

its full support to the Millennium Challenge Account. And when I'm in Europe, I will call on America's partners to join us in moving beyond the broken development policies of the past and encourage the freedom and reform that lead to prosperity.

These goals—advancing against disease, hunger, and poverty—will bring greater security to our country. They are also the moral purpose of American influence. They set an agenda for our Government, and they give idealistic citizens a great cause to serve. President Woodrow Wilson said, “America has a spiritual energy in her which no other nation can contribute to the liberation of mankind.” In this new century, we must apply that energy to the good of people everywhere.

For more than four decades, the volunteers of the Peace Corps have carried the good will of America into many parts of the world. Interest in this program is greater than ever before. I'm determined to double the size of the Peace Corps over the next 5 years. Today I would like to announce a new USA Freedom Corps initiative called Volunteers for Prosperity, which will give America's highly skilled professionals new opportunities to serve abroad. The program will enlist American doctors and nurses and teachers and engineers and economists and computer specialists and others to work on specific development initiatives, including those that I have discussed today. These volunteers will serve in the countries of their choice for however long their project takes. Like generations before us, this generation of citizens will show the world the energy and idealism of the United States of America.

I see that idealism in the faces of our soldiers and sailors and airmen and marines. I see that idealism in the faces of this Academy class. The men and women of the Coast Guard are “always ready” to defend the security of this Nation. You are “always ready” to rescue those in trouble. These two commitments define your mission, and they define America's role in history. We understand that strength is necessary to confound the designs of evil men. And we know that the compassion and generosity of this land can aid the suffering and inspire the world. We will use the great power of America to serve

the great ideals of America. And by these efforts we will build a lasting, democratic peace for ourselves and for all humanity.

Congratulations. May God bless the Class of 2003. May God continue to bless the United States of America. *Semper paratus.*

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:37 a.m. at Nelson W. Nitchman Field. In his remarks, he referred to Adm. Thomas H. Collins, USCG, commandant, U.S. Coast Guard; Rear Adm. R.C. Olsen, Jr., USCG, superintendent, United States Coast Guard Academy; Lt. Gov. M. Jodi Rell of Connecticut; and President Thomas E. Remengesau, Jr., of Palau, who presented a commission to the first Coast Guard Academy graduate from Palau. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Resignation of Christine Todd Whitman as Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency

May 21, 2003

Christie Todd Whitman is a trusted friend and adviser who has worked closely with me to achieve real and meaningful results to improve our environment.

Christie Todd has been a dedicated and tireless fighter for new and innovative policies for cleaner air, purer water, and better protected land.

In just over 2 years, we have acted in a comprehensive way to reduce pollution from diesel fuel sources and implemented an innovative initiative to better protect our water quality and watersheds. We are cleaning up abandoned industrial sites and turning them into assets for the communities in which they are located. We are also making great progress on the Clear Skies Initiative that I outlined to significantly reduce pollution from powerplants by 70 percent.

Christie Todd Whitman has served my administration exceptionally well. I thank her for her outstanding service to our Nation and wish her well as she returns home to New Jersey.

Proclamation 7680—National Maritime Day, 2003

May 21, 2003

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Today, as in the past, America depends on our maritime services to help ensure our security, promote our prosperity, and advance the universal hope of freedom. We honor the service and proud history of our merchant mariners and also recognize their important contributions in strengthening our economy.

For generations, merchant marines and commercial sailors have assisted in the defense of our Nation. Most recently, more than 5,000 merchant mariners supported Operations Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom by serving aboard 157 ships moving essential supplies to our troops. As they continue to support our troops in the ongoing war on terror, their mission continues to be dangerous and difficult, and remains vital to our efforts to defend the peace.

We also remember the vital role the Merchant Marine has played in past conflicts. More than 6,000 merchant mariners lost their lives during World War II, and more than 700 U.S. merchant ships were lost. Even before the United States declared war, merchant mariners were making perilous runs to Europe with desperately needed supplies. President Franklin Roosevelt, the first President to issue a proclamation honoring merchant mariners, wrote of their role during wartime: “They have delivered the goods when and where needed in every theater of operations and across every ocean in the biggest, the most difficult and dangerous transportation job ever undertaken.” We are grateful for the contributions and sacrifices of America’s merchant mariners before and after World War II, in Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, and around the world today.

In addition to their efforts to support our troops, merchant marines play a vital role in moving the goods that we produce around the United States and throughout the world. Their work provides jobs and economic benefits to our country, and strengthens our economy. By operating as the eyes and ears

of America at sea, they also help protect our homeland.

In recognition of the importance of the U.S. Merchant Marine, the Congress, by joint resolution approved on May 20, 1933, as amended, has designated May 22 of each year as “National Maritime Day,” and has authorized and requested that the President issue an annual proclamation calling for its appropriate observance.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim May 22, 2003, as National Maritime Day. I call upon the people of the United States to celebrate this observance and to display the flag of the United States at their homes and in their communities. I also request that all ships sailing under the American flag dress ship on that day.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-first day of May, in the year of our Lord two thousand three, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-seventh.

George W. Bush

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., May 23, 2003]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on May 27.

Remarks at the 2003 President’s Dinner

May 21, 2003

Thank you all. Thanks for the warm welcome. It’s always nice to have a nice quiet dinner with a few friends. [*Laughter*] Can’t tell you how much we appreciate you coming, though.

First I want to thank my friend George Allen for putting together this fine event. I want to thank all those who’ve helped. I particularly want to thank all of you all for coming from all across the great country. Thank you for your support. It makes a huge difference to our “Grand Party.” Your participation in the process makes a great difference to our great country.