

peace. And I believe the reason why is because democracy has taken hold on that continent. And one of the leading lights of democracy has been Hungary.

We thank the Hungarian people for their example. We thank them for their contribution in helping the newly free in Afghanistan and Iraq realize the blessings of liberty. We thank them for being allies in keeping the peace.

Mr. Speaker, thanks for letting me come by and pay my respects to a strong ally and a good friend but also pay my respects to Congressman Tom Lantos, a person who understands the difference between freedom and tyranny, and a person who is willing to speak his mind all times, all places, everywhere.

God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:45 p.m. in Statutory Hall at the United States Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; U.S. Ambassador to Hungary George H. Walker III; and Hungary's Ambassador to the U.S. Andras Simonyi.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Members of Congress

March 16, 2006

It's been my pleasure to host Republicans and Democrats from both the House and the Senate here to talk about budget reform. We're talking about the way to—for the executive branch and the legislative branch to work in a cooperative fashion to help make sure that the appropriations bills we pass are—meet priorities, that they are—that the process is transparent, that we're able to say to the American people, "We care about how we spend your money."

Part of the budget reform process is a line-item veto. I want to thank the Members here who have come, who have offered not only constructive advice but practical applications of the line-item veto so that it becomes law. And I listened carefully to some constructive suggestions from both Republicans and Democrats as to how to get a piece of legislation passed. The American people expect all of us from both parties to work diligently as to how we spend their money. And one way

that we can earn the confidence of the people is to pass a line-item veto.

And again, I want to thank the Members for being here. It means a lot that people from both parties are here. I particularly want to thank my opponent in the 2004 campaign, Senator Kerry, for being here. I can remember on the campaign trail, he said that he supported a line-item veto, and he is following through on his word by being here at the table. I'm proud you're here, Senator.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Remarks on Signing the Stop Counterfeiting in Manufactured Goods Act

March 16, 2006

Thank you. Welcome. Thanks for coming. In a few moments, I will sign a bill that protects the hard work of American innovators, strengthens the rule of law, and helps keep our families and consumers safe. The Stop Counterfeiting in Manufactured Goods Act has earned broad support, and I want to thank all those who helped get this bill passed for being here today. I want to thank the lawmakers from both political parties for getting this piece of legislation to this desk. I want to thank the consumer protection groups who have joined us as well. Thanks for your hard work on this important piece of legislation.

I want to thank the Attorney General, Al Gonzales, who has joined us; the Secretary of Commerce, Carlos Gutierrez; my Secretary of Labor, Elaine Chao. Thank you all for being here. I appreciate the chairman of the Judiciary—House Judiciary, Jim Sensenbrenner, for joining us today. I also want to thank the bill's sponsor, Joe Knollenberg from Michigan, as well as Bobby Scott from Virginia. Thank you three Members for being here. The Senators claim they're voting on important legislation; otherwise they would have been here too. *[Laughter]*

This economy of ours is strong; it's getting stronger. We grew at 3.5 percent last year. The national unemployment rate is 4.8 percent. People are buying homes. The small-

business sector is strong. Productivity is up. Our country is productive; it's innovative; it's entrepreneurial. And we've got to keep it that way.

One of the problems we have is that people feel comfortable, at times, in trying to take a shortcut to success in the business world. They feel like they can copy existing products instead of designing their own. In order to keep this economy innovative and entrepreneurial, it's important for us to enforce law, and if the laws are weak, pass new laws to make sure that the problem of counterfeiting, which has been growing rapidly, is arrested, is held in check.

Counterfeiting costs our country hundreds of billion dollars a year. It has got a lot of harmful effects in our economy. Counterfeiting hurts businesses. They lose the right to profit from their innovation. Counterfeiting hurts workers because counterfeiting undercuts honest competition, rewards illegal competitors. Counterfeiting hurts our—counterfeiting hurts consumers because fake products expose our people to serious health and safety risks. Counterfeiting hurts the Government. We lose out on tax revenue. We have to use our resources for law—of law enforcement to stop counterfeiting. Counterfeiting hurts national security because terrorist networks use counterfeit sales to, sometimes, finance their operations.

This administration and Congress have worked together to confront the illegal threat—the real threat of illegal activity such as counterfeiting. And the bill I'm signing today is an important step forward.

The bill helps us defeat counterfeiting in two key ways. First, the bill strengthens our laws against trading counterfeit labels and packaging. In the past, the law prohibited the manufacturing, shipping, and—or selling of counterfeit goods, but it did not make it a crime to ship falsified labels or packaging, which counterfeiters could then attach to fake products.

This loophole helped counterfeiters cheat consumers by passing off poorly-made items as brandname goods. By closing the loophole, we're going to keep honest Americans from losing business to scam artists.

Secondly, the bill strengthens penalties for counterfeiters and gives prosecutors new

tools to stop those who defraud American consumers. The bill requires courts to order the destruction of all counterfeit products seized as a part of a criminal investigation. The bill requires convicted counterfeiters to turn over their profits as well as any equipment used in their operations, so it can't be used to cheat our people again. The bill requires those convicted of counterfeiting to reimburse the legitimate businesses they exploited. These commonsense reforms will help law enforcement to crack down on this serious crime. We've got to get the counterfeiters and their products off the streets.

The tools in the bill I sign today will become a part of our broad effort to protect the creativity and innovation of our entrepreneurs. This administration is leading an initiative called STOP—Strategy Targeting Organized Piracy. Nine Federal agencies are coming together in this initiative, including the Department of Justice, which has launched the most aggressive effort in American history to prevent intellectual property violations. We've expanded computer hacking and intellectual property units in U.S. Attorney's offices all across the country. We're posting specially trained prosecutors and FBI agents at American embassies in Asia and Eastern Europe. We're working with other nations and the World Trade Organization to promote strong intellectual property laws around the globe. We're cooperating with the private sector to raise awareness of counterfeiting so we can help stop fraud before it starts.

These efforts are getting some results. Last year, we dismantled a piracy ring in Massachusetts that was planning to sell more than 30,000 counterfeit hand bags and shoes and necklaces and other items. With partners overseas, we broke up a prescription drug counterfeiting network and seized more than \$4 million in phony medicine. With the help of 16 countries on 5 continents, we removed more than a \$100 million worth of illegal online software, games, movies, and music. This is a really important effort, and as we call upon folks to send a message to the counterfeiters, "We're not going to tolerate your way of life," that we need to give them all the tools necessary to do their jobs. And this bill

I'm going to sign here in 30 seconds does just that.

Again, I want to thank you all for being here to help honor these legislators that crossed the partisan divide to help protect this country from those who feel like they can sell illegal products and counterfeit and steal our—steal intellectual property. Good work. Thanks for coming. Now let's sign the bill.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:07 p.m. in Room 350 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. H.R. 32, approved March 16, was assigned Public Law No. 109–181.

Remarks on the Nomination of Dirk Kempthorne To Be Secretary of the Interior

March 16, 2006

The President. Good afternoon. I'm pleased to announce my nomination of Governor Dirk Kempthorne to be the Secretary of the Interior. The Department of Interior is responsible for managing our national parks and public lands, conserving our natural resources, and pursuing environmentally responsible energy development on Federal lands and waters.

I've nominated Dirk to succeed an outstanding public servant, Gale Norton. As the Secretary of the Interior for the past 5 years, she was instrumental in establishing the Healthy Forests Initiative to protect communities from catastrophic wildfire and to improve the habitat. When Hurricane Katrina devastated the gulf coast region, she helped lead the efforts to restore offshore energy production so that Americans would not suffer further supply disruptions and price increases.

Future generations of Americans will be able to enjoy our great national parks and wildlife refugees because of Gale's untiring work. Gale was one of the original members of my Cabinet and the first woman in American history to hold the post of Secretary of the Interior. I appreciate her dedicated service, and Laura and I wish Gale and John all the best.

Dirk Kempthorne is the right man to build on this progress. As Governor of Idaho, he

worked closely with Gale on a variety of important initiatives. They worked together to resolve a longstanding water rights issue, to return responsibility to Idaho for managing the local wolf population, and to make the Healthy Forests Initiative a reality in Idaho.

As Governor, Dirk has been a responsible steward of Idaho's 30 State parks and recreational trailways that serve millions of visitors each year. He has launched the state-wide Experience Idaho Initiative, which will fund needed improvements within Idaho's State parks to preserve public spaces and expand recreational opportunities for visitors. Last August, I had a chance to enjoy those recreational opportunities firsthand when Dirk and I biked some of Idaho's trails together.

As Secretary of the Interior, Dirk will continue my administration's efforts to conserve our land, water, and air resources; reduce the maintenance backlog of our national parks; support historic and cultural sites through our Preserve America Initiative; and develop the energy potential of Federal lands and waters in environmentally sensitive ways.

Dirk brings wide experience to these important tasks. He has served at every level of government: as mayor of Boise, as Governor of Idaho, and as a United States Senator. While in the Senate, he chaired the Subcommittee on Drinking Water, Fisheries, and Wildlife, and he chaired the Armed Services Personnel Subcommittee.

He built bipartisan support to enact comprehensive reforms to the Safe Drinking Water Act. Dirk understands that those who live closest to the land know how to manage it best, and he will work closely with State and local leaders to ensure wise stewardship of our resources.

Dirk has had a long and abiding love for nature. When he and his wife, Patricia, were married, they chose to hold the ceremony atop Idaho's Moscow Mountain at sunrise. Dirk said, "I don't think there's a more beautiful cathedral than the outdoors."

I appreciate his willingness to take on this important post, and I ask the Senate to confirm him promptly as the 49th Secretary of the Interior.

Thanks for agreeing to serve.