

Recognizing the importance of democratic political systems, rule of law, and market-oriented economic policies in providing for the welfare and stability of our societies, we pledge to further develop the economic relationship between the United States and the Republic of Tajikistan, while working jointly to carry out democratic and legal reforms within Tajikistan that expand fundamental freedoms and human rights.

We further underscore the importance of rule of law as a prerequisite for economic development. The United States welcomes the efforts Tajikistan has made to integrate its economy into the global market, and will continue to assist Tajikistan in reforming its legal structures to better provide for rule of law and economic freedom with the goal of encouraging investment in the Republic of Tajikistan.

We state our commitment to the principles of democracy and human rights, and pledge to work jointly to extend and strengthen civic institutions such as free and independent media, democratic elections, political pluralism, and civil society. In this spirit, we reaffirm our commitment to basic human rights as enshrined in the founding documents of the United Nations and the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, of which we are both members. We further make clear our concern regarding the worldwide problem of trafficking in persons, and pledge our mutual assistance to combat in both of our countries this modern form of slavery. Finally, we confirm our joint efforts to enhance understanding between the citizens of our two countries. In this regard, the U.S. government has initiated a substantial program to enhance computer connectivity for Tajikistan's schools, and the U.S. Peace Corps will consider sending an assessment team to Tajikistan in 2003 with the view of establishing a country program there.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

Statement on the National Strategy To Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction

December 11, 2002

Today I have issued the National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction. The strategy establishes a comprehensive approach to counter the growing threat from weapons of mass destruction (WMD), including nuclear, radiological, biological, and chemical weapons. This strategy is integral to the National Security Strategy of the United States of America and the National Strategy for Homeland Security. We will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes and terrorists to threaten our Nation and our friends and allies with the world's most destructive weapons.

Weapons of mass destruction pose a grave danger. They could allow America's adversaries to inflict massive harm against our country, our military forces abroad, and our friends and allies. Some rogue states, including several that support terrorism, already possess WMD and are seeking even greater capabilities as tools of coercion. For them, these are weapons of choice intended to deter us from responding to their aggression against our friends in vital regions of interest. For terrorists, WMD would provide the ability to kill large numbers of our people without warning. They would give them the power to murder without conscience on a scale to match their hatred for our country and our values.

Our national strategy to combat WMD is based on three pillars. We will pursue robust counterproliferation policies and capabilities to deter and defend against the use of these weapons. We will strengthen nonproliferation measures to prevent states and terrorists from acquiring WMD. We will increase our preparations to respond effectively to any use of WMD against us or our friends and allies. To succeed, we must use new technologies, strengthen our intelligence capabilities, work even more closely with allies, and establish new partnerships with other key states, including former adversaries.

The need to prevent, deter, defend against, and respond to WMD threats presents our Nation with a difficult and complex challenge. The strategy I have issued today asks much of our Federal Government, our State and local institutions, and indeed, every citizen. The threat is real and the stakes are high. Success against this threat is a requirement of history—one that the United States will meet with confidence and determination.

Executive Order 13278—President’s Commission on the United States Postal Service

December 11, 2002

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and to ensure the efficient operation of the United States Postal Service while minimizing the financial exposure of the American taxpayers, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment. There is established the President’s Commission on the United States Postal Service (Commission).

Sec. 2. Membership. Commission shall be composed of nine members appointed by the President. The President shall designate two members of the Commission to serve as Co-Chairs.

Sec. 3. Mission. (a) The mission of the Commission shall be to examine the state of the United States Postal Service, and to prepare and submit to the President a report articulating a proposed vision for the future of the United States Postal Service and recommending the legislative and administrative reforms needed to ensure the viability of postal services.

(b) In fulfilling its mission, the Commission shall consider the following issues and such other issues relating to the Postal Service as the Commission determines appropriate:

(i) the role of the Postal Service in the 21st century and beyond;

(ii) the flexibility that the Postal Service should have to change prices, control costs, and adjust service in response to financial, competitive, or market pressures;

(iii) the rigidities in cost or service that limit the efficiency of the postal system;

(iv) the ability of the Postal Service, over the long term, to maintain universal mail delivery at affordable rates and cover its unfunded liabilities with minimum exposure to the American taxpayers;

(v) the extent to which postal monopoly restrictions continue to advance the public interest under evolving market conditions, and the extent to which the Postal Service competes with private sector services; and

(vi) the most appropriate governance and oversight structure for the Postal Service.

Sec. 4. Administration. (a) The Department of the Treasury or any organizational entity subject to the direction of the Secretary of the Treasury shall, to the extent permitted by law, provide administrative support and funding for the Commission. The Commission is established within the Department of the Treasury for administrative purposes only.

(b) Members of the Commission shall serve without any compensation for their work on the Commission. Members appointed from among private citizens of the United States, however, while engaged in the work of the Commission, may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by law for persons serving intermittently in Government service (5 U.S.C. 5701–5707), to the extent funds are available.

(c) The Commission shall have a staff headed by an Executive Director.

(d) The Commission, with the concurrence of the Secretary of the Treasury, may establish subcommittees, consisting of Commission members, as appropriate, to aid in its work.

(e) Consistent with such guidance as the President or, on the President’s behalf, the Secretary of the Treasury, may provide, the Commission shall exchange information with and obtain advice from Members of Congress; Federal, State, local, and tribal officials; commercial, nonprofit, and residential users of the United States Postal Service; and others, as appropriate, including through public hearings.

(f) Insofar as the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended, may apply to the