and

we want people everywhere to buy American. With open markets and a level playing field, no one can outproduce or outcompete the American worker.

Keeping America competitive requires an immigration system that upholds our laws, reflects our values, and serves the interests of our economy. Our Nation needs orderly and secure borders. To meet this goal, we must have stronger immigration enforcement and border protection. And we must have a rational, humane guest worker program that rejects amnesty, allows temporary jobs for people who seek them legally, and reduces smuggling and crime at the border.

Keeping America competitive requires affordable health care. Our Government has a responsibility to provide health care for the poor and the elderly, and we are meeting that responsibility. For all Americans, we must confront the rising cost of care, strengthen the doctor-patient relationship, and help people afford the insurance coverage they need.

We will make wider use of electronic records and other health information technology, to help control costs and reduce dangerous medical errors. We will strengthen health savings accounts, making sure individuals and small-business employees can buy insurance with the same advantages that people working for big businesses now get. We will do more to make this coverage portable, so workers can switch jobs without having to worry about losing their health insurance. And because lawsuits are driving many good doctors out of practice, leaving women in nearly 1,500 American counties without a single ob-gyn, I ask the Congress to pass medical liability reform this year.

Keeping America competitive requires affordable energy. And here we have a serious problem: America is addicted to oil, which is often imported from unstable parts of the world. The best way to break this addiction is through technology. Since 2001, we have spent nearly $10 billion to develop cleaner, cheaper, and more reliable alternative energy sources. And we are on the threshold of incredible advances.

So tonight I announce the Advanced Energy Initiative—a 22-percent increase in clean-energy research—at the Department of Energy, to push for breakthroughs in two vital areas. To change how we power our homes and offices, we will invest more in zero-emission coal-fired plants, revolutionary solar and wind technologies, and clean, safe nuclear energy.

We must also change how we power our automobiles. We will increase our research in better batteries for hybrid and electric cars and in pollution-free cars that run on hydrogen. We'll also fund additional research in cutting-edge methods of producing ethanol, not just from corn but from wood chips and stalks or switch grass. Our goal is to make this new kind of ethanol practical and competitive within 6 years.

Breakthroughs on this and other new technologies will help us reach another great goal: To replace more than 75 percent of our oil imports from the Middle East by 2025. By applying the talent and technology of America, this country can dramatically improve our environment, move beyond a petroleum-based economy, and make our dependence on Middle Eastern oil a thing of the past.

And to keep America competitive, one commitment is necessary above all: We must continue to lead the world in human talent and creativity. Our greatest advantage in the world has always been our educated, hard-working, ambitious people. And we're going to keep that edge. Tonight I announce an American Competitiveness Initiative, to encourage innovation throughout our economy and to give our Nation's children a firm grounding in math and science.

First, I propose to double the Federal commitment to the most critical basic research programs in the physical sciences over the next 10 years. This funding will support the work of America's most creative minds as they explore promising areas such as nanotechnology, supercomputing, and alternative energy sources.

Second, I propose to make permanent the research and development tax credit to encourage bolder private-sector initiatives in technology. With more research in both the public and private sectors, we will improve our quality of life and ensure that America will lead the world in opportunity and innovation for decades to come.

Third, we need to encourage children to take more math and science, and to make sure those courses are rigorous enough to compete with other nations. We've made a good start in the early grades with the No Child Left Behind Act, which is raising standards and lifting test scores across our country. Tonight I propose to train 70,000 high school teachers to lead advanced-placement courses in math and science, bring 30,000 math and science professionals to teach in classrooms, and give early help to students who struggle with math, so they have a better chance at good, high-wage jobs. If we ensure that America's children succeed in life, they will ensure that America succeeds in the world.

Preparing our Nation to compete in the world is a goal that all of us can share. I urge you to support the American Competitiveness Initiative, and together we will show the world what the American people can achieve.

America is a great force for freedom and prosperity. Yet our greatness is not measured in power or luxuries but by who we are and how we treat one another. So we strive to be a compassionate, decent, hopeful society.

In recent years, America has become a more hopeful nation. Violent crime rates have fallen to their lowest levels since the 1970s. Welfare cases have dropped by more than half over the past decade. Drug use among youth is down 19 percent since 2001. There are fewer abortions in America than at any point in the last three decades, and the number of children born to teenage mothers has been falling for a dozen years in a row.

These gains are evidence of a quiet transformation, a revolution of conscience, in which a rising generation is finding that a life of personal responsibility is a life of fulfillment. Government has played a role. Wise policies, such as welfare reform and drug education and support for abstinence and adoption have made a difference in the character of our country. And everyone here tonight, Democrat and Republican, has a right to be proud of this record.

Yet many Americans, especially parents, still have deep concerns about the direction of our culture and the health of our most basic institutions. They're concerned about unethical conduct by public officials and discouraged by activist courts that try to redefine marriage. They worry about children in our society who need direction and love, and about fellow citizens still displaced by natural disaster, and about suffering caused by treatable diseases.

As we look at these challenges, we must never give in to the belief that America is in decline or that our culture is doomed to unravel. The American people know better than that. We have proven the pessimists wrong before, and we will do it again.

A hopeful society depends on courts that deliver equal justice under the law. The Supreme Court now has two superb new members on its bench, Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Sam Alito. I thank the Senate for confirming both of them. I will continue to nominate men and women who understand that judges must be servants of the law and not legislate from the bench.

Today marks the official retirement of a very special American. For 24 years of faithful service to our Nation, the United States is grateful to Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

A hopeful society has institutions of science and medicine that do not cut ethical corners and that recognize the matchless value of every life. Tonight I ask you to pass legislation to prohibit the most egregious abuses of medical research: Human cloning in all its forms; creating or implanting embryos for experiments; creating human-animal hybrids; and buying, selling, or patenting human embryos. Human life is a gift from our Creator, and that gift should never be discarded, devalued, or put up for sale.

A hopeful society expects elected officials to uphold the public trust. Honorable people in both parties are working on reforms to strengthen the ethical standards of Washington. I support your efforts. Each of us has made a pledge to be worthy of public responsibility, and that is a pledge we must never forget, never dismiss, and never betray.

As we renew the promise of our institutions, let us also show the character of America in our compassion and care for one another.

A hopeful society gives special attention to children who lack direction and love.

Through the Helping America's Youth Initiative, we are encouraging caring adults to get involved in the life of a child. And this good work is being led by our First Lady, Laura Bush. This year we will add resources to encourage young people to stay in school, so more of America's youth can raise their sights and achieve their dreams.

A hopeful society comes to the aid of fellow citizens in times of suffering and emergency, and stays at it until they're back on their feet. So far the Federal Government has committed $85 billion to the people of the gulf coast and New Orleans. We're removing debris and repairing highways and rebuilding stronger levees. We're providing business loans and housing assistance. Yet as we meet these immediate needs, we must also address deeper challenges that existed before the storm arrived.

In New Orleans and in other places, many of our fellow citizens have felt excluded from the promise of our country. The answer is not only temporary relief but schools that teach every child and job skills that bring upward mobility and more opportunities to own a home and start a business. As we recover from a disaster, let us also work for the day when all Americans are protected by justice, equal in hope, and rich in opportunity.

A hopeful society acts boldly to fight diseases like HIV/AIDS, which can be prevented and treated and defeated. More than a million Americans live with HIV, and half of all AIDS cases occur among African Americans. I ask Congress to reform and reauthorize the Ryan White Act and provide new funding to States, so we end the waiting lists for AIDS medicines in America. We will also lead a nationwide effort, working closely with African American churches and faith-based groups, to deliver rapid HIV tests to millions, end the stigma of AIDS, and come closer to the day when there are no new infections in America.

Fellow citizens, we've been called to leadership in a period of consequence. We've entered a great ideological conflict we did nothing to invite. We see great changes in science and commerce that will influence all our lives. Sometimes it can seem that history is turning in a wide arc toward an unknown shore. Yet the destination of history is determined by human action, and every great movement of history comes to a point of choosing.

Lincoln could have accepted peace at the cost of disunity and continued slavery. Martin Luther King could have stopped at Birmingham or at Selma and achieved only half a victory over segregation. The United States could have accepted the permanent division of Europe and been complicit in the oppression of others. Today, having come far in our own historical journey, we must decide: Will we turn back or finish well?

Before history is written down in books, it is written in courage. Like Americans before us, we will show that courage, and we will finish well. We will lead freedom's advance. We will compete and excel in the global economy. We will renew the defining moral commitments of this land. And so we move forward—optimistic about our country, faithful to its cause, and confident of the victories to come.

May God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:12 p.m. in the House Chamber of the Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; and President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks in Nashville, Tennessee

February 1, 2006

Thanks for being here. I can see—[*applause*]. Did you say you love Laura? So do I. You stole my line. [*Laughter*] Thanks for coming. This is an amazing experience to be here. I can see why my buddy Gatlin finds that extra note when he stands out here and sings. It's a fantastic hall. The last time Laura and I were here, we were honoring Mother and Dad for their 50th wedding anniversary. Mother thought he'd lost his mind when he said, "Honey, I want to celebrate the 50 years of marriage at the Grand Ole Opry." I said, "Gosh, you got good judgment, Dad, you know." [*Laughter*] So thanks for coming. I'm really thrilled to be here.

I should have probably come before I gave my speech. When I was on the plane flying

down here, I thought, how cool would it be to give a State of the Union address in a Porter Wagoner outfit. [*Laughter*]

I do want to give you some of the thoughts behind what I said in my State of the Union. That's what I've come to do. You know, it's one thing to give the speech—I think it's important to come here to Nashville to tell people the reason why I said some of the things I said. I think it will help you understand why I have made some of the decisions I have made.

One of the interesting things about the Presidency is we get to entertain a lot, and my favorite—the favorite folks to entertain are the people that Laura and I grew up with. I like my buddies from west Texas. I liked them when I was young; I liked them when I was middle-age; I liked them before I was President; and I like them during President; and I like them after President. And it's fun to have them come to the White House. It's neat to show off this fantastic experience that Laura and I are being able to go through. When they first walk in there, they're amazed at the White House. And the second thing is, they're amazed I'm in the White House. [*Laughter*] And they always say, "What's it like to be President of the United States?" And after I say it's just a huge honor, which it is, I say, "If I could give you the job description, it would be decisionmaker." I have to make a lot of decisions. And today what I'd like to do is share with you why I have made decisions in the context of the State of the Union I gave last night.

Before I do, I really am thrilled Laura's traveling with me. She's a great First Lady. She is—[*applause*]. I'm proud to be traveling with your two United States Senators—the Majority Leader of the United States Senate, Bill Frist. He's a good man. He's a good guy to deal with. He is doing a fantastic job of herding cats. [*Laughter*] And I'm proud to be here with Senator Lamar Alexander as well.

A little later on, I'm going to talk about a key component of the competitive agenda, and that is to make sure our folks are educated for the jobs of the 21st century. And I will tell you that Lamar had a lot to do with planting this in my mind. He's, as you know, made his fame here in Tennessee for being a great education Governor. You'll be pleased to hear he's carried over that passion into the Halls of the United States Senate. And so in case I forget to give him credit later on, he deserves a lot of credit for making sure that we're competitive in the 21st century.

I appreciate the members of the statehouse who are here. Thanks for serving. I appreciate those in local government who are here. I understand the mayor is here, Mayor Purcell. I appreciate you taking time out of your busy day. I know you didn't ask for any advice. My only advice is, fill the potholes. [*Laughter*] Works every time, Mayor. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank the good folks here at Gaylord Entertainment for letting me come by and just explain some things to the people of Tennessee. This is such a fantastic facility. I have been here before my mother and dad's 50th wedding anniversary when I was—happened to be involved in the baseball business. I can remember the winter meetings we held here. And we're still looking for two of our guys that worked for us. They got lost—[*laughter*]—in one of the 14 lobbies in this fantastic facility. It's a wonderful place.

I want to thank those of you who wear our Nation's uniform who have joined us today. We particularly want to recognize Lieutenant Colonel Dan Epright. He's in active duty, U.S. Air Force. He's on a 2-week leave from Iraq, where he's stationed in the International Zone in Baghdad as the American Forces Network, Iraq, Commander. He's in his 20th year of active duty. I don't know where Colonel Epright is, but wherever you are, thanks for serving. Welcome back—Epright. Thank you very much. Is that your wife? I knew exactly where Epright was—I just forgot. [*Laughter*] And I'm proud that his wife is with him.

Yesterday I said something I really mean—as we give praise to our troops who wear the uniform, we must also remember to give praise to military families who support the troops.

Our state of the Union is strong. I say that because America is working hard to protect ourselves; we're spreading freedom; our economy is vigorous and strong as well. But there's some uncertainty in people's minds.

People are uncertain, in spite of our strong union, because of war. And I understand that. I think it is—my job is as much "Educator in Chief" as it is Commander in Chief. And during times of uncertainty, it's important for me to do what I'm doing today, which is to explain the path to victory, to do the best I can to articulate my optimism about the future.

But I understand there's an anxiety about a time of war. That's natural; it seems like to me. Even though this economy is roaring—and it's strong, particularly when you think—recognize we've overcome a lot. This year alone we've overcome higher energy prices and natural disasters, and yet we really are the envy of the world. Our economy is the envy of the world. And yet people are changing jobs a lot, and there's competition from India and China, which creates some uncertainty.

My worry is, is that people see that uncertainty and decide to adopt isolationist policies or protectionist policies. In other words, in uncertain times, it's easy to—for people to lose confidence in the capacity of this country to lead and to shape our future.

Last night in my speech, I talked about a couple of themes. And one of the themes was that we must never lose sight of our capacity to lead this world toward peace, and that we must never fear—and we must never fear competition. But, on the other hand, we've got to put solid policy in place to make sure that we can compete.

First, let me talk about foreign policy and why I'm concerned about isolationism. We're at war, see. A lot of my thinking in the speech I gave last night—and speeches that I have been giving—is based upon my understanding that we're at war. On September the 11th, 2001, I vowed to the American people that we would not rest and tire in order to protect us. And I have never forgotten that vow. As a matter of fact, every day of my Presidency, I think about this war. That's what you've got to understand. And so when you hear me give a speech and talk about the dangers to America, they are real, not imagined. Some would like us to look at the world the way we would hope it would be. My job as your President is to look at the world the way it is.

And I clearly see the threats to America. My job is to worry about those threats. That's not your job. We got a lot of people in Government worrying about those threats on your behalf, so you can go about your life. That's what we want. I knew after September the 11th, people would—they would tend to forget the nature of the enemy and forget the war, because it's natural. Who wants to live all your day worried about the next attack? That's my job, to worry about the attack. It's the job of the intelligence community and our military and law enforcement. That's what you pay us to do. But I also recognize that if we ever get weary or tired or uncertain and withdraw within our boundaries, the enemy is not going away.

The enemy is a bunch of coldblooded killers that have taken a great religion—taken parts of a great religion and converted it into an ideology that is—they perverted a great religion, and they have an ideology. We've been through ideological struggles in the past. We've had an ideological struggle against fascism and communism. And we're in that same kind of struggle now. That's what's important for the American people to understand. They have ambition. They want to spread their totalitarian empire.

People say, "What do you mean by that?" I say, the best thing to think about is what life was like in Afghanistan for the Taliban—under the Taliban, for the people under the Taliban. It's a life where young girls couldn't get an education. Think about that. You talk about a dark vision of the future—it's a life where if you didn't agree with their view of religion, you were punished. It's a life in which freedom of expression was not encouraged. It was a dim view of the world. That's what these people think like.

They have stated clearly their desire to hurt us. And we got to take what they say seriously. When the enemy says something, an enemy which attacked us brutally on September the 11th, I would hope you would want the people in Government to take their word seriously—which I do. They have said they want to drive us out of Iraq. They have said they want weapons of mass destruction. In other words, they've got an ideology that they want to spread, and they want us to retreat. That's what they have openly stated.

And that is why it's essential that we remain active in the world and keep the lead for peace. We have the duty to protect the American people. And so our strategy is to never give in, and never be—and never—[*applause*]. It's to never lose heart. This enemy has got one weapon, and it's the weapon of fear.

What a fantastic country America is. We deeply care about every human life. The life of a child in Baghdad is precious. And so when we see these killers kill somebody—a young child outside a hospital where one of our soldiers is handing out candy—we weep, because Americans have a deep compassion for every human being. And the only weapon they have is to cause us to weep and lose our nerve. And as I said last night—it's something I truly believe—they don't understand the nature of America. We love our freedom, and we will do everything in our power to defend our freedom.

And so we're on the hunt for Al Qaida, and we're going to stay on the hunt. And we will bring them to justice. No doubt in my mind—no doubt in my mind we are bringing them to justice. We're making great progress in dismantling Al Qaida, and the others who hide won't be able to hide long enough. We're using every asset in our power to keep them on the defense, to find them and bring them to justice.

Secondly, I said something that I meant early on in this war against these terrorists, and that is, is that—to countries, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're equally as guilty as the terrorist." In other words, one of the—[*applause*]. Because I understand that these terrorist networks need safe haven in order to plan and plot. We're not dealing with nation states; we're dealing with an ideological movement that needs a nation in which to hide. And so we made it clear that if you're complicit with the murderers, you're just as guilty as the murderers themselves. And that's why we took the action in Afghanistan. We gave the Taliban an opportunity to get rid of Al Qaida. They chose not to, and we acted.

So, thirdly, when we see a threat, we've got to deal with the threat. I remember growing up in Midland—Gatlin grew up in Odessa, by the way, right down the road—or the Gatlins did. I was white collar; he was blue collar. Anyway—[*laughter*]. I'm President; he's a singer. Anyway—[*laughter*]. You can tell I like him, because when I put the needle out, it's a sign of affection. Just don't give him the mike. Anyway—[*Laughter*].

When we grew up, oceans protected us—it seemed like. We felt pretty safe and secure from a attack on American soil. We were concerned about a nuclear threat, but nevertheless, we felt secure because we were isolated from threats—it seemed like. September the 11th changed my way of thinking. It changed my way of thinking on a lot of things, and one way it changed is that when we see a threat, we got to deal with it. We can't hope for the best. One of the lessons of September the 11th is threats should not be allowed to fully materialize; otherwise it will cause harm to the American people.

I saw a threat in Iraq. The world saw a threat in Iraq. We gave Saddam Hussein a chance to deal with the world in good faith by honoring the United Nations Security Council resolutions. He chose—it was his choice—he chose to defy the resolutions. And so we took action. The world is safer and America is more secure without Saddam Hussein in power.

I recognize in a free society like ours, there can be and should be debate on big matters. I welcome the debate. But as I said last night to Congress, whether you agree or not agree with the decision, this country has one option, and that's victory in Iraq. I say that because the enemy has said they want to drive us out of Iraq and use it as safe haven. We've got to take the word seriously of those who want to do us harm.

I want to describe right quick our plans for victory in Iraq. First of all, anytime we put our troops in harm's way, we got to go in with victory in mind. And the victory is for Iraq to be a democracy that can sustain itself and govern itself and defend itself, a country which will be an ally in the war on terror, a country which will deny safe haven to the Al Qaida, and a country which will serve as a powerful example of liberty and freedom in a part of the world that is desperate for liberty and freedom.

The Iraqis have shown incredible courage and a strong desire to live in democracy. If

you really think about last year, the year 2005, the progress toward democracy was remarkable. Anyway you look at it, it was remarkable. This young democracy has gone from tyranny—a brutal dictator that killed or had killed thousands of people, to a country which had a Transitional Government in an election, to a country which wrote a progressive Constitution for the Middle East and had that Constitution ratified, to a country in which 11 million people voted in elections last December. You see, one of the things that—one of the inherent parts of my foreign policy is my strong belief that liberty is universal, that everybody desires to be free, that freedom is not just a Western idea or an American idea—freedom is lodged in the soul of every person. I used—I put it—let me put it another way to you. I believe there's an Almighty, and I believe the Almighty's gift is freedom to every single person in this world.

And if you believe that—I'm just getting wound up here. I told Laura, I'd try to keep it under a couple hours. [*Laughter*] If you believe that, that freedom is universal, then it shouldn't surprise you that 11 million people, more or less, went to the polls. People want to be free, and the Iraqis are showing the world that.

Secondly, we've got to make sure their economy is able to function as good as possible so that people see the benefits of democracy. It's one thing to have elections; it's another thing for people to say, "Democracy is good for me; democracy is good for my family." And so we're working on reconstruction and fighting corruption and making sure that there are tangible benefits. And it's been difficult because the enemy is not only brutal in terms of killing people, the enemy is just relentless in trying to destroy infrastructure so that people cannot see the benefits of democracy.

And the third aspect—and it's one that I know is dear to the hearts of many people—is, how long will we be in Iraq? And the answer is this: It's a security aspect. And that is that if people want to be free and if 11 million people chose to vote, the question on people's mind is, is there a willingness for the Iraqis to defend their own freedom? And I will tell you, the answer we have seen, our commanders on the ground have seen, is, absolutely. Absolutely. There is great bravery amongst these Iraqi soldiers. Our job is to convert their desire to protect their new democracy into effective forces. And that's what we're doing.

We've changed our training patterns. When we first got in there—one of the things I talked about over the Christmas season or the holiday season—prior to the holiday season—was that we've adjusted. That's what happens. We see things, and we change. We've done things differently. When we first went in there, we helped train an army for an external threat. Well, sure enough, the external threat wasn't nearly as significant as the internal threat. And so we started adjusting our training tactics. And we got good advice from Members of the Senate and the House from both political parties who went to Iraq and came back and said, "Here's what we've seen." And so we're changing.

And the security forces of Iraq are up to about 230,000, more or less. But the question is not just numbers. I first asked about numbers. You'd read about these suiciders knocking people off that were trying to stand these recruiting stations, and so the question is, are you able to get recruits? If it's dangerous to sign up, are you able to sign people up? And the answer is, absolutely. People wanted to serve the Iraqi military. This is a good sign about whether or not we're succeeding in our mission in training folks to defend their freedom. And if they're willing to sign up in the face of suiciders, it says something about their desire to protect their country.

The second question is, can they do the job? Are we training them well enough so they can take the fight on their own? And the election was an interesting example where the Iraqis were in the lead, and the violence in the last election was significantly lower than the violence in the first election.

Today, by video, I met with my—I met not only in the room with my national security team, but we had the Ambassador and General Casey from Baghdad. And it's interesting to be able to communicate with your commanders on the ground in real time. And the reason I bring that up is that they are constantly updating the national security team and me about the effectiveness of these

troops and how much territory we're turning over to the Iraqi troops.

What I have told the American people is, as the Iraqis stand up, we will stand down. As the Iraqis are capable of taking the fight to the enemy, we will reduce our troop levels. We have two less brigades there than we thought. In other words, these troops are being trained—the troops that we're training are more effective, more capable of taking the fight to the enemy. The commanders on the ground say, "We need less American presence."

Now, I'm going to tell you something about timetables and withdrawals and all that business. It is a mistake to have a definitive timetable of withdrawal, because the enemy will react; the Iraqis will react. And it's not fair to our men and women who wear the uniform.

So I will make my decisions based upon what these commanders tell me. That's what you expect of the Commander in Chief. My job is to set the strategy. I just told you what victory is all about. We've defined victory. And now it's up to the commanders on the ground to help us achieve that victory. And if they say these Iraqis are capable of taking the fight, they're there firsthand to tell me that, and then we'll reduce our troops based upon their recommendation, not based upon the politics in Washington, DC.

Another reason—in other words, we can't be isolationists and win the war on terror. And we can't be isolationist, either, because it would prevent us from doing our duty around the world, and not only make this world a place where terrorists have trouble recruiting, but to live to that admonition, "To whom much is given, much is required."

Effective foreign policy is—recognizes that we can help change conditions on the ground to make life better for future generations of Americans. And I believe that helping defeat HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa is—not only reflects the great compassion of America, but it will improve lives for generations of Americans to come. I believe defeating hopelessness and despair and helping others defeat poverty is in our national interest. I also know it reflects the deep character of the American people.

If this country were to become isolationist and withdraw and say we don't care about conditions of life elsewhere, we're not only ceding the ground to terrorists, we're not doing our duty as a compassionate nation.

Do you realize we feed a lot of the hungry in the world—and I'm proud of that record—that we're providing incredibly important lifesaving antiretroviral drugs to help defeat HIV/AIDS on the continent of Africa. There is a pandemic sweeping that continent, and the United States of America is leading the world in helping save lives. Do you realize that when the tsunami hit earlier this past year, it was the United States military that moved in and provided immediate help and aid and comfort and organization. Our choppers were flying rescue missions in Pakistan after the devastating earthquake. In my judgment, an active foreign policy, one that aids the suffering and helps the poor, is one that is in the interest of the United States of America, both short term and long term.

And finally, if we were to withdraw, not only would we cede ground to the terrorists and endanger this country, we would miss a fantastic opportunity to help spread liberty. In my speech I mentioned Roosevelt and Kennedy, Truman, and Reagan. I did so because I wanted to remind the American people that these leaders were one that acted in confidence in our values. They understood when America led, not only was America better off, but the world was. And we're spreading freedom now.

For those of you who are young, I want you to watch the spread of freedom in our world. It's amazing to see, when you think about it. The vote in Afghanistan was part of freedom's march. The vote in Iraq is part of freedom's march. People in Lebanon want to be free from Syria, and we're working—the Palestinians voted. Now, that election was an important election because it said what the people on the street wanted. They wanted clean government. They want people to pay attention to the education needs and their health needs. In order for us to—and Hamas, by the way, now has a choice to make. If they want to work with the United States of America, they must renounce their desire to destroy Israel; they must be a partner in peace.

Last night I spoke to the people of Iran—spoke first to the Government of Iran and said, "The world will continue to come together in unity to say you can't have nuclear weapons." But I also spoke to the people, because I believe that everybody desires to be free, and I just wanted to assure them that someday, that they will be able to have a choice in their Government, and the United States looks forward to a friendship with a free and democratic Iran.

Liberty is universal, but it's important also to understand that freedom and liberty yield the peace we all want. One reason to be active in the world is to spread peace. If the United States were to withdraw, we'd miss an opportunity to make this world a more peaceful place for generations to come.

I like to tell people about my relationship with Prime Minister Koizumi because it helps drive home the point about freedom yielding peace. You know, my dad, and I suspect, a lot of your relatives fought against the Japanese in World War II. They were the sworn enemy of the United States of America. If there are any World War II vets here, they'll tell you what it was like during that period of time. The Japanese attacked us, and we vowed to do everything in our power to defeat them. And we sent a lot of kids into battle, and we lost a lot of lives, and the Japanese lost a lot of lives. It was a brutal battle, and we won.

Interestingly enough, one of the people that I work closest with in the world is the Prime Minister of Japan. Isn't that interesting? At least it is to me. My dad fought them, and now his son is working to keep the peace with the Prime Minister of the country that he went to war against. And so what happened between when he was 18 and I'm sitting here at 59? I'll tell you what happened, in between; Japan adopted a Japanese-style democracy. Freedom has the capacity to convert enemies into allies. Freedom has the capacity to lay—freedom has that capacity to lay that foundation for peace for generations to come.

I believe we will be victorious in Iraq, and I know that by laying that foundation of peace in the Middle East, we'll be able to say: Job well done. We have laid—we have made a better chance for peace for a generation of Americans coming up. Someday, an American President will be sitting down with a duly elected leader of Iraq, working on keeping that peace, and a new generation of Americans will say, thank goodness this generation accepted the responsibilities given to them.

Talk about a couple of other issues: There is a duty of us in Washington to protect you. One of the important aspects of protecting you is to make sure our law enforcement has all the tools necessary to do their job. Right after September the 11th, members of both political parties came together and said, "Let us make sure that we make sure that we tear down walls between intelligence gathering service and law enforcement services in America so they can share information to connect dots and protect the people." And so they passed what's called the PATRIOT Act. The PATRIOT Act is an important piece of legislation, in my judgment, because it says to folks, "Here's some tools that we use in other areas of law enforcement—now applicable to intelligence," to protecting you. For example, some of the tools in the PATRIOT Act were already being used by people fighting off drug lords or Medicaid fraud, interestingly enough. The PATRIOT Act had safeguards designed in it where the programs were reviewed, and if people had complaints about abuse of civil liberty, they could bring them, and we would know whether or not the law was meeting intended consequences.

The laws work. It's been a very important tool for our law enforcement officials. The PATRIOT Act is set to expire. The war against terrorists is not expiring. These people need the tools necessary to do their job. It's essential that Congress reauthorize the PATRIOT Act.

I want to take a little time to explain the terrorist surveillance program to you. First, if I was trying to pull a fast one on the American people, why did I brief Congress? In other words—[*applause*]. Right after September the 11th, it was apparent that there was some of the hijackers in the United States who were calling Al Qaida—Al Qaida operatives calling overseas. We don't know what they were talking about. Matter of fact, we found out about the calls after it was too late. But I was concerned about a system that

wasn't doing everything we could to protect the American people, within the Constitution. And so, as you would hope that the Commander in Chief would do, I said to our operators, people responsible for protecting you, "Are we doing everything we can to protect you? Come up with other ways to connect the dots." And this terrorist surveillance program was designed by very capable operatives.

But before I implemented the program—I'm mindful of the fact that I took an oath to uphold the Constitution and the laws of the United States. So I had lawyers—the Attorney General and the Justice Department look at what I was doing. I'm also mindful that people want to make sure the President safeguards civil liberties while we protect the country, that there needs to be a balance. And so this is a program—and I became comfortable with that balance and confident that I had the legal authority to do what I did.

And so let me tell you what I did without talking about the operating details. I'm sure you can understand why you don't want the President or anybody talking about the operating details. If you're at war, and you're trying to stop an enemy from attacking you, why in the world would you want to tell the enemy what they're doing to stop them, because they'll adjust. So I've authorized NSA to listen to a phone call from outside the United States in, or inside the United States out. In other words, this is not a program where we're listening to phone calls inside the United States. One of the people making the call has to be Al Qaida, suspected Al Qaida, and/or affiliate.

This is a program in which we have briefed key Members of the Congress a lot of times. It is constantly reviewed by a legal team, constantly reviewed. It is constantly reviewed inside NSA by a legal team. We are safeguarding your liberties.

Federal courts have ruled that the President—a President has constitutional authority to use foreign intelligence surveillance against enemies. Previous Presidents have used the same constitutional authority I have. I've got statutory authority as well. The Congress passed the authorization to use military force against Al Qaida after September the 11th, and the Supreme Court, in a recent opinion, ruled that the President—the Congress gave me the authority to use what's called the "fundamental incidents of war." In other words, Congress authorized me to use force in the fundamental incidents of war, which means in this case, you can't defeat the enemy until you know when the enemy is going to hit. And therefore, using this surveillance to find out the intention of the enemy is a fundamental incident of war to protect the American people. Let me put it to you in Texan: If Al Qaida is calling into the United States, we want to know.

Here's the challenge at home—we got a great economy. The American people are amazing when you unleash their creativity and talent. The entrepreneurial spirit of this country is strong when we reinforce that entrepreneurial spirit. Over the past 2½ years this economy has created 4.6 million new jobs; the unemployment rate is 4.9 percent. Small businesses are flourishing. After-tax income since '01 is up 7 percent. Productivity is very high, which is important for quality of life and higher standards of living. Homeownership is at an alltime high; more minorities own a home today in America than ever before in our Nation's history. This economy is doing just fine.

But the question is, how do we stay competitive? What do we do to make sure, in a world in which competition is becoming fiercer and fiercer—what do we do to stay ahead of it? Now, some would say, "Protect yourselves by withdrawing from the world." I think that is a huge mistake. Protectionism doesn't work. Protectionism would default to other countries in the world. That's not the American way. America must be confident and lead and do what is necessary to keep us competitive.

And I've got some ideas for you. First, in order to make sure we're competitive, this economy has got to continue to grow. Last night I said an interesting statistic—at least I thought it was; otherwise I wouldn't have said it, but—[*laughter*]—I said the tax relief we passed left $880 billion in the hands of American families and small businesses and entrepreneurs. See, my philosophy is that the more money you got, the more of your own money you keep, you will save and invest and

spend, and that's how this economy grows. And the tax relief we passed is working because the American people are responding.

And so how do we make sure that we have economic vitality and growth. Well, one thing you don't want to do is take money out of—if it has worked, why take money out of your pocket? And the tax relief we passed is set to expire. If Congress doesn't do anything, your taxes are going to go up, which, in my judgment, would be bad for the economy. In order to keep America competitive, the Congress needs to make the tax relief permanent.

You'll hear folks say, "Well, we got to run up your taxes in order to balance the budget." That's not the way it works in Washington. They're going to raise your taxes so they can find new ways to spend your money. That's how it works. So I want the tax cuts permanent, and I want to work on the deficit by controlling Federal spending.

We can meet priorities. We can meet priorities. See, you got to set priorities in order to meet priorities. So long as we've got kids in harm's way, a priority will be to make sure our troops have what's necessary to do their job.

We got a plan to cut this deficit in half by 2009. It's just going to take Congress making some hard choices. Part of my job is to present a budget that gives them a chance to show how to cut that deficit in half by 2009. Looking forward to working with them on achieving this objective. [*Laughter*] But the long-term problem we got is the mandatory spending. And I want to spend a little time on it.

There's—we got a real issue with Social Security and Medicare. And the reason why is, guys like me are fixing to retire. I'm turning 62, retirement age, in 2008, which is a convenient coincidence. [*Laughter*] I'm looking around and I see some other baby boomers out there too. And we're going to stress the system. There's a lot of us getting ready to retire, a heck of a lot more than have been retired. And we've been promised a lot. And a lot of young guys are going to be having to pay into a system that is flat going broke. That's the reality.

It's hard for me to be the President and look at young workers, young people coming into the workforce, paying payroll taxes into a system that I know is going broke. And it is. We've been promised too much, and too few people paying into the system. And now we need to do something about it, because this mandatory spending, these entitlement programs, are going to make it really hard for future Congresses and future taxpayers.

I tried last year with the Social Security plan. I thought my job was not only to raise the issue but to come up with some solutions. One of my first objectives was to explain to the American people, we got a problem. I believe that until Congress hears from the people that we got a problem that their attitude is going to be, "Nobody thinks we got a problem; why do anything about it?" People now know we got a problem.

Last night I said to Members of Congress the truth: We're not going to be able to solve this issue until we bring Republicans and Democrats together. It's a big issue solving the baby boomer—[*applause*]. We can get the job done. You don't have to cut benefits to people; you just got to slow them down so that the next generation can afford them. Do you realize my benefits or your benefits grow faster than the rate of inflation? I mean, in other words, there's ways to make it work. But it's going to require a new attitude in Washington, DC. There's too much politics up there. There's too much zero-sum. I want the Democrats on Capitol Hill to hear loud and clear: I want a bipartisan solution on mandatory and entitlement spending for the sake of future generations of Americans.

I want to talk about four other issues right quick. You still awake? [*Laughter*] They didn't come all the way to hear this, kind of getting shortchanged. I'll make it quick. It's important for us to stay competitive, to open up markets. The temptation is to shut markets down. I'm confident in our ability. I'm confident in our farmers; I'm confident in our entrepreneurs. I think the job—I know the job of the President is to work to open up markets and level the playing field. My attitude is this: We say to countries, "You treat us the way we treat you," and when they do, nobody can out-compete the American worker and farmer and entrepreneur.

A big issue is immigration. It's important for us to get this issue solved so that we can be competitive as we go out into the 21st century. First of all, the obligation of the Federal Government is to enforce our borders, is to make sure that—[*applause*]. And I want to thank Leader Frist for passing a strong appropriations bill to provide resources necessary for more Border Patrol technology along the border. Listen, the border is long, and it's not easy to enforce. But with proper use of technology, some physical barriers, I think we'll be able to do a much better job.

The second issue along the border, by the way, is that when we catch somebody sneaking into our country illegally, we just can't release them out into the system. We've got to have more detention space so that—it used to be they'd catch them, a lot of the folks, they'd say, "All right, check back in with your immigration judge here in 45 days." And the guy would say, "Yes, you bet—[*laughter*]—see you later." So we're changing that along the border.

I do want to talk about the worker issue. A lot of people here in America have come to do jobs Americans won't do. And they're here because they can make money for their families. I used to tell people in Texas that family values didn't stop at the Rio Grande River. If you're a mother or a dad and you want to put food on the table for your children, and you had the choice between $5 and $50, you'd head for $50 if you could.

I believe a very significant part of enforcing our border, make it easier for our Border Patrol to do the job, is to end this system that encourages smuggling and pressure on the border by people sneaking across, and saying if there is somebody that's willing to do a job an American won't do, let's give him a fool-proof pass so they can be here on a temporary basis.

Now, I'm against amnesty, and the reason I am is, I believe if you grant amnesty to people that are here, it will cause another wave of people to want to come. But I am for recognizing reality and saying that if you're doing a job, if you're an employer and you're looking for somebody to do a job an American won't do, then here is a card for a temporary worker. That's a humane way to treat the issue. I can't stand a system that has caused people to get stuffed in the back of 18-wheelers and they're driving across the desert. We have—because of our policy, we have caused there to be a whole smuggling industry and a forgery industry. If you're out there working and somebody shows up, and you can't find somebody to find work, and they show up and you say, "Show me your card"—you don't know whether it's real or not real. There's people forging cards in order to help these people find work.

We've got Border Patrol agents chasing people getting smuggled across the border to do work. If you are able to have a rational plan on a temporary-worker basis, it doesn't seem like to me—they're not going to have to try to sneak across the border, and our Border Patrol will be able to do a better job on drugs and terrorists and guns that are trying to be snuck in and out of this country. Immigration is an important issue, and I'm looking forward to working with Congress to get a job done on behalf of the American people.

I want to talk about health care right quick. The job of the Federal Government is to take care of the elderly and the poor. We're rolling out a Medicare plan that is going to make medicine for our seniors modern, up to date, and work well. It's a really important reform.

Listen, if you say, "We're going to provide medicine for our seniors," you need to provide the best medicine possible for our seniors. And that means including prescription drug coverage for the seniors. And that's what's happening. We got—millions of people are signing up for this program. We've been in it for about 4 weeks. We're going to correct problems. Most of the people signing up are finding out it's a good deal. I urge seniors to look at this program carefully and sign up.

We also have an obligation to the poor, which we're taking care of in Medicaid. But I want to give you another way of dealing with medicine other than having the Federal Government run it all, which I am unalterably opposed to. I think, one, we ought to have policies that encourage the doctor-patient relationship, strengthen that relationship. Secondly, we got to be wise about how we help control costs. One way to control

costs is to spread information technology out—throughout the health care field.

Let me put it to you this way: Health care is kind of lagging behind when it comes to using modern technology. Think about it—you got docs still writing out those files. And they hand that file to you and say, "Take it down the hall." You're moving paper still in a paperless world. The problem is, not only are you moving paper, but doctors can't write in the first place. [*Laughter*] It creates inefficiencies in the system. There are too many medical errors. By spreading information technology, which—Bill Frist and I went to a hospital—I think it was here in Nashville—where they've got a modern information technology system being put in place. They're going to save 20 percent to 30 percent on health care costs—it's a rationale way of helping control health care without the Federal Government getting in your business.

I'm for allowing small businesses to pool risk across jurisdictional boundaries so they have the opportunity of buying health care at the same discount big businesses get.

I am big believer in health savings accounts. For those of you who don't know health savings accounts, investigate health savings accounts. They're an innovative way to make sure the doctor-patient relationship is strong, that people are in charge of making the health care decisions themselves, that there is an incentive to taking care of your body through good exercise and good nutrition. It's a way to save money tax-free in your health care and, at the same time, get coverage for catastrophic illness. These make sense for small businesses; they make sense for individuals. And I'm going to ask Congress to make them more available and more attractive for individual consumers all across the United States.

Finally, if you want to do something about availability of health care and affordability of health care, we have got to get the United States Senate to pass medical liability reform. You don't have to worry about Frist. No, he understands. We got a problem with ob-gyns. I said last night a statistic which should alarm the American people: There are 1,500 counties in America in which a woman can't find an ob-gyn. And a lot of that has to do with lawsuits, driving good docs out of practice. This isn't right, folks. This isn't right. It's time for those Senators who are blocking that bill, those Senators who are representing the trial lawyers of America, to understand the damage they're doing to the health care industry of this country.

I'm just getting warmed up. [*Laughter*] In order to stay competitive, America must end its dependence on oil. When you're hooked on oil from the Middle East, it means you've got an economic security issue and a national security issue. And I spoke last night to some exciting opportunities here in America. I believe—I know that technology is going to enable us to diversify away from being dependent on hydrocarbon, from oil.

Let me talk about cars, and that's really the area where we can achieve a lot of independence. We use a lot of foreign oil in our automobiles, and we drive a lot. And people say, well, CAFE this and CAFE that. Actually, we have increased CAFE standards for certain types of vehicles during my administration, and that's important, as is giving people choice, and marketplace function is important. But most important of all, it seems like to me, if you recognize the fact that being dependent upon oil is a problem for the long term, then why don't we figure out how to drive our cars using a different type of fuel?

Now, let me talk about two things that we're working on. We spent—I said last night, we've spent $10 billion, since I've been President, on research, and we're close to some really interesting breakthroughs. One such breakthrough is advanced batteries, which will make the hybrid car or the electric car much more affordable and much more suitable to the consumer demands. You don't want your battery running out halfway between here and somewhere else.

But I do want to talk about ethanol right quick. You know, we're making ethanol out of corn right now. We're very close to a breakthrough where we'll be able to figure out how to make ethanol from other forms, other materials, like grasses, woods. Now, think about that. All of a sudden—we may be in the energy business by being able to grow grass on the ranch—[*laughter*]—and have it harvested and converted into energy.

And that's what's close to happening. We're told that if we continue to focus on research, we'll be able to, within 6 years, have a competitive fuel to gasoline.

Now, people say, "Well, that's great. How about the automobile?" Will they be able to use it? Four-and-a-half million cars today are flex-fuel automobiles. In other words, they can either use gasoline or ethanol. So the technology is there for the automobile, and we're close to the technology of providing a competitive fuel to gasoline by converting that which we grow into fuel. It's coming. It's an exciting time. I can't wait to work with Congress to continue promoting this kind of research so that someday, we're no longer dependent on Middle Eastern oil.

People say, "Well, why can't—once you get the fuel, why can't you just convert your fleet instantly?" We've got 200 million cars out there. It takes a while for new automobiles to become the main, dominant part of the automobile fleet. What I'm telling you is, is that we're close to some breakthroughs. These are exciting times. Technology is going to help keep this country competitive.

But the thing that's going to keep the country most competitive is making sure our workforce has got the skills to compete. This is a dynamic world. Whether the people want to recognize it or not, we're in a competitive world. Some will say, "It's so competitive; let's withdraw and protect ourselves." That's not my attitude. My attitude is if it's competitive, let's get in a position where we can outcompete the rest of the world. And the most important place is going to be to make sure our kids have got the skills to fill the jobs of the 21st century. If our kids don't have those skills, those jobs will go somewhere else.

And so this is the initiative that I praised Lamar about—it's called the America Competitiveness Initiative. It basically says that we're going to focus on research, both in public and private sector, to make sure that the technologies and skill base of our science and engineering community leads the world. It also recognizes that we've got to make sure our children have got math and science skills.

By the way, that starts with making sure children can read. One of Laura's most important initiatives and inherent in the No Child Left Behind Act is the absolute demand by our Government that schools teach every single child how to read by fourth grade—or third grade—and remain at grade level throughout their entire public school career.

One of the ways to make sure that our children have got math and science skills that will give them the basis on which to compete—and, by the way, when you test our scores relative to other children, we're doing just fine in elementary school and we start slipping off in middle school, and we're not doing worth a darn in high school. And so one way to reverse that trend is to make sure our high school teachers have got the necessary skills to teach kids the skill sets to be able to compete. And so we believe that we can help train 70,000 high school teachers to lead advanced placement courses in math and science.

Advanced placement works. AP is a vital program. If you study your AP results here in Tennessee schools, you'll see it makes a lot of sense. We want AP programs to be available to children from all walks of life so that they have the skills necessary to compete. We got a plan to get 30,000 math and science professionals to teach in our classrooms. And we want to make sure, just like we do on No Child Left Behind, that we focus on math as well, and we find math deficiencies early—we provide money to correct them. See, if you diagnose and don't correct, you're doing a child a disservice. If you don't diagnose, you're doing a child a disservice. The best thing to do is what we're doing, is diagnose and solve problems early, before they're too late. And that's what we're going to do in this very exciting initiative.

A couple of other things I want to talk about. What I just told you is how to stay competitive. See, we have a choice. We can withdraw and say, "Okay, you all go do your thing, and we'll just protect ourselves inside America," or we can compete. And I just laid out an agenda for America to lead. I believe that the way you enhance prosperity for the American people is, you shape your own destiny. And America has been a leader and will continue to be a leader in the world economy.

What really matters in the long term is the character of the American people. The great strength of this country is the compassion of our citizens. It really is. I like to remind people that de Tocqueville got it right when he came and looked at America in the 1830s and recognized the voluntary associations. The ability for people to serve something greater than themselves was the strength of America then, and it's the strength of America now.

One of the reasons why I mentioned Laura last night and her program is not only I want her to get a little air time—[*laughter*]—but she's heading up a very important effort to encourage mentors to help say to a child, "I love you. What can I do to help you? How can I help you realize you need to make the right choices in life in order to succeed?"

I see a Scout there. The Scouting program is a great mentoring program. But there are all kinds of ways you can help, all kinds of ways you can help get involved with people's lives. Last night, we honored some folks by putting them in the box there during the State of the Union. I guess it's an honor when you sit there and have to listen to an old guy for an hour. But anyway, nevertheless, they were there. And one of them was a young guy that was volunteering down there in—for those affected by the hurricanes. One of the things about that hurricane is, we're going to make sure that we analyze the response and, as I said, we just didn't do as good a job as we should have done at all levels of government. As the head of the Federal Government, I take responsibility for that. But having said that, the response of the American people to these hurricanes was unbelievable. People were uprooted out of their homes. They were wandering out there, wondering whether or not anybody cared. And thousands of our fellow citizens had open arms and said, "I care about you. How can I help you?" It was a remarkable, remarkable thing to watch. It's reconfirmed my great faith in the American people.

The Government has got a role. As I mentioned last night, we've committed $85 billion to help the people get on their feet down there. We're going to stay with them. We'll help them. And the American people are helping them as well.

Another thing I talked about last night, to make sure that our country is hopeful and the spirits are up, is that when you look at Washington, you've got to be assured that people are upholding the integrity that you expect them to. I look forward to working with Congress on ethics reform. We have a solemn duty and an obligation to say to the American people that we will uphold the honor of the offices to which we have been elected.

I do want to say something about judges. I want to thank both Senators here for voting to confirm a good man. Laura and I are going to—if I can ever stop speaking here—[*laughter*]—we're going to go back and have a swearing-in ceremony for Judge Sam Alito. The reason I bring this up is that part of making sure America knows there's a hopeful tomorrow is that—a lot of Americans don't like it when judges kind of write the law. We've got plenty of legislators in Washington. Believe me, we've got plenty of legislators in Washington. And so I'm going to put judges on the bench who know the difference between interpreting the Constitution and trying to write the law. I'll continue to do that.

And so that's what's on my mind, and it took me an hour to tell you. [*Laughter*] I hope you get the sense of my optimism about the country. I told you mine is a decision-making job. I first learned that when the guy called me—I was getting ready to give my Inaugural Address, right before the swearing-in of the first term. And a guy called me and said, "What color rug do you want in the Oval Office?" I said, "Man, this is a decision-making job." [*Laughter*]"What color rug do I want?" The second thing about decision-making is you've got to know when it's time to delegate. So, not knowing much about rug designing, I said, "Laura, give me a hand." [*Laughter*]

And the third thing about my job is, you've got to set a strategic vision. I set the strategic vision last night for our country: Active in the pursuit of our own security and the spread of freedom; confident in our ability to compete in the world; understanding we need to continually recommit ourselves to serving others. And so I said, "Laura, the only thing I want is that rug to say—you figure

out how to say it—is, 'Optimistic person comes here to work every day.' " And she captured my spirit, because I am optimistic about our future.

Thanks for giving me a chance to share that optimism with you. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:01 p.m. at the Grand Ole Opry House. In his remarks, he referred to entertainer Larry Gatlin of the Gatlin Brothers; country music entertainer Porter Wagoner; Mayor Bill Purcell of Nashville, TN; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Ambassador to Iraq Zalmay Khalilzad; Gen. George W. Casey, Jr., USA, commanding general, Multi-National Force—Iraq; and Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan.

Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony for Samuel A. Alito, Jr., as an Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court

February 1, 2006

Good afternoon. Laura and I welcome you to the White House. Mr. Chief Justice, thank you for coming. Members of the Supreme Court, thank you all for being here. Members of the Senate, honored you're here. Ladies and gentlemen, appreciate you joining us on this historic occasion. This afternoon we're also honored by the presence of a strong and graceful woman, Mrs. Cissy Marshall. Thank you for coming, Mrs. Marshall.

Yesterday the United States Senate confirmed Sam Alito as the 110th Justice of the Supreme Court of the United States. Last night he looked pretty good in that black robe sitting there. [*Laughter*]

It's a proud day for Judge Alito and his entire family. We extend a special welcome to Martha, who has been at his side for more than 20 years. And with us, you can see his son, Phil, and daughter, Laura. If they're anything like our daughters, they're probably telling their dad how to behave and how to testify. [*Laughter*]

I appreciate Rosemary being with us today. And we're thinking of Sam's mom, Rose, who turned 91 in December. And of course, as we think of Rose, we think of her husband, Sam's late father. He came to our country as an immigrant from Italy in 1914. Sam Alito, Sr., instilled in his son a deep commitment to serving his fellow Americans. And I'm sure he's looking down with pride as Sam takes his place on the highest Court of the United States of America.

Sam Alito is replacing an extraordinary Justice, Sandra Day O'Connor. Justice O'Connor has been an admired member of the Supreme Court for 24 years. She has served our Nation with decency and spirit and great devotion, and I thank her on behalf of all the American people.

Sam, you've drawn quite a distinguished crowd here. I appreciate the Vice President being here, and Lynne. I want to thank the Attorney General and other members of my Cabinet who have joined us today. I want to thank the members of my team who have worked so hard to help Sam, particularly former Senator Dan Coats of Indiana.

I want to thank Secretary Mike Chertoff, who's with us. The reason I bring up Chertoff is they worked together, and Chertoff kind of put in a good word for Sam, you know—[*laughter*]—at a crucial moment. [*Laughter*]

I particularly want to thank the Members of the Senate who are here. I'm sorry I'm a little late. I've just come in from Tennessee. I got a little windy. And Senator Frist was with me. I appreciate you, Leader, for working hard to get this good man through. And thank you, Mitch McConnell, Senator McConnell, as well. I don't want to name all the Senators since we're running a little late, but I do want to mention the chairman of the Judiciary Committee, Arlen Specter, who did a heck of good job.

Judge Alito becomes Justice Alito. As he becomes Justice Alito, our Nation completes a process that was ordained by our Founders in Philadelphia more than 200 years ago. Under the Constitution, the President nominates, and by and with the consent—advice and consent of the Senate, appoints the Justices of the Supreme Court. This process has been carried out many times since the beginning of our democracy. And each new appointment represents a renewal of the promise of our country and our constitutional order.

Our Founders thought carefully about the role they wanted judges to play in the American Republic. They decided on a court system that would be independent from political or public pressure, with judges who serve for life. America expects members of our judiciary to be prudent in exercising judicial power and firm in defending judicial independence. So every member of the Supreme Court takes an oath to uphold the Constitution and administer justice faithfully and impartially. This is a solemn responsibility.

And the man we honor today has demonstrated his devotion to our courts and law through years of service to our country. Sam Alito has distinguished himself as a member of our military, a Federal prosecutor, Assistant to the Solicitor General, U.S. Attorney in New Jersey, and for the last 15 years, a highly respected judge on the Third Circuit Court of Appeals.

Sam Alito is known for his steady demeanor, careful judgment, and complete integrity. Throughout his career he has treated others with respect. In return, he has earned the admiration of his colleagues on the bench, the lawyers who have come before it, and, of course, a very devoted group of proud law clerks.

During the confirmation process, the American people saw a man of character and legal brilliance. Like our fellow citizens, I was impressed by the dignity Sam Alito and his family displayed during the Senate hearings, and by the thoughtful scholarship and reverence of the Constitution that have always defined his approach to the law.

A Supreme Court Justice must meet the highest standard of legal excellence, while serving with humility and fidelity to our founding promise of equal justice under the law. These are qualities Americans want in a Supreme Court Justice. These are qualities Americans see in Sam Alito. He will make a superb Justice of the Supreme Court, and I know this son of New Jersey will make all Americans proud.

Sam, I thank you for agreeing to serve our country again and for accepting this new call to duty.

Now I ask the Chief Justice of the United States, John Roberts, to please step forward and administer the oath.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:22 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Cecilia Marshall, wife of former Justice Thurgood Marshall. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Associate Justice Alito.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Spending-Reduction Legislation

February 1, 2006

As I said last night, keeping America competitive requires us to be good stewards of taxpayer dollars. The House today passed a significant spending-reduction package that will curb the growth of entitlement spending for the first time in years and help us stay on track to cut the deficit in half by 2009. I look forward to signing this bill into law. The budget I propose next week will continue to build on the spending restraint we have achieved.

NOTE: The statement referred to S. 1932.

Statement on the New Freedom Initiative

February 1, 2006

Five years ago, I announced the New Freedom Initiative to build on the progress of the Americans with Disabilities Act and more fully integrate people with disabilities into all aspects of life. Since the announcement of this important initiative, we have expanded educational opportunities for children with disabilities and provided essential funding for the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. We have launched disabilityinfo.gov to serve as an online resource for people with disabilities and their families, employers, service providers, and other community members. To provide expanded employment opportunities, we are assisting persons with disabilities by implementing the Ticket to Work program and strengthening training and employment services at One-Stop Career Centers.

As a result of these efforts, Americans with disabilities have greater access to the opportunities of America. My administration will

continue to work to remove barriers that still confront Americans with disabilities and their families.

Proclamation 7978—American Heart Month, 2006

February 1, 2006

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

More than 70 million Americans live with some form of heart disease, and this disease remains the leading cause of death in the United States. During American Heart Month, we reinforce our commitment to fighting heart disease by promoting awareness about its risks, its causes, and the ways to reduce the chance of developing this deadly illness.

Many of the factors that lead to heart disease, such as high blood pressure, high blood cholesterol, and obesity, can be controlled with commonsense steps and healthy lifestyles. Through the HealthierUS Initiative, my Administration encourages Americans to work toward four simple goals that can lead to a healthy heart: exercise daily; develop good eating habits; avoid tobacco, drugs, and excessive alcohol; and take advantage of preventive screenings to detect problems early.

First Lady Laura Bush helps lead "The Heart Truth" campaign through her Women's Health and Wellness Initiative. The campaign was launched by business, nonprofit, and government organizations, including the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, to educate women about the risks of heart disease and to encourage them to make their cardiovascular health a priority. Along with the American Heart Association's "Go Red for Women" campaign, these initiatives use the red dress as a symbol to remind women to make healthy choices and talk with their doctors about heart disease.

As a result of the Medicare Modernization Act, our seniors have more choices to prevent, diagnose, and treat potential problems before they become worse. Medicare now covers preventive screenings, a "Welcome to Medicare" physical for new beneficiaries, and innovative programs to help seniors fight chronic threats. I urge all Medicare beneficiaries to take advantage of these measures as part of a healthy lifestyle.

All Americans can improve their heart health and live longer, better lives by taking an active role in their health care decisions and consulting their physician for the latest information. As we observe American Heart Month, we recognize those battling heart disease; we express gratitude to the family members and friends who are a source of love and encouragement; and we commend the medical professionals and researchers who provide assistance and work to find cures and improve treatments.

In acknowledgement of the importance of the ongoing fight against cardiovascular disease, the Congress, by Joint Resolution approved December 30, 1963, as amended (77 Stat. 843; 36 U.S.C. 101), has requested that the President issue an annual proclamation designating February as "American Heart Month."

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim February 2006 as American Heart Month, and I invite all Americans to participate in National Wear Red Day on February 3, 2006. I also invite the Governors of the States, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, officials of other areas subject to the jurisdiction of the United States, and the American people to join me in recognizing and reaffirming our commitment to combating heart disease.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this first day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand six, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and thirtieth.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., February 3, 2006]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on February 6.

Remarks at the National Prayer Breakfast

February 2, 2006

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for the warm welcome. Laura and I are delighted to be here. This lovely personality said this morning, "Keep your remarks short." [*Laughter*]

I appreciate this prayer breakfast a lot, and I appreciate the spirit in which it was formed. Ike said he was living in the loneliest house in America—for what he got to say is, the rent is pretty good. [*Laughter*]

It's great to be here with distinguished guests from all around the world. Your Majesty and Prime Ministers and former Prime Ministers, friends with whom I have the honor to work, you're welcome here. I appreciate the fact that people from different walks of life, different faiths have joined us. Yet I believe we share one thing in common: We're united in our dedication to peace and tolerance and humility before the Almighty.

I want to thank Senators Pryor and Coleman for putting on this breakfast. I appreciate Senator Frist, Representative Blunt, Representative Pelosi, other Members of the United States Congress who've joined us on the dais and who are here for this breakfast. I thank the members of my Cabinet who are here. Get back to work. [*Laughter*]

I find it interesting that the music is from Arkansas. [*Laughter*] I'm glad it is, because they know how to sing down there. [*Laughter*]

You know, I was trying to figure out what to say about Bono—[*laughter*].

Bono. Careful. [*Laughter*]

The President. And a story jumped to mind about these really good Texas preachers. And he got going in a sermon, and a fellow jumped up in the back and said, "Use me, Lord, use me." And the preacher ignored him and finished his sermon. Next Sunday, he gets up and cranking on another sermon, and the guy jumps up and says, "Use me, Lord, use me." And after the service, he walked up to him and said, "If you're serious, I'd like for you to paint the pews." Next Sunday, he's preaching; the guy stands up and says, "Use me, Lord, use me, but only in an advisory capacity." [*Laughter*]

So I've gotten to know Bono. [*Laughter*] He's a doer. The thing about this good citizen of the world is, he's used his position to get things done. You're an amazing guy, Bono. God bless you.

It is fitting we have a National Prayer Breakfast, because our Nation is a nation of prayer. In America, we do not prescribe any prayer; we welcome all prayer. We're a nation founded by men and women who came to these shores seeking to worship the Almighty freely. From these prayerful beginnings, God has greatly blessed the American people, and through our prayers, we give thanks to the true source of our blessings.

Americans remain a prayerful people today. I know this firsthand. I can't tell you the number of times out there traveling our country, people walk up, total strangers, and say, "Mr. President, I'm praying for you and your family." It is one of the great blessings of the Presidency and one of the most wonderful gifts a person can give any of us who have the responsibility to govern justly. So I thank my fellow citizens for their gracious prayers and wonderful gifts.

Every day, millions of Americans pray for the safety of our troops, for the protection of innocent life, and for the peace we all hope for. Americans continue to pray for the recovery of the wounded and to pray for the Almighty's comfort on those who have lost a loved one. We give thanks daily for the brave and decent men and women who wear our Nation's uniform, and we thank their families as well.

In this country, we recognize prayer is a gift from God to every human being. It is a gift that allows us to come before our Maker with heartfelt requests and our deepest hopes. Prayer reminds us of our place in God's creation. It reminds us that when we bow our heads or fall to our knees, we are all equal and precious in the eyes of the Almighty.

In prayer, we're reminded we're never alone in our personal trials or individual suffering. In prayer, we offer our thanksgiving and praise, recognizing our lives, our talents, and all that we own ultimately flow from the Creator. And in these moments of our deepest gratitude, the Almighty reminds us that

for those to whom much has been given, much is required.

In prayer, we open ourselves to God's priority, especially His charge to feed the hungry, to reach out to the poor, to bring aid to the widow or the orphan. By surrendering our will to God's will, we learn to serve His eternal purposes. Through prayer, our faith is strengthened, our hearts are humbled, and our lives are transformed. Prayer encourages us to go out into the world and serve.

In our country, we recognize our fellow citizens are free to profess any faith they choose, or no faith at all. You are equally American if you're a Hebrew—a Jew or a Christian or a Muslim. You're equally American if you choose not to have faith. It is important America never forget the great freedom to worship as you so choose.

What I've found in our country, that whatever our faith, millions of Americans answer the universal call to love your neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. Over the past 5 years, we've been inspired by the ways that millions of Americans have answered that call. In the face of terrorist attacks and devastating natural disasters here and around the world, the American people have shown their faith in action again and again. After Katrina, volunteers from churches and mosques and synagogues and other faith-based and community groups opened up their hearts and their homes to the displaced. We saw an outpouring of compassion after the earthquake in Pakistan and the tsunami that devastated entire communities. We live up to God's calling when we provide help for HIV/AIDS victims on the continent of Africa and around the world.

In millions of acts of kindness, we have seen the good heart of America. Bono, the true strength of this country is not in our military might or in the size of our wallet; it is in the hearts and souls of the American people.

I was struck by the comment of a fellow who was rescued from the gulf coast and given shelter. He said, "I didn't think there was so much love in the world." This morning we come together to recognize the source of that great love. We come together before the Almighty in prayer, to reflect on God's will, to seek His aid, and to respond to His grace.

I want to thank you for the fine tradition you continue here today. I pray that our Nation will always have the humility to commend our cares to Providence and trust in the goodness of His plans.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:09 a.m. at the Hilton Washington Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to musician and activist Bono.

Remarks in Maplewood, Minnesota

February 2, 2006

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. Appreciate the warm welcome. Got to take my Post-it note off my speech here. [*Laughter*] My fault. [*Laughter*] I should have cleaned off the podium. [*Laughter*] I see the Governor out there—he says, "You want to have some lunch?" I said, "Sure, what are you serving?" He said, "Lutefisk." [*Laughter*] I said, "No, I think I'll eat on Air Force One." [*Laughter*]

It's great to see you, Governor. Thanks for being here. Laura and I are delighted to be here at 3M. We're glad to be with the Governor and the First Lady, Lieutenant Governor.

I was greeted by your chairman and CEO, George W. [*Laughter*.] I'll just call you "W." [*Laughter*] Thanks for having me. I appreciate it. I want to thank Jay Ihlenfeld, the senior vice president, for the tour we just went on. I want to thank all the employees here for giving me a chance to come by and visit with you.

I really want to send a message to the United States of America that in order for us to keep the standard of living that we're accustomed to, that in order for us to be the leader in the world that we want to be, that we must remain a flexible, technologically-based economy.

You know, it's amazing when you come to 3M to talk to George W. about the number of products you make and—products that people just take for granted, but products, many of which started in a laboratory as the

result of a really smart, capable person making the technological advances necessary to get these products to market.

Innovation is a vital part of the future of the United States of America, and the fundamental question is, how do we keep our society innovative? That's what I'm here to talk about.

You know, one way for our fellow citizens to understand the importance of innovation and technology is, just think about what has taken place over 25 years. Now, for a 59-year-old guy, that doesn't seem like much these days. If you're 26, it seems like a lot. Twenty-five years ago, most Americans used the typewriter. Isn't that interesting? Twenty-five years ago, they had such a thing as pay phones. [*Laughter*] Now we're using cell phones. Carbon paper was used. For those youngsters here, carbon paper was kind of a messy way to duplicate things. Now we're using laser printers. They had bank tellers that were distributing most money in those days. Twenty-five years ago, you had to go to the bank and say to the teller, "Good day, may I have some money?" Now you can go to the ATM machine.

Technology is changing the way we think. I don't know if you remember those awful trips when you had to drive with your family; you played the license plate game. [*Laughter*] Now we got the DVDs—[*laughter*]—right there in the car. Technology happens quickly if you remain an innovative society. And it's those technological improvements that help create high-paying jobs and enhances the standard of living of the American people.

Do you realize that economists say that as much as half of our Nation's economic growth in the last half-century is directly due to technological progress fueled by research and development, the kind of research and development you do right here? Think about that. One-half of the progress of our economy is due to research and development. Well, if that's the case, if that's the truth, we got to make sure we continue to encourage research and development.

Technology has enabled us to be the preeminent economy in the world. I think it's good that we're the preeminent economy in the world. I think it's good for the American people that we're in a leadership position. And the reason why I think it's good is because when you lead, your people benefit. By being a leader in the economy of the world, it means somebody is more likely to find work. And somebody is able to—likely to realize dreams and opportunity.

I say we're the preeminent economy in the world because the facts bear me out. We're growing faster than other industrial—major industrialized nations. We've added 4.6 million new jobs in 2½ years. That's more than Japan and the European Union combined. And the fundamental question is: one, do we want to remain the leader; and two, how do you do it?

There's some uncertainty in America today, and I can understand why. There's uncertainty when it comes to our economy. People are beginning to see competitors emerge, India and China. I'm a fellow who likes competition. I think it's good to have competition. I think it makes us do things better. But some people in our country look at competition and say, "Well, we can't possibly compete with China or India or other countries, and therefore, why don't we just think about walling ourselves off?" That's called protectionism. It's a trend that we need to worry about. See, there's uncertainty when people see jobs go overseas. I can understand that. Somebody's working hard all their life, and all of the sudden, the job gets moved overseas because of competition. That creates uncertainty in the workplace. And one of the reactions to that uncertainty could be, "Well, I'm tired of competing; maybe what we need to do is instead of competing, just kind of leave ourselves apart from the world."

The United States of America has been through this before. This isn't a new thought. If you look at our history, our economic history, you'll find that we've been through periods of protectionism before. If you'll look at our foreign policy history, you'll find there's been periods of isolationism before. I think that—and so the first thing I want to share with you is, it's important for us not to lose our confidence in changing times. It's important for us not to fear competition but welcome it.

There's a global economy. The Internet has really changed a lot, when you think about it. It is—I happen to think it's good news that countries are becoming more wealthy; that through the global competition, that people's lives are improving. I believe that because most Americans—all Americans believe in the dignity of every human being. But I take a practical look at it, and so should you at 3M. You ought to say, "We welcome this developing world, this new economy, because as wealth spreads, there are new customers for our products." In other words, instead of saying, "We fear the competition; the global economy frightens us," the United States of America ought to say, "We want more people to be able to buy our products."

And so what I'm telling you is, I think the role of Government is to shape the future, not fear the future. And I think the role of a President is to say to the American people, "Be bold; be confident. And if we do the right things, we'll remain the leader in the world."

And here are the things I think we ought to do. First, I know we got to keep our economy growing. You can't be a world leader in the economy if your economy is flat. You can't be a world leader—world economic leader, if your economy is flat. I mean, you got to have progrowth policies in place.

One of the interesting debates in Washington, DC, is, how do you encourage growth? Well, I'll give you my position. I think when people have more money in their pocket to save, earn, or spend, the economy grows. I think when a small-business person has more money to invest, the economy grows.

We passed tax relief. As I said in my State of the Union the other night, the tax relief that we passed left $880 billion in the hands of individuals and families and small businesses and entrepreneurs. And I believe that is why our economy is the most preeminent in the world.

And this—[*Applause*] And that tax relief is set to expire. And when it does, you're going to get a tax increase. Not only do I think it's wrong to take money out of your pocket at this point in our economic history, I also believe that uncertainty in the Tax Code makes it difficult for people to make wise decisions about investment. And I meant what I said to the Congress: In order to make sure this expansion is not temporary, they need to make sure that tax relief is permanent.

You'll hear them say, "Well, we need to raise taxes to balance the budget." That's not the way Washington works. They'll raise taxes to increase spending. That's the way it works. And so I think the best way to balance the budget is to have progrowth policies in place so these tax revenues remain strong—and be wise about how we spend your money. That's hard in Washington. Everybody has got a great idea about how to spend your money. But when you're running 3M Company or you're running your family budget, you learn how to set priorities. And that's what Congress must do.

I'm going to tell you something: If Congress does set its priorities—and we've got a few suggestions for them how to set the priorities—we can cut this deficit in half by 2009. The real issue on spending, though—and this is important, by the way, the current deficit is important—don't get me wrong. But if you're a younger person sitting out there, you need to worry about the long-term deficit caused by baby boomers like me fixing to retire. I don't know if you know this or not, but I turn 62, retirement age, in 2008. That's a convenient year for me to be in retirement. [*Laughter*]

And there's a lot of us getting ready to retire. And when we retire, this baby boom generation retires, we're going to put a big strain on Social Security and Medicare. Interestingly enough, my generation has been promised better benefits than the previous generation. And yet per worker, there's fewer people paying into the system to support me. We got a problem.

You know, it's really hard for me to realize we have a problem and travel around the country and look at younger workers paying payroll taxes into a system that I know is going bankrupt. It's not right for Members of Congress, by the way, to travel around the country and talk—and look at workers paying into a system that's going bankrupt and not tell the truth. We can fix this problem. This is a problem—we don't have to cut benefits

of younger workers. We need to slow the rate of benefits down.

Do you realize the benefits grow faster than the rate of inflation? Congress over here, and people say, "Vote for me; I'm going to make sure the benefits grow faster than the rate of inflation." Listen, Social Security was meant to supplement income, retirement income, initially. And so what I'm telling you is, there's a solution to be had. Unfortunately, the atmosphere in Washington appears that there will be no solution because there's too much politics. And my call to members of both parties—and I mean this—is we need to set aside this needless politics in Washington, this zero-sum attitude, and fix mandatory spending so a younger generation of Americans can confidently contribute into a system that's—[*applause*].

If we live in a global economy—which we do—with competition, it's—the countries that are able to fix their entitlement programs will be the countries that remain competitive. Congress needs to remember that. When we fix this—and I'm confident we can, and I believe we will—when we reform the program, it will keep the United States of America competitive. Because if we don't, the majority of tax revenues will go to—there will have to be massive tax increases to pay for the promises, or significant cuts throughout our Government.

To keep us competitive, we've got to make sure we keep markets open. I told you—I'm telling you something you already know—61 percent of your revenue is as a result of sales from the United States elsewhere, which says to me—listen, my theory is this: If you're good at something, let's make sure we can sell it all around the world. And so I believe in open markets. As a matter of fact, I know that in order to keep us competitive in the 21st century, that the United States of America should be doing everything we can to open markets and level the playing field.

We've signed a lot of free trade agreements, and at the same time we've done so, we've said to countries, "Listen, treat us the way we treat you." That's all we ask; level the playing field. There is no doubt in my mind, American farmers and entrepreneurs and business people and 3M employees can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

In my speech, I talked about a health care system that takes care of the elderly and takes care of the poor. We'll do that. But it needs to be a health care system, as well, in which there's transparency in pricing, information technology in the health care field to help reduce costs, a doctor-patient relationship that is the center of the decisionmaking, a plan that encourages preventative medicine. People need to be incented to make right choices with their bodies, in what they eat and how they exercise.

Another aspect of making sure that medicine is affordable and available is—listen, there's too many lawsuits. I said a startling statistic the other night: Do you realize there are 1,500 counties in America without an ob-gyn? Now, think about that. And the reason why is, a lot of good docs are getting run out of practice because of needless lawsuits. It's one thing to make sure that there's justice; it's another thing to have a system that encourages junk lawsuits that are running up your cost of medicine and running good docs out of practice. Congress needs to pass medical liability reform now.

And speaking about legal reform, you talk to people that take risk, one of the things they tell you about is, these lawsuits hamper strong investment. If we want to be competitive, we've got to have balance in our legal system. Congress has the chance to send a signal again—we did a pretty good job on class-action lawsuits, but now they got a chance to do something on asbestos. And there's a bill going to be moving out of the Senate. It's time to send a clear message to investors and markets and employees that we've got to have a legal system, in regards to asbestos, that's fair to those who have actually been harmed and reasonable for those who need to pay.

I talked about energy the other day, and Tim mentioned it. I guess I shocked some people, being from Texas, to say we're addicted to oil, but we are, and it's a problem. It's a problem; it's a national security problem and an economic security problem. Touring here and seeing the great benefits of nanotechnology, I'm beginning to get a better sense of how nanotechnology plays

into fuel cells, for example, and the capacity for us to have hydrogen automobiles. I know that technology will end up leading away from dependence on oil. I know it's going to happen. I'll tell you why I'm optimistic about it, is because the scientists there in Washington, those in the Energy Department, believe we're darn close to a couple of very important breakthroughs.

Before I get to them, I did talk about the need to use safe nuclear energy to power our plants. I mean, if you're worried about the environment, which I am, it seems like to make sense that we use nuclear power. It's renewable, and it's clean.

We're pretty close to some interesting breakthroughs on solar energy as well. I truly believe that with continued research and development, focusing on interesting technologies, that we'll have coal-fired plants that will be emitting zero emissions. And it's coming. And what I'm telling you is, is that technology is important for your jobs, but it's also important for the quality of life.

Automobiles—if we want to get rid of dependence on oil, we got to do something with automobiles. I mean, that's the place where we use a lot of oil. We got to change how we drive. We got to change how cars are powered. This administration has done some things on CAFE standards, but that recognizes that we're still dependent upon oil to manufacture our fuel. What I'm interested in doing is providing alternative choices for the consumers like ethanol or plug-in hybrid vehicles. We're close to some breakthroughs on battery technologies that I'm sure some of you know about, to make these hybrid automobiles even better and more cost-effective for the American consumer.

I'm excited about ethanol. Now, we've been making ethanol out of corn, mainly. But now we got a chance, with breakthroughs in research and development, new technologies to make ethanol out of switch grass or wood products or weeds. And we're close. And I said the other night in the State of the Union, within 6 years, this kind of fuel ought to be competitive with gasoline.

Now, people say, "That's fine; how about the automobiles?" Well, I had an interesting experience. I went down to Brazil, and I saw President Lula down there. I don't know if you know this, but the vast majority of fuel to fuel the cars in Brazil is made from sugar. And guess who makes the cars that run on sugar? General Motors. So the technology is available for flex-fuel automobiles. As a matter of fact, I am told there's over 4 million flex-fuel automobiles operating in the United States today. And so the hope is and the belief is, is that, with a breakthrough with these cellulostic technologies—big word for a history major—[*laughter*]—I don't want to try to spell it—[*laughter*]—the car industry has got the capacity to manufacture automobiles that can burn that stuff.

Now, people say, "Well, if you can get the technology and you got the cars, how come it takes until 2025 to reduce—significantly reduce dependence on the Middle Eastern oil?" Well, the answer is, we got a lot of automobiles, and it takes awhile for the fleet to turn over. Things just don't happen instantly when it comes to an automobile fleet.

And so—but what I'm telling you is, and what I'm telling the American people is, research is going to lead to an important breakthrough here, when it comes to our energy. I'm confident that we'll be able to say to the American people when this research is complete, that the United States is on our way to no dependence on oil from the Middle East.

I want to talk about another important issue, and I've come to 3M to highlight this issue. And the truth of the matter is, in order to stay competitive, we have got to lead the world in research and development, and got to lead the world in having people—scientists and engineers that are capable of helping this America stay on the cutting edge of technology. And 3M is a perfect place to come.

There's an economic reason why we need to do this. The economic reason why we got to stay on the leading edge of technology is to make sure that people's standard of living here in America goes up—that's what it is. And there's a direct correlation by being the most innovative country in the world and how our citizens live.

Secondly, the second practical application to make sure we've got young scientists and engineers coming up, is that if we don't have people that have got the skill set to fill the jobs of the 21st century, because we're in

a global world and a competitive world, they're going to go somewhere else. And so I want to talk about an initiative to make sure America remains competitive.

The first element is, is that for the Federal Government to continue its role—oh, by the way, when we went on the tour, so I asked, "How are you doing?" "Fine." "What do you do?" "This." "Where did you get your education?" We met engineers and chemists and physicists. I didn't meet any history majors. [*Laughter*] I met people who are incredibly capable, smart thinkers that are able to take their brainpower and come up with ways to make practical products that change Americans' lives. And so—and the Federal Government has a role in this, and our taxpayers have got to understand, a good use of your taxpayers' money is to promote research and development—research into the physical sciences.

Again, I'd repeat to you that if we can remain the most competitive nation in the world, it will benefit the worker here in America. People have got to understand, when we talk about spending your taxpayers' money on research and development, there is a correlating benefit, particularly to your children. See, it takes awhile for some of the investments that are being made with Government dollars to come to market. I don't know if people realize this, but the Internet began as the Defense Department project to improve military communications. In other words, we were trying to figure out how to better communicate. There was research money spent, and as a result of this sound investment, the Internet came to be.

The Internet has changed us. It's changed the whole world. It's an amazing example of what a commitment to research dollars can mean. The iPod—I'm a bike guy, and I like to plug in music on my iPod when I'm riding along to hopefully help me forget how old I am. [*Laughter*] But it was built—when it was launched, it was built on years of Government-funded research and microdrive storage or electrochemistry or single compression—signal compression. See, the nanotechnology research that the Government is helping sponsor is going to change the way people live.

And so what I said to the Congress was, "Let's be wise with taxpayers' money. Let's stay on the leading edge of technology and change, and let's reaffirm our commitment to scientific innovation." I think we ought to double the Federal commitment to the most basic critical research programs in physical sciences over the next decade.

This year alone, we're proposing $6 billion go to the National Science Foundation to fund research in physics and chemistry and material science and nanotechnology. We're proposing $4 billion goes to the Energy Department's Office of Science to build the world's most powerful civilian supercomputer. We're proposing $535 million to the Commerce Department's National Institute of Standards and Technology to research electronics information technologies and advanced computers.

I wouldn't be proposing this if I didn't believe that there will be tangible benefits for the American people. We may not see them tomorrow, but you're children will see them. We're staying on the leading edge of technology for a reason. If America doesn't lead, if we try to kind of forget that we're in a competitive world, generations of Americans won't be able to realize the standard of living that we've been able to realize.

Secondly, I also realize that, by far, the vast majority of research and development is done at the private level by companies—3M, you're spending a lot of money on research and development. So the Government can help, but the truth of the matter is, two-thirds of all research and development spending in America comes from the private sector. And so the fundamental question is, what can the Government do, if anything, to encourage that money to continue to be invested? If it makes sense to develop new technologies and the private sector provides most of the money for that, is there anything we can do, encourage this kind of investment?

And the answer is, yes, there is. There's something called the research and development tax credit. Interestingly enough—obviously, if you think about tax credit, it says if you spend money on research and development—the Tax Code—it treats you generously, more generously than if you didn't. It says, go ahead and do it; there's an advantage

for you to make this decision. The problem is, it expired. The research and development tax credit expires in 2005. And so the Congress is saying, "Well, why don't we just temporarily extend it?" You cannot run a business and plan to make long-term investments if the incentive program is only temporary.

Congress needs to understand that nations like China and India and Japan and Korea and Canada all offer tax incentives that are permanent. In other words, we live in a competitive world. We want to be the leader in this world. And therefore, in my judgment, in order—one important part of staying the leader, when it comes to innovation and research and technology, is for the Congress to make the tax credit on research and development permanent.

Third part of the competitiveness agenda is to make sure our kids learn math and science. It's one thing to research, have incentives for money, but if you don't have somebody in that lab, like those chemists I met, we're not going to be that good. And so I got some ideas for the Congress to consider. The first is to emphasize math and science early, and to make sure that the courses are rigorous enough that our children can compete globally.

We made a pretty good start on, by the way, high standards with the No Child Left Behind Act. I was talking to—it about the Governor; he said, "People get a little nervous when Government says, 'Measure.' " And he didn't say that; he's reflecting the opinion of others. As the Governor of Texas, I remember that attitude too. But here's my attitude: If you spend money, doesn't it make sense to determine whether or not the results are halfway decent? As a taxpayer, it seems like that's something you'd want to know. It's certainly—it's part of, I'm sure, how 3M succeeds and continues to compete. You set high standards, and then you measure.

Well, I think schools ought to do the same thing. I don't think we ought to tell you how to design your test. I don't think we ought to dictate curriculum, but I do know, in return for Federal money, it makes sense to say, "Can the child read, write, add, and subtract when he or she is supposed to?" And so we're measuring in return for Federal money. That's the whole thing behind No Child Left Behind.

When I was the Governor of Texas, schools that didn't measure thought they were doing pretty well until—that's a natural assumption for a parent, right? "I'm happy. They're paying attention to me." And things are going fine, and then the child gets out there and has to take remedial reading courses in college. And so you've got to measure. I remember the debate in Texas. They said, "It's racist to measure." I said, "Uh-uh, it's racist not to measure." Think about a system that just shuffles kids through.

So we're making good progress at the early grades, particularly in reading and math. Matter of fact, America is competitive in math in the early grades. How do we know? Because we test. We test. And by the way, we make the test results known locally, and we compare tests State to State, so people can figure out—old Pawlenty can figure out how he's doing against other States. [*Laughter*] It's a nice tool if you're a reformist, by the way. See, if you believe in reform, it gives you leverage on a system that tends to be status quo oriented.

The other thing that we did in No Child Left Behind, which makes a lot of sense, is there's supplemental service money. That means extra money so that when we find a child lagging behind in reading, that family got extra money for extra tutoring. In other words, we said, let's diagnose the problem and solve it early, before it's too late.

Accountability does a further thing that is important. It kind of helps resolve curriculum disputes. You might remember the old debates—at least I certainly remember them—over how do you teach reading. And there was this kind of theory and that kind of theory. Well, when you measure, it kind of makes it pretty clear which works and what doesn't work. We need to have the same emphasis in math that we have in reading, and the reason why is, is that because when you test early, we do fine in math, and yet when our kids start heading into junior high and high school, it's clear they can't compete in the world. And now is the time to do something about it.

Well, so what do you do? What do you do? Well, the first thing you've got to make

sure your teachers have the skills necessary to be able to teach math and science. And I think the most practical way to do that is to teach teachers how to teach Advanced Placement. If you believe in high standards and if you want your kids to compete, a proven system is the AP programs. And they work. And therefore, we're going to ask Congress to appropriate money so that we can have a full-scale effort to train 70,000 teachers in how to teach AP.

Another way to make sure that we have high standards in math and science is to take the same approach we took in reading, and that is intervention early, but apply that to math in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. In other words, have supplemental service money, extra money, tutorial money, money that could be used at the public school or private school or tutoring service to say, when we find a child that's lagging behind in math in the junior high schools, let's intervene. Let's not let them slip. Let's make sure that same high standard we've achieved in the fourth grade applies throughout the junior high level. So you got intervention in junior high, teachers able to spend that—get that curriculum right in high school.

The third thing we need to do is what you do here at 3M—and I want to applaud those scientists who are here who have gone in the classroom and said, "This is a good deal. You're not going to believe how exciting it is to be a physicist or a mathematician or a chemist. Let me tell you the practical applications of what it means to be a scientist and tell you how cool a job it is, how exciting it is." See, these kids need somebody to walk in to their classrooms and say, "Follow me; follow my example." And so we've got a plan to help 30,000 adjunct professors—that would be you—to be able to go into the schools all across America and set a good example, to excite kids about the potential.

One of the other things we're going to do that makes sense is to have a—what we call a national math panel. Again, we made great progress in reading, and one of the reasons why is that we've—there's a science to reading. I mean, it's not guesswork anymore. We've got a lot of really smart people, particularly out of NIH, that helped develop curriculum go-bys. We're not telling you what to use, but we are saying, "If you're interested in teaching every child to read, here are some things that are necessary to make it work." We want to do the same thing with the math curriculum so that every school district, if they so choose, has got a resource base in which to figure out what works.

Sometimes you have a good teacher sitting there, but they really don't understand what works when it teaches a child—how to teach a child math. And we believe we can figure it out. I believe we have figured it out, and now we'll make that available to school districts all around the country through the Governors and the States.

And so the initiative I just described is—America will remain competitive by being wise about how we encourage research and development but, most importantly, by making sure our kids have the skill sets for the jobs of the 21st century.

Now in the meantime, there's another issue that I want to discuss right quick—two other quick issues, then you'll be liberated. [*Laughter*] One of them is, there are more high-tech jobs in America today than people available to fill them. And if that's—so what do we do about that? And the reason it's important, and the American citizen has got to understand it's important, is if we don't do something about how to fill those high-tech jobs here, they'll go somewhere else where somebody can do the job. In other words, there are some who say, "We can't worry about competition. It doesn't matter; it's here. Don't worry about it; do something about it. It's a real aspect of the world in which we live."

And so one way to deal with this problem, and probably the most effective way, is to recognize that there's a lot of bright engineers and chemists and physicists from other lands that are either educated here or received an education elsewhere but want to work here. And they come here under a program called H1B visas. And the problem is, is that Congress has limited the number of H1B visas that can come and apply for a job—a H1B visa holder can apply for a job at 3M. And I think it's a mistake not to encourage more really bright folks who can fill the jobs that are having trouble being filled here in America—to limit their number. And

so I call upon Congress to be realistic and reasonable and raise that cap.

We'll educate our kids. That's the goal. Of course, we want every job that's ever generated in America filled by Americans, but that's not the reality today. In order for 3M to remain competitive, in order for this job base to remain strong, in order for us to be a leader in innovation, we got to be wise about letting kids come here who've got the skill sets needed to fill the jobs that help us remain the leader in the world.

And so what I'm telling you is, is that I'm an optimistic guy about America's future because I believe in our system, and I believe in the people. The Government's role is to make sure that we're a flexible economy. Its role is to make sure that we apply our resources properly to make sure we're an innovative economy. And certainly, a very vital role at all levels of government is to make sure our children have the skill sets necessary to fill the jobs that will inevitably come in this changing world.

My belief is that we should not fear the future; we should shape it. America has a vital role to play as a leader. And the policies I just outlined will help us remain the leader that I think most Americans want us to be.

I appreciate 3M's leadership. I appreciate you employing so many people. I appreciate you making this a good place for people to come to work. I could tell it just in the pride of the voices of the researchers I met. Thanks for making this an environment where innovation succeeds and people are able to realize their full human capacity.

God bless you all, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. at 3M Corporate Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota, and his wife, Mary; Lt. Gov. Carol Molnau of Minnesota; George W. Buckley, chairman, president, and chief executive officer, 3M; and President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Negotiation of a Free Trade Agreement With South Korea

February 2, 2006

The United States and the Republic of Korea have a strong alliance and are bound together by common values and a deep desire to expand freedom, peace, and prosperity throughout Asia and the world. Today we seek to deepen the ties between our nations by negotiating a comprehensive U.S.-Republic of Korea Free Trade Agreement.

A Free Trade Agreement with the Republic of Korea will provide important economic, political, and strategic benefits to both countries and build on America's engagement in Asia. The Republic of Korea is our seventh largest trading partner and seventh largest export market, and this Free Trade Agreement advances our commitment to opening markets and expanding opportunities for America's farmers, ranchers, workers, and businesses.

Remarks in a Discussion on American Competitiveness in Rio Rancho, New Mexico

February 3, 2006

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for the warm welcome. Thanks for the Mexican food last night, Pete. [*Laughter*] I hope you picked up the tab. [*Laughter*] Laura and I are thrilled to be here. This is going to be an interesting discussion. What you're watching—what you'll watch is a way to talk about how to put good policy in place, not only through my voice but through the voices of many who are living exactly the strategy that we want to implement for the rest of the country.

So, first of all, I want to welcome my wife, Laura. We don't get to travel that much——

The First Lady. Together.

The President. Together. We both were raised in west Texas and occasionally slipped across the border there to go to New Mexico. And every time we did, we were better for it. [*Laughter*] It's a great State.

Do you want to have a few words?

The First Lady. Well, I'm going to just speak and, as they say in the political business, step off the message a little bit. George is going to be talking today about what we can do to make sure our children are educated and our economy is competitive. But I also just want to remind everyone that earlier this week, he signed a proclamation to make February American Heart Month. And a lot of people are wearing their red tie or their red dress. I'm wearing my Red Dress pin today to remind the American people that heart disease is the number one killer; it's the number one killer among women in the United States.

A lot of women don't know that, and if they start to suffer the signs of a heart attack or the symptoms of a heart attack, they wait. They don't go to the emergency room like they might rush their husbands to the emergency room, but they don't go themselves as fast.

So I want to encourage Americans to remember that heart disease is the number one killer, to talk to people about all the ways we can prevent heart disease through exercise, healthy eating, not smoking, seeing your doctor on a regular basis so you can find out if you have any early signs of heart disease.

The other thing that fits into the message that George is going to talk about is, we know that if our children have the chance to study more math and science, we'll have even more doctors, we can produce even more doctors, and many, many more medical breakthroughs.

So, remember that February is National Heart Month and take good care of your heart.

The President. Before we get started, I do want to recognize some folks. Obviously, Senator Domenici is here. I know you are very proud of his service in the United States Senate. What a good man he is. And with him is Senator Bingaman, who is also doing a fine job.

What happened the other day was, I got a phone call from Domenici, and generally when someone of that—with that much power calls you, you say, "Yes, sir, Mr. Senator." [*Laughter*] And he said, "I want to come by, and I want to bring Jeff Bingaman with me and Senator Alexander." And I said, "Fine, come on over." And they come over the Oval Office and sit down and say, "Look, at your State of the Union, we want you to seriously consider announcing an agenda that we think is important to make this country competitive." And I said, "I'll consider it." One of the things you want to do when you're the President is kind of keep your cards close to your vest. [*Laughter*] I said, "I'll give that serious consideration, Senator."

But I knew prior to him coming in that he had looked at the same report I had seen, which is called the Augustine report. Craig Barrett, who I'm going to talk about here in a second, was on that committee. Chuck Vest—I don't know if Chuck is with us or not. We had dinner with Chuck last night, as well as Augustine—Norm Augustine, himself. But they're a group of distinguished citizens and scholars and businesspeople who started looking out beyond the immediate and asking the question, what does America need to do to remain the preeminent economy in the world so our people can have a good life? And they made some suggestions. And Jeff and Pete looked at it, fine-tuned it, brought me some ideas. And at the State of the Union, I talked about how to keep this country strong.

And want to give credit to the Senators. I also want to give credit to the Senators after they get the deal done, too, see. [*Laughter*] And so I want to thank both Senators for being here.

I also want to thank the Congressman from this district, Tom Udall. Thank you, Mr. Congressman, for joining us. Proud you're here. Two other Congresspeople—Heather Wilson—thank you for coming, Heather, appreciate you, and Steve Pearce from eastern New Mexico. Is it Hobbs? Yes, Hobbs, that's right. [*Laughter*] Flying Eagles. That's the name of the basketball team.

I do want to thank the mayor, Jim Owen. Mr. Mayor, thank you for being here. I appreciate you coming. You're kind to take time out of your day.

Before I talk about the Intel family, I do want to recognize the vice president of the Navajo Nation, and his wife, Virginia—and that would be Frank Dayish. Frank is here. Good to see you again, Frank. The reason I want to bring up Frank and Virginia is that

their daughter, Staff Sergeant Felissa Dayish, is with us. She has been to Iraq twice. Thank you for serving. God bless. I remember the pride that Frank had when he described his daughter's service to me. And I know you're doubly proud, Frank. Thanks for being here—proud you're here.

And finally, the Governor of the great State of New Mexico has joined us, Governor Bill Richardson. Governor, thank you for being here. Good to see you. I appreciate you coming. I know you're proud of the Intel facility and the Intel family, as you should be.

One of the things we're going to talk about is the importance of research and development and technology. And the people here in this part of the world understand that when you have a research and development facility that promotes modern technology, it improves the quality of the life of the community in which the facility exists. And that has been, really, Craig Barrett's credo as the CEO of this company. He wants to provide a product that people want to buy, obviously—otherwise, you're not going to be in business. [*Laughter*]

But he also understands there's something called corporate responsibility. It's in his interest that there be corporate responsibility in Intel. In other words, Intel can only be strong if it has a workforce that's capable of making sure this company is competitive in a global economy. And so I really want to say thanks to Craig and all the employees here for doing the following things—besides making a good product and providing jobs—to provide people from this company to teach in local schools.

And if corporate CEO is paying attention to this little seminar, I strongly urge you to follow the Intel example of making employees available to make sure math and science becomes an important part of the curriculum of the local schools. They provide internships for young students here to encourage them to become involved with math and science. They help train teachers. And we're going to talk a little bit about teacher training. And then they provide scholarships.

And so for those of you who work here, thanks for being such—so generous with your knowledge and your talent. And Craig, thanks for having us. It's not easy to host the President here. It kind of disrupts—[*laughter*]—disrupt—yes, I know. [*Laughter*]

A couple of points I want to make, and the reason why this subject is relevant, first, we've got a strong economy. Today you're going to see that in January we added 193,000 new jobs, 81,000 new jobs—extra jobs were added as a result of upgrading the November and December numbers. And we got steady growth. And that's important. We want our people working. We want people to be able to realize opportunity and hope. And in order to do that you got to have a growing economy, obviously.

And we've overcome a lot. I really ascribe that to mainly the entrepreneurial spirit of America is strong, the small-business sector is strong. I do happen to think good tax policy helped. I think keeping taxes low is an important way to make sure this economy continues to grow.

But what's interesting about the numbers is that beneath that there's a certain amount of uncertainty amongst some in America—that, you know, we've got a lot of competition, and people begin to see an emerging China and India, and that makes people uncertain. It creates certain anxiety when they hear the stories about India and China beginning to grow robustly, or jobs going to India and China, or India and China consuming a lot of natural resources.

Secondly, there's a lot of turnover in the job market. People are changing jobs, and that creates uncertainty. And during times of uncertainty, we're faced with certain choices. And there's a tendency throughout our history, our economic history and foreign policy history, to withdraw. Times of uncertainty sometimes encourage folks to say, "Well, why do we need to compete? Why don't we just come within ourselves? Why don't we protect ourselves off from the world? Why do we need to be trying to spread freedom when the world is a dangerous place? Why don't we just come home?"

And I strongly reject that notion, and I want to explain to you why. First of all, with an enemy that lurks, if we were to withdraw it would only embolden the enemy and make this country less secure. If we were to withdraw from the world it would be a missed

opportunity to lay the foundation of peace for generations to come by spreading liberty and freedom. See, part of my foreign policy is this: I believe that there is an Almighty, and I believe that the Almighty's gift to everybody on the face of the Earth, regardless of where they live, regardless of their religion, is freedom. And I believe deep in everybody's soul is the deep desire to live in freedom. And I believe that this country, if it were to retreat, would miss an opportunity to help others realize their dream. And I also know that history has proven that free societies yield the peace that we all want.

Secondly, when it comes to competition, the world is going to be competitive whether we're in the mix, or not. For example, this competitive world is going to demand a job skill set that emphasizes math and science, which we'll talk about here in a second. And if our kids don't have the talents necessary to compete, those jobs won't go away; they'll just go to another country.

I mean, we're in a global competition. Here's my attitude: With the right policy we can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere. This has been the history of America, and it's going to be the future of America. We should not fear the future because we intend to shape it.

The American—this American economy leads the world, and we're going to continue to lead it. And here's how: good fiscal policy out of Washington, DC, making sure that this economy is flexible. In other words, when you say that, that means there's not a lot of rules and regulations that prohibit capital moving freely and people making investment.

We've got to have an energy policy that gets us off this dependence on Middle Eastern oil. I spent a lot of time on that before; I'm going to spend a little more time on it next week. But I'm going to tell you something: With research and development and technology, we can change the fuels we put in our cars, and we can become less dependent on unstable sources of energy overseas. And if we intend to be the leader of the world, we've got to do that. It's a goal that can be achieved, and it's a goal that's necessary.

I've talked about health care—and will continue—in the past. I want to talk about trade real quick, and then we're going to talk about the education initiative. Our panelists are beginning to wonder—[*laughter*]. It's called a filibuster. [*Laughter*] First, let us talk about trade. The first sign that the country is becoming protectionist is when we refuse to ratify trade agreements. That's a sign. It's an indication that the elected officials are beginning to get worried about the capacity of this country to compete. It's hard to get trade agreements through Congress, and I'm worried that that is an indication that we're losing our confidence.

But if you're working at Intel, you better be for open trade, because 80 percent of the products this company makes are sold overseas. Yesterday we were at 3M in Minnesota. It's a great United States company, very much like Intel. Sixty percent of the products they manufacture are overseas—sold overseas. We're 5 percent of the world's population, which means the rest of the 95 percent could be, and should be, customers to United States products, either grown or manufactured.

Now, the role of the Government—it seems like to me—is to not only open up markets for our products but, at the same time, say to our competitors and/or other markets, "Treat us the way we treat you." That's all we ask. In other words, level the playing field. It is very important if this country is to remain competitive that we do not lose our nerve, that we open up markets for our products, that we level the playing field—because nobody can out-compete us when the rules are fair.

Now, let me talk about education. That's kind of the—that's part of the cornerstone of making us competitive, shaping our destiny, refusing to lose our great desire to continue to lead. But perhaps the most important thing of all is to make sure that we lead the world in innovation and technological development and make sure we have a workforce that has the skill sets necessary to do so. And that's really the heart of the American Competitive Initiative. And that's why we're here at Intel.

Again, I want to repeat to you, all the people who understand the connection between

technology and jobs ought to be the people in this part of the world. I remember when this plant didn't exist—and neither did much of the neighborhood around it. I mean, one of the most exciting things that's happened to the Albuquerque area is the arrival of Intel—not only because it's provided good jobs, but the spinoff of those jobs, the small businesses that have occurred as a result of—when this amazing center of brilliance came here.

I want to talk about three things, and then we'll start visiting. Here's some things, practical things the Government can do. First of all, the Government can't do everything. The Government is a partner. For those of you who think the Government can solve all problems, this is not the way it works. Most problems are solved locally. First—one thing the Government can do is to spend money on research. In other words, we can be a partner with enterprise.

Do you realize that the Internet came to be as a result of Federal Government research into basic sciences? In other words, research yields practical applications that improve people's live—is what I'm trying to say. And so I proposed to Congress that we double basic research programs in physical sciences over the next 10 years.

They tell me that by doing so, we'll be the leader in nanotechnology research. I'm just beginning to understand what that means. [*Laughter*] But the smart people tell you, if you're the leader in nanotechnology research, you'll be the leader in quality jobs and quality of life.

The second thing that the Congress needs to do is to encourage private investment in research and development. As a matter of fact—this makes sense—most of the research done in the United States is done through the private sector. About two-thirds of it is done through private sector research; 15,000 companies take advantage of what's called the research and development tax credit. It's part of our Tax Code. It says, if you spend money on research, you'll be rewarded through the Tax Code.

Seems to make sense, if we're trying to encourage people to spend private sector dollars. The problem is, is that the research and development tax credit is only a temporary measure. And so you're a CEO of a major company like Intel or a CEO of a small company that's thinking about spending research dollars, and you're uncertain as to whether or not that research and development tax credit will be available.

People don't plan big amounts of money to invest on a short-term basis. It's important to provide stability in the Tax Code so that the planners and thinkers and investors have confidence that if they make an investment 5 years from now, the reason they made the investment in the first place—besides trying to improve product lines—the reason they made the tax—the reason they made the investment because of tax incentive will still exist. And so Congress needs to make the research and development tax credit a permanent part of our Tax Code to encourage more private sector research to keep America on the leading edge of innovation.

Finally—you'll be happy to hear—[*laughter*]—how do we make sure the folks who are going to be running this economy, our workers and entrepreneurs, have the skill set necessary to do so? How do we encourage people to stay focused on math and science? And that's really an important subject. I—here's what the Government can and should do.

First of all, we passed the No Child Left Behind Act. It's a great piece of legislation. It basically says, "Let's raise standards and measure." I can remember people said, "Why would you want the Government to cause people to measure?" I said, "Because we're spending a lot of money." If you're running a business and you're spending money, you want to measure. You want to look at results. People in America want to know, you see? And if a child can't read at the third grade, we want to know why. And we also want to be able to analyze curriculum to determine if that's one of the reasons why. And equally importantly, by diagnosing, you're able to say, this child deserves extra help.

I strongly believe all Government is locally controlled. However, I believe that it's the responsibility of Government that spends money to say to those who designed the curriculum, "Please, show us whether or not you're achieving results; and if not, correct what you're doing, and solve problems early

before they're too late." We need to send that same spirit into—that we've got in reading in the No Child Left Behind Act into math.

Now, the positive news is that we're doing fine, relative to the rest of the world, in math in the early grades. And you know why we know? We measure. I can remember when I was Governor of Texas and we didn't measure, people would say, "Gosh, my schools are doing great"—until the kids graduated from school, and they couldn't read very well and then had to be re-educated at college. Measuring lets you know. Measuring lets you compare. And measuring lets us know how we're doing with the rest of the world. If we're in a competitive world, we want to make sure our students can compete.

And we're doing fine in the fourth grade. We're doing lousy in junior high. Something happens between elementary school, where our teachers are able to get the kids interested in math and they test well, to junior high. And that's where we ought to emphasize focus. In the early—in the initiative—in the reading initiative in No Child Left Behind, we say that if you're not up to grade level, there's extra money for you. It's called supplemental services. There's extra money to correct problems early before they're too late.

We're now going to ask Congress to apply that same supplemental service to junior high kids in math. If the kids aren't testing well in math in junior high, in other words, if they're part of the falloff, let's intervene. Let's make sure there's tutorials available, after-school mathematics available, for these children so that they can remain competitive.

And they'll go to high school. So how can we help in high school? Well, one thing that we've learned is that our teachers have got to have the skill set necessary to teach the skills in math and science. And one effective program—and Laura and I are fixing to go to Dallas after this to herald this program—is an advanced placement program. And the Federal Government can be a partner in helping teachers train to be AP teachers. Advanced placement works. Advanced placement raises standards. Advanced placement gives teachers the tools to teach kids to take this advanced placement test, which is a measurement. It's a go-by to determine how competitive our workforce can be in the 21st century.

And finally, we want to get 30,000 adjunct professors into classrooms. That's a fancy word for saying we want engineers and chemists and physicists in places like Intel, or retired professionals, to go in the classroom and excite students about the possibility of math and science. That's what we need. We need role models. We need people walking into a classroom full of youngsters and say, "You're not going to believe how cool this profession is. You're not going to believe the horizons that will be available to you." And one of the things Craig has encouraged Intel to do is, do just that.

And so here's an initiative that makes sense. Here's a chance for Republicans and Democrats to put aside all the foolishness that's going on in Washington and come together and get something done for the future of this country.

And I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to lay out the strategy. And now I want to turn this over to Craig Barrett. He's the CEO of this company. He himself—he probably won't tell you this, but I will—is an engineer, highly qualified engineer. I asked him last night where he spent most of his youth. He said on the Stanford campus. And here he is now the CEO of one of the great companies. He was able to take his degree—for those of you who are interested in whether or not a degree makes sense—he took his engineering degree, and now he runs one of the world's preeminent companies. And he's sitting right here.

[*At this point, Craig R. Barrett, chairman of the board, Intel Corp., made brief remarks.*]

The President. I appreciate that. One of the good things about being the President is you tend to draw cameras. [*Laughter*] Good or bad, depending on your perspective. I hope people listening hear what Craig has just said, those particularly in CEO America, corporate America, that there is such a thing as corporate responsibility. He said, "I take this responsibility serious." It's in your interest, by the way, to help train a teacher. It's in your interest to provide a scholarship. It's in your interest to help a young group of

Americans learn math and science because, after all, if you intend to stay in business, you better have a workforce that's capable.

And so thanks for setting such a good example. Thanks for joining us.

We're also joined today by Tom Hunter. He's the president of Sandia. The last time I was with him, we were standing out kind of in a desert area, and he fired up one of these new solar research beams. [*Laughter*] All I can tell you is I was glad I wasn't at the other end of the beam. [*Laughter*] But they're doing some good stuff when it comes to research and development here at Sandia.

Welcome. Thanks for being here. What's on your mind?

[*Thomas Hunter, president, Sandia Corp., made brief remarks.*]

The President. Tom, let me ask you something. I think it's very important for people listening to understand when you say nanotechnology that it's got an application to their life. In other words, when the Federal Government says, "We're going to spend money on research," that the taxpayers got to understand that there's something—their life is going to improve. And the question is, how?

The other day, I was talking about how research is—I mean, how technology has changed our society, and I ended with the example: I remember driving across Texas playing the license plate game, and now they're driving across Texas watching a DVD. And it all happened in 20 years.

But when you talk about supercomputing will have an application that could help somebody, or nanotechnology, share an example with people.

[*Mr. Hunter made further remarks.*]

The President. Yesterday we saw nanotechnology being applied to a fuel membrane that will go into a hydrogen-powered automobile at some point in time, which means we'll be using hydrogen as opposed to extract from oil, the byproduct of which will be water. And it's coming. And technology and research will help us achieve that. We want to be the ones with the hydrogen breakthrough. It means there will be jobs here for Americans that will improve your quality of life as well.

Okay, thanks. Good job.

Matt, welcome. Tell everybody what you do.

[*Matthias W. Pleil, faculty member, Albuquerque Technical Vocational Institute (TVI), made brief remarks.*]

The President. Wait, let me stop you a minute. NSF is the National Science Foundation. Don't speak in initials, because we're—[*Laughter*].

Mr. Pleil. I'm originally from industry, and everything was an acronym. [*Laughter*]

The President. That's right. Imagine what it would be like if you were originally from Government.

Mr. Pleil. They have longer acronyms. [*Laughter*]

The President. National Science Foundation. And you're doing what?

Mr. Pleil. I'm working creating educational materials for college students and also for college and high school teachers so that we can teach the future technologists about microsystems, which a lot of people don't know much about.

The President. And microsystems are what?

Mr. Pleil. Well, microsystems are here and now, and they include the circuitry that Intel produces, but also micromachines, as well. And we're collaborating with Sandia National Labs. They're on the cutting edge of making surface micromachines, it's called. And I've been fortunate enough to work there part-time, learn from Sandia and help them create educational materials that they use in their University Alliance program.

And we've also been able to train teachers at several workshops. So we're creating a group of folks now that are understanding microsystems and hopefully energizing the kids in school.

The President. And is there an interest—I presume with Intel being here, it serves as a magnet for kids to say, "Gosh, that's a good place to work. I need the skill set necessary, and TVI provides that skill set."

Mr. Pleil. Absolutely, Intel supported TVI over the years to create our semiconductor manufacturing technology program. We have

a teaching clean room that was sponsored primarily by Intel, and many of our students go and work for Intel. In fact, one of my students is actually working in the lab, probably today.

The President. We hope so. [*Laughter*] It's interesting, isn't it—I want to kind of take off on what Matt was talking about. One of the really great assets we have in America is the community college or technical school system. And the reason why is, is that these schools tend to be market-driven. And by that I mean the curriculum adjusts to the needs of the local folks. And what he just said was, is that here's a job provider, here's an education institute—they collaborated to design a curriculum that actually means something to the graduate.

I'm not saying my history degree didn't mean anything. [*Laughter*] It did; it meant a lot. But, nevertheless, if you're interested in work, and you're getting out of school, and you want to be trained in a job which actually exists, this collaboration is a vital part. And I urge communities all across the country to utilize their community college or their technical vocational schools to work with the local industry to design curriculum that matters.

And so one of the ways to make sure that we're competitive in the 21st century is to adequately utilize our community college system and make sure that they are incented to constantly adjust by working with the job providers.

And so thanks for bringing that up. It's an interesting idea, and I bet a lot of people in Albuquerque didn't even know this is going on. And for people who are looking to find work, you ought to look at the TVI as an opportunity. And the other thing people ought to do—you may be 35 years old or so; there's money to help you upgrade your job skills. And what education does, it enables you to become a more productive worker. And as your ability to be a more productive worker increases, so do your wages. Education adds—makes it more likely you're going to have a higher wage. And that's what Matt is doing—I think that's what you just said. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Pleil. Yes, absolutely. Thank you.

The President. Good job. Now, we've got an interesting person here, Nicole Lopez. Nicole, welcome. Tell people your story, if you don't mind.

[*Nicole Lopez, senior, Rio Rancho High School, made brief remarks.*]

The President. You have learned to communicate. [*Laughter*] That was fantastic. So what are your dreams?

Ms. Lopez. I plan on going to the University of New Mexico and majoring in civil engineering.

The President. Fantastic. This isn't exactly on the subject, but it is kind of—Laura is involved, leading what's called Helping America's Youth. The whole spirit of the program is a mentor can make a difference in a person's life; that we can change America one heart at a time. A person can, by just taking time out of his or her life and surrounding somebody with love and compassion, can make a significant contribution to the country.

And so you just described the whole spirit of Helping America's Youth. You also just described the true strength of the country. Our country's strength is not our military or the size of our wallet; it's the fact that there are millions of people that have got great heart who want to improve somebody else's life, love a neighbor like they'd like to be loved themselves.

Nicole, so you're interested in sciences, obviously.

Ms. Lopez. Yes, I have found that math and science have become my niche, and it's my passion, and I want to continue it.

The President. Awesome. You know, a lot of people probably think math and science isn't meant for me—it kind of seems a little hard, algebra. I can understand that, frankly, but—[*laughter*]. I'm looking for a mentor, by the way. [*Laughter*] Both in math and English. [*Laughter*] But I hope people listening hear Nicole's story that, you know, take a look at math and science. I'm sure there's some—kind of the "nerd patrol." [*Laughter*] It's not; it's the future. That's what Nicole just said; she said the future is engineering and physics and chemistry and math.

Really good job, by the way. Thanks for coming. Appreciate it.

Chris Baca is with us. Chris, why don't you give everybody your job description.

[*Chris Baca, president and chief executive officer, Youth Development, Inc., made brief remarks.*]

The President. Clubhouses, go ahead and explain what that is.

Mr. Baca Clubhouses are—Intel has provided both mentors and equipment and actually a design for a clubhouse that involves using state of the art technology.

The President. You mean there's a physical plant that people go to where there's the latest technology?

Mr. Baca. Exactly it. And that's located right in a neighborhood where you won't—you wouldn't expect it to be.

The President. And you run the clubhouse?

Mr. Baca. Yes, sir. My program runs the clubhouse.

The President. I mean the program. Good.

Mr. Baca. And so the kids can walk from—after school, we get these little kids dropping in. They don't even go home. They stop by. We help them do their homework, and then they can play.

[*Mr. Baca made further remarks.*]

The President. Chris just laid out the strategy which is Government, corporate, community involvement—all aiming at making sure that we save the lives of our children, and not only saves their lives but give them the skills necessary to be productive leaders into the 21st century.

You're right, old guys like us, we'd better be—count on the next generation to—[*laughter*]—now, we got to make sure they got the skills. Finally, we want to make sure that we're in entrepreneurial heaven, and by that I mean that if you've got the instinct and the drive to start your own business, that that you'll be comfortable in doing so. Government can't guarantee your product is successful. We can guarantee you good legal policy, good tax policy, good regulator policy, and then go for it.

And one of the things that I notice about our country when I travel the world is, we really are entrepreneurial heaven. We got people from all walks of life saying, "I want to realize my dream." One of them is Justin Sanchez.

Welcome, Justin. Let her rip.

[*Justin Sanchez, director of Semiconductor Operations, Advent Solar, Inc., made brief remarks.*]

The President. I think it's going to happen. I think what you're talking about is that one of these days our homes are going to be little sources of power, and to the extent that we have excess power, we'll feed it back into the grid.

Mr. Sanchez. That's right, that's absolutely correct.

The President. How far away are we from that, in terms of your thinking?

Mr. Sanchez. You know, solar is a technology that the time has come, and I think with some of the more recent innovations and some of the things that we're doing now, in the next 5 to 10 years you could see that happen.

The President. One reason why it makes sense for the taxpayers to have research and development into solar energy, which we're doing through the Energy Department in collaboration with Sandia Labs, is because he's just describing a product that's going to come as a result of the research money spent. And that is, it's conceivable that you'll have a little unit on top of your house that will power your own house, and that to the extent that you don't use the power generated from the unit, you actually sell it back to the grid, so you become a mini powerplant.

Mr. Sanchez. Absolutely. A million mini powerplants.

The President. And what's the average age of your team, would you say?

Mr. Sanchez. Average age of the team? Well, that's a good question. Probably about thirty.

The President. Management team. Thirty?

Mr. Sanchez. Forty.

The President. Forty? Old guys.

Mr. Sanchez. Of the management team, or the team?

The President. Management team.

Mr. Sanchez. Management team, it's probably closer to 50.

The President. Really?

Mr. Sanchez. Yes.

The President. So you're bringing down the average.

Mr. Sanchez. Bringing down the average. [*Laughter*]

The President. We want Justin Sanchezes of the country to dream big dreams and to think big. Look at the product they're thinking about. I mean, this is a big idea. And there's people willing to risk capital on the idea, and you're willing to risk time in it.

Mr. Sanchez. Absolutely.

The President. And it's going to happen, isn't it?

Mr. Sanchez. It will happen.

The President. Yes, and America will be better off for it. This is a good way to end, for our people to understand there's a direct connection between research and development, technology, and quality of life. This country has a chance—it needs to make a choice: Are we going to lead, or are we going to fear the future? I hope after this discussion, people sitting around here and listening ought to realize we ought not to fear the future but shape the future and continue to be the leader. And by leading, our people will realize a more peaceful world and a more prosperous world and a chance to realize dreams. And that's what America has been all about in the past and it should be about in the future.

Listen, thank you all for the panel. It's been a great discussion. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:10 a.m. at Intel New Mexico. In his remarks, he referred to Charles M. Vest, president, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; Norman R. Augustine, chair, National Academies' Committee on Prospering in the Global Economy of the 21st Century; and Mayor Jim Owen of Rio Rancho, NM.

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 28

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

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

January 29

In the afternoon, the President participated in a speech preparation session for his January 31 State of the Union Address.

January 30

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Family Theater, the President participated in a speech preparation session for his January 31 State of the Union Address.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President participated in a signing ceremony for a Presidential proclamation in honor of the fourth anniversary of the USA Freedom Corps.

The President announced his intention to nominate W. Ralph Basham to be Commissioner of Customs at the Bureau of Customs and Border Enforcement in the Department of Homeland Security.

The President announced his intention to nominate Paul DeCamp to be Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division at the Department of Labor.

The President announced his intention to nominate Edward P. Lazear to be a member of the Council of Economic Advisers and, upon appointment, to designate him as Chairman.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jeffrey L. Sedgwick to be Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to appoint Mark Sullivan as Director of the U.S. Secret Service at the Department of Homeland Security.

The President announced his designation of the following individuals as members of a Presidential delegation to the 2006 Olympic Games in Turin, Italy: Laura Bush (head of delegation), Ronald P. Spogli, Barbara P. Bush, Roland Betts, Brad Freeman, Dorothy Hamill, Eric Heiden, Kerri Strug, Debi Thomas, and Herschel Walker.

January 31

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Roosevelt Room, he met with Samuel A. Alito, Jr., to congratulate him on being confirmed by the Senate as an Associate Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court.

In the afternoon, in the Old Family Dining Room, the President had lunch with television correspondents.

February 1

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Vladimir Putin of Russia to discuss the situation in Iran. Later, he had a telephone conversation with President Evo Morales of Bolivia to congratulate him on his election and inauguration. He then had an intelligence briefing.

Later in the morning, in the Oval Office, the President and Mrs. Bush participated in a signing ceremony for a Presidential proclamation in honor of American Heart Month. He and Mrs. Bush then traveled to Nashville, TN, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Suzanne Bingham.

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

February 2

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he traveled to Minneapolis, MN, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Anna Edlund. He then traveled to Maplewood, MN, where he toured 3M headquarters.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Albuquerque, NM, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Mike Martin.

February 3

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, the President traveled to Dallas, TX, where, upon arrival in the afternoon, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Sharon Randolph.

Later in the afternoon, the President traveled to the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX.

The White House announced that President Bush will welcome King Abdullah II of Jordan to the White House on February 8.

The White House announced that the President will welcome Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the United Nations to the White House on February 13.

The President declared a major disaster in Nevada and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding from December 31, 2005, to January 4, 2006.

The President declared a major disaster in California and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, flooding, mudslides, and landslides from December 17, 2005, through January 3, 2006.

The President announced his intention to nominate Benedict S. Cohen to be General Counsel of the Department of the Army.

The President announced his intention to nominate Robert M. McDowell to be a Commissioner on the Federal Communications Commission.

The President announced his intention to nominate Mauricio J. Tamargo to be Chairman of the Foreign Claims Settlement Commission of the U.S. at the Department of Justice.

The President announced his intention to nominate Armando J. Bucelo to be a director of the Board of Directors of the Securities Investor Protection Corporation (Public).

The President announced his intention to nominate Todd S. Farha to be a director of the Board of Directors of the Securities Investor Protection Corporation (Public) and, upon appointment, to designate him as vice chairman.

The President announced his intention to appoint Douglas DeMaster as Deputy U.S. Commissioner on the International Whaling Commission.

The President annnounced his intention to appoint William Hogarth as U.S. Commissioner on the International Whaling Commission.

The President announced his intention to appoint William B. Keleher as a member of the Board of Directors of the Valles Caldera Trust (Expert in Cultural and Natural History).

The President announced his intention to appoint Michael Robert Oestreicher as a

member of the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations.

The President announced his appointment of Kevin J. Bergner as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Iraq.

The President announced his appointment of J. Scott Jennings as Special Assistant to the President and Deputy Director of Political Affairs.

The President announced his appointment of Jeffrey F. Kupfer as Special Assistant to the President for Economic Policy.

The President announced his appointment of Elisabeth Millard as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for South and Central Asian Affairs.

The President announced his appointment of Luis A. Reyes as Special Assistant to the President for Presidential Personnel.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted January 31

W. Ralph Basham,
of Virginia, to be Commissioner of Customs, Department of Homeland Security, vice Robert C. Bonner, resigned.

Paul DeCamp,
of Virginia, to be Administrator of the Wage and Hour Division, Department of Labor, vice Tammy Dee McCutchen, resigned.

Edward P. Lazear,
of California, to be a member of the Council of Economic Advisers, vice Ben S. Bernanke.

Jeffrey L. Sedgwick,
of Massachusetts, to be Director of the Bureau of Justice Statistics, vice Lawrence A. Greenfeld, resigned.

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 30

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Released January 31

Transcript of a press briefing by Counselor to the President Dan Bartlett on the State of the Union Address

Statement by the Press Secretary on Shaykh Sabah al-Ahmad Al Sabah becoming Kuwait's new amir

Fact sheet: A Strong America Leading the World

Fact sheet: Affordable and Accessible Health Care

Fact sheet: American Competitiveness Initiative

Fact sheet: The Advanced Energy Initiative

Excerpts: State of the Union

Advance text: State of the Union

Released February 1

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Transcript of a press briefing by Secretary of Commerce Carlos M. Gutierrez, Secretary of Labor Elaine L. Chao, Secretary of Energy Samuel W. Bodman, Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings, and Office of Science and Technology Policy Director John H. Marburger III on the American Competitiveness Initiative

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Council Director Allan B. Hubbard and Special Assistant to the President for Economic Policy Roy Ramthun on the President's Health Care Initiatives for 2006

Transcript of a press briefing by Secretary of Energy Samuel W. Bodman

and National Economic Council Director Allan B. Hubbard on the President's Advanced Energy Initiative

Fact sheet: Continuing the Fight Against HIV/AIDS in America

Released February 2

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan, Office of Science and Technology Policy Director John H. Marburger III, and Assistant to the President for Domestic Policy Claude Allen

Transcript of a press briefing by Office of Management and Budget Deputy Director Joel Kaplan and Deputy Assistant Secretary of Defense for Public Affairs Bryan Whitman on funding related to ongoing operations in Iraq

Released February 3

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary: Condolences for the Victims in the Sinking of an Egyptian Ferry in the Red Sea

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit by King Abdullah II of Jordan to Washington

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit by United Nations Secretary-General Kofi Annan

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to California

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Nevada

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed H.R. 4659

Fact sheet: Economic Growth Continues—Unemployment Rate Falls to 4.7 Percent

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.