Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report of the National Endowment for Democracy

June 11, 2001

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the provisions of section 504(h) of Public Law 98–164, as amended (22 U.S.C. 4413(i)), I transmit herewith the Annual Report of the National Endowment for Democracy for fiscal year 2000.

George W. Bush

The White House,
June 11, 2001.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 13.

Remarks at the Opening of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization Meeting in Brussels, Belgium

June 13, 2001

Mr. Secretary General, thank you very much. It's an honor for me to be here. It's an honor to say hello to folks who I've had the honor of meeting before, and it's a real pleasure to meet other leaders in the free world.

Our nations established NATO to provide security for the free peoples of Europe and North America, to build a grand alliance of freedom to defend values which were won at great cost. We've succeeded, in part.

The NATO Alliance deterred the Soviet Union. It provided the time and space for free peoples to defeat communism. And it brought the cold war to a bloodless end. Now, we have a great opportunity to build a Europe, whole, free, and at peace, with this grand alliance of liberty at its very core. That work has begun.

By bringing in new members, we extend the security and stability through central Europe. By establishing the Partnership for Peace, we reached out across central and eastern Europe and Eurasia. By our actions in the Balkans, we halted ethnic cleansing in the heart of Europe and halted a dictator in the process. Yet, there is more to do.

We must strengthen our Alliance, modernize our forces, and prepare for new threats. We must expand cooperation with our partners, including Russia and the Ukraine. And we must extend our hands and open our hearts to new members to build security for all of Europe.

Next year we meet in the ancient capital of a new democracy. Our ally Prague will host our next summit in November of 2002. In preparation for that meeting, we must affirm our enduring commitments by preparing for the challenges of our time.

Thank you, Mr. Secretary.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:44 a.m. at NATO headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's News Conference With NATO Secretary General Lord Robertson in Brussels

June 13, 2001

Secretary General Lord Robertson. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for coming. The NATO heads of state and government have just completed our informal lunch, where we continued to discuss many of the things which were raised in our formal session during this morning.

It's very rare that the Prime Ministers, Presidents, and the Chancellor have an opportunity to discuss privately among themselves the broader issues before the Alliance and our long-term strategies, but that's what we've been able to do today. And I personally believe it was an exceptionally useful meeting.

I had a chance to speak with you earlier on, on the discussions in the formal session, and I've already issued a formal press release, and I have nothing further to add at this time. But let me take this opportunity, on his very first visit to the headquarters of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization, to introduce the President of the United States, President George W. Bush.

President Bush. Thank you, sir. Thank you very much for your hospitality. I've got a statement to make, and we'll be glad to answer some questions.

Before I talk about the meeting, I do want to say a brief word on some important developments in the Middle East. I'm encouraged that both Israel and the Palestinian Authority have agreed to a cease-fire plan, and I'm proud of America's role in helping to achieve it.

Today, on my flight from Spain to here, I talked to CIA Director George Tenet, who has worked very hard to bring the parties together. He is cautiously optimistic about the agreement that's been signed.

Our country recognizes that an end to violence is a necessary first step toward implementing the Mitchell committee report and a resumption of real negotiations. All the parties must now take additional steps that will place them on the road to a just and lasting peace. All the parties must build trust by demonstrating good faith in words but, more importantly, in deeds. This process is difficult. But hopefully, it has now begun.

And as for the meeting today, I'm most pleased with the meeting. I did think we had a great discussion. We reaffirmed the deepest commitments of history's most successful alliance. We discussed new security challenges. We outlined the work ahead as we move towards next year's summit in Prague. It was a good start on a long and important agenda.

First, there was broad agreement that we must seek a new approach to deterrence in a world of changing threats, particularly the threat posed by the spread of weapons of mass destruction and ballistic missiles. I told the Allies I'm committed to working closely with them to address this common threat by developing a new framework for nuclear security. This framework must include greater nonproliferation and counter-proliferation efforts, decreased reliance on offensive weapons, and greater transparency so that responsible nations can have greater levels of confidence.

I also spoke of my commitment to fielding limited but effective missile defenses as soon as possible. I explained that the ABM Treaty embodied the cold war nuclear balance of terror between rival superpowers. But it no longer makes sense as a foundation for relations that should be based on mutual confidence, openness, and real opportunities for cooperation.

All this marks a major shift in thinking about some of the most critical issues of world security, and I was pleased by the open and constructive reactions. I'm encouraged that in today's meeting we saw a new receptivity towards missile defense as part of a new strategic framework to address the changing threats of our world.

As one of our close Allies noted, the world is changing around us, and NATO's great strength has been a willingness to adapt and move forward. Another noted, NATO is a defensive Alliance and, thus, an increasingly important role should be played by defensive systems to protect all our citizens from terrorist blackmail.

Secondly, we agreed that we must reach out to Russian leaders and to a new Russian generation with a message that Russia does have a future with Europe. The United States will seek to build this strategic framework with Russia. Now that Russia has recognized a weapons of mass destruction threat to Europe, future cooperative work on a new strategic framework could be a great task which brings NATO and Russia together.

Third, we agreed on the need to commit the resources that will allow NATO's force to do their jobs. The decline in defense spending amongst NATO nations must be reversed. And when we do spend, we must spend wisely. It shouldn't be a question of whether to buy American or buy European; it should be a question of how to buy transatlantic. North American and European companies should collaborate to produce the most advanced systems at the lowest costs.

We agreed that NATO and the European Union must work in common purpose. It is in NATO's interest for the European Union to develop a rapid reaction capability. A strong, capable European force integrated with NATO would give us more options for handling crises when NATO, as a whole, chooses not to engage.

NATO must be generous in the help it gives the EU. And similarly, the EU must welcome participation by NATO Allies who are not members of the EU. And we must not waste scarce resources, duplicating effort

or working at cross purposes. Our work together in the Balkans shows how much the 23 nations of NATO and the EU can achieve when we combine our efforts.

Our work together in the Balkans reminds me that I'm going to commit to the line that Colin Powell said: "We came in together, and we will leave together." It is the pledge of our Government, and it's a pledge that I will keep.

We agreed that we must face down extremists in Macedonia and elsewhere who seek to use violence to redraw borders or subvert the democratic process.

Concerning Bosnia and Kosovo, we agreed that this is a major effort, an effort that we will continue to work together on.

Fifth, and finally, we agreed that NATO must prepare for further enlargement of the Alliance. All aspiring members have work to do. Yet, if they continue to make the progress they are making, we will be able to launch the next round of enlargement when we meet in Prague.

We agreed that all European democracies that seek to join our ranks and meet our standards should have the opportunity to do so without red lines or outside vetoes. We must never lose sight of what NATO does and what it stands for, how it safeguards prosperity and protects democracy in an ever-widening Europe. Let us then be true to the great vision of our fathers and grandfathers, is what I said: the preservation of peace by democratic leadership, the defense of freedom through collective strength.

I'd be glad to answer some questions, starting with Jim Angle [Fox News].

National Missile Defense/ABM Treaty

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Your critics at home, sir, suggest that you are prepared to deploy a missile defense system that will not work. First, Mr. President, will you deploy defensive technologies that have not been successfully tested? And second, you suggested that the ABM Treaty may be a problem sooner rather than later because, as you put it, it prevents us from exploring the future. When does that become a problem, and what do you do about it?

President Bush. First, it's important to—for people who are following this issue to understand that we're not asking our Allies to sign on to a specific system. We're asking our Allies to think differently, and asking Russia to think differently, about the post-cold-war era.

The ABM Treaty is a product of the cold war era. It was a time when the United States and Russia were bitter enemies, and the whole concept of peace was based upon the capacity of each of us, each country, to blow each other up. The new threats are threats based upon uncertainty. The threats that somebody who hates freedom or hates America or hates our Allies or hates Europe will try to blow us up.

And the fundamental question is, will freedom-loving nations develop a system to enhance freedom to prevent that from happening? And I make the case, yes. But before we can lay out a specific case, Jim, it's necessary to set aside the ABM Treaty so we can fully explore all options available to the United States and our Allies and friends. The ABM Treaty prevents full exploration of opportunity.

And for those who suggest my administration will deploy a system that doesn't work are dead wrong. Of course, we're not going to deploy a system that doesn't work. What good will that do? We'll only deploy a system that does work in order to keep the peace. But we must have the flexibility and opportunity to explore all options.

I'm making good progress on this issue here in Europe. There's some nervousness, and I understand that. But it's beginning to be allayed when they hear the logic behind the rationale.

I look forward to my meeting with Mr. Putin. There's no question this is going to be an important meeting on Friday. And there's no question that this will be a topic—it won't be the only topic that we'll discuss. It will be—the topic of missile defense will be in a part of a larger framework about how the United States and Russia can cooperate, how we can find areas to grow our economies, and how we can work together to keep the peace.

Lord Robertson, you're supposed to call on somebody.

Secretary General Lord Robertson. Am I?

President Bush. You don't have to if you don't want to. [*Laughter*]

Secretary General Lord Robertson. You're very observant, but I'll——

Macedonia

Q. Mr. President, you stressed the continuing vitality and importance of NATO as a collection of freedom-loving democracies. Nowhere in Europe is democracy more threatened at the moment than in Macedonia. There is, I see—I note from today's meetings a growing sense of alarm at developments there on the ground. For many people, it seems an obvious question: Why is this huge, well-armed military alliance not willing to put even perhaps a small number of troops into Macedonia, if the Government there were to request it, to bring about some sort of stability after which the very significant political reforms that are acquired there can be enacted?

President Bush. The conversation I heard approached the subject from an opposite direction. Most people believe there's still a political solution available before troops are committed.

I want to remind you, KFOR does have troops on the border, and we must continue the presence on the border to prevent insurgence and arms from reaching the Albanian extremists. But the sentiment I heard here was that there is still a possibility for a political settlement, a good possibility, and that we must work to achieve that settlement. Lord Robertson can speak to that very clearly; he is on his way to Macedonia in short order.

Have you told them that?

Secretary General Lord Robertson. I did.

President Bush. Okay, good. Well, if you didn't, I just did. [*Laughter*]

Secretary General Lord Robertson. I told them before, but they may not have been listening. [*Laughter*]

President Bush. Anyway, he's going. And—but the idea of committing troops within Macedonia was one that most nations were troubled over. They want to see if we cannot achieve a political settlement first.

Secretary General Lord Robertson. That is a good one behind the program of President Trajkovski that was signed up to by the National Unity Government yesterday. And there will be talks among all the political parties about the reform program at the week's end.

That is a big breakthrough, and I think that that is something we all want to put our support behind. We're not talking about other options. Bilaterally, countries have supported the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. On the border, as the President has said, there are large numbers of troops, including extra troops that have been sent down from the boundary between Kosovo and Serbia, who are policing aggressively that border and interdicted only the other night quite a number of those who seemed intent on mischief in that area.

What we need now is a continued ceasefire and a continuation of the existing ceasefire, a recognition by the armed insurgents that the reform process that they claim they are interested in can be achieved through democratic means, and an international community that stands full-square behind the territorial integrity of that country.

So we're not considering any other options at the moment than the bilateral support that has been given at present and by encouraging a political process, which is the only way to a sustainable peace in the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

National Missile Defense

Q. Mr. President, are you prepared to say here and now, sir, that you will go ahead with a limited missile defense, with or without the agreement of NATO and the European Union? And are you prepared to unilaterally abandon the ABM Treaty, or is it crucial for you, sir, to have Russia's agreement on that point?

President Bush. John, I have made it clear to our friends and Allies that I think it's necessary to set aside the ABM Treaty, but I will do so in close consultation with not only members of NATO and EU countries who are not members of NATO but, as well, with the Russians.

I believe strongly it's necessary to move forward. I think it is necessary to do so in order to make the world more peaceful. I

can't imagine a world that continues to be locked into a cold war mentality when the cold war is over. Along these lines, I'll also assure our Allies and friends that we will move to reduce our offensive weapons to a level commensurate with keeping the peace but one that is below where our levels are now.

I mean, I think it's important to go through these committees and arms control agreements, and those are important stabilizers. But rather than wait for hours of endless negotiations in order to show the world that we're sincere about peace, on the one hand, we will consult on defensive weapons; on the other hand, we'll move by ourselves on offensive weapons.

It is the right signal to do; it is the right signal to send that the cold war must be abandoned forever. And I believe we're making progress. I don't think we're going to have to move, as they say, unilaterally. I think people are coming our way. But people know that I'm intent upon doing what I think is the right thing in order to make the world more peaceful.

Secretary General Lord Robertson. How would you—the questions all appear to be for you, Mr. President, anyway.

President Bush. Fournier [Ron Fournier, Associated Press]. Yes, you always get to ask a question.

Situation in the Middle East

Q. I appreciate it, sir.

Following up on your comment in the Middle East, I'm wondering whether or not, because of the negotiations your administration succeeded on with the cease-fire, if you or your administration is going to get more involved, even more involved in the Middle East. Specifically, do you plan to send the Secretary of State to the region in the near future? What would it take for you, yourself, to go to the region?

President Bush. First and foremost, we're very involved. After all, it was George Tenet of the CIA that has been working long hours to bring people to the table. But this is just the first step. It's one thing for folks to sign a piece of paper; it's another thing for the parties to act. And as you notice in my statement, I called upon both parties to act.

It is still a fragile situation there. As I understand, Mr. Burns is still coming to talk to Colin this evening. He's very much engaged in the process. And we'll decide whether or not the Secretary of State or myself will become more directly involved, based upon the positive steps toward peace that now must be taken.

It's wonderful news that we've signed the document. But the fundamental question is, will parties take steps to peace, concrete actions that will help build the confidence necessary so that peaceful-loving countries can say, the cycle of violence has been finally broken, and then there is the opportunity to have political discussion. But until the cycle of violence has been fully broken, as the Mitchell report calls for, that we will delay political discussions. It's important that these parties now take the document that's been signed and implement it with concrete actions.

Ed [Ed Chen, Los Angles Times].

Q. We're not——

President Bush. You only get one question at a press conference.

U.S. Approach to Allies

Q. Good afternoon, Mr. President, sir. There has been a lot of talk on this side of the Atlantic about a unilateralist approach out of Washington. I think in Washington, those of us who work there have heard that it's leadership—I wonder if you could differentiate the two for us.

President Bush. Well, I hope the notion of a unilateral approach died in some people's minds today here. Unilateralists don't come around the table to listen to others and to share opinion. Unilateralists don't ask opinions of world leaders.

I count on the advice of our friends and Allies. I'm willing to consult on issues. Sometimes we don't agree, and I readily concede that, but there's a lot more that we agree upon than we disagree about. And no, I think the people of NATO now understand they've got a strong, consistent, loyal Ally, one that supports the mission of NATO and one that understands not only the history of NATO but the importance for NATO as we go down the road.

That's why our Government believes in the expansion of NATO. We believe NATO is the core of a free and peaceful Europe. And as Lord Robertson will tell you, ever since he came to my office in Washington at the Oval Office, I have been a loyal supporter of NATO and its mission.

A unilateralist is one that doesn't understand the role of NATO and one that won't fully support NATO, like my Government is going to do.

Secretary General Lord Robertson. It's worth making the point, I think, that all of the heads of state and government today very much welcome the fact that the United States, and the President in particular, was willing to share the thinking process on these key issues before any decision was taken.

I would say that the statement that the President made, underlining what Secretary Powell and Secretary Rumsfeld have said about the Balkans, also was a clear signal of the inclusiveness that the American administration has in view for NATO.

"We went in together, we will come out together." There will be no unilateral decisions taken by this Ally or by any other Allies. We have common missions. And there was a warm welcome today for the fact that the thinking process on this whole new landscape of such urgency was to be the subject of detailed consultations, not just around this table today but in detail and among experts, as well. That was a very good signal, and it was widely welcomed.

President Bush. Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Troop Reductions in the Balkans

Q. You campaigned on a pledge to reduce the troop presence in the Balkans. Do you now see that as politically impossible to do at this point?

President Bush. Actually, the troop presence in the Balkans has been reduced since I have become the President. It's been reduced on a reasonable timetable, one set with the United States and in consultation with Allies. It's a timetable that was embraced by NATO.

I said today in my talk that it's important for our nations to work together to put civil institutions in place that ultimately can become the framework for the reduction and, ultimately, the removal of NATO troops. But we recognize it's going to take a while. And so, what I said was, "We came in together, and we'll leave together." And that's important for our Allies to hear.

Secretary General Lord Robertson. And in the meantime, we'll get the job done together.

Thank you very much. I think that's it; we need to go.

President Bush. See you next stop.

NOTE: The President's eighth news conference began at 3:35 p.m. at NATO headquarters. In his remarks, President Bush referred to President Vladimir Putin of Russia; and President Boris Trajkovski of the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. President Bush also referred to KFOR, the NATO-led security force in Kosovo.

Exchange With Reporters in Brussels

June 13, 2001

President's Visit to Europe

Q. Sir, how would you sum up the trip so far?

The President. Great. Very happy with it and pleased with the progress made on key issues. Pleased that we had the opportunity to spend some quality time with fellow leaders. One thing is for certain, European leaders now know that our administration is committed to a strong NATO and a free Europe. And that was important for them to hear, and I'm real pleased.

Patients' Bill of Rights Legislation

Q. I understand, sir, that Charles Norwood has signed on to the McCain-Kennedy bill.

The President. Yes. I haven't had a chance to talk, but I'm confident we'll get a bill that I can live with if we don't. I made a speech in Florida that laid out the principles. And if those principles are not met, I meant what I said—I said, I can't live with the bill. And so——

Q. Does that mean you'd veto it?

The President. Can't living with the bill means it won't become law. And I'm hopeful we can work out our differences. We're working hard to do so, and I believe we can. I believe we can have a good Patients' Bill