

The delegations will be headed by three men on this stage: Rich Armitage, Paul Wolfowitz, and Steve Hadley; Deputies of the State Department, the Defense Department, and the National Security staff. Their trips will be part of an ongoing process of consultation involving many people and many levels of government, including my Cabinet Secretaries.

These will be real consultations. We are not presenting our friends and allies with unilateral decisions already made. We look forward to hearing their views, the views of our friends, and to take them into account.

We will seek their input on all the issues surrounding the new strategic environment. We'll also need to reach out to other interested states, including China and Russia. Russia and the United States should work together to develop a new foundation for world peace and security in the 21st century. We should leave behind the constraints of an ABM Treaty that perpetuates a relationship based on distrust and mutual vulnerability. This Treaty ignores the fundamental breakthroughs in technology during the last 30 years. It prohibits us from exploring all options for defending against the threats that face us, our allies, and other countries.

That's why we should work together to replace this Treaty with a new framework that reflects a clear and clean break from the past and especially from the adversarial legacy of the cold war. This new cooperative relationship should look to the future, not to the past. It should be reassuring rather than threatening. It should be premised on openness, mutual confidence, and real opportunities for cooperation, including the area of missile defense. It should allow us to share information so that each nation can improve its early warning capability and its capability to defend its people and territory. And perhaps one day, we can even cooperate in a joint defense.

I want to complete the work of changing our relationship from one based on a nuclear balance of terror to one based on common responsibilities and common interests. We may have areas of difference with Russia, but we are not and must not be strategic adversaries. Russia and America both face new threats to security. Together, we can address

today's threats and pursue today's opportunities. We can explore technologies that have the potential to make us all safer.

This is a time for vision, a time for a new way of thinking, a time for bold leadership. The Looking Glass no longer stands its 24-a-hour-day vigil. We must all look at the world in a new, realistic way to preserve peace for generations to come.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:40 p.m. outside Eisenhower Hall at Fort McNair. In his remarks, he referred to Vice Adm. Paul G. Gaffney II, USN, president, National Defense University; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

### **Remarks on the Bipartisan Congressional Tax Relief Agreement and an Exchange With Reporters**

*May 1, 2001*

**The President.** Good afternoon. This is a great day for the American people and the American taxpayer. Working together, Republicans and Democrats in the House and the Senate have agreed on a proposal that will provide \$1.35 trillion in tax relief over the next 11 years. One hundred billion will be distributed right away, this year and next, to help stimulate our economy and put money in people's pockets quickly. The rest of tax relief will be provided over the next decade.

I congratulate the Members of the Senate and the House, Republicans and Democrats, who have worked so hard to achieve this bipartisan agreement. You all deserve great credit for agreeing to provide the American people with meaningful, significant, sweeping tax relief—the most tax relief in a generation.

Today Republicans and Democrats have agreed to help Americans send their children to college, pay off their mortgages a little faster, or cope with rising energy costs. In short, once we've funded our Nation's priorities, we've agreed to let the American people spend their own money on their own priorities.

Today's agreement has a larger message, as well. By finding common ground on an issue that divided the two parties throughout

last year's campaign, Republicans and Democrats have today proven we can work together to do what is right for the American people. Achieving the agreement on significant tax relief can help pave the way for consensus on other vital issues, including reforming our public schools, strengthening Social Security and Medicare, and transforming our national defense.

When I spoke to a joint session of Congress just a few months ago to outline my budget and tax relief proposals, I said that in the end, we'll be judged not only by what we say but by what we're able to accomplish.

We have more work to do to complete the full budget. But today we have accomplished significant tax relief and shown we can work together in a constructive way to get things done for the people of this country.

Thank you.

### **Federal Spending**

**Q.** Mr. President, are you going to be able to keep spending in check in order to be able to fund your tax cuts?

**The President.** Well, I'm absolutely convinced we'll be able to fund the tax cuts.

**Q.** Are you going to be able to keep spending—

**The President.** I've worked with Members of the House and the Senate to have a discretionary spending at a reasonable level. I hope—we're making progress. There's a lot of discussions going on. I suspect I'm going to have to remain diligent over the next year to keep the spenders in check. That's a good job for the Chief Executive Officer.

### **Conversation With President Vladimir Putin of Russia**

**Q.** Mr. President, how did your conversation with President Putin go?

**The President.** Terry [Terry Moran, ABC News], it was good. We had a very constructive conversation. I called him early this morning to let him know that I'd be giving the speech that I just gave. I wanted to assure him that my plans were in the best interests of our two countries, that we are going to consult with the Russians, as well as our other friends and allies.

But I also made it clear to him that it's important to think beyond the old days of when we had the concept that if we blew each other up, the world would be safe. I told him the cold war is over and that Russia was not our enemy, and I'd help try to define the threats as realistically as I could and that we needed to have defenses to meet those threats.

I also told him that we would work to reduce our own nuclear arsenals and would do so in time. He asked me whether or not there is a chance we could meet before our upcoming summits. I told him I would love to meet with him beforehand to look him in the eye and let him know how sincere I am about achieving a new way of keeping the peace.

He reminded me at one point in time that he talked about the need to address current threats in our world with systems that might be able to intercept missiles on launch—boost phase—I talked about today. So I felt that it was a very constructive meeting.

### **Resignation of FBI Director**

**Q.** Mr. President, are you concerned about Director Freeh's resignation? Did that catch you by surprise?

**The President.** Actually, Director Freeh came to see me late yesterday afternoon. And he asked if we could meet alone. I said, "Of course." And he said, "I'm resigning." And it did catch me by surprise. And I'm disappointed. I would hope—I was hoping that he would stay on. I think he's done a very good job. I'm sure he explained to you—I didn't see his press conference, but I suspect he explained to you the reason why, and that is, he wanted to spend more time with his family. I found Louie Freeh to be a fine public servant, and our Nation owes him a great debt of gratitude for his service to our country. And now we'll begin the process of finding replacements.

### **National Missile Defense**

**Q.** What response do you expect from the European allies on missile defense? Do you think they will get along—go along eventually, and will participate?

**The President.** Well, I think we've got a lot of explaining to do. That's why yesterday I called the leaders of France and Britain

and Canada and Germany to explain to them exactly what I—and the head of the NATO—to explain to them exactly what I just explained—I told you, that—Mr. Putin. The phone call I made yesterday was nothing new, however. I had met with those leaders before and talked to them about what I meant.

And during the course of the campaign, when I talked about providing defenses to meet the true threats of—that all of us are now faced with, the leaders were pleased that we're sincere about our desire to go through consultations. I've sent a high level team—a team of high level members of my administration, Deputies Armitage, Hadley, and Wolfowitz. It's a clear signal about how, one, important this issue is and how, two, how seriously we take the idea of consulting with our allies and friends. They are very pleased with that.

But they are going to have to speak for themselves. I am a little hesitant to put words in their mouth.

### **Social Security Reform**

**Q.** Mr. President, on the Social Security Commission, some are saying that if the membership is going to be sort of stacked in a way that preordains a recommendation of privatization. What is your—

**The President.** Well, I think—I think—let us—tomorrow is a day when we will be talking about Social Security and that would be a very good question to the members of the Commission, to make sure that there is an objective analysis of Social Security: How do we save it; what do we do to make sure it is viable in the future?

There is a lot of speculation about the Commission that will be cleared up tomorrow afternoon, if I'm not mistaken, right here in this very spot.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:05 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Jacques Chirac of France; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Jean Chretien of Canada; Chancellor Gerhard Schröder of Germany; and NATO General Secretary George Robertson.

### **Statement on the Retirement of Federal Bureau of Investigation Director Louis J. Freeh**

*May 1, 2001*

Louis Freeh is a dedicated public servant who has served his country and the FBI with honor and distinction. I regret the Director is leaving Government. We are fortunate to have had a man of his caliber serve our country, and we will miss him.

### **Letter to Congressional Leaders on Proposed Legislation To Extend the Filing Deadline for Undocumented Immigrants**

*May 1, 2001*

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Leader:)*

I am a strong proponent of government policies that recognize the importance of families and that help to strengthen them. To the extent possible, I believe that our immigration policies should reflect that philosophy. That is why I support legislation to extend the window created under section 245(i) of the Immigration and Nationality Act during which qualified immigrants may obtain legal residence in the United States without being forced to first leave the country and their families for several years.

According to agency estimates, there are more than 500,000 undocumented immigrants in the country who are eligible to become legal permanent residents, primarily because of their family relationship with a citizen or legal permanent resident. However, the law generally requires them to go back to their home country to obtain a visa, and once they do so, they are barred from returning to the United States for up to 10 years. Many choose to risk remaining here illegally rather than to be separated from their families for those many years. This issue has been the subject of discussion in the Working Group that Attorney General Ashcroft and Secretary of State Powell co-chair with officials of the Mexican government, and should be addressed to ensure a more orderly, legal, and humane migration flow between our countries.