

free. We will know it is here when Miguel Sigler Amaya is reunited with his brothers, and they can say what they think and can come and go as they please. And we will know it is here when the Ladies in White no longer make their silent vigils or live in constant fear of assault or arrest.

Until that day comes, the United States will continue to shine a bright and revealing light on Cuba's abuses. We will continue to tell the stories of Cuba's people, even when a lot of the world doesn't want to hear them. And we will carry this refrain in our hearts: *Viva Cuba Libre*.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:35 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Raul Castro Ruz and former President Fidel Castro Ruz of Cuba. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks on the National Economy

March 7, 2008

Earlier today I spoke with members of my economic team. They updated me on the state of our economy. This morning we learned that our economy lost 63,000 payroll jobs in February, although the unemployment rate improved to 4.8 percent.

Losing a job is painful, and I know Americans are concerned about our economy. So am I. It's clear our economy has slowed. But the good news is, we anticipated this and took decisive action to bolster the economy by passing a growth package that will put money into the hands of American workers and businesses.

I signed this growth package into law just 3 weeks ago, and its provisions are just starting to kick in. First, a growth package includes incentives for businesses to make investments in new equipment this year. These incentives are now in place, and they are starting to have an impact. My advisers tell me that investment in new equipment remains solid thus far in the first quarter.

And as more businesses take advantage of these new incentives as well as lower interest rates, we expect investment will continue to grow and that businesses will begin creating new jobs in the months ahead.

Secondly, the growth package will provide tax rebates to more than 130 million American households. Now, these rebates will begin reaching American families in May. And when the money reaches the American people, we expect they will use it to boost consumer spending, and that will spur job creation as well.

We believe that the steps we've taken, together with the actions taken by the Federal Reserve, will have a positive effect on our economy. So my message to the American people is this: I know this is a difficult time for our economy, but we recognized the problem early and provided the economy with a booster shot. We will begin to see the impact over the coming months. And in the long run, we can have confidence that so long as we pursue progrowth, low-tax policies that put faith in the American people, our economy will prosper.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:55 p.m. on the Colonnade at the White House.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

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.

March 1

In the morning, at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, the President had an intelligence briefing.

March 3

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he returned to Washington, DC, arriving in the afternoon.

Later in the afternoon, on the North Portico, the President participated in a photo opportunity with the Veterans of Foreign Wars National Voice of Democracy Award recipients.