for those to whom much has been given, much is required.

In prayer, we open ourselves to God's priority, especially His charge to feed the hungry, to reach out to the poor, to bring aid to the widow or the orphan. By surrendering our will to God's will, we learn to serve His eternal purposes. Through prayer, our faith is strengthened, our hearts are humbled, and our lives are transformed. Prayer encourages us to go out into the world and serve.

In our country, we recognize our fellow citizens are free to profess any faith they choose, or no faith at all. You are equally American if you're a Hebrew—a Jew or a Christian or a Muslim. You're equally American if you choose not to have faith. It is important America never forget the great freedom to worship as you so choose.

What I've found in our country, that whatever our faith, millions of Americans answer the universal call to love your neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. Over the past 5 years, we've been inspired by the ways that millions of Americans have answered that call. In the face of terrorist attacks and devastating natural disasters here and around the world, the American people have shown their faith in action again and again. After Katrina, volunteers from churches and mosques and synagogues and other faith-based and community groups opened up their hearts and their homes to the displaced. We saw an outpouring of compassion after the earthquake in Pakistan and the tsunami that devastated entire communities. We live up to God's calling when we provide help for HIV/AIDS victims on the continent of Africa and around the world.

In millions of acts of kindness, we have seen the good heart of America. Bono, the true strength of this country is not in our military might or in the size of our wallet; it is in the hearts and souls of the American people.

I was struck by the comment of a fellow who was rescued from the gulf coast and given shelter. He said, "I didn't think there was so much love in the world." This morning we come together to recognize the source of that great love. We come together before the Almighty in prayer, to reflect on God's will, to seek His aid, and to respond to His grace.

I want to thank you for the fine tradition you continue here today. I pray that our Nation will always have the humility to commend our cares to Providence and trust in the goodness of His plans.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:09 a.m. at the Hilton Washington Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to musician and activist Bono.

Remarks in Maplewood, Minnesota

February 2, 2006

Thank you all. Please be seated. Thanks for coming. Appreciate the warm welcome. Got to take my Post-it note off my speech here. [*Laughter*] My fault. [*Laughter*] I should have cleaned off the podium. [*Laughter*] I see the Governor out there—he says, "You want to have some lunch?" I said, "Sure, what are you serving?" He said, "Lutefisk." [*Laughter*] I said, "No, I think I'll eat on Air Force One." [*Laughter*]

It's great to see you, Governor. Thanks for being here. Laura and I are delighted to be here at 3M. We're glad to be with the Governor and the First Lady, Lieutenant Governor.

I was greeted by your chairman and CEO, George W. [*Laughter*.] I'll just call you "W." [*Laughter*] Thanks for having me. I appreciate it. I want to thank Jay Ihlenfeld, the senior vice president, for the tour we just went on. I want to thank all the employees here for giving me a chance to come by and visit with you.

I really want to send a message to the United States of America that in order for us to keep the standard of living that we're accustomed to, that in order for us to be the leader in the world that we want to be, that we must remain a flexible, technologically-based economy.

You know, it's amazing when you come to 3M to talk to George W. about the number of products you make and—products that people just take for granted, but products, many of which started in a laboratory as the

result of a really smart, capable person making the technological advances necessary to get these products to market.

Innovation is a vital part of the future of the United States of America, and the fundamental question is, how do we keep our society innovative? That's what I'm here to talk about.

You know, one way for our fellow citizens to understand the importance of innovation and technology is, just think about what has taken place over 25 years. Now, for a 59-year-old guy, that doesn't seem like much these days. If you're 26, it seems like a lot. Twenty-five years ago, most Americans used the typewriter. Isn't that interesting? Twenty-five years ago, they had such a thing as pay phones. [*Laughter*] Now we're using cell phones. Carbon paper was used. For those youngsters here, carbon paper was kind of a messy way to duplicate things. Now we're using laser printers. They had bank tellers that were distributing most money in those days. Twenty-five years ago, you had to go to the bank and say to the teller, "Good day, may I have some money?" Now you can go to the ATM machine.

Technology is changing the way we think. I don't know if you remember those awful trips when you had to drive with your family; you played the license plate game. [*Laughter*] Now we got the DVDs—[*laughter*]—right there in the car. Technology happens quickly if you remain an innovative society. And it's those technological improvements that help create high-paying jobs and enhances the standard of living of the American people.

Do you realize that economists say that as much as half of our Nation's economic growth in the last half-century is directly due to technological progress fueled by research and development, the kind of research and development you do right here? Think about that. One-half of the progress of our economy is due to research and development. Well, if that's the case, if that's the truth, we got to make sure we continue to encourage research and development.

Technology has enabled us to be the preeminent economy in the world. I think it's good that we're the preeminent economy in the world. I think it's good for the American people that we're in a leadership position. And the reason why I think it's good is because when you lead, your people benefit. By being a leader in the economy of the world, it means somebody is more likely to find work. And somebody is able to—likely to realize dreams and opportunity.

I say we're the preeminent economy in the world because the facts bear me out. We're growing faster than other industrial—major industrialized nations. We've added 4.6 million new jobs in 2½ years. That's more than Japan and the European Union combined. And the fundamental question is: one, do we want to remain the leader; and two, how do you do it?

There's some uncertainty in America today, and I can understand why. There's uncertainty when it comes to our economy. People are beginning to see competitors emerge, India and China. I'm a fellow who likes competition. I think it's good to have competition. I think it makes us do things better. But some people in our country look at competition and say, "Well, we can't possibly compete with China or India or other countries, and therefore, why don't we just think about walling ourselves off?" That's called protectionism. It's a trend that we need to worry about. See, there's uncertainty when people see jobs go overseas. I can understand that. Somebody's working hard all their life, and all of the sudden, the job gets moved overseas because of competition. That creates uncertainty in the workplace. And one of the reactions to that uncertainty could be, "Well, I'm tired of competing; maybe what we need to do is instead of competing, just kind of leave ourselves apart from the world."

The United States of America has been through this before. This isn't a new thought. If you look at our history, our economic history, you'll find that we've been through periods of protectionism before. If you'll look at our foreign policy history, you'll find there's been periods of isolationism before. I think that—and so the first thing I want to share with you is, it's important for us not to lose our confidence in changing times. It's important for us not to fear competition but welcome it.

There's a global economy. The Internet has really changed a lot, when you think about it. It is—I happen to think it's good news that countries are becoming more wealthy; that through the global competition, that people's lives are improving. I believe that because most Americans—all Americans believe in the dignity of every human being. But I take a practical look at it, and so should you at 3M. You ought to say, "We welcome this developing world, this new economy, because as wealth spreads, there are new customers for our products." In other words, instead of saying, "We fear the competition; the global economy frightens us," the United States of America ought to say, "We want more people to be able to buy our products."

And so what I'm telling you is, I think the role of Government is to shape the future, not fear the future. And I think the role of a President is to say to the American people, "Be bold; be confident. And if we do the right things, we'll remain the leader in the world."

And here are the things I think we ought to do. First, I know we got to keep our economy growing. You can't be a world leader in the economy if your economy is flat. You can't be a world leader—world economic leader, if your economy is flat. I mean, you got to have progrowth policies in place.

One of the interesting debates in Washington, DC, is, how do you encourage growth? Well, I'll give you my position. I think when people have more money in their pocket to save, earn, or spend, the economy grows. I think when a small-business person has more money to invest, the economy grows.

We passed tax relief. As I said in my State of the Union the other night, the tax relief that we passed left $880 billion in the hands of individuals and families and small businesses and entrepreneurs. And I believe that is why our economy is the most preeminent in the world.

And this—[*Applause*] And that tax relief is set to expire. And when it does, you're going to get a tax increase. Not only do I think it's wrong to take money out of your pocket at this point in our economic history, I also believe that uncertainty in the Tax Code makes it difficult for people to make wise decisions about investment. And I meant what I said to the Congress: In order to make sure this expansion is not temporary, they need to make sure that tax relief is permanent.

You'll hear them say, "Well, we need to raise taxes to balance the budget." That's not the way Washington works. They'll raise taxes to increase spending. That's the way it works. And so I think the best way to balance the budget is to have progrowth policies in place so these tax revenues remain strong—and be wise about how we spend your money. That's hard in Washington. Everybody has got a great idea about how to spend your money. But when you're running 3M Company or you're running your family budget, you learn how to set priorities. And that's what Congress must do.

I'm going to tell you something: If Congress does set its priorities—and we've got a few suggestions for them how to set the priorities—we can cut this deficit in half by 2009. The real issue on spending, though—and this is important, by the way, the current deficit is important—don't get me wrong. But if you're a younger person sitting out there, you need to worry about the long-term deficit caused by baby boomers like me fixing to retire. I don't know if you know this or not, but I turn 62, retirement age, in 2008. That's a convenient year for me to be in retirement. [*Laughter*]

And there's a lot of us getting ready to retire. And when we retire, this baby boom generation retires, we're going to put a big strain on Social Security and Medicare. Interestingly enough, my generation has been promised better benefits than the previous generation. And yet per worker, there's fewer people paying into the system to support me. We got a problem.

You know, it's really hard for me to realize we have a problem and travel around the country and look at younger workers paying payroll taxes into a system that I know is going bankrupt. It's not right for Members of Congress, by the way, to travel around the country and talk—and look at workers paying into a system that's going bankrupt and not tell the truth. We can fix this problem. This is a problem—we don't have to cut benefits

of younger workers. We need to slow the rate of benefits down.

Do you realize the benefits grow faster than the rate of inflation? Congress over here, and people say, "Vote for me; I'm going to make sure the benefits grow faster than the rate of inflation." Listen, Social Security was meant to supplement income, retirement income, initially. And so what I'm telling you is, there's a solution to be had. Unfortunately, the atmosphere in Washington appears that there will be no solution because there's too much politics. And my call to members of both parties—and I mean this—is we need to set aside this needless politics in Washington, this zero-sum attitude, and fix mandatory spending so a younger generation of Americans can confidently contribute into a system that's—[*applause*].

If we live in a global economy—which we do—with competition, it's—the countries that are able to fix their entitlement programs will be the countries that remain competitive. Congress needs to remember that. When we fix this—and I'm confident we can, and I believe we will—when we reform the program, it will keep the United States of America competitive. Because if we don't, the majority of tax revenues will go to—there will have to be massive tax increases to pay for the promises, or significant cuts throughout our Government.

To keep us competitive, we've got to make sure we keep markets open. I told you—I'm telling you something you already know—61 percent of your revenue is as a result of sales from the United States elsewhere, which says to me—listen, my theory is this: If you're good at something, let's make sure we can sell it all around the world. And so I believe in open markets. As a matter of fact, I know that in order to keep us competitive in the 21st century, that the United States of America should be doing everything we can to open markets and level the playing field.

We've signed a lot of free trade agreements, and at the same time we've done so, we've said to countries, "Listen, treat us the way we treat you." That's all we ask; level the playing field. There is no doubt in my mind, American farmers and entrepreneurs and business people and 3M employees can compete with anybody, anytime, anywhere, so long as the rules are fair.

In my speech, I talked about a health care system that takes care of the elderly and takes care of the poor. We'll do that. But it needs to be a health care system, as well, in which there's transparency in pricing, information technology in the health care field to help reduce costs, a doctor-patient relationship that is the center of the decisionmaking, a plan that encourages preventative medicine. People need to be incented to make right choices with their bodies, in what they eat and how they exercise.

Another aspect of making sure that medicine is affordable and available is—listen, there's too many lawsuits. I said a startling statistic the other night: Do you realize there are 1,500 counties in America without an ob-gyn? Now, think about that. And the reason why is, a lot of good docs are getting run out of practice because of needless lawsuits. It's one thing to make sure that there's justice; it's another thing to have a system that encourages junk lawsuits that are running up your cost of medicine and running good docs out of practice. Congress needs to pass medical liability reform now.

And speaking about legal reform, you talk to people that take risk, one of the things they tell you about is, these lawsuits hamper strong investment. If we want to be competitive, we've got to have balance in our legal system. Congress has the chance to send a signal again—we did a pretty good job on class-action lawsuits, but now they got a chance to do something on asbestos. And there's a bill going to be moving out of the Senate. It's time to send a clear message to investors and markets and employees that we've got to have a legal system, in regards to asbestos, that's fair to those who have actually been harmed and reasonable for those who need to pay.

I talked about energy the other day, and Tim mentioned it. I guess I shocked some people, being from Texas, to say we're addicted to oil, but we are, and it's a problem. It's a problem; it's a national security problem and an economic security problem. Touring here and seeing the great benefits of nanotechnology, I'm beginning to get a better sense of how nanotechnology plays

into fuel cells, for example, and the capacity for us to have hydrogen automobiles. I know that technology will end up leading away from dependence on oil. I know it's going to happen. I'll tell you why I'm optimistic about it, is because the scientists there in Washington, those in the Energy Department, believe we're darn close to a couple of very important breakthroughs.

Before I get to them, I did talk about the need to use safe nuclear energy to power our plants. I mean, if you're worried about the environment, which I am, it seems like to make sense that we use nuclear power. It's renewable, and it's clean.

We're pretty close to some interesting breakthroughs on solar energy as well. I truly believe that with continued research and development, focusing on interesting technologies, that we'll have coal-fired plants that will be emitting zero emissions. And it's coming. And what I'm telling you is, is that technology is important for your jobs, but it's also important for the quality of life.

Automobiles—if we want to get rid of dependence on oil, we got to do something with automobiles. I mean, that's the place where we use a lot of oil. We got to change how we drive. We got to change how cars are powered. This administration has done some things on CAFE standards, but that recognizes that we're still dependent upon oil to manufacture our fuel. What I'm interested in doing is providing alternative choices for the consumers like ethanol or plug-in hybrid vehicles. We're close to some breakthroughs on battery technologies that I'm sure some of you know about, to make these hybrid automobiles even better and more cost-effective for the American consumer.

I'm excited about ethanol. Now, we've been making ethanol out of corn, mainly. But now we got a chance, with breakthroughs in research and development, new technologies to make ethanol out of switch grass or wood products or weeds. And we're close. And I said the other night in the State of the Union, within 6 years, this kind of fuel ought to be competitive with gasoline.

Now, people say, "That's fine; how about the automobiles?" Well, I had an interesting experience. I went down to Brazil, and I saw President Lula down there. I don't know if you know this, but the vast majority of fuel to fuel the cars in Brazil is made from sugar. And guess who makes the cars that run on sugar? General Motors. So the technology is available for flex-fuel automobiles. As a matter of fact, I am told there's over 4 million flex-fuel automobiles operating in the United States today. And so the hope is and the belief is, is that, with a breakthrough with these cellulostic technologies—big word for a history major—[*laughter*]—I don't want to try to spell it—[*laughter*]—the car industry has got the capacity to manufacture automobiles that can burn that stuff.

Now, people say, "Well, if you can get the technology and you got the cars, how come it takes until 2025 to reduce—significantly reduce dependence on the Middle Eastern oil?" Well, the answer is, we got a lot of automobiles, and it takes awhile for the fleet to turn over. Things just don't happen instantly when it comes to an automobile fleet.

And so—but what I'm telling you is, and what I'm telling the American people is, research is going to lead to an important breakthrough here, when it comes to our energy. I'm confident that we'll be able to say to the American people when this research is complete, that the United States is on our way to no dependence on oil from the Middle East.

I want to talk about another important issue, and I've come to 3M to highlight this issue. And the truth of the matter is, in order to stay competitive, we have got to lead the world in research and development, and got to lead the world in having people—scientists and engineers that are capable of helping this America stay on the cutting edge of technology. And 3M is a perfect place to come.

There's an economic reason why we need to do this. The economic reason why we got to stay on the leading edge of technology is to make sure that people's standard of living here in America goes up—that's what it is. And there's a direct correlation by being the most innovative country in the world and how our citizens live.

Secondly, the second practical application to make sure we've got young scientists and engineers coming up, is that if we don't have people that have got the skill set to fill the jobs of the 21st century, because we're in

a global world and a competitive world, they're going to go somewhere else. And so I want to talk about an initiative to make sure America remains competitive.

The first element is, is that for the Federal Government to continue its role—oh, by the way, when we went on the tour, so I asked, "How are you doing?" "Fine." "What do you do?" "This." "Where did you get your education?" We met engineers and chemists and physicists. I didn't meet any history majors. [*Laughter*] I met people who are incredibly capable, smart thinkers that are able to take their brainpower and come up with ways to make practical products that change Americans' lives. And so—and the Federal Government has a role in this, and our taxpayers have got to understand, a good use of your taxpayers' money is to promote research and development—research into the physical sciences.

Again, I'd repeat to you that if we can remain the most competitive nation in the world, it will benefit the worker here in America. People have got to understand, when we talk about spending your taxpayers' money on research and development, there is a correlating benefit, particularly to your children. See, it takes awhile for some of the investments that are being made with Government dollars to come to market. I don't know if people realize this, but the Internet began as the Defense Department project to improve military communications. In other words, we were trying to figure out how to better communicate. There was research money spent, and as a result of this sound investment, the Internet came to be.

The Internet has changed us. It's changed the whole world. It's an amazing example of what a commitment to research dollars can mean. The iPod—I'm a bike guy, and I like to plug in music on my iPod when I'm riding along to hopefully help me forget how old I am. [*Laughter*] But it was built—when it was launched, it was built on years of Government-funded research and microdrive storage or electrochemistry or single compression—signal compression. See, the nanotechnology research that the Government is helping sponsor is going to change the way people live.

And so what I said to the Congress was, "Let's be wise with taxpayers' money. Let's stay on the leading edge of technology and change, and let's reaffirm our commitment to scientific innovation." I think we ought to double the Federal commitment to the most basic critical research programs in physical sciences over the next decade.

This year alone, we're proposing $6 billion go to the National Science Foundation to fund research in physics and chemistry and material science and nanotechnology. We're proposing $4 billion goes to the Energy Department's Office of Science to build the world's most powerful civilian supercomputer. We're proposing $535 million to the Commerce Department's National Institute of Standards and Technology to research electronics information technologies and advanced computers.

I wouldn't be proposing this if I didn't believe that there will be tangible benefits for the American people. We may not see them tomorrow, but you're children will see them. We're staying on the leading edge of technology for a reason. If America doesn't lead, if we try to kind of forget that we're in a competitive world, generations of Americans won't be able to realize the standard of living that we've been able to realize.

Secondly, I also realize that, by far, the vast majority of research and development is done at the private level by companies—3M, you're spending a lot of money on research and development. So the Government can help, but the truth of the matter is, two-thirds of all research and development spending in America comes from the private sector. And so the fundamental question is, what can the Government do, if anything, to encourage that money to continue to be invested? If it makes sense to develop new technologies and the private sector provides most of the money for that, is there anything we can do, encourage this kind of investment?

And the answer is, yes, there is. There's something called the research and development tax credit. Interestingly enough—obviously, if you think about tax credit, it says if you spend money on research and development—the Tax Code—it treats you generously, more generously than if you didn't. It says, go ahead and do it; there's an advantage

for you to make this decision. The problem is, it expired. The research and development tax credit expires in 2005. And so the Congress is saying, "Well, why don't we just temporarily extend it?" You cannot run a business and plan to make long-term investments if the incentive program is only temporary.

Congress needs to understand that nations like China and India and Japan and Korea and Canada all offer tax incentives that are permanent. In other words, we live in a competitive world. We want to be the leader in this world. And therefore, in my judgment, in order—one important part of staying the leader, when it comes to innovation and research and technology, is for the Congress to make the tax credit on research and development permanent.

Third part of the competitiveness agenda is to make sure our kids learn math and science. It's one thing to research, have incentives for money, but if you don't have somebody in that lab, like those chemists I met, we're not going to be that good. And so I got some ideas for the Congress to consider. The first is to emphasize math and science early, and to make sure that the courses are rigorous enough that our children can compete globally.

We made a pretty good start on, by the way, high standards with the No Child Left Behind Act. I was talking to—it about the Governor; he said, "People get a little nervous when Government says, 'Measure.' " And he didn't say that; he's reflecting the opinion of others. As the Governor of Texas, I remember that attitude too. But here's my attitude: If you spend money, doesn't it make sense to determine whether or not the results are halfway decent? As a taxpayer, it seems like that's something you'd want to know. It's certainly—it's part of, I'm sure, how 3M succeeds and continues to compete. You set high standards, and then you measure.

Well, I think schools ought to do the same thing. I don't think we ought to tell you how to design your test. I don't think we ought to dictate curriculum, but I do know, in return for Federal money, it makes sense to say, "Can the child read, write, add, and subtract when he or she is supposed to?" And so we're measuring in return for Federal money. That's the whole thing behind No Child Left Behind.

When I was the Governor of Texas, schools that didn't measure thought they were doing pretty well until—that's a natural assumption for a parent, right? "I'm happy. They're paying attention to me." And things are going fine, and then the child gets out there and has to take remedial reading courses in college. And so you've got to measure. I remember the debate in Texas. They said, "It's racist to measure." I said, "Uh-uh, it's racist not to measure." Think about a system that just shuffles kids through.

So we're making good progress at the early grades, particularly in reading and math. Matter of fact, America is competitive in math in the early grades. How do we know? Because we test. We test. And by the way, we make the test results known locally, and we compare tests State to State, so people can figure out—old Pawlenty can figure out how he's doing against other States. [*Laughter*] It's a nice tool if you're a reformist, by the way. See, if you believe in reform, it gives you leverage on a system that tends to be status quo oriented.

The other thing that we did in No Child Left Behind, which makes a lot of sense, is there's supplemental service money. That means extra money so that when we find a child lagging behind in reading, that family got extra money for extra tutoring. In other words, we said, let's diagnose the problem and solve it early, before it's too late.

Accountability does a further thing that is important. It kind of helps resolve curriculum disputes. You might remember the old debates—at least I certainly remember them—over how do you teach reading. And there was this kind of theory and that kind of theory. Well, when you measure, it kind of makes it pretty clear which works and what doesn't work. We need to have the same emphasis in math that we have in reading, and the reason why is, is that because when you test early, we do fine in math, and yet when our kids start heading into junior high and high school, it's clear they can't compete in the world. And now is the time to do something about it.

Well, so what do you do? What do you do? Well, the first thing you've got to make

sure your teachers have the skills necessary to be able to teach math and science. And I think the most practical way to do that is to teach teachers how to teach Advanced Placement. If you believe in high standards and if you want your kids to compete, a proven system is the AP programs. And they work. And therefore, we're going to ask Congress to appropriate money so that we can have a full-scale effort to train 70,000 teachers in how to teach AP.

Another way to make sure that we have high standards in math and science is to take the same approach we took in reading, and that is intervention early, but apply that to math in the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade. In other words, have supplemental service money, extra money, tutorial money, money that could be used at the public school or private school or tutoring service to say, when we find a child that's lagging behind in math in the junior high schools, let's intervene. Let's not let them slip. Let's make sure that same high standard we've achieved in the fourth grade applies throughout the junior high level. So you got intervention in junior high, teachers able to spend that—get that curriculum right in high school.

The third thing we need to do is what you do here at 3M—and I want to applaud those scientists who are here who have gone in the classroom and said, "This is a good deal. You're not going to believe how exciting it is to be a physicist or a mathematician or a chemist. Let me tell you the practical applications of what it means to be a scientist and tell you how cool a job it is, how exciting it is." See, these kids need somebody to walk in to their classrooms and say, "Follow me; follow my example." And so we've got a plan to help 30,000 adjunct professors—that would be you—to be able to go into the schools all across America and set a good example, to excite kids about the potential.

One of the other things we're going to do that makes sense is to have a—what we call a national math panel. Again, we made great progress in reading, and one of the reasons why is that we've—there's a science to reading. I mean, it's not guesswork anymore. We've got a lot of really smart people, particularly out of NIH, that helped develop curriculum go-bys. We're not telling you what to use, but we are saying, "If you're interested in teaching every child to read, here are some things that are necessary to make it work." We want to do the same thing with the math curriculum so that every school district, if they so choose, has got a resource base in which to figure out what works.

Sometimes you have a good teacher sitting there, but they really don't understand what works when it teaches a child—how to teach a child math. And we believe we can figure it out. I believe we have figured it out, and now we'll make that available to school districts all around the country through the Governors and the States.

And so the initiative I just described is—America will remain competitive by being wise about how we encourage research and development but, most importantly, by making sure our kids have the skill sets for the jobs of the 21st century.

Now in the meantime, there's another issue that I want to discuss right quick—two other quick issues, then you'll be liberated. [*Laughter*] One of them is, there are more high-tech jobs in America today than people available to fill them. And if that's—so what do we do about that? And the reason it's important, and the American citizen has got to understand it's important, is if we don't do something about how to fill those high-tech jobs here, they'll go somewhere else where somebody can do the job. In other words, there are some who say, "We can't worry about competition. It doesn't matter; it's here. Don't worry about it; do something about it. It's a real aspect of the world in which we live."

And so one way to deal with this problem, and probably the most effective way, is to recognize that there's a lot of bright engineers and chemists and physicists from other lands that are either educated here or received an education elsewhere but want to work here. And they come here under a program called H1B visas. And the problem is, is that Congress has limited the number of H1B visas that can come and apply for a job—a H1B visa holder can apply for a job at 3M. And I think it's a mistake not to encourage more really bright folks who can fill the jobs that are having trouble being filled here in America—to limit their number. And

so I call upon Congress to be realistic and reasonable and raise that cap.

We'll educate our kids. That's the goal. Of course, we want every job that's ever generated in America filled by Americans, but that's not the reality today. In order for 3M to remain competitive, in order for this job base to remain strong, in order for us to be a leader in innovation, we got to be wise about letting kids come here who've got the skill sets needed to fill the jobs that help us remain the leader in the world.

And so what I'm telling you is, is that I'm an optimistic guy about America's future because I believe in our system, and I believe in the people. The Government's role is to make sure that we're a flexible economy. Its role is to make sure that we apply our resources properly to make sure we're an innovative economy. And certainly, a very vital role at all levels of government is to make sure our children have the skill sets necessary to fill the jobs that will inevitably come in this changing world.

My belief is that we should not fear the future; we should shape it. America has a vital role to play as a leader. And the policies I just outlined will help us remain the leader that I think most Americans want us to be.

I appreciate 3M's leadership. I appreciate you employing so many people. I appreciate you making this a good place for people to come to work. I could tell it just in the pride of the voices of the researchers I met. Thanks for making this an environment where innovation succeeds and people are able to realize their full human capacity.

God bless you all, and may God continue to bless our country.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. at 3M Corporate Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Tim Pawlenty of Minnesota, and his wife, Mary; Lt. Gov. Carol Molnau of Minnesota; George W. Buckley, chairman, president, and chief executive officer, 3M; and President Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva of Brazil. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on Negotiation of a Free Trade Agreement With South Korea

February 2, 2006

The United States and the Republic of Korea have a strong alliance and are bound together by common values and a deep desire to expand freedom, peace, and prosperity throughout Asia and the world. Today we seek to deepen the ties between our nations by negotiating a comprehensive U.S.-Republic of Korea Free Trade Agreement.

A Free Trade Agreement with the Republic of Korea will provide important economic, political, and strategic benefits to both countries and build on America's engagement in Asia. The Republic of Korea is our seventh largest trading partner and seventh largest export market, and this Free Trade Agreement advances our commitment to opening markets and expanding opportunities for America's farmers, ranchers, workers, and businesses.

Remarks in a Discussion on American Competitiveness in Rio Rancho, New Mexico

February 3, 2006

The President. Thank you all. Thanks for the warm welcome. Thanks for the Mexican food last night, Pete. [*Laughter*] I hope you picked up the tab. [*Laughter*] Laura and I are thrilled to be here. This is going to be an interesting discussion. What you're watching—what you'll watch is a way to talk about how to put good policy in place, not only through my voice but through the voices of many who are living exactly the strategy that we want to implement for the rest of the country.

So, first of all, I want to welcome my wife, Laura. We don't get to travel that much——

The First Lady. Together.

The President. Together. We both were raised in west Texas and occasionally slipped across the border there to go to New Mexico. And every time we did, we were better for it. [*Laughter*] It's a great State.

Do you want to have a few words?