

Weekly Compilation of  
**Presidential  
Documents**



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## WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

## PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, February 18, 2005

**Remarks at the Performance of  
“Lincoln Seen and Heard”**

*February 11, 2005*

Thank you for that wonderful performance. Laura and I welcome you all to the White House.

I appreciate the members of my Cabinet who are here and former members of the Cabinet who are here. I thank Senator Bill Frist for joining us as well as Congressman Mel Watt. Thank you both for coming.

I appreciate Michael Steele, the Lieutenant Governor of the great State of Maryland, for joining us. I want to thank Bruce Cole, the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities. I appreciate Brian Lamb joining us today, the president and CEO of C-SPAN.

I thank the U.S. Lincoln Bicentennial Commission members and the Advisory Committee for joining us today. I appreciate all the Lincoln scholars and authors who are here.

I particularly appreciate Sam Waterston and Lynn and Graham for joining us as well as Harold Holzer and Edith and Meg. Thank you all for coming.

Sam and Harold have had a good many reviews since they first took “Lincoln Seen and Heard” on the road. Perhaps the most enthusiastic review I heard came from two unimpeachable sources, Mother and Dad—[laughter]—who told how much they enjoyed the performance when they saw it in Houston. Tonight we’ve had the special honor of listening to Lincoln’s words being read in the very house where so many of them were written.

Harold Holzer has written, coauthored, or edited 23 books on Lincoln and the Civil War. He cochairs the U.S. Lincoln Bicentennial Commission and in his spare time—[laughter]—works for one of Laura’s favorite museums, the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York. He’s an avid New York Yankee

fan who had a miserable year last year. [Laughter] He has won many awards for his work, and his latest book is, “Lincoln at Cooper Union.”

This evening I can let you all in on a secret. Tomorrow it will be announced that Allen Guelzo, who is with us tonight, and Harold Holzer are this year’s first and second place winners of the prestigious Lincoln Prize.

Congratulations.

Those of you who know Sam Waterston as “Jack McCoy” should know that America’s most famous assistant district attorney has portrayed Abraham Lincoln on stage, on television, and so I’m told, even in ballet. [Laughter] He didn’t dance. [Laughter] But he did narrate a special version of Aaron Copland’s “Lincoln Portrait” while ballet dancers performed around him. [Laughter] Sam has said, “If I have to be typecast, I’d like to be typecast as Abraham Lincoln.” I like a guy who aims high. [Laughter]

In his readings tonight, Sam noted that it was on this very day back in 1861 that Abraham Lincoln said goodbye to his home in Springfield, Illinois, never to return. Over the next 4 years, from this house, Lincoln would endure a bitter civil war that included terrible defeats as well as ringing victories; he’d sign the Emancipation Proclamation right upstairs; and he would live to see his hopes for peace and unity rewarded, before his life was taken at Ford’s Theatre on Good Friday, 1865.

The Civil War was decided on the battlefield; the larger fight for America’s soul was waged with Lincoln’s words. In his own day, Lincoln set himself squarely against a culture that held that some human beings were not intended by their Maker for freedom. And as President, he acted in the conviction that holding the Union together was the only way to hold America true to the founding promise of freedom and equality for all. And that is why, in my judgment, he was America’s greatest President.

We're familiar with the words of the Gettysburg Address and the Second Inaugural, so eloquently read by Sam. And this performance reminds us that Lincoln wrote his words to be spoken aloud—to persuade, to challenge, and to inspire. Abraham Lincoln was a master of the English language, but his true mother tongue was liberty.

I hope that every American might have the experience we had here tonight, to hear Lincoln's words delivered with Lincoln's passion and to leave with a greater appreciation for what these words of freedom mean in our own time.

Thank you all again. Please join us at the reception. And may God continue to bless our great land.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:58 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sam Waterston, actor on NBC's television series "Law & Order," his wife, Lynn Waterston, and their son Graham Waterston; Harold Holzer, cochair, Abraham Lincoln Bicentennial Commission, his wife, Edith Holzer, and their daughter Meg Holzer; and author Allen C. Guelzo. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

### **The President's Radio Address**

*February 12, 2005*

Good morning. In my State of the Union Address, I discussed the need to act to strengthen and save Social Security. Since then, I have traveled to eight States and spoken with tens of thousands of you about my ideas. I have reminded you that Social Security was one of the great moral successes of the 20th century. And for those born before 1950, I have assured you that the Social Security system will not change in any way and you will receive your checks. I've also warned our younger workers that the Government has made promises it cannot pay for with the current pay-as-you-go system.

Social Security was created decades ago for a very different era. In 1950, about 16 workers paid into the system for every one person drawing benefits. Today, we have only about three workers for each beneficiary. And over the next few decades, baby boomers like me will retire, people will be

living longer, and benefits are scheduled to increase dramatically. Eventually, there will be just two workers per beneficiary. With every passing year, fewer workers will be paying ever-higher benefits to ever-larger numbers of retirees.

So here is the result: 13 years from now, in 2018, Social Security will be paying out more than it collects in payroll taxes, and every year afterward will bring a new and larger shortfall. For example, in the year 2027, the Government will somehow have to come up with an extra \$200 billion a year to keep the system afloat. By the year 2033, the annual shortfall would be more than \$300 billion a year. And by the year 2042, the entire system would be bankrupt. If we do not act now to avert that outcome, the only solutions would be dramatically higher taxes, massive new borrowing, or sudden and severe cuts in Social Security benefits or other Government programs.

To keep the promise of Social Security alive for our children and grandchildren, we need to fix the system once and for all. Fixing Social Security permanently will require a candid review of the options. In recent years, many people have offered suggestions such as limiting benefits for wealthy retirees, indexing benefits to prices instead of wages, increasing the retirement age, or changing the benefit formulas, and creating disincentives for early collection of Social Security benefits. All these ideas are on the table.

I will work with Members of Congress and listen to any good idea that does not include raising payroll taxes. But we cannot pretend that the problem does not exist. Social Security will go broke when some of our younger workers get ready to retire, and that is a fact. And if you're a younger person, you ought to be asking your elected officials, "What are you going to do about it?" Because every year we wait, the problem becomes worse for our children.

And as we fix Social Security permanently, we must make it a better deal for younger workers by allowing them to set aside part of their payroll taxes in personal retirement accounts. The accounts would be voluntary. The money would go into a conservative mix of bond and stock funds that would have the opportunity to earn a higher rate of return

than anything the current system could provide. A young person who earns an average of \$35,000 a year over his or her career would have nearly a quarter million dollars saved in his or her own retirement account. And that money would provide a nest egg to supplement that worker's traditional Social Security check or to pass on to his or her children. Best of all, it would replace the empty promises of the current system with real assets of ownership.

Reforming Social Security will not be easy, but if we approach this debate with courage and honesty, I am confident we will succeed, because our children's retirement security is more important than partisan politics.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:32 a.m. on February 11 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 12. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 11 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

### **Statement on the Announcement of Provisional Results of the Iraqi Election**

*February 13, 2005*

Two weeks ago, more than 8 million Iraqis defied terrorists and went to the polls. The world saw long lines of Iraqi men and women voting in a free and fair election for the first time in their lives. The United States and our coalition partners can all take pride in our role in making that great day possible.

Today the provisional results of the election have been announced. We still await their review and certification. I congratulate the Iraqi people for defying terrorist threats and setting their country on the path of democracy and freedom. And I congratulate every candidate who stood for election and those who will take office once the results are certified.

### **Remarks at a Swearing-In Ceremony for Alberto R. Gonzales as Attorney General at the Department of Justice** *February 14, 2005*

Good morning. Laura and I are pleased to be here with Al Gonzales, his wife, Becky, and his wonderful family. Thank you all for coming. I turned to Al and said, "It seems like they're cheering pretty loud." He said, "Most of them work for me now." [*Laughter*]

For the past decade, Al has been a close adviser, an honorable public servant, and a dear friend. Now he assumes a new title. Today it is my honor to call this son of Humble, Texas, the 80th Attorney General of the United States.

I appreciate Justice Sandra Day O'Connor for administering the oath and admitting publicly that she was born in Texas. [*Laughter*] I want to thank the current and former members of my Cabinet who are here. I appreciate Senator Pat Leahy, Senator Judd Gregg and Kathy, Senator John Cornyn and Sandy, Senator Mel Martinez for joining us today. I thank Congresswoman Grace Napolitano for joining us. I thank the other distinguished guests who are here, and I thank the Texans who have come up.

As Attorney General Gonzales begins his service, he will build on the outstanding work of Attorney General John Ashcroft. Over the past 4 years, Attorney General Ashcroft has started the Department of Justice on the right course in the war on terror. He's helped reduce violent crime to a 30-year low. He's taken vital new steps to protect children from exploitation. John Ashcroft has worked tirelessly to make our Nation safer and more just, and America is thankful for your lifetime of service.

Attorney General Gonzales now joins every employee at the Department of Justice in an urgent mission to protect the United States from another terrorist attack. Few periods in our history have demanded so much of this Department. With Al's principled leadership, the Department of Justice will continue this important mission and will defend the security of all Americans and the liberty of all Americans.

The men and women of this Department are meeting your duty every day, from your

headquarters in Washington to U.S. Attorneys offices across the country, to dangerous posts overseas. You've reorganized your resources to confront the threats of this new war. You've devised effective methods to investigate and prosecute terrorists. Some of you have volunteered for demanding new duties in complex areas such as intelligence and counterterrorism.

Our Nation is grateful for your dedication and sacrifice, and in return, we must provide you all the tools you need to do your job. And one of those tools is the PATRIOT Act, which has been vital to our success in tracking terrorists and disrupting their plans. Many key elements of the PATRIOT Act are now set to expire at the end of this year. We must not allow the passage of time or the illusion of safety to weaken our resolve in this new war. To protect the American people, Congress must promptly renew all provisions of the PATRIOT Act this year.

Your mission to ensure equal justice for every American extends far beyond the war on terror. By aggressively prosecuting gun criminals and drug dealers, you make neighborhoods safer for all families. By holding corporate wrongdoers to account, you build confidence in our economy. By protecting victims of child abuse and domestic violence, you help guarantee a compassionate society. And by defending the civil rights of every American, you affirm the dignity of every life and you set an example of liberty for the entire world.

As we strive to provide equal justice, we must ensure that Americans of all races and backgrounds trust the legal system. By spreading the use of DNA analysis, we can solve more crimes, lock up more criminals, and prevent wrongful conviction. So I've asked Congress for more than a billion dollars over 5 years to expand this vital technology. And to help ensure that the death penalty is applied justly, I've also requested new funding to train prosecutors, judges, and defense counsels in capital cases.

To maintain confidence in the legal system, we must ensure that judges faithfully interpret the law, not legislate from the bench. I've a constitutional responsibility to nominate well-qualified men and women for the Federal courts. I have done so. And I've

benefited greatly from the sound judgment of Attorney General Gonzales on picking qualified people to serve on our benches. I will continue to rely on his advice. And the United States Senate must also live up to its constitutional responsibility. Every judicial nominee deserves a prompt hearing and an up-or-down vote on the floor of the United States Senate.

As he embarks on all these duties, Attorney General Gonzales has my complete confidence. From his early days of selling soda at Rice University football games to his time in the Air Force to his distinguished legal career and service on the White House staff, Al has been a model of courage and character to his fellow citizens. I've witnessed his integrity, his decency, his deep dedication to the cause of justice. Now he will advance that cause as the Attorney General and ensure that more Americans have the opportunity to achieve their dreams.

Attorney General—or General—congratulations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. in the Great Hall at the U.S. Department of Justice. In his remarks, he referred to Kathleen MacLellan Gregg, wife of Senator Judd Gregg; and Sandy Cornyn, wife of Senator John Cornyn. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Attorney General Gonzales. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

### **Statement on the Request for Fiscal Year 2005 Supplemental Appropriations for Ongoing Military and Intelligence Operations and Selected Other International Activities**

*February 14, 2005*

With the help of the United States and coalition partners, the Iraqi and Afghan people have set their countries on the path of democracy and freedom. As both nations work to cement this great progress, our troops and assistance will continue to play a critical role.

The majority of this request will ensure that our troops continue to get what they

need to protect themselves and complete their mission. It also provides for the continued pursuit of Al Qaida and other terrorist elements in Afghanistan and elsewhere. And it reflects our core mission in Iraq and Afghanistan by providing funding to accelerate efforts to train and equip Iraqi and Afghan forces, so they can assume greater responsibility for their own security, and our troops can return home with the honor they have earned.

Other important funding in this emergency request includes resources to seize the opportunity to build peace and democracy in the Middle East, to continue helping nations affected by the tsunamis, and to address other unforeseen needs.

I urge the Congress to move quickly so our troops and diplomats have the tools they need to succeed.

**Letter to the Speaker of the House of Representatives Transmitting a Request for Fiscal Year 2005 Supplemental Appropriations for Ongoing Military and Intelligence Operations and Selected Other International Activities**

*February 14, 2005*

*Dear Mr. Speaker:*

Today, I am submitting a request for fiscal year 2005 supplemental appropriations of \$81.9 billion for ongoing military and intelligence operations in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom, Operation Enduring Freedom, and selected other international activities, including tsunami relief and reconstruction. This request reflects urgent and essential requirements. I ask the Congress to appropriate the funds as requested and promptly send the bill to me for signature.

These funds will support U.S. Armed Forces and Coalition partners as we advance democracy, fight the insurgency, and train and equip Iraqi security forces so that they can defend their sovereignty and freedom. In Afghanistan, our Armed Forces continue to track down terrorists, help the Afghan people rebuild their country, and train and equip Afghan security forces so that Afghanistan,

too, may continue to take control of its democratic future.

My request will provide funds needed to repair, refurbish, and procure equipment needed by the Armed Forces to win the War on Terror. In addition, this request will fund the Army's Modularity plan to restructure three brigades deploying to Iraq.

Finally, this request will assist the Palestinians as they build a democratic state, will provide relief for the humanitarian crisis in Darfur, and will support relief, rehabilitation, and reconstruction efforts in countries devastated by the recent Indian Ocean tsunami.

I hereby designate the specific proposals in the amounts requested herein as emergency requirements. I urge the Congress not to attach to this proposal items that are not directly related to these emergencies abroad. The details of the request are set forth in the enclosed letter from the Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

Sincerely,

**George W. Bush**

**Memorandum on Determination To Waive Military Coup-Related Provisions of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2005, With Respect to Pakistan**

*February 15, 2005*

Presidential Determination No. 2005-21

*Memorandum for the Secretary of State*

*Subject:* Determination to Waive Military Coup-Related Provisions of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2005, with Respect to Pakistan

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, including Public Law 107-57, as amended, I hereby determine and certify, with respect to Pakistan, that a waiver of any provision of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2005 (Division D, Public Law 108-447), that prohibits direct assistance to the

government of any country whose duly elected head of government was deposed by decree or military coup:

- would facilitate the transition to democratic rule in Pakistan; and
- is important to United States efforts to respond to, deter, or prevent acts of international terrorism.

Accordingly, I hereby waive, with respect to Pakistan, any such provision.

You are authorized and directed to transmit this determination to the Congress and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

**George W. Bush**

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

### **Remarks in a Discussion on Strengthening Social Security in Portsmouth, New Hampshire**

*February 16, 2005*

**The President.** Thanks for coming. Hi, John. It's nice to be back with friends. Thank you all for being here. We're here to talk about a vital issue, and that is Social Security. But before I do, I want to say hello to some folks, maybe talk about a few other things. And then we'll get our panel involved.

Before I begin on other things, I just want you to know what I think my job is, to confront problems, and not to pass them on. And so, as you hear a discussion about issues, I hope you keep that in mind. I believe a leader ought to, when they see a problem, address it head on and not say, "Okay, we'll wait for somebody else to take care of the problem." That's what we're here to discuss.

First, I want to really thank your Senators from the great State of New Hampshire, Senator Judd Gregg and Senator John Sununu. I appreciate their leadership. I appreciate their advice. I appreciate the fact that they're willing to jump on Air Force One anytime I come to New Hampshire, for a free ride. [Laughter] Judd is in charge of the budget for the United States Senate. Believe me, he brings a sharp New Hampshire eye to the budget process, and that's good. I'm looking

forward to working with him. He'll be a great budget leader.

I want to thank the speaker of the house, Speaker Scamman, and the president of the New Hampshire Senate for joining us. Thank you, members, for being here. I'm proud you're here. I want to wish my friend Commissioner Dick Flynn a happy birthday. Today is his birthday. I want to thank the State and local officials who are here, appreciate you coming.

I want to thank Reggie Wright. I met—where's Reggie? Yes, Mr. Wright, thank you for coming. Reggie Wright is 81 years old—or will be 81 on Monday. He is a volunteer at the veterans hospital, and I appreciate that. The Portsmouth Veterans Affairs Community Based Outpatient Clinic, right here in—that's a long word, but anyway—a long series of words—here at Pease. And I appreciate his volunteering.

See, here's the thing about volunteering. If you volunteer to make your community a better place, you're adding to the great compassion of America. And so, for those of you who are taking time out of your life to help feed the hungry or provide shelter for the homeless or love somebody who hurts, I want to thank you for being a soldier in the army of compassion. Thank you for setting such a good example, Reggie. I appreciate that.

I'm getting ready to go to Europe, and I'm looking forward to it. I'm looking forward to talking about how we can work together to extend freedom around the world so that the world is more peaceful for generations to come. I'm looking forward to reminding the people of Europe that there has been some amazing events in the march of freedom, if you think about it. The Afghan people went to the polls in the millions to vote for a new leader, and that is important, providing an example for others to show what can happen when people are given a chance to live in a free society. Free societies are peaceful societies. Democracies produce peaceful nations. And the elections of Afghanistan—I hope you found them as hopeful as I did, and I'm convinced many in the—on the continent of Europe found hopeful as well.

I will remind them about what happened in Iraq. It was a grand moment when millions

defied the terrorists and went to the polls to say, “We want to live in a free society.” For those of you who have been to Iraq—I see we’ve got some marines here—or family members in Iraq, I want to thank you for your loved ones’ sacrifices. I hope that the hug that took place at the State of the Union spoke to you as much as it spoke to a lot of people I’ve talked to. It certainly spoke to me. It said that there’s a mom who’s longing for—to be able to hug her son, but her son’s sacrifice was recognized by the woman who got to vote. It was a—I thought it was a wonderful moment of compassion and freedom and, eventually, peace that we all want for our children and grandchildren.

Freedom is on the march, and I look forward to working with our friends in Europe to continue that march, so when it is all said and done we can look back and say, “The world is safer and more peaceful for our children and grandchildren.”

Looking forward to working with the Congress to make sure we put things in place—plans in place to keep this economy growing. The unemployment rate here is 3.3 percent. That’s pretty low. Things are going well. I suspect it’s because the entrepreneurial spirit is strong, and so we’ve got to work on ways to make sure the entrepreneurial spirit remains strong all around the country.

I’ve got some ideas. One is to make sure the budget is wise. I’m looking forward to working with Judd and Members of the House and the Senate to say, “We’ll set priorities with your money. We’ll make sure there’s clear priority. If a program doesn’t work, we need to eliminate it.” We need to be wise about spending the money. And I think that will set the tone for future economic growth, when people see that we’re serious about dealing with our deficits.

We’re going to do something about lawsuits. The Senate voted out a good bill on class-action lawsuits. There’s more lawsuit reform that needs to be done. I’m looking forward to working with the House and the Senate. We want to make sure the scales of justice are balanced. And they’re not balanced around this country when frivolous lawsuits make it hard for small businesses to expand their employee base, and they’re not balanced when doctors are getting run out

of practice. This Congress needs to do something about asbestos, and they need to get a medical liability reform to my desk.

There’s a lot of issues we can work together on to make sure that the economy continues to grow. We need to get an energy policy—energy bill; I’ve put out a policy. I’m looking forward to working with Judd and John Sununu to get a bill out of the United States Senate that enhances conservation, that talks about renewable uses of energy. I am—believe that we ought to expand nuclear power to make us less dependent on foreign sources of energy and, at the same time, do a better job of protecting our environment.

We need to continue to provide money for technologies to make the cars we drive cleaner. One of these days, it would be nice if biodiesel or ethanol becomes even more commercially available, so that when the crops are up, we’re less dependent on a source of energy from coming overseas. And so I want to work with the Congress to promote a good energy plan—good energy bill that will enable this President and future Presidents to say that we’re less dependent, that we’re more self-sufficient when it comes to energy, which will be good for our economy and good for our national security as well.

And now I want to talk about Social Security. And I’m sure there are some, when they heard the State of the Union, if they listened to it, that said, “Why is he spending so much time on what had been—used to be called the ‘third rail of American politics?’” That means, if you touched it, you were politically electrocuted. I guess that’s what it meant. I’ve touched it. I touched it in 2000 when I campaigned here and around the country. I touched it in 2004, and I really touched it at the State of the Union, because I believe we have a problem. And I want to talk to you about the problem.

And Tim Penny, my friend, former Democrat Member from Minnesota, is also going to talk about the problem. And I’m going to throw out some ideas about the solution as well, and I want to hear from our panelists here in a minute. Laura said, “Make sure you tell everybody hello when you come, and make sure you give the panelists a chance

to speak.” [Laughter] So far I’m not listening to her too well. [Laughter]

So here’s the problem. In the olden days, in the 1950s, 16 workers would be paying in the system for every beneficiary. That means that the worker had less of a burden to pay the benefits that were promised. And the system was working great. And by the way, Social Security is vital. It’s a really important system.

But things have changed since the 1950s. First, baby boomers, like me and Judd and Penny and a couple others of you out there, are getting ready to retire. There’s a lot of us. And instead of living to about 60 years, which was the life expectancy early in the Social Security calculations, we’re now living to 77 years, and a bunch of us hope we do better than that. So you got a bunch of people fixing to retire, a bulge of retirees coming into the system, who are going to live longer. Plus, the benefits promised to the baby boomers are 40 percent higher, in real terms, than the seniors retiring today. So just think about that aspect of the environment in which we live, more people, living longer, being promised greater benefits.

The problem is compounded by this: There’s not enough people paying money into the system to pay for all that. The ratio of payers to beneficiaries is going from 16 to 1 to 3.3 to 1 today. And when—and down the road it’s going to be 2 to 1. So you can see the formula begins to get a little disturbed. It makes it hard to pay the promises. As a matter of fact, in 2018, the system goes into the red.

And by the way, there’s not a Social Security trust. In other words, people think your money goes into the trust, and it’s held for your account, and then you get it out. That’s not the way it works. It’s “pay as you go.” It goes in, and it goes out. And to the extent that there’s money more than the retirees receive, like it is today, it goes to other programs. And so what you’ve got is an IOU, kind of a bank of IOUs. It’s an important concept.

So money that’s going in is greater than money going out today for Social Security. But in 2018, the system goes into the red, and every year thereafter the situation gets worse; 2027 will cost the Federal Govern-

ment \$200 billion above and beyond payroll taxes to make the promises; and in 2042, the system goes broke. Those are the facts.

Now, 13 years isn’t very far down the road. You know, if you’ve got a 5-year-old child, it means when your child is getting ready to vote, the system goes negative. It may seem like a lot for some in the United States Congress who have got 2-year terms. But it’s not a lot if you’re a grandfather who’s worried about whether or not your grandchild is going to have a retirement system that works and whether or not we’ve got the capability of dealing with the problem before it gets even worse, because the longer you wait, the more severe the remedies become.

Now, I want to—I fully understand—you’ve got to know this about many of us in Congress who are discussing reforms—we understand that many people rely upon their Social Security check. And I know that any discussion about Social Security can frighten people who rely upon their Social Security check. I mean, I remember the campaigns where people would say, “If you vote for George W., you’re not going to get your Social Security check.” In other words, it’s been part of the political dynamic. People would say—even if you discussed it, that would frighten people. And so, not only am I going to spend time traveling our country—this is my ninth trip since the State of the Union—or ninth State—I’m going to continue traveling over and over and over again, making it clear to the American people we have a problem. I’m also going to travel over and over and over again to say to people who have received a check—who are receiving a check and those near retirement, people born before 1950, “Nothing changes.” It doesn’t matter what the rhetoric might be, no matter what the mailers may say, nothing changes for people who have retired or near retirement, and that’s really important.

Now, I have an obligation to talk about solutions as well. And in my State of the Union Address, I may have been the first President ever to have talked about different ideas about how to permanently fix the problem for younger generations of Americans. And Republicans and Democrats have both—have all come forth with different ideas. Tim is an example. He is on the leading

edge of the Social Security debate. I mean, he was talking about it way before I was even thinking about running for President. And he's had some interesting ideas, and I mentioned his name in the State of the Union as being the kind of person who had the courage to step up and say, "Here are different options." And it's important to keep the options on the table. And it's important for me to say to the Members of Congress, "If you've got a good idea, bring it forward. There will be no political retribution."

President Clinton thought raising the age might have made sense. Daniel Patrick Moynihan had an idea. Tim Penny had some ideas. And so my message today is: Bring them forth; let's sit down at the table and discuss ways to permanently fix the system. I'm openminded. And I think that's what you want from your President at this point—not for me to prescribe the solution, because I don't get to write the law, but to call Members forward and say, "We'll work with you. We'll look at all the different options, with the exception of the payroll tax increase."

Now, I've got an idea that I'd like for Congress to consider, and I want to share the idea with you here. It's a novel idea—oh, it's really not that novel. As a matter of fact, it's a part of the Federal employee retirement plan. It's a thrift benefit plan. It's a plan that allows Federal employees to set aside some of their money and put it in safe stocks and bonds, so they get a better rate of return on their money than they would otherwise. So it's not new. The idea of allowing people to invest their money, their own money, is not a new thought. That's what's already happening with Federal employees. I'm the kind of fellow who believes if it's good enough for Federal employees, it ought to be considered for younger workers. In other words, there ought to be a—and that's the idea of letting younger workers set aside some of their own payroll taxes in a personal savings account.

The benefits are these, in my judgment: One, you get a better rate of return on your money than that which is in the Social Security system. If you're a younger worker, and say—my proposal is, is that you can put 4 percent of your payroll taxes in the account, and the rest of it, obviously, will go into the

Social Security system. If you're a younger worker who averages \$35,000 over your lifetime, and you put the money set aside—the 4 percent allowed to be set aside into a personal account, because of the compounding rate of interest, that will accumulate—you'll accumulate \$250,000 when it comes time to retire. So you've got money in the Social Security system, however much Congress can afford, plus your own nest egg of \$250,000. That's for a worker who earns \$35,000 over his or her lifetime.

And the reason why the money grows is because interest compounds. I'm trying to sound like an economist; I was a simple history major. But nevertheless, people—if you keep reinvesting in safe stocks and bonds, money grows. And it's important for younger workers to be able to watch their money grow.

Now, you can't take that money and put it in the lottery, in all due respect to those who like the lottery. In other words, there's going to be some safe guidelines. We've already done this. The Federal employee benefit plan does just that. It says, "Here is a conservative mix of stocks and bonds available for you to get a better rate of return than that which you get with your money flowing through the Social Security system."

It makes sense for younger workers to hold their own account, because when they pass on, they can leave their own assets to whomever they choose. I think that's a wonderful idea.

Certainly the personal account doesn't fix the system. There needs to be better reforms, more meaningful reforms than that. But what the personal account will do, it will make it more likely—it will make it so that a younger worker gets closer to the promises made, because of the compounding rate of interest.

There's going to be a lot of discussion about how to fund these accounts. I look forward to working with Congress. I'm interested; I'm openminded. One of the suggestions we made is the accounts start very slowly, so they become easier to finance, and they grow over time. Senators and Congressmen may have different ideas. I just want the idea of people being able to manage their own money to be a part of the debate. It makes

financial sense, and it makes sense to promote ownership in America. I think that when more people own something, the more they'll have a stake in the future of this country.

Now, a couple of other guidelines that you need to know about, and then we'll get to our panel. Laura's voice is beginning to kind of echo in my ears. You can't take all your money when you retire and take a trip. In other words, this is your account, but there's got to be guidelines because the account is set up to help supplement your Social Security check. And so you can't withdraw it. There will be withdraw requirements, for example.

However, if you do pass it on to a survivor, that survivor can liquidate the account and live on it, which oftentimes does not happen in Social Security today. For example, if a person were to die prior to 60 years old, all the money going into the account—and the kids are over a certain age—all the money in the account goes away. I've talked to widows who would like to see at least something left over for all the hard work their husband has done—or vice versa, if the woman is working and the husband is the beneficiary—that there's an account to pass on.

So what I'm telling you is, is that there's ways to make this system conservative, is the right word to use. It's easy to come—develop a mix of stocks and bonds that can beat the rate of return that the money now earns in the—going through the Social Security system and enable a younger worker to have a compounded rate of interest that grows over time. And that's what I want the Congress to discuss and think about.

I understand it's novel and it's different. But when the Members of Congress think about it, it's not all that novel and different. And we're going to talk to some people who are thinking about 401(k)s, what that means. We're developing an investor society.

Let me conclude by this thought: Investors aren't just Wall Street people, as far as I'm concerned. You've got "the investor class"—if you think about that, that means only certain people are capable of investing. I disagree. I think every citizen—every citizen—has got the capacity to manage his or her own money. And if they don't, we'll help

them understand how to, and the rules will be such that they can. And I believe the so-called investor class ought to be every American, regardless of his or her background.

So that's what's on my mind, Social Security. And I'm excited about the issue. I like getting out with the people and talking about it, and I told Tim this coming in. He said, "Mr. President, you're going to have to work this issue." I said, "Don't worry about it. Every week, I'm out of Washington, DC, in forums like this." And I'll continue to do it. I'm going to talk to the American people over and over and over again until the Members of Congress recognize we have a problem. And then I'm going to ask them the same question that people have asked me, "If we've got a problem, what are you going to do about it?" People expect us to lead on this issue. They expect us to put our parties aside and move forward on this issue to solve the problem for the American people, which is exactly what we're going to do.

And here's a guy—he is a man who has put party aside, put his country first. He's served as a United States Congressman from Minnesota, like I told you. And he is our expert on the subject. He's a senior fellow at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute Policy Forum in Minnesota. Thanks for coming. Give us your thoughts.

**Representative Timothy J. Penny.** Well, thank you, first of all, Mr. President, for your leadership on this issue, because this is the most important domestic program ever created. It's provided enormous security to senior citizens in America, that they know they have a safety net they can't fall below, and that's important to maintain. But as you've articulated, we need to strengthen this program for the 21st century. It was created 70 years ago, different time, different place, circumstances have changed. We've got new generations coming along, and they rightfully are worried about the future of this program. And we need to give them a voice in how to change this program for the future.

[At this point, Representative Penny, senior fellow and co-director, Hubert H. Humphrey Institute Policy Forum at the University of Minnesota, Waseca, MN, made further remarks.]

**The President.** Yes. Let me just give an example. Today, a retired average-wage earner gets 14,200 a year in benefits. So think about what two workers per beneficiary means. It means that one worker would have to pay \$7,000 to support that retiree. So my—sorry, Tim, I’m just trying to quantify the burden.

**Representative Penny.** That’s fine. And it does put it in very real terms, because that’s a big chunk of change. I was at a dinner last night with another leader on this issue, retired Congressman Charlie Stenholm, and he said, “Well, I’ve got it all figured out. Since there’s only going to be two workers to support my retirement, I’m picking Tiger Woods and Jessica Simpson.” [Laughter] But we don’t have that luxury.

[Representative Penny made further remarks.]

**The President.** Tim, help me on this. I need for you to, if you feel like it, talk to the seniors who are receiving checks today. I mean, people have got to understand—I know I sound like a broken record, but I’ve heard people say, “Well, he’s talking about Social Security reform. It means seniors aren’t going to get their checks or are not going to get their full amount promised.” You’ve looked at this—

**Representative Penny.** Well, I can talk to this on two levels, one, as a member of your Commission a few years ago. We said that all changes would be phased in over time, so anyone that’s currently retired or anyone that’s near retirement would be in the traditional system, the current system, no changes whatsoever.

But I can also speak to this from my own life experience. My mother lives on Social Security and nothing else, so she’s in that category of people that rely on this current system. And for her there will be no changes. I have two younger brothers who are disabled, and they get disability assistance, and we’re going to protect that program for those people that need the program. So that’s a separate issue. We’re talking about what we need to do for the next generation of workers coming along and how to strengthen and improve this system for them. So they’re really separate issues.

**The President.** Perfect. All right, Frank, Frank Partin and his daughter, Amy. It’s a interesting idea, whoever—I want to congratulate the people who picked our panelists, because this is really a generational issue when you think about it, in many ways—dad/daughter, retired/not retired. [Laughter] Frank, what did you do? What did you do here?

**Franklin Partin.** Thank you, Mr. President.

**The President.** How did you make a living for a while?

**Mr. Partin.** How did I make my living, Mr. President?

**The President.** Yes.

**Mr. Partin.** I was in the Air Force for many years, and I—

**The President.** There you go. Thanks for serving. [Applause] I appreciate that.

**Mr. Partin.** I beg your pardon?

**The President.** I appreciate it, and so do the people out here, obviously.

**Mr. Partin.** Thank you. We appreciate you, Mr. President.

**The President.** Well, thank you.

**Mr. Partin.** My name is Franklin Partin, Jr. My wife and family and I reside in New Boston, New Hampshire. My lovely wife—

**The President.** Where is she?

**Mr. Partin.** Right down there in the blue jacket.

**The President.** You’re right. She is lovely. We’ll see you afterwards.

**Mr. Partin.** I’m 69 years old. I’ve been retired for about 6 years now. And I’m receiving Social Security. It comprises about 40 percent of our retirement income. I’m very thankful for it. But I recognize that there’s a serious problem with it, and I appreciate the plan that you have because I think it’s something that my daughter, when she gets to be my age and wants to think about it, will have something viable to count on.

**The President.** So Social Security is important for you—obviously not to the extent that it’s important for Tim’s mom, but 40 percent of a person’s money, what they’re living on, is important. And as you discuss this issue with people, Frank, you hear people say, “Yes, it looks like Congress is going to reduce my benefits for retired people.” Is that out there still?

**Mr. Partin.** I've heard things like that, but that's not my experience at all.

**The President.** It's not what you're thinking. That's good to know. Well, it's not going to happen. And this is important. I'll you why it's important, because once the people who get their Social Security checks realize nothing changes, then all of a sudden they're going to start saying, "How about my daughter? What are you going to do about the next generation coming up?" One of the great things about the generation which is retired is they've always worried about the next generation. And that's what we need to be worried about. That's why Frank has agreed to stand here in front of all these cameras, sitting up here with the President, worried about speaking, I'm sure, because he was worried about his daughter. That's why he came—once he's assured that the check, his check, isn't going to change.

And by the way, before I talk to Amy, I do want to say something to the people who are going to be voting on this legislation. Once the seniors realize nothing changes, the voices you'll hear from are the Amys of America who are saying, "Mr. Elected Official, what you going to do about it to make sure I don't get stuck with 200 billion a year, near 300 billion a year deficits over time? Why don't you address the problem now and not wait and pass it on so the next generation coming up has to deal with it?"

So Dad did good, didn't he? Your dad did good?

**Amy Partin.** Yes, he did.

**The President.** Yes. All right, Amy, what do you do?

**Ms. Partin.** My name is Amy Partin. I'm a senior at the University of New Hampshire at Manchester. I'm studying English.

**The President.** Good, yes. I could use a few lessons. [Laughter]

**Ms. Partin.** I'll see you afterwards. [Laughter]

**The President.** Yes, quick tutorial. [Laughter]

**Ms. Partin.** I am also working as a part-time tutor as I go to school. [Laughter]

[Ms. Partin, student, University of New Hampshire at Manchester, New Boston, NH, made further remarks.]

**The President.** Interesting idea, isn't it? Here's a person getting ready to get out of college, and she says she's thinking about how to save her own money. And remember, the payroll tax is not the Government's money; it's your money. And I think the people—there are a lot of young people around America saying, "Why don't you think of a system that will work, that enables us to watch our assets grow." I think there's nothing healthier for a society in which they see an asset base grow.

And by the way, Amy, because she's younger, can find a—amongst conservative portfolios, a little higher return portfolio, and as she gets ready to retire, can shift from stocks and bonds to Treasury bills or whatever may be available at the time, so that it can—it helps to make sure that you deal with market adjustments. But over time, money grows. That's what Tim's committee, I suspect, discovered. They discovered—you might assure people of that.

**Representative Penny.** Well, we did ask the Social Security actuaries to run numbers on what a modest account for young workers would mean to them over the course of their lifetimes, contributing 4 percent of payroll per year into these accounts. And in every instance, they did markedly better than what the current system is promising them. And bear in mind, the current system is promising them about 30 percent more than it can pay them, because there won't be enough money in the current system to pay them. So with these personal accounts, they come out better, even assuming very conservative growth in their fund over the course of their working lives.

**The President.** So if she starts early with her own money, which I think you just told me you'd like to do—

**Ms. Partin.** That's right.

**The President.** —it grows. It grows to a substantial amount. If you think about the worker making 35,000 over his or her lifetime, and they set 4 percent of the payroll taxes aside and it turns into 250,000, imagine the person who makes 50,000 over his or her lifetime, or 70,000. In other words, we're talking about the accumulation of significant amounts of wealth to help complement, not replace but complement the Social Security

check. And that's important as well for people to understand.

We've got us a dairy farmer with us. That would be you, Bill.

**William Yeaton.** Yes, welcome to New Hampshire.

**The President.** Did you ever envision coming off the dairy farm to—lending your wisdom here about Social Security?

**Mr. Yeaton.** Up at 4 this morning, quick shower, and now we're down here.

**The President.** That's good. [Laughter] Like, when was the last time you wore a tie, just out of curiosity? [Laughter]

**Mr. Yeaton.** It wasn't yesterday. [Laughter]

**The President.** That's good. [Laughter] I don't blame you, man. I'm stuck, though. [Laughter]

**Mr. Yeaton.** Well, my name is Bill Yeaton. I'm here with my wife, Cerina.

**The President.** Where is she? Thanks.

**Mr. Yeaton.** The girl beside her, Shannon, my daughter, and Samuel, and also my mother, Beulah.

**The President.** Good, talk to Mom, that's for certain.

**Mr. Yeaton.** So we're—

**The President.** Is your mother still giving you instructions?

**Mr. Yeaton.** I was getting dressed this morning, so I was getting some help. [Laughter]

**The President.** So is mine. [Laughter]

**Mr. Yeaton.** And I was up—[laughter]—I was up most of the night, hoping I wouldn't forget their names, so we got that by—we have to keep going.

**The President.** Yes, that's good. [Laughter] So you're a dairy farmer. A little bit about the history of the farm, just out of curiosity.

**Mr. Yeaton.** The history of the farm, I'm fourth-generation dairy farmer.

**The President.** Same farm?

**Mr. Yeaton.** Same farm.

**The President.** Fantastic.

[Mr. Yeaton, co-owner, Yeaton Dairy Farm, Epsom, NH, made further remarks.]

**The President.** That's 4 percent of the payroll tax. It's not 4—I mean, it's 4 percent out of the payroll tax; that's important. So it's like a third of the payroll tax.

So how is the milk business?

**Mr. Yeaton.** Last year, we had a pretty good year. The cows are doing well.

**The President.** It's never good enough, though, if you're a farmer, right?

**Mr. Yeaton.** I was going to sit up here and say we need more milk—

**The President.** Wait a minute. [Laughter]

**Mr. Yeaton.** —the price of milk is too low.

**The President.** Write your Congressman. [Laughter]

**Mr. Yeaton.** I practiced that speech last night, talking about milk prices, and said, "No, we're not going to use that."

**The President.** Okay, good, yes, thanks. [Laughter] So you and your wife have got a 401(k)?

**Mr. Yeaton.** Oh, yes, my wife has a 401(k).

**The President.** She's got the 401(k)?

**Mr. Yeaton.** Yes.

**The President.** Everybody know what a 401(k) is? It's a defined contribution plan. You contribute your money into a plan and watch it grow. When I was your age, I don't—let me say when I was younger than your age, there weren't a lot of 401(k)s. I don't remember coming up talking about 401(k)s. And by the way, I never remember, when I was Amy's age, talking about whether Social Security would be around. I mean, baby boomers just assumed it would be around, and it is for us. This is an interesting dialog, isn't it? The dynamics have shifted a lot. Here we've got a dairy farmer talking about how he and his wife manage their own money. That's what you're doing, right?

**Mr. Yeaton.** Yes. In the old days, they used to say, "Farmers don't retire. We just pass on." But that has changed.

**The President.** That's good, pretty good. A little agricultural humor there. [Laughter] But you're managing your 401(k). Think about what has changed in society. You've got younger folks saying, "We're managing our own money. We're looking after our own money. We're watching the 401(k) grow. We're making decisions." And so the idea of extending what is happening in society to Social Security seems like to make a lot of sense, doesn't it?

This is a society where younger folks are saying, "Just give me a chance to watch my

own money grow and, at the same time, go milk those cows.” [Laughter] Are you still milking them by hand here in New Hampshire?

**Mr. Yeaton.** Oh, no. We’ve got a state-of-an-art process.

**The President.** You’re mechanized? That’s good. [Laughter]

**Mr. Yeaton.** We had to change our 70-year-old plan too.

**The President.** There you go. [Laughter] Very good.

And finally, Marlo Downer is with us. Thank you for coming, Marlo.

By the way, good job, Bill. For a farmer, you’re pretty darn articulate. [Laughter]

Marlo, tell us about yourself. Where do you work?

**Marlo Downer.** I work at Wentworth-Douglass Hospital in Dover.

**The President.** Dover? Hospital? Very good. Mom?

**Ms. Downer.** I’m a single mom of a 13-year-old son.

**The President.** Where is he?

**Ms. Downer.** Douglas.

**The President.** Hey, Douglas. Like teenage years?

**Ms. Downer.** Yes.

**The President.** Interesting experience.

**Ms. Downer.** Oh, yes. [Laughter]

**The President.** I’ve been through them. [Laughter] I like to tell people, Marlo has got the hardest job in America, being a single mom. And she’s worried about retirement.

[Ms. Downer, intensive care unit nurse, Wentworth-Douglass Hospital, Dover, NH, made further remarks.]

**The President.** And so, let me ask you, in your plan, how often do you get a statement, just out of curiosity? Quarterly?

**Ms. Downer.** I believe it’s quarterly.

**The President.** Yes. That makes sense, doesn’t it? I mean, I think it’s kind of a reminder about the need for people to pay attention to policy or know what the Government is doing with your money as you watch—on a quarterly basis, watch your asset base begin to grow. And that’s important.

And so, tell us about Social Security. Here’s your chance, with everybody watching.

[Ms. Downer made further remarks.]

**The President.** Are you aware of the problem? Obviously, otherwise you wouldn’t be sitting here. But I mean, I just wonder how often people—how aware people are that we have a serious problem. That chart—and this chart, by the way, which is reality, just shows how big the deficits are, starting in 2018. I mean, it’s like you wait, and then, all of a sudden, you’ve got to come up with 200 billion in 2027, and like in 2032, you’ve got to come up with 300 billion, just to stay even for the year.

I mean, are people beginning, around the old nursing station, to start kind of talking about it yet?

**Ms. Downer.** I really haven’t heard it around the nurses station yet.

**The President.** They’re going to, after you get back—[laughter]—aren’t they?

**Ms. Downer.** Oh, yes.

**The President.** By the way, on the Medicare drugs, we’re fixing it. We got a new system that we put in place to make sure that the seniors who have trouble affording prescription drugs get help through Medicare. So they don’t have to worry about that anymore, starting next year, by the way—next year. And it’s going to be a great change.

But back to Social Security. So what Marlo wants to know is whether or not we’ve got the courage, the political courage, to take this issue on and solve it. That’s what she wants to know. And what I want to assure you all is that I like calling Congress to do big things, because that’s what we got elected to do. And I’m going to continue pressing this issue and pressing this issue and pressing this issue and—until we get something done.

I want to thank you all for your interest. I want to thank you for your interest. I would tell you, you don’t have to worry about your Senators. They’re forward-thinking people who understand we’ve got to address this problem today. They understand that, and I’m looking forward to working with them on it. I’m looking forward to giving them a ride back to Washington. [Laughter] I’m looking forward to talking about what they’ve heard here. I want to thank you for your time. I want to thank our panelists for doing such a fabulous job. I appreciate it.

And in the meantime, may God bless you all. Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. in the Pan Am Hangar at Pease International Tradeport Airport. In his remarks, he referred to W. Douglas Scamman, speaker, New Hampshire House of Representatives; Thomas R. Eaton, president, New Hampshire Senate; Richard M. Flynn, commissioner, New Hampshire Department of Safety; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; Janet Norwood, mother of Sgt. Byron Norwood, USMC, who was killed in Iraq on November 13, 2004, and Iraqi citizen and political activist Safia Taleb al-Suhail, both of whom were guests of the First Lady at the President's State of the Union Address on February 2; professional golfer Tiger Woods; and entertainer Jessica Simpson. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

**Executive Order 13372—  
Clarification of Certain Executive  
Orders Blocking Property and  
Prohibiting Certain Transactions  
February 16, 2005**

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, as amended (50 U.S.C. 1701 *et seq.*) (IEEPA), the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1601 *et seq.*) (NEA), section 5 of the United Nations Participation Act of 1945, as amended (22 U.S.C. 287c) (UNPA), and section 301 of title 3, United States Code,

**I, George W. Bush**, President of the United States of America, in order to clarify the steps taken in Executive Order 12947 of January 23, 1995, as amended by Executive Order 13099 of August 20, 1998; and Executive Order 13224 of September 23, 2001, as amended by Executive Order 13268 of July 2, 2002, and Executive Order 13284 of January 23, 2003, in particular with respect to the implementation of section 203(b)(2) of IEEPA (50 U.S.C. 1702(b)(2)), hereby order:

**Section 1.** Section 4 of Executive Order 13224 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“**Sec. 4.** I hereby determine that the making of donations of the type of articles specified in section 203(b)(2) of IEEPA (50 U.S.C. 1702(b)(2)), by, to, or for the benefit

of, any persons determined to be subject to this order would seriously impair my ability to deal with the national emergency declared in this order, and would endanger Armed Forces of the United States that are in a situation where imminent involvement in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances, and I hereby prohibit such donations as provided by section 1 of this order. Furthermore, I hereby determine that the Trade Sanctions Reform and Export Enhancement Act of 2000 (Title IX, Public Law 106–387) shall not affect the imposition or the continuation of the imposition of any unilateral agricultural sanction or unilateral medical sanction on any person determined to be subject to this order because imminent involvement of the Armed Forces of the United States in hostilities is clearly indicated by the circumstances.”

**Sec. 2.** Section 3 of Executive Order 12947 is hereby amended to read as follows:

“**Sec. 3.** I hereby determine that the making of donations of the type of articles specified in section 203(b)(2) of IEEPA (50 U.S.C. 1702(b)(2)), by, to, or for the benefit of, any person whose property or interests in property are blocked pursuant to section 1 of this order would seriously impair my ability to deal with the national emergency declared in this order, and I hereby prohibit such donations as provided by section 1.”

**Sec. 3.** (a) The Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Secretary of State, is hereby authorized to take such actions, including the promulgation of rules and regulations, and to employ all powers granted to the President by IEEPA and the UNPA as may be necessary to carry out the purposes of this order. The Secretary of the Treasury may redelegate any of these functions to other officers and agencies of the United States Government consistent with applicable law. All agencies of the United States Government are hereby directed to take all appropriate measures within their authority to carry out the provisions of this order.

(b) Nothing contained in this order shall relieve a person from any requirement to obtain a license or other authorization in compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

(c) Amendments to Executive Orders made by this order shall take effect as of the date of this order.

**Sec. 4.** This order is not intended to, and does not, create any right, benefit, or privilege, substantive or procedural, enforceable at law or in equity by a party against the United States, its departments, agencies, entities, officers, employees, or agents, or any other person.

**Sec. 5.** This order shall be transmitted to the Congress and published in the *Federal Register*.

**George W. Bush**

The White House,  
February 16, 2005.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:57 a.m., February 17, 2005]

NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on February 18.

**Message to the Congress Reporting on the Executive Order on Clarification of Certain Executive Orders Blocking Property and Prohibiting Certain Transactions**

*February 16, 2005*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

Pursuant to, *inter alia*, section 203(a) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, (50 U.S.C. 1702(a)) (IEEPA) and section 201(a) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1621(a)) (NEA), I exercised my statutory authority to declare national emergencies in Executive Orders 13224 of September 23, 2001, as amended, and 12947 of January 23, 1995, as amended. I have issued a new Executive Order that clarifies certain measures taken to address those national emergencies. This new Executive Order relates to powers conferred to me by section 203(b)(2) of IEEPA and clarifies that the Executive Orders at issue prohibit a blocked United States person from making humanitarian donations.

The amendments made to those Executive Orders by the new Executive Order take effect as of the date of the new order, and specific licenses issued pursuant to the prior

Executive Orders continue in effect, unless revoked or amended by the Secretary of the Treasury. General licenses, regulations, orders, and directives issued pursuant to the prior Executive Orders continue in effect, except to the extent inconsistent with this order or otherwise revoked or modified by the Secretary of the Treasury.

**George W. Bush**

The White House,  
February 16, 2005.

**Remarks Announcing the Nomination of John D. Negroponte To Be Director of National Intelligence and an Exchange With Reporters**

*February 17, 2005*

**The President.** Thank you very much. I appreciate you here—coming here. I'm pleased to announce my decision to nominate Ambassador John Negroponte as Director of National Intelligence. The Director's responsibility is straightforward and demanding. John will make sure that those whose duty it is to defend America have the information we need to make the right decisions. John understands America's global intelligence needs because he spent the better part of his life in our Foreign Service and is now serving with distinction in the sensitive post of our Nation's first Ambassador to a free Iraq.

John's nomination comes at an historic moment for our intelligence services. In the war against terrorists who target innocent civilians and continue to seek weapons of mass murder, intelligence is our first line of defense. If we're going to stop the terrorists before they strike, we must ensure that our intelligence agencies work as a single, unified enterprise. And that's why I supported and Congress passed reform legislation creating the job of Director of National Intelligence.

As DNI, John will lead a unified intelligence community and will serve as the principle adviser to the President on intelligence matters. He will have the authority to order the collection of new intelligence, to ensure the sharing of information among agencies,

and to establish common standards for the intelligence community's personnel. It will be John's responsibility to determine the annual budgets for all national intelligence agencies and offices and to direct how these funds are spent. Vesting these authorities in a single official who reports directly to me will make our intelligence efforts better coordinated, more efficient, and more effective.

The Director of the CIA will report to John. The CIA will retain its core of responsibilities for collecting human intelligence, analyzing intelligence from all sources, and supporting American interests abroad at the direction of the President.

The law establishing John's position preserves the existing chain of command and leaves all our intelligence agencies, organizations, and offices in their current departments. Our military commanders will continue to have quick access to the intelligence they need to achieve victory on the battlefield. And the new structure will help ensure greater information sharing among Federal departments and agencies and also with appropriate State and local authorities.

John brings a unique set of skills to these challenges. Over the course of a long career, John Negroponte has served his Nation in eight countries spanning three continents. He's held important leadership posts at both the State Department and the White House. As my representative to the United Nations, John defended our interests vigorously and spoke eloquently about America's intention to spread freedom and peace throughout the world. And his service in Iraq during these past few historic months has given him something that will prove an incalculable advantage for an intelligence chief, an unvarnished and up-close look at a deadly enemy.

Today I'm pleased as well to announce that joining John as his Deputy will be Lieutenant General Michael Hayden. As a career Air Force intelligence officer, General Hayden now serves as Director of the National Security Agency, America's largest intelligence service, and Chief of the Central Security Service. In these critical roles, Mike has already demonstrated an ability to adapt our intelligence services to meet the new threats of a new century.

I appreciate the willingness of these men to take on these tough new assignments in an extraordinary moment in our Nation's history. I'd like to thank the thousands of men and women already serving in our intelligence services. These are people who go to work each day to keep Americans safe. We live in a dangerous world, and oftentimes, they take great risk to their own lives. These men and women are going to be pleased to have leaders such as Ambassador John Negroponte and General Mike Hayden.

John, I want to thank you for being here today. Congratulations. Godspeed.

[At this point, Ambassador Negroponte made brief remarks.]

**The President.** I'll be glad to take some questions. Jennifer [Jennifer Loven, Associated Press].

#### **Syria/Assassination of Rafiq Hariri**

**Q.** Thank you, Mr. President. Can you tell us if you believe that Syria is linked to the assassination of Mr. Hariri? And further, how far are you willing to go to expel Syria from Lebanon and stop its involvement in Iraq?

**The President.** First, we support the international investigation that is—will be going on to determine the killers of Mr. Hariri. We've recalled our Ambassador, which indicates that the relationship is not moving forward, that Syria is out of step with the progress being made in a greater Middle East, that democracy is on the move, and this is a country that isn't moving with the democratic movement.

And we've talked clearly to Syria about, one, making sure that their territory is not used by former Iraqi Ba'athists to spread havoc and kill innocent lives. We expect them to find and turn over former regime—Saddam regime supporters, send them back to Iraq. We've made it very clear from the beginning of my administration that Syria should not use its territory to support international terrorist groups. We expect them to adhere to 1559—U.N. Security Council Resolution 1559, which calls for the removal of troops from Lebanon. And we expect them to help free and fair elections to take place in Lebanon.

These are very reasonable requests, the requests all aimed at making the world more peaceful. I look forward to working with our European friends on my upcoming trip to talk about how we can work together to convince the Syrians to make rational decisions.

### **Iran**

**Q.** Thank you, Mr. President. The Europeans want more support from the U.S. in their negotiations with Iran. Would the U.S. consider joining these talks?

**The President.** Well, first, a couple of points. One, we are a party to the talks or a party to the process, as a result of being a member of the IAEA. In other words, we're on the IAEA board, one of some 30-odd nations. So we've been very much involved with working with the Iranians and the world to achieve a goal that we share with the Europeans, and that is for Iran not to develop a nuclear weapon.

I look forward to, again, on this trip, to discussing strategies, ways forward with the Europeans to make sure we continue to speak with one voice, and that is, Iran should not have a nuclear weapon, and how to work together to make sure they don't.

Wendell [Wendell Goler, FOX News Channel].

### **Syria/Assassination of Rafiq Hariri**

**Q.** Mr. President, in your answer to Jennifer's question, I heard several reasons for recalling the Ambassador from Syria but not an indication of whether you believe Syria bears some responsibility for the assassination.

**The President.** I can't tell you that. I don't know yet, because the investigation is ongoing. And so I'm going to withhold judgment until we find out what the facts are. Hopefully, by the time I get overseas, we'll have a clearer understanding of who killed Mr. Hariri, and it will be an opportune time to talk with our friends, to determine what to do about it.

But it's important that this investigation go on in a thoughtful way, and I'm convinced it will. We supported the international—

**Q.** Would you like it to be an international investigation, sir?

**The President.** Yes, we support the international investigation.

Yes, John [John Roberts, CBS News].

### **Iran and Israel**

**Q.** Mr. President, I recall a conversation a small group of us had with a very senior administration official about a year ago, and in that conversation the subject of Iran and Israel came up. And I'm just wondering, what's your level of concern that if Iran does go down the road to building a nuclear weapon, that Israel will attack Iran to try to prevent that from happening?

**The President.** Well, of course the—well, first of all, Iran has made it clear they don't like Israel, to put it bluntly. And the Israelis are concerned about whether or not Iran develops a nuclear weapon, as are we, as should everybody.

And so the objective is to solve this issue diplomatically, is to work with friends, like we're doing with France, Europe, and—I mean, France, Germany, and Great Britain, to continue making it clear to the Iranians that developing a nuclear weapon will be unacceptable.

But clearly, if I was the leader of Israel and I listened to some of the statements by the Iranian ayatollahs about—that regarded my security of my country, I'd be concerned about Iran having a nuclear weapon as well. And in that Israel is our ally and in that we've made a very strong commitment to support Israel, we will support Israel if—if there's—if their security is threatened.

**Q.** Do you believe there's a real possibility Israel could attack?

**The President.** Oh, I—John, I think that there's a—the need for us to work together to convince the Iranians not to develop a nuclear weapon. And we will work with Europeans and the Israelis to develop a strategy and a plan that is effective. And that's one of the reasons I'm going to Europe.

Let's see here. I've got to make sure I go to the TV people. Norah [Norah O'Donnell, NBC News].

### **Social Security Reform**

**Q.** Mr. President, you've made clear that Social Security reform is your top legislative priority. The top Republican leader in the

House has said you cannot jam change down people's throats. And in your interviews with the regional newspapers, you made very clear that you would not rule out raising the cap on payroll taxes. If you were to do that, why would that not be seen as going back on your pledge not to raise taxes?

**The President.** Well, I—a couple of questions there. One, I agree, you can't cram an issue down people's throats. As a matter of fact, the best way to get this issue addressed in the Halls of Congress is for the American people to say, "Why don't we come together and do something?" And so the first priority of mine is to convince the people we have a problem. And I'm going to do that a lot. As a matter of fact, I enjoy traveling the country, and I hope you do too, because I'm going to be doing a lot of it. I fully understand, Norah, that nothing will happen if the Members of Congress don't believe there's a problem that needs to be solved, and so you'll see a lot of travel.

And the problem is plain to me. You've got baby boomers getting ready to retire. They've been promised greater benefits than the current generation. They're living longer, and there's fewer people paying into the system. And the system goes negative starting in 2018 and continues to do so. There's the problem. Nothing will happen, I repeat, unless the Congress thinks there's a problem.

Once the Congress—once the people say to Congress, "There's a problem. Fix it," then I have a duty to say to Members of Congress, "Bring forth your ideas." And I clarified a variety of ideas that people should be encouraged to bring forth, without political retribution. It used to be, in the past, people would step up and say, "Well, here's an interesting idea," and then they would take that idea and clobber the person politically.

What I'm saying to Members of Congress is that, "We have a problem. Come together, and let's fix it. And bring your ideas forward, and I'm willing to discuss them with you." And so that's why I said what I said and will continue to say it. And it's not—I've got some ideas of my own. Obviously, I think personal accounts are an important part of the mix and want to continue working with Members of Congress to understand the wisdom of why personal accounts makes sense for the

long term, to be a part of a long-term solution for Social Security.

John [John Cochran, ABC News].

### **Director of National Intelligence/Budget Process for Intelligence**

**Q.** Sir, thank you. Regarding the Director of National Intelligence, in this town power is often measured in a couple of ways, by who controls the money and how close that person is to the President, sometimes physically. So let me ask you about that. You said that Mr. Negroponte will determine the budgets for all intelligence agencies. A lot of people feel the Pentagon is going to fight that, that the Pentagon wants to control its intelligence money. Would you address that? And also, where is Mr. Negroponte going to work? Will he be in the White House complex, close to you? Will he give you your intelligence briefings every day?

**The President.** I think your assessment is right. People that can control the money, people who have got access to the President generally have a lot of influence. And that's why John Negroponte is going to have a lot of influence. He will set the budgets.

Listen, this is going to take a while to get a new culture in place, a different way of approaching the budget process. That's why I selected John. He's a diplomat. He understands the—and he's an experienced person; he understands the power centers in Washington. He's been a consumer of intelligence in the past, and so he's got a good feel for how to move this process forward in a way that addresses the different interests.

Now, as to where his office is, I don't know. It's not going to be in the White House. Remember the early debate about, should this man be a—or person be a member of the Cabinet. I said no, I didn't think so. I thought it was very important for the DNI to be apart from the White House. Nevertheless, he will have access on a daily basis in that he'll be my primary briefer. In other words, when the intelligence briefings start in the morning, John will be there. And John and I will work to determine how much exposure the CIA will have in the Oval Office. I would hope more rather than less. The relationship between John and the CIA Director

is going to be a vital relationship; the relationship between the CIA and the White House is a vital relationship.

John and I both know that change can be unsettling, and so, therefore, I'm sure there's some people out there wondering right now what this means for their jobs and the influence of a particular agency into the White House. And the answer is, everybody will be given fair access, and everybody's ideas will be given a chance to make it to John's office. And if he thinks it's appropriate I see it, I'll see it. And if he thinks it's a waste of my time, I won't see it. And obviously—therefore, the conclusion is, I trust his judgment. And I'm looking forward to working with him. It's going to be an interesting opportunity.

Yes, John [John McKinnon, Wall Street Journal].

**Q.** Will you back him if he goes up against Don Rumsfeld—Rumsfeld wants a certain amount of money for his intelligence budget and Negroponte says, “I don't think so”?

**The President.** I don't think it necessarily works—I know that's how the press sometimes likes to play discussions inside the White House—X versus Y and butting of heads and sharp elbows. Generally, it works a little more civilly than that. People make their case; there's a discussion; but ultimately John will make the decisions on the budget.

“Backing” means it's kind of zero-sum. That's not the way our team works. It's not a zero-sum attitude in the White House. It is—people have strong opinions, by the way, around here, which is—I would hope you'd want your President to have people around who have got strong opinions, people who are willing to stand up for what they believe, people who say, “Here's what I think is right, and it may not be what so-and-so thinks is right.” Then the question is, do I have the capacity to pick the right answer, to be able to make a decision? I think people have seen that I'm capable of making decisions. And one reason why I feel comfortable making them is because I get good advice. And John is going to be a great adviser.

Suzanne [Suzanne Malveaux, Cable News Network].

### ***U.S. Relations With European Allies/ Environment***

**Q.** A top European Union official said that Dr. Rice's trip, Secretary Rice's trip to Europe was very positive. He described it as “romance blossoms once two are determined to get married.” [*Laughter*] He also said that he did not expect that there would be any kind of substantive differences in U.S. policy on your own trip to Europe, but he hoped that it would help increase the sense of trust between the United States and European allies. What do you have to offer or say to European allies to help restore that trust, particularly the trust in U.S. intelligence?

**The President.** Yes, you know, my first goal is to remind both Americans and Europeans that the transatlantic relationship is very important for our mutual security and for peace, and that we have differences sometimes but we don't differ on values, that we share this great love and respect for freedom.

September the 11th was an interesting phenomenon in terms of our relations. For some in Europe, it was just a passing terrible moment. And for us, it was a change of—it caused us to change our foreign policy—in other words, a permanent part of our foreign policy. And that—those differences, at times, frankly, caused us to talk past each other. And I recognize that, and I want to make sure the Europeans understand I know that and that, as we move beyond the differences of the past, that we can work a lot together to achieve big objectives.

There's also a concern in Europe, I suspect, that the only thing I care about is our national security. And clearly, since we have been attacked—and I fear there's a terrorist group out there thinking about attacking us again or would like to—that national security is at the top of my agenda. That's what you'd expect from the President of the United States. But we also care deeply about hunger and disease, and I look forward to working with the Europeans on hunger and disease.

We care about the climate. Obviously, the Kyoto Protocol had been a problem in the past. They thought the treaty made sense. I didn't, and neither did the United States Senate when it rejected the Kyoto concept, 95 to nothing. And so there's an opportunity

now to work together to talk about new technologies that will help us both achieve a common objective, which is a better environment for generations to come.

And the Methanes to Markets project is an interesting opportunity. I spoke to my friend Tony Blair the other day, and I reminded him that here at home, we're spending billions on clean coal technology where we could have—it's conceivable and hopeful we'll have a zero-emissions coal plan, which will be not only good for the United States but it would be good for the world. This isn't a question on environment, but I was hoping somebody would ask it. I asked myself.

Anyway, let me—so I'm looking forward—[laughter]—thank you, Dickerson [John Dickerson, TIME]—I'm looking forward to discussing issues that not only relate to our security, that not only relate to how we work together to spread freedom, how we continue to embrace the values we believe in, but also how we deal with hunger and disease and environmental concerns.

Let's see, have I gone through all the TV personalities yet?

**Q.** Yes. [Laughter]

### Syria

**The President.** Herman [Ken Herman, Austin American-Statesman].

**Q.** Mr. President, good morning.

**The President.** A face made for radio, I might add.

**Q.** Thank you. My mother appreciates it. [Laughter] You offer a long list of things you expect Syrian leaders to do. What are the consequences if they don't do those things?

**The President.** The idea is to continue to work with the world to remind Syria it's not in their interest to be isolated.

Mark [Mark Knoller, CBS Radio].

### Social Security Reform

**Q.** Mr. President, if I could go back to Social Security.

**The President.** Sure.

**Q.** You spoke about your desire to have a plan that includes private retirement accounts. Chairman Greenspan yesterday, although supportive of those accounts, expressed two concerns, that he was worried about rushing something into print, if you

will, and also about the borrowing, the transition costs that would be required, trillions. He was especially worried about the latter. What is your response to that?

**The President.** Well, I presume the reason he was talking about Social Security at all is because he understands that we've got about \$11 trillion of debt owed to future generations of Americans. Therefore, we've got to do something about it now. And the longer we wait, the more difficult the solution becomes.

The—you asked about the transition cost, and what was the other?

**Q.** And that he wanted to do it slowly.

**The President.** Oh, slowly. Well, as you might remember in my State of the Union, when I expressed my desire that Congress ought to think about personal accounts, I did say they ought to be phased in.

And so—and that's part of the transition cost issue. And we look forward to working with Congress to come up with ways to make sure that the personal accounts, if Congress so chooses, and I hope they do, can be financed. And that's part of the issue. And that's part of the dialog that is going to be needed once Congress understands we have a problem.

Let me repeat what I said before—and I fully understand this—that this idea is going nowhere if the Congress does not believe there is a problem. Why should somebody take the hard path if they don't believe there's a problem? And so I'm going to spend a lot of time reminding people there is a problem.

Once the people figure out there's a problem—and I think they're beginning to understand that—then the question to ask to those of us who have been elected is, "What are you going to do about it?" And that's an important question. And when people start answering that question, I have said, "Bring your ideas forward." We welcome any idea—except running up the payroll tax rate, which I've been consistent on. And so bring them up. And I look forward to hearing their ideas.

And part of the ideas is going to be to, one, understand the benefits of personal accounts as well as how to pay for the transition costs. We've started that process, Mark, by talking about a phase-in program. And one

of the reasons we do is because we wanted to indicate to the Congress, “We understand there’s an issue. We want to work with you on it.”

Let’s see here—let’s see here, John.

**Q.** Sir, can you talk a little bit—

**The President.** If you don’t raise your hand, does that mean you don’t have a question?

**Q.** Not necessarily, sir.

**The President.** Okay, good, because you didn’t raise your hand.

### ***President’s Goals in the Middle East***

**Q.** Could you talk a little bit about how you would like to see the landscape of the Middle East change over the next year? Can you talk about the specific changes you’d like to see across the region?

**The President.** Yes. You know, a year is a really short period of time when it comes to working on—working with nations to encourage democracy, so there’s not a kind of a universal answer. But let me try to answer it this way, because it’s not—in other words, you can’t apply the same standard for every country as they move toward democracy, I guess is what I’m saying. In other words, there’s kind of not a blanket answer.

I’ll give you kind of a general thought. I would like to see the following things happen. We make progress on the development of a Palestinian state, so there can be peace with Israel. And notice I put it that way: There needs to progress for democracy to take—firmly take hold in the Palestinian Territory. It is my belief that that—when that happens, that we’ve got a very good chance for peace. That’s why I said in my State of the Union, it’s within reach. What’s in reach is to work with leadership that appears committed to fighting terror to develop the institutions necessary for democracy.

That’s why the conference Tony Blair has called is an important conference. It’s a conference that we’ll be working with the world—with countries from around the world to say, “How can we help you develop a democracy?” And so I’d like to see that move forward.

Obviously, I’d like to see the Iraqi Government continue to make the progress it is making toward providing its own security as

well as begin the process of writing the constitution. We will continue to work with the international community to make it clear that some of the behavior in the Middle East is unacceptable. The development of a nuclear weapon is unacceptable. Harboring terrorists or providing safe haven for terrorists is unacceptable. And so there’s a lot of progress that can be made.

I was pleased to see that Saudi had municipal elections. And I think Crown Prince Abdullah’s vision of moving toward reform is coming to be. Every speech I’ve given on democracy is—I fully recognize that democracy will advance at a pace that may be different from our own expectations and obviously reflect the cultures of the countries in which democracy is moving. But there’s progress being made, and so it’s kind of hard to have a summary because there’s different countries, different places. But if I try to come up with one, I’d like to see more advance toward a free and—free and democratic states.

What’s interesting—and surely hasn’t crept into your writing or reporting—but for a while there was a period that people said, “It’s an impossible mission to have freedom take hold. I mean, what was he doing? How can he possibly think that these people can possibly accept democracy?” I don’t know if you remember that period of reporting or not. I vaguely do. And then look what’s happening. And that’s why I can say, John, that I’d like to see more progress because progress is being made.

Afghanistan elections were a remarkable achievement in the march of history. The elections that John was involved in in Iraq, and was—it must have been fantastic to be there. It was—to think of the millions who defied the terrorists. And you remember the reporting that went on—first of all, democracy may not be the kind of system that people agree to in Iraq. It’s kind of a foreign concept to them, and coupled with the fact there’s a lot of terrorists there who are getting ready to blow anybody up who goes and votes. And yet, millions—I think it’s over 8 million now, I think we’ve calculated, went to the polls.

And what’s interesting to me in Iraq is to see the posturing that’s going on, kind of the

positioning. It's not exactly like the Social Security debate, but it's posturing. It's politics. People are jockeying for position. And I say it's not like the Social Security debate because their, obviously, democracy isn't as advanced as ours. But nevertheless, there's—people are making moves here and there. And you hear about the conferences and the discussions. To me, that's healthy. It's inspiring to see a fledgling democracy begin to take wing, right here in the 21st century in a part of the world where people didn't think there could be progress. I think there can be progress, and we'll continue to work that progress.

Part of my reason I'm going to Europe is to share my sense of optimism and enthusiasm about what's taking place and remind people that that's—that those values of human rights, human dignity, and freedom are the core of our very being as nations. And it's going to be a great experience to go there.

Let's see, yes, Hillman [G. Robert Hillman, Dallas Morning News].

**Q.** Yes—

**The President.** I had to call on Hillman, because—to balance the thing here with the competing Texas newspapers.

**Commission on the Intelligence Capabilities of the United States Regarding Weapons of Mass Destruction**

**Q.** Yes, Mr. President, have you, by any chance, received any sort of interim or preliminary report from the Robb Commission that's investigating intelligence failures? And did you seek the Commission's counsel on the scope of the duties for the new Intelligence Director?

**The President.** I haven't—that's—no, I have not had an interim report. Maybe the national security people have—or not. Hadley said he hasn't either. We have—our people have gone to talk to the Robb-Silberman Commission when asked. But I've got great confidence in both those leaders to bring forth a very solid report. And so we haven't been involved in the process other than when asked to share opinion.

**Q.** When might they report back?

**The President.** Don't know yet. Do we have any idea?

**Mr. Hadley.** Sometime next month.

**The President.** Yes, Hadley said, "Try to work me in the press conference," and I did. [Laughter] Congratulations. "Sometime next month," he said.

It's an important report. And it's a relevant question today because of the announcement of Ambassador Negroponte. He will take and I will take the findings of the Robb-Silberman Commission very seriously. And I look forward to their conclusions and look forward to working with the leaders and the Commission members to not only deal with the conclusions but to address whatever conclusions they have in concrete action. And I appreciate the work.

But in terms—no, and then I did not consult with either person and/or members as to whether or not—the nature of the pick. I did it independently from the Commission.

Yes, sir. Mark [Mark Silva, Chicago Tribune].

**Iran and North Korea**

**Q.** Thank you, Mr. President. If, as you say, the development of nuclear weapons is unacceptable and if the administration's concern for weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, which proved out to be unfounded, drove an invasion to seek regime change, how concerned should Americans and, for that matter, the world be that the true identification of weapons in Iran or North Korea might not lead to the same sort of attack?

**The President.** Well, first, Iran is different from Iraq—very different. The international community was convinced that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction—not just the United States but the international community—and had passed some 16 resolutions. In other words, diplomacy had—they tried diplomacy over and over and over and over again. John was at the United Nations during this period. And finally, the world, in 1441—U.N. Resolution 1441—said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." This was not a declaration by the United States of America; it was a declaration by the United Nations Security Council—and a 15-to-nothing vote, as I recall. And we took that resolution very seriously.

As you know, the Iranian issue hasn't even gone up to the Security Council yet. And so there's more diplomacy, in my judgment, to be done. And we'll work very closely with our European friends and other nations. As I mentioned before, we're an active member of the IAEA board, which will give us an opportunity to continue to say to the Iranians, "You've got to be transparent with your program and adhere to protocols that you have signed."

Remember, this all started when they—we found them enriching uranium in an undeclared fashion. And it happened because somebody told on them. There was an Iranian group that brought forth the information, and it was clear that they were enriching. And yet, they hadn't told anybody, which leads you to wonder why they hadn't told anybody. And so you can understand our suspicions.

And we'll work with nations. And in terms of Korea—North Korea, again, it's not Iraq. It's a different situation. But I'm—I remember being with Jiang Zemin in Crawford, and as a result of that meeting, we issued a joint declaration that said that the Korean Peninsula should be nuclear-weapons-free. Since then I've—that policy has been confirmed by President Hu Jintao. And the other day the leader of North Korea declared they had a nuclear weapon, which obviously means that if he is—if he's correct, that the peninsula is not nuclear-weapons-free. So now is the time for us to work with friends and allies who have agreed to be a part of the process to determine what we're jointly going to do about it. And that's where we are in the process right now.

Thank you all very much for your attention and questions. Appreciate it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to former Prime Minister Rafiq Hariri of Lebanon, who was assassinated on February 14 in Beirut; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia; National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley; former President Jiang Zemin of China; President Hu Jintao of China; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea. The Office of the Press Secretary also re-

leased a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

### **Statement on House of Representatives Action on the Class Action Fairness Act of 2005**

*February 17, 2005*

I commend the House for passing a class-action reform bill that will help protect people who are wrongfully harmed while reducing the frivolous lawsuits that clog our courts, hurt the economy, cost jobs, and burden American businesses. Junk lawsuits have helped drive the cost of America's tort system to more than \$240 billion a year, greater than any other major industrialized nation. This bill is an important step forward in our efforts to reform the litigation system and to continue creating jobs and growing our economy. I look forward to signing the bill into law.

### **Statement on the Resignation of N. Gregory Mankiw as Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers**

*February 17, 2005*

Greg Mankiw has been a trusted member of my economic team and a close adviser. His wise and principled counsel over the past 2 years has helped shape policies that today are fueling our economic growth. I am grateful to Greg for his service to our country, and I wish him, Deborah, and the Mankiw family all the best.

### **Interview With TV3-France**

*February 18, 2005*

#### **France-U.S. Relations**

**Q.** Mr. President, thank you very much to welcome Francois. You and President Chirac want to improve your relationship after bitter divisions on Iraq. How do you plan, yourself, to take concrete steps with France, with the allies, and restore credible cooperation on the hardest issues, like Middle East for instance?

**The President.** Sure. No, I think that's a great question because inherent in your

question is the understanding that there—we share a lot of values. Both our nations value human rights and human dignity and rule of law and transparency. And we value our friendship from years gone by. And I look forward to working with President Chirac. We've have our differences, and now is the time to set those aside and focus on peace in the Middle East. I'll work with the French on—to help the Lebanese have a free and fair election and a burgeoning democracy. And I'll work with the French to continue to help with the Middle Eastern peace process. There's a lot of areas where we need to work together. And we need to continue to work together on HIV/AIDS in Africa and hunger around the world. And I'm looking forward to the meeting.

### Syria

**Q.** You and President Chirac keep telling the Syrians that they have to withdraw immediately their troops.

**The President.** Yes.

**Q.** What will you do if they refuse—

**The President.** Well, that's—

**Q.** —in the coming weeks?

**The President.** That's a—my attitude is, is that when we speak together and convince others to speak with us, that the Syrians will get the message. And I'm a hopeful person. I'm hopeful that the President of Syria will hear the world speak. And the French have got a lot of influence in Syria, and we've got some influence as well. And the fact that we're talking together should send a clear signal to President Asad that we're very serious about this.

### Iran

**Q.** Let's come to Iran —

**The President.** Sure.

**Q.** —which is backing terrorism and all that. If Iran refuses to stop its nuclear program, or the kind of same question, what will you do, Mr. President, with the allies or whatever?

**The President.** Well, I think the key is there for the Iraqis [Iranians]\* to hear Europe and the United States speak with one voice. And I appreciate President Chirac and

his Government and as well as the Germans and the Brits working together to say to the Iranians, "We don't want you to have a weapon." In other words, we—the—we share a goal, and that is for the Iranians not to develop a nuclear weapon. And we want to work with our friends to not only speak with one voice, clearly with one voice, but also to help others realize—like Russia realize. And I think President Putin understands that the Iranians shouldn't have weapon. I'm convinced, again, if the Iranians hear us loud and clear, without any wavering, that they will make the rational decision.

**Q.** But do you trust the Iranians, this regime?

**The President.** Well, it's hard to trust a regime that doesn't trust their own people. And so part of our belief is that the Iranians ought to listen to the reformers in their country, those who believe in democracy and then—and give them a say in government. After all, the French model and the U.S. model believes in—people ought to be able to express themselves in a free society.

**Q.** Two quick last questions, Mr. President.

**The President.** Sure.

### Iraq

**Q.** Iraq is having explosions, terrorist attacks every day. Do you fear about not having a national reconciliation? There might be a civil war. Do you fear also that the Shiite leaders might decide to build up the sort of theocracy like in Iran?

**The President.** Yes. No, of course, I'm heartened by the fact that the leadership of the Shi'a election parties, the political parties that took their message to the people, campaigned on the notion of minority rights and a unified country. There are still terrorists there. But the terrorists suffered a major defeat when over 8 million people went to the polls and said, "You will not intimidate us. You can't stop us from expressing our desire." I'm very optimistic and very encouraged about a free Iraq becoming a stable partner in peace, an ally in the war on terror, and a clear example to others in the greater Middle East that freedom is possible.

\* White House correction.

### ***Palestinian Authority/Israel***

**Q.** Last question, Mr. President. Near East, don't you fear that if sooner than later, Mahmoud Abbas and Ariel Sharon don't reach a global peace agreement based on land for peace, that all this bunch of Islamic group terrorists, Hamas, Jihad, Hezbollah, might try to get rid of Mahmoud Abbas and get in total war with Israel?

**The President.** No, that's a concern, of course. And I'm impressed by President Abbas' leadership. We want to support him as he moves forward to develop a Palestinian state based upon democratic institutions. And I think we're making great progress. The good news is, is that Europe and Russia and the United Nations, the United States all understands that we've got to make progress to head off these terrorists so that they don't—so they can't capture the imaginations of the Palestinian people anymore. In other words, terrorism is not the path to peace and security and freedom and hope, and that's democracy. And we're making great progress.

And I look forward to talking to President Chirac about the progress we're making and remind him, as well as the people of France, that we'll stay engaged. The United States of America sees a settlement within reach, like I said in my State of the Union, and therefore if you can see it in reach, it means all the more reason to stay fully engaged in the peace process.

**Q.** I wish you all the very best, Mr. President.

**The President.** Thank you, sir. Looking forward to it. Thank you, sir.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 10:34 a.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to President Jacques Chirac of France; President Bashar al-Asad of Syria; President Vladimir Putin of Russia; and President Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority. The interviewer referred to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

### **Interview With VRT Belgian Public Broadcasting**

*February 18, 2005*

#### ***Europe-U.S. Relations***

**Q.** Mr. President, it's your first international trip in your second term. Does it mean that transatlantic relations are a top priority now for you? And how are you going to restore the European confidence in the American politics?

**The President.** Yes. No, the transatlantic relations have always been a top priority, because of all the nations in the world, we share common values—America is more likely to share common values of peace and freedom and human rights and human dignity. And we've had our differences, obviously. But that's okay. The key is to move past differences and to focus on how we can leave behind a legacy of peace and freedom for our children and grandchildren.

And so I'm looking forward to it. I want to thank the Belgian Government and the Belgian people for hosting the meetings, the NATO meetings and the EU meetings. And Laura and I are anxious to come. It's—we've got very fond memories of our first trip to Belgium. This is a chance to reconfirm a vital relationship and to say there's so much we can do, whether it be in the Middle East or joining together to fight disease and poverty and terror. There's a lot we can do.

#### ***Iraq***

**Q.** Iraq is a big issue, of course. During your trip, Belgium—NATO joined in for the training program. Belgium, well, they only are contributing financially. Are you going to insist on more support from a country as Belgium and from Europe?

**The President.** No, not from—listen, the Government of Belgium makes the decision that they're comfortable with. And all I can ask is—say, “Thanks for considering it. Thank you for the financial contribution, and if you're comfortable supporting the training missions with troops, fine. If not, you're still our friend.”

**Q.** Yes, especially after the opposition—the Belgian opposition against Iraqi war.

**The President.** Absolutely. I mean, I understand that. No, we can't—I don't believe

we should ask people to do things that their people don't want them to do. And in democracies, the Government reflects the desires of the people. That's why I'm such a big believer in democracy.

Now, having said that, the vote of the Iraqi people should say loud and clear that democracy is on the move, and we've got to work together. And that's what I'm going to talk to NATO, to make sure they continue the training missions, as well as the EU that helped with the elections, as well as figuring out ways that we can work together to help this new fledgling democracy grow. Because it's in our interest—it's in the Belgian interest and the U.S. interest that democracy take hold in the Middle East.

### **Iran**

**Q.** Working together will be your big message over in Europe, but there is also Iran. Now that Syria pledged support for Iran, how far will you support the European diplomatic efforts to solve that issue? And can you exclude American military action?

**The President.** Well, listen, first of all, you never want a President to say "never." But military action is certainly not—it's never the President's first choice. Diplomacy is always the President's first—at least my first choice.

And we've got a common goal, and that is that Iran—Iran should not have a nuclear weapon. That's what we have said—America has said. That's what the Brits have said, the French have said, the Germans have said, when they send their Foreign Ministers in to talk to the Iranians. In other words, there's a common mission.

And I look forward to kind of making sure we continue to speak with one voice. The—and it's in our interest they not have a nuclear weapon. And so we want to support the European efforts, and I applaud the European efforts to continue to send a clear message to the Iranians. And we want to be—we want to—we will consult, like we have been, to make sure that we fully understand where we stand to achieve that goal. And I think we—listen, I think if we continue to speak with one voice and not let them split us up and keep the pressure on them, we can achieve the objective.

### **Central Africa**

**Q.** Mr. President, freedom through democracy is the centerpiece of your politics. The Belgian Government feels that they're doing the same in Central Africa and Congo. How important is the election process over there, since Darfur and AIDS seem to be more of a priority for your administration?

**The President.** Well, no, I appreciate that very much. First of all, I want to applaud the Belgian Government's understanding that you can achieve peace through freedom and democracy. I mean, it's very important that a country that has benefiting from democracy, like Belgium, not ever abandon that for others.

Secondly, we have been helpful in the Congo. My former Secretary of State, Colin Powell, and I have discussed this issue a lot. Condi Rice is very concerned about not only the Congo but other countries on the continent of Africa. And we will work with our friends to not only fight HIV/AIDS—and obviously, that Darfur—we've got to be very careful about Darfur and work together to solve that problem. But as well, it's to support our friends like the Belgian Government in Congo and will.

And all they've got to do is ask. And I'm the kind of person, if we can't help you, I'll say, "We can't help you." But if we can help you, we will. Interesting enough, there's a wonderful movie called "Hotel Rwanda," by the way. And the Belgian citizen who ran the hotel came to visit me yesterday in the Oval Office. He's a spectacular guy. I said, "You're a hero." And he said, "No, I'm not a hero." I said, "Well, you are to a lot of people," for being such a humanitarian and drawing—you know, to helping draw the world's attention to what it means to go through a genocide. And free nations must work together to prevent genocide.

### **President's Upcoming Visit to Brussels**

**Q.** Can the Belgian Government read a positive gesture in your first visit to Brussels now?

**The President.** Oh, they already have. Listen, I'm absolutely convinced that the—His Majesty—my visit with His Majesty and Her Majesty will be great, and the Prime Minister, who I've known for a long time,

will be good. I'm looking forward to this. I really am. It's—I remember going to the chocolate shop and—which was not diplomacy, it was pure commercialism on my part. But it was kind of a sweet reminder of our trip there, and I'm just confident that the trip will be equally as good this time.

**Q.** Thank you so much, Mr. President, for these kind words.

**The President.** Good luck to you.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 10:41 a.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Paul Rusesabagina, whose actions to shelter refugees during the 1994 Rwanda genocide were depicted in the film "Hotel Rwanda"; and King Albert II, Queen Paolo, and Prime Minister Guy Verhofstadt of Belgium. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

## Interview With ARD-German Television

February 18, 2005

### Agenda for the President's Upcoming Visit to Europe

**Q.** Mr. President, your visit to Europe is an important gesture. Now what many people wonder is, beyond the style, what substance you're going to add to the—invigorating the transatlantic relationship? Schroeder has just proposed a NATO reform, to have a forum to discuss policy. What do you think about things like that?

**The President.** Well, I—look, I mean, first of all, I think NATO is vital, and I look forward to reminding him that the U.S. position is that NATO is a vital institution, and that—but so is the EU. And we look forward to working with the EU.

In terms of—and I think it's a legitimate question for people to say, "Look, it's fine to have nice words, but it's, what can we do together? What can we do together to make the world a better place?" We can continue to fight disease and hunger, which we will. The United States is actively involved on the continent of Africa on HIV/AIDS and wants to work with our European friends through the Global Fund to do so. We can work on trade matters, a benefit to the citizens of the U.S. and to Europe that there be active

trade. And equally importantly, we can work to spread freedom and peace.

And so I'm going to talk about Middle Eastern peace, my vision about two states living side by side in peace, Israel and Palestine. I'm going to talk about Iran. I'll talk about Syria. I'll talk about Lebanon. I mean, there's a lot of things—concrete things—that we need to be working on so that we can say when it's all said and done, the world is more peaceful for our children.

### Iran and Syria

**Q.** You mentioned Iran and Syria, two real hot spots, two conflicts in the making. Now, 70 percent of all Germans are convinced, according to a latest poll, that you are already planning a military action against Iran. Now, what do you say to disperse these fears? You know that Blair, Schroeder, and Bush [sic] would like you to play a more active role in the diplomatic—

**The President.** No, I know—listen, we're playing—look, first of all, I hear all these rumors about military attacks, and it's just not the truth. We want diplomacy to work. And I believe diplomacy can work so long as the Iranians don't divide Europe and the United States. And the common goal is for them not to have a nuclear weapon. It's in the interests of the German people and the American people and all people for the Iranians not to develop that nuclear weapon.

And so I want to applaud and will applaud Gerhard and the other leaders for sending a clear message to Iran. The Iranians need to know—they know what they need to do. And so what they're trying to do is kind of wiggle out. They're trying to say, "Well, we won't do anything, because America is not involved." But America is involved. We're in close consultation with our friends. We're on the board of the IAEA. And we will continue to work with friends and allies to make it clear.

The other thing Iran's got to do—two other things they've got to do, is stop exporting terror through Hezbollah, which could be a devastating blow to the peace process between Israel and the Palestinian people, and they ought to open up their country to more democracy and freedom, just like we do in the United States and Germany, give

their people a chance to express themselves in a free way.

**Q.** Now, some people are reminded, when you say you have no plans for military actions, they're reminded of the pre-Iraq crisis, when you said, "No war plans on my desk," and then one month later, there was. What's different this time?

**The President.** Well, it's totally different. The Iraqi situation was one where many good people tried diplomacy to solve the problem. Remember, the whole world thought the man had weapons of mass destruction. The United Nations thought he had weapons of mass destruction. And that's why—one of the reasons why they passed 16 resolutions. I mean, this was an issue where diplomacy had been exhausted.

And I went to the United Nations and said, "Let's, one more time, hold the man to account." And the United Nations said, "Disclose, disarm, or face serious consequences." That's what the world body said. The United Nations Security Council voted 15 to nothing for that resolution.

The Iranian issue hasn't even been to the United Nations yet. In other words, there's a lot more diplomacy to be done. And the people of Germany have just got—I know the rumors, and I've heard all the gossip and the false stories about this, that—the people have got to know that we will try diplomacy for all means.

### **Iraq**

**Q.** Are you happy with the way things are going in Iraq? They just had elections, but they seemed to not support the moderate Allawi but more the Shiites. And in that situation, what are you going to ask the Germans to do on top of what they're already doing in the training?

**The President.** Well, you know, look, I think Gerhard is comfortable in the training mission. But I'm going to wait for him to tell me if he's interested in participating. If so, the German Government would be welcome. Germany is really good at certain things, like we're good at things. And Germany is good at training and ministerial—developing ministries and humanitarian aid and the PRT in Afghanistan, for example, is a great German contribution. And what

friends do is they say, "Are you comfortable? If you're interested in helping this fledgling democracy get to be a more mature democracy, where's your comfort level?" And so I'm looking forward to talking to him about that.

You mentioned the Shi'as. Allawi is a Shi'a himself. My attitude is this: A Government that has been voted on by the people is going to be, by its very nature, a reasonable Government. In other words, it's a—governments tend to reflect the will of the people, and the people of Iraq want to live in peace. The mothers and dads want to raise their children in a peaceful environment.

I am heartened by the political posturing going on. I think it is healthy to see the different factions of Government begin to emerge, all of whom are saying—this is an important point—all of whom are saying, "There needs to be a unified Iraq, respect for minority rights." And there's a nationalist feeling there. I mean, some are saying, "Are you worried about Iranian influence?" Well, if the Iranian Government tries to destabilize an elected government, I am. But to the extent that the Iraqi people love Iraq before they love Iran, I take comfort. And Iraq is a proud nation, and they care deeply about their national heritage and tradition and future.

### **Germany and the U.N. Security Council**

**Q.** One word about Germany's aspirations for a permanent seat in the Security Council?

**The President.** Yes, right. [Laughter]

**Q.** You knew I'd ask that.

**The President.** No, you should ask it. And Gerhard—I'm very aware of that. And we'll look forward to working—look, I haven't taken a position on reform yet. And I want to see how this—the different models of reform come forward. But Germany is a great nation, and Germany is—Europe is vital for the future of the United States, and Germany is vital for the future of Europe. And I'm open for suggestions.

**Q.** Thank you very much.

**The President.** Thanks for coming.

**Q.** We should do this every month.

**The President.** I'd like to.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 10:48 a.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred

to Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Prime Minister Ayad Allawi of the Iraqi Interim Government. He also referred to Provincial Reconstruction Teams, a component of NATO's International Security Assistance Force operating in Afghanistan. The interviewer referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

### **Interview With Slovak State Television**

*February 18, 2005*

#### **President's Upcoming Visit to the Slovak Republic**

**Q.** Mr. President, I assume that your trip to Europe, after your reelection, was very well tailored, and we can imagine why you go to Brussels and to Germany. But there are lots of—lots of speculation about why you decided to go to Bratislava. So what was behind this decision? And what will be your message for Slovaks and people in our region?

**The President.** Thanks. I've been trying to think about when this thought got in my mind. I think—I have to credit your Prime Minister, who, in the Oval Office, said, "You need to come to our country." And I thought about it, and I think I told Condi Rice then, when she was my National Security Adviser, before I named her Secretary of State, that would be a great idea.

I'd like to come, and I'm thankful for the invitation, because I want to say to the world, "Freedom is a beautiful thing, and here is a country that is working hard to promote democracy." The spirit of your Prime Minister, talking about overcoming the difficulties to become a free society, is—was just wonderful.

I've always felt like countries like the Slovak Republic are very important for the world to know more about, and—because, as you know, I'm a big believer in liberty, and this is a country which is succeeding. And it's not—there's bumps in the road. It's difficult, but it's successful.

So I'm looking forward to coming. It's going to be one of the highlights of the trip; it really is.

### **Iraq/Europe-U.S. Relations**

**Q.** You have, obviously, a very good relationship with Slovak Government and the other governments of so-called new Europe. But the public does not always necessarily agree with our Government and with American policy. And you, many time, stress that you want to have a very good relationship with the whole Europe. So what is your strategy to improve the relationship with the nations, with the citizens?

**The President.** That's a good point. Well, first of all, nobody likes war. And basically what you're referring to is my decision to go into Iraq. And I can understand why citizens, particularly if they didn't feel threatened by Saddam Hussein, would say, "We don't like war, and we don't agree with what George Bush decided." And I know that.

But now they've got to see what's happening in Iraq. Eight million people voted in the face of terror. I mean, there's a free country. And so what's going to be very important for me is to connect that free country emerging with peace for their children and grandchildren. In other words, there has to be a connection in order for people to say, "Well, now I understand what, you know, what the policy means." It's a—and so one of the reasons—that's what I'll speak about not only—I mean, in Europe, it's very important to make that connection.

It's—ours is a—mine is a mission and a trip that says, "We share values, human rights and human dignity and rule of law and minority rights and respect for women." And therefore, it's those values that should unite our voices when it comes to spreading those values in parts of the world that are troubled parts of the world, Iran or Syria or, as you saw recently, in Lebanon. I'm convinced that as democracy—and particularly, Israel and the Palestinian Territories—as democracy takes hold there, the people of the Slovak Republic will see, "Gosh, I'm beginning to understand what President Bush was trying to do."

### **U.S. Visa Policy**

**Q.** United States and you, personally, helped to fulfill the vision of free, democratic, and united Europe. But there is something missing from this picture, and people

feel that they're treated like second-class Europeans because of visa.

**The President.** Oh. [Laughter]

**Q.** And I'm sure you will hear about the visa very often, not only in Slovakia but also in European Union.

**The President.** Sure.

**Q.** I know your Government has many other priorities, maybe much, much bigger priorities. But can I count on your leadership, Mr. President, on this issue?

**The President.** No, I've heard about the visa issue.

**Q.** No?

**The President.** No, I have—yes. I mean, yes, I've heard about the visa issue. In other words, what I was saying, “No, this is not a minor issue.” This is an issue that our friends have brought up quite frequently. And we're trying to work it through. There's an old policy in place that needs to be renewed and reviewed, given the new realities of the Slovak Republic or Poland or the Czech Republic or wherever. And so I've told Condi Rice, “Let's just make sure our visa policy is fair and balanced.”

**Q.** So we can count on your help?

**The President.** I'm not sure you can count on the results, but you can count on my interest.

### **Russia**

**Q.** Mr. President, you are going to meet President Putin in Bratislava.

**The President.** Yes.

**Q.** And in Washington, many people are concerned about corrosion of democracy in Russia. And you, in a summit in Chile, you also raised the issue of Russia's curb on democracy. So how much you are concerned about this issue of Russia?

**The President.** Well, I have a good relationship with President Putin. And the reason—and that's important, because that then will give me a chance to say in private—ask him why he's been making some of the decisions he's been making. I mean, he's done some things that has concerned people. And I—it's going to be—I want him to be able to have a chance to say he's done it for this reason or done that, so I can explain to him as best I can—in a friendly way, of course—that Western values are—you know, are

based upon transparency and rule of law, the right for the people to express themselves, checks and balances in Government. In other words, not one part of the Government is so powerful they can overwhelm all the rest of the Government. And I'm looking forward to doing that right there in your beautiful country.

Listen, I think this is going to be my 12th meeting with President Putin. It's an important relationship that we'll continue to nurture and work.

### **Iraq/Europe-U.S. Relations**

**Q.** You mentioned the war in Iraq and relationship. What is your personal lesson how this war in Iraq changed relationship between United States and Europe and built relation with Eastern Europe?

**The President.** Yes, I appreciate that very much. First of all, war is a terrible thing. And a lot of Europe supported the decision to enforce the United Nations' resolutions. Remember, this wasn't a U.S.—you know, this came about as a result of the United Nations passing 1441, which said—and by the way, the 16th resolution to Mr. Saddam Hussein that said, “Disarm, disclose, or face serious consequences.” He chose not to do either, so he faced serious consequences. And a lot of Europe supported the decision to go and have him face serious consequences because the international body, the United Nations, needed to be credible when it spoke.

But people need to see why the actions and why a free Iraq will make them safer. In other words, there has to be a connection. And the Eastern Europeans were great friends on this subject, and it's interesting. They understand what it means to live under tyranny. They know what it means to have secret police. And they began to smell that great freedom that comes, and then all of a sudden, democracies began to emerge. And what a fantastic example for the world, and Europe benefits with countries like the Slovak Republic a part of NATO or the European Union. I mean, these are very important lessons for people to see, that you cannot take freedom for granted, and freedom is hard, and democracy is hard work.

But it is inspiring to see what's taking place in the Slovak Republic. My message to the

Slovak people is, “Thank you for doing what you’re doing. Thank you for your courage. And freedom is a beautiful thing, and you’re showing it right here.”

**Q.** Thank you very much, Mr. President.  
**The President.** God bless. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 10:57 a.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Mikulas Dzurinda of Slovakia; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and President Vladimir Putin of Russia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

## Interview With Russian ITAR-TASS

February 18, 2005

### Russia-U.S. Relations

**Q.** Thank you very much, Mr. President, for this, again, unique opportunity to talk with you.

**The President.** Thank you, sir.

**Q.** You first time met with President Putin in Slovenia, and now in Slovakia is going to be—[laughter]—your 12th meeting. What kind—do you think we need now? Do we need a fresh start? And what do you expect for this meeting?

**The President.** You know, it’s interesting. First of all, we don’t need a fresh start in my personal relationship with Vladimir Putin. We’re friends, and that’s important. It’s important so that we can—he and I can have good talks, and we can understand each other and understand the decisionmaking process.

Vladimir makes a lot of decisions. And I make a lot of decisions. And I like to talk about—him about, “Well, why did you do this?” or “Why did you do that?” And I suspect he likes to ask me the same questions.

Secondly, we’ve got the framework for a good strategic relationship, which is important. I think this relationship can be invigorated. The campaign came, and in American public life, I mean—whether it be foreign policy or domestic policy, often you kind of shut down when the campaign comes. People weren’t really sure who was going to be the next President for a while. It turned out to be me, thankfully. But—and so this is a chance to reinvigorate. I wouldn’t say fresh—

fresh start is okay. I’d call it reinvigorate. We’ve got the framework, and it gives us a chance to move it forward. There’s a lot we need to do, a lot we need to work together on.

### 60th Anniversary of V-E Day

**Q.** V-Day in Moscow—in May—

**The President.** Yes.

**Q.** —60 years ago, World War II was ended. Your father was a pilot, was a hero of Second War.

**The President.** Yes.

**Q.** What—the best—the people who can—to those who won the war. What can you say to the patriots? You are invited to Moscow for the—

**The President.** I’m coming. Oh, yes, I want to make sure everybody understands I’m coming. My answer is, is that, thank you for your sacrifice. The Russian veterans—the people of Russia went through an unbelievable period of time of sacrifice. The stories of courage and bravery against the onslaught of the Nazis was really fantastic. I mean, it was a great lesson for bravery.

And same in our country—they call it the “Greatest Generation”; that’s what they call the World War II people because they sacrificed. And it still—this world still requires sacrifice in different ways. But there’s still needed sacrifice to make sure there’s peace. And I’m looking forward to the celebrations.

**Q.** The wartime alliance, do you have lessons for us now? We have again the common enemy.

**The President.** Yes. No, we do. And that’s another thing Vladimir and I will talk about. He sees clearly the common enemy. He’s a—and he knows you got to be tough to—and resolute and strong. And we will talk about that common enemy that is still active. The enemy—there’s a set of beliefs they believe in, and I believe the best way to defeat those beliefs is by spreading freedom and democracy. Free societies don’t like to fight. Free societies spend more time listening to their people and the demands of their people as opposed to being able to fight and spread—in this case fighting an ideology that is an ideology of hatred as this—as your good country full—fully understands.

**Russia-U.S. Relations**

**Q.** American-Russian relationship—what was the biggest success during your first term? And what are your plans for next 4 years?

**The President.** I appreciate that. Look, I think the biggest success would be twofold: one, an understanding of the war—the world we live in and the war on terror. Now, the enemy hit us, and they hit Russia. They hit us in a gruesome way, and they hit Russia in a gruesome way—Beslan, these movie theaters. I mean, there are all kinds of terrible events that have taken place. And so there's a common understanding that we need to work together on the war on terror. And that's important.

The other thing was the Moscow Treaty. We kind of recognized that an era has gone by, that we're reducing our nuclear stockpiles. And that's important too.

Ahead, there's a lot of things we can do. We can work on proliferation. We can work on—on disease and hunger. We can work on Iran to make sure the Iranians don't have a nuclear weapon. We continue to work on Korea. We continue to work for Middle Eastern peace. And the roadmap is an opportunity for the United States and Russia to cooperate to convince Israel and the Palestinians to do what's necessary to achieve peace. And so there's a lot we can do. And I'm looking forward to seeing my friend Vladimir Putin.

**Q.** Thank you very much.

**The President.** Yes, sir.

**Q.** Thank you very much.

**The President.** Thanks for coming.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 11:06 a.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to President Vladimir Putin of Russia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

**Remarks on Signing the Class Action Fairness Act of 2005**

*February 18, 2005*

Thank you all. Thanks for coming. Please be seated. Thank you for coming. Thanks for the warm welcome. Welcome to the people's

house. Glad you're here for the first bill signing ceremony of 2005.

The bill I'm about to sign is a model of effective, bipartisan legislation. By working together over several years, we have agreed on a practical way to begin restoring common sense and balance to America's legal system. The Class Action Fairness Act of 2005 marks a critical step toward ending the lawsuit culture in our country. The bill will ease the needless burden of litigation on every American worker, business, and family. By beginning the important work of legal reform, we are meeting our duty to solve problems now and not to pass them on to future generations.

I appreciate so very much the leadership that Senator Frist and Senator McConnell have shown on this bill in the United States Senate. I want to thank Senator Chris Dodd and Senator Tom Carper and Senator Craig Thomas as well for working in a bipartisan fashion to get this good bill to my desk.

I appreciate Congressman Jim Sensenbrenner as well as Congressman Lamar Smith joining us today. I particularly want to pay tribute to the bill sponsors, Senator Grassley and Senator Kohl as well as Congressman Bob Goodlatte and Congressman Rick Boucher, who are with us here today.

Congress showed what is possible when we set aside partisan differences and focus on what's doing right for Congress, and you all are to be—I mean, for the country—and you're to be credited for your good work. Thank you very much.

I welcome our new Attorney General—oh, right there. *[Laughter]* How quickly they forget in Washington. *[Laughter]* Al Gonzales—proud you're up here, Al. Hector Barreto of the SBA. Thank you, all the business leaders, community leaders, consumer groups who care about this issue. Thanks for your hard work. Thanks for being patient. Thanks for not becoming discouraged. And thanks for witnessing the fruits of your labor as I sign this bill.

Class actions can serve a valuable purpose in our legal system. They allow numerous victims of the same wrongdoing to merge their claims into a single lawsuit. When used properly, class actions make the legal system more

efficient and help guarantee that injured people receive proper compensation. That is an important principle of justice. So the bill I sign today maintains every victim's right to seek justice and ensures that wrongdoers are held to account.

Class actions can also be manipulated for personal gain. Lawyers who represent plaintiffs from multiple States can shop around for the State court where they expect to win the most money. A few weeks ago, I visited Madison County, Illinois, where juries have earned a reputation for awarding large verdicts. The number of class actions filed in Madison County has gone from 2 in 1998 to 82 in 2004—even though the vast majority of the defendants named in those suits are not from Madison County. Trial lawyers have already filed 24 class actions in Madison County this year—we're in February—[laughter]—including 20 in the past week, after Congress made it clear their chance to exploit the class-action system would soon be gone.

Before today, trial lawyers were able to drag defendants from all over the country into sympathetic local courts, even if those businesses have done nothing wrong. Many businesses decided it was cheaper to settle the lawsuits rather than risk a massive jury award. In many cases, lawyers went home with huge payouts, while the plaintiffs ended up with coupons worth only a few dollars. By the time the settlement in at least one case was finished, plaintiffs actually owed their lawyers money.

A newspaper editorial called the class-action system “an extortion racket that only Congress can fix.” This bill helps fix the system. Congress has done its duty, and I'm proud to sign it into law.

Over the past few years, I've met people from all over the country who know the importance of class-action reform firsthand, and three of them are with us today. Marylou Rigat lives in Connecticut, yet a class action involving her faulty roof was resolved by a judge in Alabama. The award covered only a fraction of the cost of new shingles, but that wasn't Marylou's biggest problem. She had no idea she was part of the class action in the first place, and no one contacted her about her award. She only learned by acci-

dent when she called the company about her warranty. And then she found out there was nothing more she could do.

Hilda Bankston is with us. And her late husband used to own a drugstore in Fayette, Mississippi. Their business was doing well until the store got swept up in massive litigation just because it dispensed prescription drugs for a certain drug—prescriptions for a certain drug. She had to sell the pharmacy 6 years ago. But she's still getting dragged into court again and again. Here's what she said: “My husband and I lived the American Dream until we were caught up in what has become an American nightmare.”

Alita Ditkowsky is with us. She was part of a class action against a company that made faulty televisions. When the case was settled in Madison County, Illinois, Alita's lawyer took home a big check while she got a \$50 rebate on another TV built by the same company that had ruined the first TV. [Laughter] Here's what she said: “I'm still left with a broken TV.” [Laughter] “He got \$22 million. Where's the justice in this?”

I want to thank you all for letting me use your stories, not only here but during different events we've had in highlighting the need for class-action reform, because this act will help ensure justice by making two essential reforms. First, it moves most large, interstate class actions into Federal courts. This will prevent trial lawyers from shopping around for friendly local venues. The bill will keep out-of-State businesses, workers, and shareholders from being dragged before unfriendly local juries or forced into unfair settlements. And that's good for our system, and it's good for our economy.

Second, the bill provides new safeguards to ensure that plaintiffs in class-action lawsuits are treated fairly. The bill requires judges to consider the real monetary value of coupons and discounts, so that victims can count on true compensation for their injuries. It demands settlements and rulings to be explained in plain English so that class members understand their full rights.

These are needed reforms. It's an important piece of legislation. It shows we're making important progress toward a better legal system.

There's more to do. Small-business owners across America fear that one junk lawsuit could force them to close their doors for good. Medical liability lawsuits are driving up the cost for doctors and patients and entrepreneurs around the country. Asbestos litigation alone has led to the bankruptcy of dozens of companies and cost tens of thousands of jobs, even though many asbestos claims are filed on behalf of people who aren't actually sick.

Overall, junk lawsuits have driven the total cost of America's tort system to more than \$240 billion a year, greater than any other major industrialized nation. It creates a needless disadvantage for America's workers and businesses in a global economy, imposes unfair costs on job creators, and raises prices to consumers.

We have a responsibility to confront frivolous litigation head on. I will continue working with Congress to pass meaningful legal reforms, starting with reform in our asbestos and medical liability systems.

Once again, I want to thank you all for the hard work on this important legislation. Class-action reform will help keep America the best place in the world to do business. It will help ensure justice for our citizens, and I'm confident that this bill will be the first of many bipartisan achievements in the year 2005.

And now it is my honor to sign the Class-Action Fairness law.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:37 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. S. 5, approved February 18, was assigned Public Law No. 109-2.

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### **Digest of Other White House Announcements**

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The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

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#### **February 12**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

#### **February 14**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing and met with the National Security Council. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia to commemorate the 60th anniversary of the meeting between former President Franklin D. Roosevelt and King Abdulaziz of Saudi Arabia and to discuss elections in Saudi Arabia and counterterrorism efforts.

In the afternoon, in the Oval Office, the President met with outgoing Administrator Sean O'Keefe of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to thank him for his service.

The President announced his intention to nominate Lester M. Crawford to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs at the Department of Health and Human Services.

#### **February 15**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The White House announced that the President and Mrs. Bush will host King Harald V and Queen Sonja of Norway for lunch at the White House on March 7.

The President declared a major disaster in Ohio and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe winter storms, flooding, and mudslides on December 22, 2004, through February 1, 2005.

#### **February 16**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, in the Oval Office, he had breakfast with congressional leaders.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Portsmouth, NH, where, upon arrival, he met with USA Freedom Corps volunteer Reggie Wright.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

#### **February 17**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

During the day, in the Oval Office, the President and Mrs. Bush met with Paul Rusesabagina, whose actions to shelter refugees during the 1994 Rwanda genocide were depicted in the film "Hotel Rwanda," and his wife, Tatiana Rusesabagina.

### **February 18**

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

The President announced his intention to nominate Jonathan Brian Perlin to be Under Secretary for Health at the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The President announced his intention to appoint Becky Norton Dunlop (Chairman) and Richard Barber Ainsworth, Jr., as members of the Federal Service Impasses Panel.

The President announced his intention to designate Raymond F. DuBois as Acting Under Secretary of the Army.

The President announced his intention to designate Peter F. Allgeier as Acting U.S. Trade Representative.

The President declared a major disaster in Arizona and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding on December 28, 2004, through January 12, 2005.

The President declared an emergency in Nevada and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by record and/or near record snow on December 29, 2004, through January 2, 2005.

The President declared an emergency in Connecticut and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by record snow on January 22–23.

The President declared an emergency in Massachusetts and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by record and/or near record snow on January 22–23.

The President declared an emergency in Rhode Island and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by record snow on January 22–23.

The President declared a major disaster in American Samoa and ordered Federal aid to

supplement Territory and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Tropical Cyclone Olaf, including high winds, high surf, and heavy rainfall, beginning on February 15 and continuing.

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### **Nominations Submitted to the Senate**

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The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

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#### **Submitted February 14**

John B. Bellinger III,  
of Virginia, to be Legal Adviser of the Department of State, vice William Howard Taft IV.

R. Nicholas Burns,  
of Massachusetts, to be an Under Secretary of State (Political Affairs), vice Marc Isaiah Grossman, resigned.

C. David Welch,  
of Virginia, to be an Assistant Secretary of State (Near Eastern Affairs), vice William J. Burns.

Terrence W. Boyle,  
of North Carolina, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fourth Circuit, vice J. Dickson Phillips, Jr., retired.

Janice R. Brown,  
of California, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit, vice Stephen F. Williams, retired.

Richard A. Griffin,  
of Michigan, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Sixth Circuit, vice Damon J. Keith, retired.

Thomas B. Griffith,  
of Utah, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit, vice Patricia M. Wald, retired.

William James Haynes II,  
of Virginia, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the  
Fourth Circuit, vice H. Emory Widener, Jr.,  
retired.

Brett M. Kavanaugh,  
of Maryland, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the  
District of Columbia Circuit, vice Laurence  
H. Silberman, retired.

David W. McKeague,  
of Michigan, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the  
Sixth Circuit, vice Richard F. Suhrheinrich,  
retired.

William Gerry Myers III,  
of Idaho, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the  
Ninth Circuit, vice Thomas G. Nelson, re-  
tired.

Susan Bieke Neilson,  
of Michigan, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the  
Sixth Circuit, vice Cornelia G. Kennedy, re-  
tired.

Priscilla Richman Owen,  
of Texas, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the  
Fifth Circuit, vice William L. Garwood, re-  
tired.

William H. Pryor, Jr.,  
of Alabama, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the  
Eleventh Circuit, vice Emmett Ripley Cox,  
retired.

Henry W. Saad,  
of Michigan, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the  
Sixth Circuit, vice James L. Ryan, retired.

Robert J. Conrad, Jr.,  
of North Carolina, to be U.S. District Judge  
for the Western District of North Carolina,  
vice a new position created by Public Law  
107-273, approved November 2, 2002.

Sean F. Cox,  
of Michigan, to be U.S. District Judge for  
the Eastern District of Michigan, vice Law-  
rence P. Zatkoff, retired.

Paul A. Crotty,  
of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for  
the Southern District of New York, vice Har-  
old Baer, Jr., retired.

James C. Dever III,  
of North Carolina, to be U.S. District Judge  
for the Eastern District of North Carolina,  
vice W. Earl Britt, retired.

Thomas L. Ludington,  
of Michigan, to be U.S. District Judge for  
the Eastern District of Michigan, vice Paul  
V. Gadola, retired.

Daniel P. Ryan,  
of Michigan, to be U.S. District Judge for  
the Eastern District of Michigan, vice Patrick  
J. Duggan, retired.

J. Michael Seabright,  
of Hawaii, to be U.S. District Judge for the  
District of Hawaii, vice Alan C. Kay, retired.

Peter G. Sheridan,  
of New Jersey, to be U.S. District Judge for  
the District of New Jersey, vice Stephen M.  
Orlofsky, resigned.

Jennifer M. Anderson,  
of the District of Columbia, to be Associate  
Judge of the Superior Court of the District  
of Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice  
Steffen W. Graae, retired.

Laura A. Cordero,  
of the District of Columbia, to be Associate  
Judge of the Superior Court of the District  
of Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice  
Shellie F. Bowers, retired.

A. Noel Anketell Kramer,  
of the District of Columbia, to be a Judge  
of the District of Columbia Court of Appeals  
for the term of 15 years, vice John M. Stead-  
man, retired.

Juliet JoAnn McKenna,  
of the District of Columbia, to be Associate  
Judge of the Superior Court of the District  
of Columbia for the term of 15 years, vice  
Nan R. Shuker, retired.

Gretchen C.F. Shappert,  
of North Carolina, to be U.S. Attorney for  
the Western District of North Carolina, for  
the term of 4 years, vice Robert J. Conrad,  
Jr., resigned.

Earl C. Aguigui, of Guam, to be U.S. Marshal for the District of Guam and concurrently U.S. Marshal for the District of the Northern Mariana Islands for the term of 4 years, vice Joaquin L.G. Salas, term expired.

Adolfo A. Franco, of Virginia, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation for a term expiring September 20, 2008, vice Jeffrey Davidow, resigned, to which position he was appointed during the recess of the Senate from January 6, 2005, to January 20, 2005.

Gregory B. Jaczko, of the District of Columbia, to be a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the term of 5 years expiring June 30, 2008, vice Greta Joy Dicus, term expired, to which position he was appointed during the recess of the Senate from January 6, 2005, to January 20, 2005.

Peter B. Lyons, of Virginia, to be a member of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission for the term of 5 years expiring June 30, 2009, vice Richard A. Meserve, resigned, to which position he was appointed during the recess of the Senate from January 6, 2005, to January 20, 2005.

Roger Francisco Noriega, of Kansas, to be a member of the Board of Directors of the Inter-American Foundation for a term expiring September 20, 2006, vice Harriet C. Babbitt, term expired, to which position he was appointed during the recess of the Senate from January 6, 2005, to January 20, 2005.

**Submitted February 15**

Lester M. Crawford, of Maryland, to be Commissioner of Food and Drugs, Department of Health and Human Services, vice Mark B. McClellan.

**Submitted February 17**

Anthony Jerome Jenkins, of the Virgin Islands, to be U.S. Attorney for the District of the Virgin Islands for the term

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of 4 years, vice James Allan Hurd, Jr., resigned.

Stephen Joseph Murphy III, of Michigan, to be U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of Michigan for the term of 4 years, vice Jeffrey Gilbert Collins, resigned.

**Submitted February 18**

Michael Jackson, of Virginia, to be Deputy Secretary of Homeland Security, vice James M. Loy, resigned.

Jonathan Brian Perlin, of Maryland, to be Under Secretary for Health of the Department of Veterans Affairs for a term of 4 years, vice Robert H. Roswell, resigned.

Patricia Lynn Scarlett, of California, to be Deputy Secretary of the Interior, vice J. Steven Griles, resigned.

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**Checklist  
of White House Press Releases**

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The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

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**Released February 14**

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary on the terrorist attack in Beirut, Lebanon

Fact sheet: Request for Additional FY 2005 Funding for the War on Terror

**Released February 15**

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Ohio

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Bush To Welcome King Harald V and Queen Sonja of Norway

***Released February 16***

Transcript of a press gaggle by Press Secretary Scott McClellan

Fact sheet: Strengthening Social Security for Future Generations

***Released February 17***

Transcript of a press briefing by National Security Adviser Stephen J. Hadley on the President's upcoming visit to Europe

Transcript of a press briefing by Chairman N. Gregory Mankiw of the Council of Economic Advisers on the 2005 Economic Report of the President

***Released February 18***

Statement by the Press Secretary announcing that the President signed S. 5

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Arizona

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Nevada

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Connecticut

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Massachusetts

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to Rhode Island

Statement by the Press Secretary on disaster assistance to American Samoa

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**Acts Approved  
by the President**

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***Approved February 18***

S. 5 / Public Law 109-2  
Class Action Fairness Act of 2005