

Week Ending Friday, December 20, 2002

**Statement on the Resignation of
Henry Kissinger as Chairman of the
National Commission on Terrorist
Attacks Upon the United States**

December 13, 2002

It is with regret that I accept Dr. Kissinger's decision to step down as Chairman of the national commission to investigate the events of September 11, 2001, and the years that led up to that event.

As I stated at the time of his appointment, Dr. Kissinger is one of our Nation's most accomplished and respected public servants. I thank him for his willingness to consider serving his country once again. His chairmanship would have provided the insights and analysis the Government needs to understand the methods of our enemies and the nature of the threats we face.

My administration will work quickly to select a new Chairman whose mission will be to uncover every detail and learn every lesson of September 11, even as we act on what we have learned so far to better protect and defend America.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Letter to Congressional Leaders
Transmitting a Report on Northern
Ireland**

December 13, 2002

Dear Mr. Chairman:

I am transmitting to you a report prepared by my Administration as required by section 701(d) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Year 2003 (Public Law 107-228).

The enclosed report broadly addresses policing reform and human rights in Northern Ireland. It provides information on topics of interest outlined by the Congress, including

details on paramilitary decommissioning, and the manner in which U.S. law enforcement training for members of the Police Service of Northern Ireland is being administered.

Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Joseph R. Biden, Jr., chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations, and Henry J. Hyde, chairman, House Committee on International Relations. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

December 14, 2002

Good morning. This week I introduced new members of my economic team. For the Secretary of the Treasury, I have submitted the name of John Snow, a respected business leader and economist who shares my commitment to faster growth and more new jobs for American workers. I have nominated Bill Donaldson to serve as Chairman of the Securities and Exchange Commission, to vigorously enforce the laws against corporate corruption. And here at the White House, Steve Friedman will be the Director of the National Economic Council, giving me daily advice on our economy.

These leaders will assume their duties at an important moment for our economy. There are many good signs. Inflation is firmly under control, which means food, clothing, and other necessities are more affordable. Mortgage interest rates remain at historic lows, helping more Americans become homeowners. And growth has returned to the American economy.

Yet we also face specific challenges that could slow the recovery and limit future growth. Many Americans have very little money left over after taxes. Some struggle under a weight of debt that makes it difficult to save for retirement. Investor confidence

needs to be strengthened in practical ways. And the Nation's rate of unemployment is now 6 percent—and significantly higher in some parts of America. We will not rest until every person in America who wants to work can find a job.

The new Congress that convenes next month will have a responsibility to address these challenges, and I will be making specific proposals to increase the momentum of economic recovery through a jobs and growth package.

The last Congress also left behind some unfinished business. The House and Senate passed different bills extending unemployment benefits. However, no final bill was sent to me extending unemployment benefits for about 750,000 Americans whose benefits will expire on December the 28th. These Americans rely on their unemployment benefits to pay for the mortgage or rent, food, and other critical bills. They need our assistance in these difficult times, and we cannot let them down.

I have shared these concerns with leaders of the House and the Senate, and they understand the need for early action. When our legislators return to the Capitol, I ask them to make the extension of unemployment benefits a first order of business. And the benefits they approve should be retroactive, so that people who lose their benefits this month will be paid in full. I've also directed the Department of Labor to work with the States to minimize any delay in helping these Americans once Congress has acted and extended these benefits.

I look forward to working with Members of both parties in the new Congress on our economic challenges. We must help our fellow citizens who have lost their jobs. And we must create an environment in which businesses, especially small businesses, can grow and generate the new jobs our country needs.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:02 a.m. on December 13 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 14. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 13 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also re-

leased a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Appointment of Thomas H. Kean as Chairman of the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States

December 16, 2002

I am pleased to announce that Thomas H. Kean, former Governor of New Jersey and president of Drew University in New Jersey, will serve as Chairman of the national commission to investigate the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, and the events that led up to it.

Tom Kean is a leader respected for his integrity, fairness, and good judgment. I am confident he will work to make the Commission's investigation thorough. It is important that we uncover every detail and learn every lesson of September 11th.

Governor Kean served on the Advisory Board to the President's Initiative on Race from 1997 to 1998, served as Vice Chairman of the U.S. delegation to the Fourth U.N. World Conference on Women in 1995, and led the U.S. delegation to the World Conference on Education for All in Thailand in 1990.

Statement on the Resignation of Joe M. Allbaugh as Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency

December 16, 2002

For nearly 2 years as Director of FEMA, Joe Allbaugh has served America with ability, courage, and compassion. He will continue to shepherd FEMA through its transition into the Department of Homeland Security.

After the attacks on our country, America came to know Joe as I do: He is a steady leader, a calm presence, and man who inspires confidence in a time of crisis. I have trusted Joe in a variety of positions throughout my public life, and he has always met the highest standards of service and integrity. Laura and I wish Joe the very best in all that he does in the future.