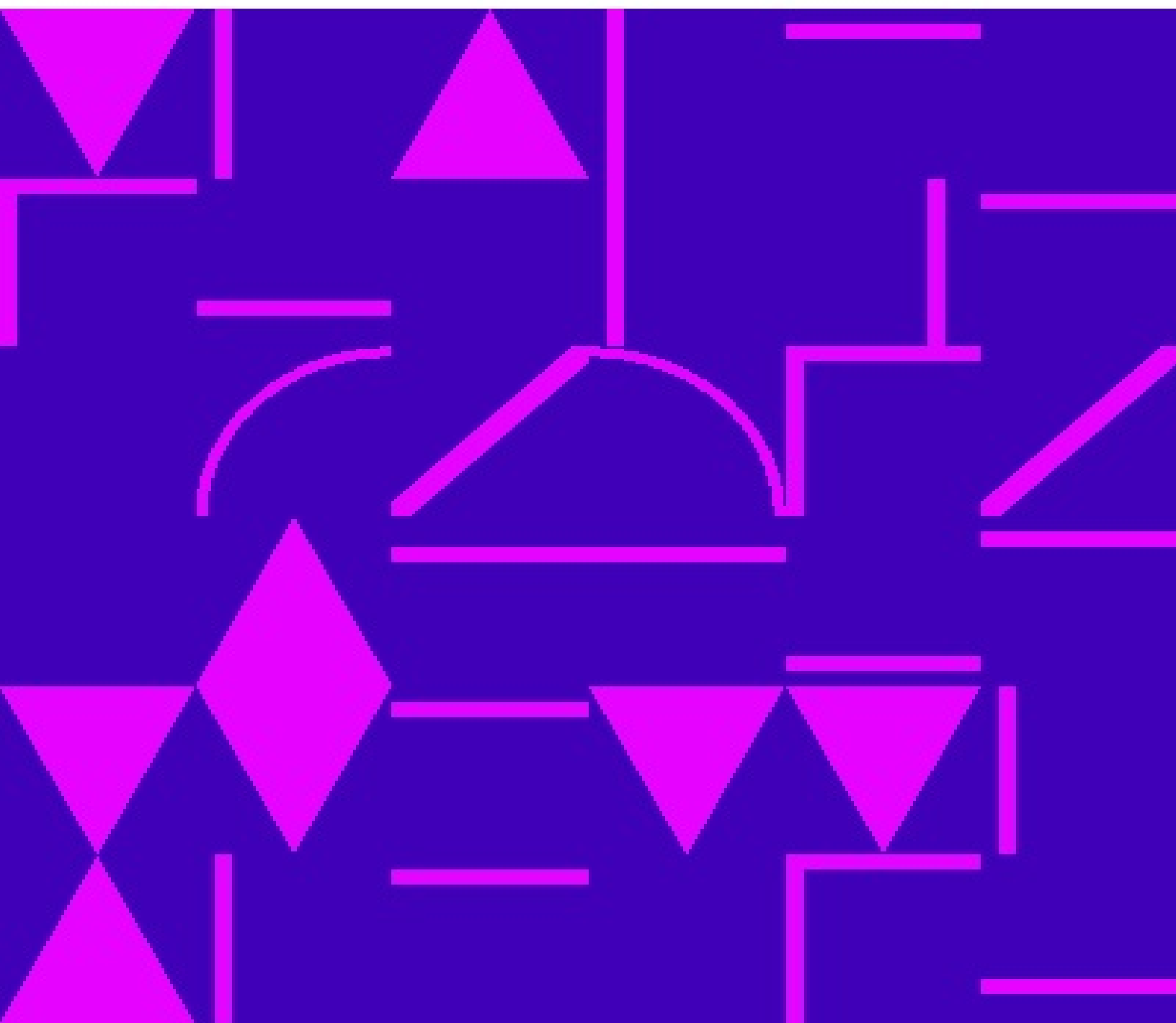


State of the Union Addresses

George W. (George Walker) Bush



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State of the Union Addresses of George W. Bush

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State of the Union Address
George W. Bush
February 27, 2001

Mr. Speaker, Mr. Vice President, Members of Congress: It is a great privilege to be here to outline a new budget and a new approach for governing our great country.

I thank you for your invitation to speak here tonight. I know Congress had to formally invite me and it could have been a close vote. So, Mr. Vice President, I appreciate you being here to break the tie. I want to thank so many of you who have accepted my invitation to come to the White House to discuss important issues. We are off to a good start. I will continue to meet with you and ask for your input. You have been kind and candid, and I thank you for making a new President feel welcome.

The last time I visited the Capitol, I came to take an oath. On the steps of this building, I pledged to honor our Constitution and laws, and I asked you to join me in setting a tone of civility and respect in Washington. I hope America is noticing the difference. We are making progress. Together, we are changing the tone in the Nation's capital. And this spirit of respect and cooperation is vital, because in the end we will be judged not only by what we say or how we say it, we will be judged by what we are able to accomplish.

America today is a Nation with great challenges, but greater resources. An artist using statistics as a brush could paint two very different pictures of our country. One would have warning signs: increasing layoffs, rising energy prices, too many failing schools, persistent poverty, the stubborn vestiges of racism. Another picture would be full of blessings: a balanced budget, big surpluses, a military that is second to none, a country at peace with its neighbors, technology that is revolutionizing the world, and our greatest strength, concerned citizens who care for our country and care for each other.

Neither picture is complete in and of itself. And tonight I challenge and invite Congress to work with me to use the resources of one picture to repaint the other, to direct the advantages of our time to solve the problems of our people.

Some of these resources will come from government, some but not all. Year after year in Washington, budget debates seem to come down to an old, tired argument: on one side those who want more government, regardless of the cost; on the other, those who want less government, regardless of the need.

We should leave those arguments to the last century and chart a different course. Government has a role, and an important role. Yet too much government crowds out initiative and hard work, private charity and the private economy. Our new governing vision says government should be active but limited, engaged but not overbearing.

My budget is based on that philosophy. It is reasonable and it is responsible. It meets our obligations and funds our growing needs. We increase spending next year for Social Security and

Medicare and other entitlement programs by \$81 billion. We have increased spending for discretionary programs by a very responsible 4 percent, above the rate of inflation. My plan pays down an unprecedented amount of our national debt, and then when money is still left over, my plan returns it to the people who earned it in the first place.

A budget's impact is counted in dollars, but measured in lives. Excellent schools, quality health care, a secure retirement, a cleaner environment, a stronger defense, these are all important needs, and we fund them.

The highest percentage increase in our budget should go to our children's education. Education is my top priority. Education is my top priority, and by supporting this budget, you will make it yours as well.

Reading is the foundation of all learning, so during the next 5 years we triple spending, adding \$5 billion to help every child in America learn to read. Values are important, so we have tripled funding for character education to teach our children not only reading and writing, but right from wrong.

We have increased funding to train and recruit teachers, because we know a good education starts with a good teacher.

And I have a wonderful partner in this effort. I like teachers so much, I married one. Laura has begun a new effort to recruit Americans to the profession that will shape our future: teaching. She will travel across America to promote sound teaching practices and early reading skills in our schools and in programs such as Head Start.

When it comes to our schools, dollars alone do not always make the difference. Funding is important, and so is reform. So we must tie funding to higher standards and accountability for results.

I believe in local control of schools. We should not and we will not run public schools from Washington, DC. Yet when the Federal government spends tax dollars, we must insist on results. Children should be tested on basic reading and math skills every year, between grades three and eight. Measuring is the only way to know whether all our children are learning, and I want to know, because I refuse to leave any child behind in America.

Critics of testing contend it distracts from learning. They talk about "teaching to the test." But let us put that logic to the test. If you test a child on basic math and reading skills and you are "teaching to the test," you are teaching math and reading, and that is the whole idea.

As standards rise, local schools will need more flexibility to meet them, so we must streamline the dozens of Federal education programs into five, and let States spend money in those categories as they see fit. Schools will be given a reasonable chance to improve, and the support to do so.

Yet if they don't, if they continue to fail, we must give parents and students different options: a better public school, a private school, tutoring, or a charter school. In the end, every child in a bad situation must be given a better choice, because when it comes to our children, failure is simply not an option.

Another priority in my budget is to keep the vital promises of Medicare and Social Security, and

together we will do so. To meet the health care needs of all America's seniors, we double the Medicare budget over the next 10 years.

My budget dedicates \$238 billion to Medicare next year alone, enough to fund all current programs and to begin a new prescription drug benefit for low-income seniors. No senior in America should have to choose between buying food and buying prescriptions.

To make sure the retirement savings of America's seniors are not diverted into any other program, my budget protects all \$2.6 trillion of the Social Security surplus for Social Security and for Social Security alone.

My budget puts a priority on access to health care, without telling Americans what doctor they have to see or what coverage they must choose. Many working Americans do not have health care coverage, so we will help them buy their own insurance with refundable tax credits. And to provide quality care in low-income neighborhoods, over the next 5 years we will double the number of people served at community health care centers.

And we will address the concerns of those who have health coverage yet worry their insurance company does not care and won't pay. Together, this Congress and this President will find common ground to make sure doctors make medical decisions and patients get the health care they deserve with a Patients' Bill of Rights.

When it comes to their health, people want to get the medical care they need, not be forced to go to court because they didn't get it. We will ensure access to the courts for those with legitimate claims, but first, let us put in place a strong independent review so we promote quality health care, not frivolous lawsuits.

My budget also increases funding for medical research, which gives hope to many who struggle with serious disease. Our prayers tonight are with one of your own who is engaged in his own fight against cancer, a fine Representative and a good man, Congressman JOE MOAKLEY. I can think of no more appropriate tribute to JOE than to have the Congress finish the job of doubling the budget for the National Institutes of Health.

My New Freedom Initiative for Americans with Disabilities funds new technologies, expands opportunities to work, and makes our society more welcoming. For the more than 50 million Americans with disabilities, we must continue to break down barriers to equality.

The budget I propose to you also supports the people who keep our country strong and free, the men and women who serve in the United States military. I am requesting \$5.7 billion in increased military pay and benefits, and health care and housing. Our men and women in uniform give America their best, and we owe them our support.

America's veterans honored their commitment to our country through their military service. I will honor our commitment to them with a \$1 billion increase to ensure better access to quality care and faster decisions on benefit claims.

My budget will improve our environment by accelerating the cleanup of toxic brownfields. I propose we make a major investment in conservation by fully funding the Land and Water

Conservation Fund.

Our national parks have a special place in our country's life. Our parks are places of great natural beauty and history. As good stewards, we must leave them better than we have found them, so I propose providing \$4.9 billion over 5 years for the upkeep of these national treasures.

My budget adopts a hopeful new approach to help the poor and the disadvantaged. We must encourage and support the work of charities and faithbased and community groups that offer help and love, one person at a time. These groups are working in every neighborhood in America to fight homelessness and addiction and domestic violence, to provide a hot meal or a mentor, or a safe haven for our children. Government should welcome these groups to apply for funds, not discriminate against them.

Government cannot be replaced by charities or volunteers. Government should not fund religious activities, but our Nation should support the good works of these good people who are helping their neighbors in need. So I propose allowing all taxpayers, whether they itemize or not, to deduct their charitable contributions. Estimates show this could encourage as much as \$14 billion a year in new charitable giving, money that will save and change lives.

Our budget provides more than \$700 million over the next 10 years for a Federal Compassion Capital Fund with a focused and noble mission: to provide a mentor for the more than 1 million children with a parent in prison and to support other local efforts to fight illiteracy, teen pregnancy, drug addiction and other difficult problems.

With us tonight is the Mayor of Philadelphia. Please help me welcome Mayor John Street. Hi, Mr. Mayor.

Mayor Street has encouraged faithbased and community organizations to make a significant difference in Philadelphia. He has invited me to his city this summer to see compassion in action. I am personally aware of just how effective the mayor is.

Mayor Street is a Democrat. Let the record show I lost his city, big time. But some things are bigger than politics. So I look forward to coming to your city to see your faith-based programs in action.

As government promotes compassion, it also must promote justice. Too many of our citizens have cause to doubt our Nation's justice when the law points a finger of suspicion at groups, instead of individuals. All our citizens are created equal and must be treated equally. Earlier today, I asked John Ashcroft, the Attorney General, to develop specific recommendations to end racial profiling.

It is wrong, and we will end it. It is wrong. In so doing, we will not hinder the work of our Nation's brave police officers. They protect us every day, often at great risk. But by stopping the abuses of a few, we will add to the public confidence our police officers earn and deserve.

My budget has funded a responsible increase in our ongoing operations. It has funded our Nation's important priorities. It has protected Social Security and Medicare. And our surpluses are big enough that there is still money left over.

Many of you have talked about the need to pay down our national debt. I listened, and I agree.

We owe it to our children and our grandchildren to act now, and I hope you will join me to pay down \$2 trillion in debt during the next 10 years.

At the end of those 10 years, we will have paid down all the debt that is available to retire. That is more debt repaid more quickly than has ever been repaid by any nation at any time in history.

We should also prepare for the unexpected, for the uncertainties of the future. We should approach our Nation's budget as any prudent family would, with a contingency fund for emergencies or additional spending needs.

For example, after a strategic review, we may need to increase defense spending. We may need to increase spending for our farmers or additional money to reform Medicare. So my budget sets aside almost a trillion dollars over 10 years for additional needs, that is one trillion additional reasons you can feel comfortable supporting this budget.

We have increased our budget at a responsible 4 percent. We have funded our priorities. We have paid down all the available debt. We have prepared for contingencies, and we still have money left over. Yogi Berra once said "when you come to a fork in the road, take it." Now we come to a fork in the road. We have two choices. Even though we have already met our needs, we could spend the money on more and bigger government. That is the road our Nation has traveled in recent years.

Last year, government spending shot up 8 percent. That is far more than our economy grew, far more than personal income grew and far more than the rate of inflation. If you continue on that road, you will spend the surplus and have to dip into Social Security to pay other bills.

Unrestrained government spending is a dangerous road to deficits, so we must take a different path. The other choice is to let the American people spend their own money to meet their own needs. I hope you will join me in standing firmly on the side of the people.

You see, the growing surplus exists because taxes are too high and government is charging more than it needs. The people of America have been overcharged, and on their behalf, I am here asking for a refund.

Some say my tax plan is too big. Others say it is too small. I respectfully disagree. This plan is just right.

I did not throw darts at a board to come up with a number for tax relief. I did not take a poll or develop an arbitrary formula that might sound good. I looked at problems in the Tax Code and calculated the costs to fix them.

A tax rate of 15 percent is too high for those who earn low wages, so we must lower the rate to 10 percent. No one should pay more than a third of the money they earn in Federal income taxes, so we lowered the top rate to 33 percent.

This reform will be welcome relief for America's small businesses, which often pay taxes at the highest rate, and help for small business means jobs for Americans.

We simplified the Tax Code by reducing the number of tax rates from the current five rates to four lower ones, 10 percent, 15 percent, 25 percent and 33 percent. In my plan, no one is targeted in or targeted out. Everyone who pays income taxes will get relief.

Our government should not tax and thereby discourage marriage, so we reduced the marriage penalty. I want to help families rear and support their children, so we doubled the child credit to \$1,000 per child.

It is not fair to tax the same earnings twice, once when you earn them and again when you die, so we must repeal the death tax.

These changes add up to significant help. A typical family with two children will save \$1,600 a year on their Federal income taxes. Now, 1,600 may not sound like a lot to some, but it means a lot to many families.

Sixteen hundred dollars buys gas for two cars for an entire year. It pays tuition for a year at a community college. It pays the average family grocery bill for 3 months. That is real money.

With us tonight, representing many American families, are Steven and Josefina Ramos. They are from Pennsylvania, but they could be from any one of your districts. Steven is a network administrator for a school district. Josefina is a Spanish teacher at a charter school, and they have a 2-year-old daughter. Steven and Josefina tell me they pay almost \$8,000 a year in Federal income taxes. My plan will save them more than \$2,000.

Let me tell you what Steven says, "\$2,000 a year means a lot to my family. If we had this money, it would help us reach our goal of paying off our personal debt in 2 years time." After that, Steven and Josefina want to start saving for Lianna's college education.

My attitude is government should never stand in the way of families achieving their dreams. And as we debate this issue, always remember, the surplus is not the government's money, the surplus is the people's money.

For lower-income families, my tax plan restores basic fairness. Right now, complicated tax rules punish hard work. A waitress supporting two children on \$25,000 a year can lose nearly half of every additional dollar she earns above the 25,000. For overtime, her hardest hours, are taxed at nearly 50 percent. This sends a terrible message: You will never get ahead. But America's message must be different. We must honor hard work, never punish it.

With tax relief, overtime will no longer be overtime for the waitress. People with the smallest incomes will get the highest percentage reductions. And millions of additional American families will be removed from the income tax rolls entirely.

Tax relief is right and tax relief is urgent. The long economic expansion that began almost 10 years ago is faltering. Lower interest rates will eventually help, but we cannot assume they will do the job all by themselves.

Forty years ago and then 20 years ago, two Presidents, one Democrat and one Republican, John F. Kennedy and Ronald Reagan, advocated tax cuts to, in President Kennedy's words, "get this country

moving again." They knew then, what we must do now, to create economic growth and opportunity, we must put money back into the hands of the people who buy goods and create jobs.

We must act quickly. The Chairman of the Federal Reserve has testified before Congress that tax cuts often come too late to stimulate economic recovery. So I want to work with you to give our economy an important jump start by making tax relief retroactive.

We must act now because it is the right thing to do. We must also act now because we have other things to do. We must show courage to confront and resolve tough challenges: To restructure our Nation's defenses, to meet our growing need for energy, and to reform Medicare and Social Security.

America has a window of opportunity to extend and secure our present peace by promoting a distinctly American internationalism. We will work with our allies and friends to be a force for good and a champion of freedom. We will work for free markets and free trade and freedom from oppression. Nations making progress toward freedom will find America is their friend.

We will promote our values, and we will promote peace. And we need a strong military to keep the peace. But our military was shaped to confront the challenges of the past. So I have asked the Secretary of Defense to review America's armed forces and prepare to transform them to meet emerging threats. My budget makes a down payment on the research and development that will be required. Yet, in our broader transformation effort, we must put strategy first, then spending. Our defense vision will drive our defense budget, not the other way around.

Our Nation also needs a clear strategy to confront the threats of the 21st century, threats that are more widespread and less certain. They range from terrorists who threaten with bombs to tyrants and rogue nations intent on developing weapons of mass destruction. To protect our own people, our allies and friends, we must develop and we must deploy effective missile defenses.

And as we transform our military, we can discard Cold War relics, and reduce our own nuclear forces to reflect today's needs.

A strong America is the world's best hope for peace and freedom. Yet the cause of freedom rests on more than our ability to defend ourselves and our allies. Freedom is exported every day, as we ship goods and products that improve the lives of millions of people. Free trade brings greater political and personal freedom.

Each of the previous five presidents has had the ability to negotiate farreaching trade agreements. Tonight I ask to give me the strong hand of presidential trade promotion authority, and to do so quickly.

As we meet tonight, many citizens are struggling with the high costs of energy. We have a serious energy problem that demands a national energy policy. The West is confronting a major energy shortage that has resulted in high prices and uncertainty. I have asked Federal agencies to work with California officials to help speed construction of new energy sources. And I have directed Vice President Cheney, Commerce Secretary Evans, Energy Secretary Abraham, and other senior members of my administration to develop a national energy policy.

Our energy demand outstrips our supply. We can produce more energy at home while protecting

our environment, and we must. We can produce more electricity to meet demand, and we must. We can promote alternative energy sources and conservation, and we must. America must become more energy independent, and we will.

Perhaps the biggest test of our foresight and courage will be reforming Medicare and Social Security.

Medicare's finances are strained, and its coverage is outdated. Ninety-nine percent of employer-provided health plans offer some form of prescription drug coverage. Medicare does not. The framework for reform has been developed by Senators FRIST and BREAUX and Congressman THOMAS; and now is the time to act. Medicare must be modernized. And we must make sure that every senior on Medicare can choose a health care plan that offers prescription drugs.

Seven years from now, the baby boom generation will begin to claim Social Security benefits. Everyone in this Chamber knows that Social Security is not prepared to fully fund their retirement. And we only have a couple of years to get prepared. Without reform, this country will one day awaken to a stark choice: either a drastic rise in payroll taxes or a radical cut in retirement benefits. There is a better way.

This spring I will form a Presidential commission to reform Social Security. The commission will make its recommendations by next fall. Reform should be based on these principles: It must preserve the benefits of all current retirees and those nearing retirement. It must return Social Security to sound financial footing, and it must offer personal savings accounts to younger workers who want them.

Social Security now offers workers a return of less than 2 percent on the money they pay into the system. To save the system, we must increase that by allowing younger workers to make safe, sound investments at a higher rate of return.

Ownership, access to wealth, and independence should not be the privilege of a few. They are the hope of every American, and we must make them the foundation of Social Security.

By confronting the tough challenge of reform, by being responsible with our budget, we can earn the trust of the American people. And we can add to that trust by enacting fair and balanced election and campaign reforms.

The agenda I have set before you tonight is worthy of a great Nation.

America is a Nation at peace, but not a Nation at rest. Much has been given to us, and much is expected.

Let us agree to bridge old divides. But let us also agree that our goodwill must be dedicated to great goals. Bipartisanship is more than minding our manners, it is doing our duty.

No one can speak in this Capitol and not be awed by its history. At so many turning points, debates in these chambers have reflected the collected or divided conscience of our country. And when we walk through Statuary Hall and see those men and women of marble, we are reminded of their courage and achievement.

Yet America's purpose is never found only in statues or history. America's purpose always stands before us.

Our generation must show courage in a time of blessing as our Nation has always shown in times of crisis. And our courage, issue by issue, can gather to greatness and serve our country. This is the privilege and responsibility we share. And if we work together, we can prove that public service is noble.

We all came here for a reason. We all have things we want to accomplish and promises to keep. Juntos podemos, together we can. We can make Americans proud of their government. Together we can share in the credit of making our country more prosperous and generous and just, and earn from our conscience and from our fellow citizens, the highest possible praise: well done, good and faithful servants.

Thank you all. Good night. And God bless.

(Applause, the Members rising.)

State of the Union Address
George W. Bush
January 29, 2002

Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker, Vice President Cheney, members of Congress, distinguished guests, fellow citizens: As we gather tonight, our nation is at war, our economy is in recession, and the civilized world faces unprecedented dangers. Yet the state of our Union has never been stronger. (Applause.)

We last met in an hour of shock and suffering. In four short months, our nation has comforted the victims, begun to rebuild New York and the Pentagon, rallied a great coalition, captured, arrested, and rid the world of thousands of terrorists, destroyed Afghanistan's terrorist training camps, saved a people from starvation, and freed a country from brutal oppression. (Applause.)

The American flag flies again over our embassy in Kabul. Terrorists who once occupied Afghanistan now occupy cells at Guantanamo Bay. (Applause.) And terrorist leaders who urged followers to sacrifice their lives are running for their own. (Applause.)

America and Afghanistan are now allies against terror. We'll be partners in rebuilding that country. And this evening we welcome the distinguished interim leader of a liberated Afghanistan: Chairman Hamid Karzai. (Applause.)

The last time we met in this chamber, the mothers and daughters of Afghanistan were captives in their own homes, forbidden from working or going to school. Today women are free, and are part of

Afghanistan's new government. And we welcome the new Minister of Women's Affairs, Doctor Sima Samar. (Applause.)

Our progress is a tribute to the spirit of the Afghan people, to the resolve of our coalition, and to the might of the United States military. (Applause.) When I called our troops into action, I did so with complete confidence in their courage and skill. And tonight, thanks to them, we are winning the war on terror. (Applause.) The men and women of our Armed Forces have delivered a message now clear to every enemy of the United States: Even 7,000 miles away, across oceans and continents, on mountaintops and in caves--you will not escape the justice of this nation. (Applause.)

For many Americans, these four months have brought sorrow, and pain that will never completely go away. Every day a retired firefighter returns to Ground Zero, to feel closer to his two sons who died there. At a memorial in New York, a little boy left his football with a note for his lost father: Dear Daddy, please take this to heaven. I don't want to play football until I can play with you again some day.

Last month, at the grave of her husband, Michael, a CIA officer and Marine who died in Mazur-e-Sharif, Shannon Spann said these words of farewell: "Semper Fi, my love." Shannon is with us tonight. (Applause.)

Shannon, I assure you and all who have lost a loved one that our cause is just, and our country will never forget the debt we owe Michael and all who gave their lives for freedom.

Our cause is just, and it continues. Our discoveries in Afghanistan confirmed our worst fears, and showed us the true scope of the task ahead. We have seen the depth of our enemies' hatred in videos, where they laugh about the loss of innocent life. And the depth of their hatred is equaled by the madness of the destruction they design. We have found diagrams of American nuclear power plants and public water facilities, detailed instructions for making chemical weapons, surveillance maps of American cities, and thorough descriptions of landmarks in America and throughout the world.

What we have found in Afghanistan confirms that, far from ending there, our war against terror is only beginning. Most of the 19 men who hijacked planes on September the 11th were trained in Afghanistan's camps, and so were tens of thousands of others. Thousands of dangerous killers, schooled in the methods of murder, often supported by outlaw regimes, are now spread throughout the world like ticking time bombs, set to go off without warning.

Thanks to the work of our law enforcement officials and coalition partners, hundreds of terrorists have been arrested. Yet, tens of thousands of trained terrorists are still at large. These enemies view the entire world as a battlefield, and we must pursue them wherever they are. (Applause.) So long as training camps operate, so long as nations harbor terrorists, freedom is at risk. And America and our allies must not, and will not, allow it. (Applause.)

Our nation will continue to be steadfast and patient and persistent in the pursuit of two great objectives. First, we will shut down terrorist camps, disrupt terrorist plans, and bring terrorists to justice. And, second, we must prevent the terrorists and regimes who seek chemical, biological or nuclear weapons from threatening the United States and the world. (Applause.)

Our military has put the terror training camps of Afghanistan out of business, yet camps still exist

in at least a dozen countries. A terrorist underworld--including groups like Hamas, Hezbollah, Islamic Jihad, Jaish-i-Mohammed--operates in remote jungles and deserts, and hides in the centers of large cities.

While the most visible military action is in Afghanistan, America is acting elsewhere. We now have troops in the Philippines, helping to train that country's armed forces to go after terrorist cells that have executed an American, and still hold hostages. Our soldiers, working with the Bosnian government, seized terrorists who were plotting to bomb our embassy. Our Navy is patrolling the coast of Africa to block the shipment of weapons and the establishment of terrorist camps in Somalia.

My hope is that all nations will heed our call, and eliminate the terrorist parasites who threaten their countries and our own. Many nations are acting forcefully. Pakistan is now cracking down on terror, and I admire the strong leadership of President Musharraf. (Applause.)

But some governments will be timid in the face of terror. And make no mistake about it: If they do not act, America will. (Applause.)

Our second goal is to prevent regimes that sponsor terror from threatening America or our friends and allies with weapons of mass destruction. Some of these regimes have been pretty quiet since September the 11th. But we know their true nature. North Korea is a regime arming with missiles and weapons of mass destruction, while starving its citizens.

Iran aggressively pursues these weapons and exports terror, while an unelected few repress the Iranian people's hope for freedom.

Iraq continues to flaunt its hostility toward America and to support terror. The Iraqi regime has plotted to develop anthrax, and nerve gas, and nuclear weapons for over a decade. This is a regime that has already used poison gas to murder thousands of its own citizens--leaving the bodies of mothers huddled over their dead children. This is a regime that agreed to international inspections--then kicked out the inspectors. This is a regime that has something to hide from the civilized world.

States like these, and their terrorist allies, constitute an axis of evil, arming to threaten the peace of the world. By seeking weapons of mass destruction, these regimes pose a grave and growing danger. They could provide these arms to terrorists, giving them the means to match their hatred. They could attack our allies or attempt to blackmail the United States. In any of these cases, the price of indifference would be catastrophic.

We will work closely with our coalition to deny terrorists and their state sponsors the materials, technology, and expertise to make and deliver weapons of mass destruction. We will develop and deploy effective missile defenses to protect America and our allies from sudden attack. (Applause.) And all nations should know: America will do what is necessary to ensure our nation's security.

We'll be deliberate, yet time is not on our side. I will not wait on events, while dangers gather. I will not stand by, as peril draws closer and closer. The United States of America will not permit the world's most dangerous regimes to threaten us with the world's most destructive weapons. (Applause.)

Our war on terror is well begun, but it is only begun. This campaign may not be finished on our watch--yet it must be and it will be waged on our watch.

We can't stop short. If we stop now--leaving terror camps intact and terror states unchecked--our sense of security would be false and temporary. History has called America and our allies to action, and it is both our responsibility and our privilege to fight freedom's fight. (Applause.)

Our first priority must always be the security of our nation, and that will be reflected in the budget I send to Congress. My budget supports three great goals for America: We will win this war; we'll protect our homeland; and we will revive our economy.

September the 11th brought out the best in America, and the best in this Congress. And I join the American people in applauding your unity and resolve. (Applause.) Now Americans deserve to have this same spirit directed toward addressing problems here at home. I'm a proud member of my party--yet as we act to win the war, protect our people, and create jobs in America, we must act, first and foremost, not as Republicans, not as Democrats, but as Americans. (Applause.)

It costs a lot to fight this war. We have spent more than a billion dollars a month--over \$30 million a day--and we must be prepared for future operations. Afghanistan proved that expensive precision weapons defeat the enemy and spare innocent lives, and we need more of them. We need to replace aging aircraft and make our military more agile, to put our troops anywhere in the world quickly and safely. Our men and women in uniform deserve the best weapons, the best equipment, the best training--and they also deserve another pay raise. (Applause.)

My budget includes the largest increase in defense spending in two decades --because while the price of freedom and security is high, it is never too high. Whatever it costs to defend our country, we will pay. (Applause.)

The next priority of my budget is to do everything possible to protect our citizens and strengthen our nation against the ongoing threat of another attack. Time and distance from the events of September the 11th will not make us safer unless we act on its lessons. America is no longer protected by vast oceans. We are protected from attack only by vigorous action abroad, and increased vigilance at home.

My budget nearly doubles funding for a sustained strategy of homeland security, focused on four key areas: bioterrorism, emergency response, airport and border security, and improved intelligence. We will develop vaccines to fight anthrax and other deadly diseases. We'll increase funding to help states and communities train and equip our heroic police and firefighters. (Applause.) We will improve intelligence collection and sharing, expand patrols at our borders, strengthen the security of air travel, and use technology to track the arrivals and departures of visitors to the United States. (Applause.)

Homeland security will make America not only stronger, but, in many ways, better. Knowledge gained from bioterrorism research will improve public health. Stronger police and fire departments will mean safer neighborhoods. Stricter border enforcement will help combat illegal drugs. (Applause.) And as government works to better secure our homeland, America will continue to depend on the eyes and ears of alert citizens.

A few days before Christmas, an airline flight attendant spotted a passenger lighting a match. The crew and passengers quickly subdued the man, who had been trained by al Qaeda and was armed with explosives. The people on that plane were alert and, as a result, likely saved nearly 200 lives. And

tonight we welcome and thank flight attendants Hermis Moutardier and Christina Jones. (Applause.)

Once we have funded our national security and our homeland security, the final great priority of my budget is economic security for the American people. (Applause.) To achieve these great national objectives--to win the war, protect the homeland, and revitalize our economy--our budget will run a deficit that will be small and short-term, so long as Congress restrains spending and acts in a fiscally responsible manner. (Applause.) We have clear priorities and we must act at home with the same purpose and resolve we have shown overseas: We'll prevail in the war, and we will defeat this recession. (Applause.)

Americans who have lost their jobs need our help and I support extending unemployment benefits and direct assistance for health care coverage. (Applause.) Yet, American workers want more than unemployment checks-- they want a steady paycheck. (Applause.) When America works, America prospers, so my economic security plan can be summed up in one word: jobs. (Applause.)

Good jobs begin with good schools, and here we've made a fine start. (Applause.) Republicans and Democrats worked together to achieve historic education reform so that no child is left behind. I was proud to work with members of both parties: Chairman John Boehner and Congressman George Miller. (Applause.) Senator Judd Gregg. (Applause.) And I was so proud of our work, I even had nice things to say about my friend, Ted Kennedy. (Laughter and applause.) I know the folks at the Crawford coffee shop couldn't believe I'd say such a thing--(laughter)--but our work on this bill shows what is possible if we set aside posturing and focus on results. (Applause.)

There is more to do. We need to prepare our children to read and succeed in school with improved Head Start and early childhood development programs. (Applause.) We must upgrade our teacher colleges and teacher training and launch a major recruiting drive with a great goal for America: a quality teacher in every classroom. (Applause.)

Good jobs also depend on reliable and affordable energy. This Congress must act to encourage conservation, promote technology, build infrastructure, and it must act to increase energy production at home so America is less dependent on foreign oil. (Applause.)

Good jobs depend on expanded trade. Selling into new markets creates new jobs, so I ask Congress to finally approve trade promotion authority. (Applause.) On these two key issues, trade and energy, the House of Representatives has acted to create jobs, and I urge the Senate to pass this legislation. (Applause.)

Good jobs depend on sound tax policy. (Applause.) Last year, some in this hall thought my tax relief plan was too small; some thought it was too big. (Applause.) But when the checks arrived in the mail, most Americans thought tax relief was just about right. (Applause.) Congress listened to the people and responded by reducing tax rates, doubling the child credit, and ending the death tax. For the sake of long-term growth and to help Americans plan for the future, let's make these tax cuts permanent. (Applause.)

The way out of this recession, the way to create jobs, is to grow the economy by encouraging investment in factories and equipment, and by speeding up tax relief so people have more money to spend. For the sake of American workers, let's pass a stimulus package. (Applause.)

Good jobs must be the aim of welfare reform. As we reauthorize these important reforms, we must always remember the goal is to reduce dependency on government and offer every American the dignity of a job. (Applause.)

Americans know economic security can vanish in an instant without health security. I ask Congress to join me this year to enact a patients' bill of rights--(applause)--to give uninsured workers credits to help buy health coverage--(applause)--to approve an historic increase in the spending for veterans' health--(applause)--and to give seniors a sound and modern Medicare system that includes coverage for prescription drugs. (Applause.)

A good job should lead to security in retirement. I ask Congress to enact new safeguards for 401K and pension plans. (Applause.) Employees who have worked hard and saved all their lives should not have to risk losing everything if their company fails. (Applause.) Through stricter accounting standards and tougher disclosure requirements, corporate America must be made more accountable to employees and shareholders and held to the highest standards of conduct. (Applause.)

Retirement security also depends upon keeping the commitments of Social Security, and we will. We must make Social Security financially stable and allow personal retirement accounts for younger workers who choose them. (Applause.)

Members, you and I will work together in the months ahead on other issues: productive farm policy--(applause)--a cleaner environment--(applause) --broader home ownership, especially among minorities--(applause)--and ways to encourage the good work of charities and faith-based groups. (Applause.) I ask you to join me on these important domestic issues in the same spirit of cooperation we've applied to our war against terrorism. (Applause.)

During these last few months, I've been humbled and privileged to see the true character of this country in a time of testing. Our enemies believed America was weak and materialistic, that we would splinter in fear and selfishness. They were as wrong as they are evil. (Applause.)

The American people have responded magnificently, with courage and compassion, strength and resolve. As I have met the heroes, hugged the families, and looked into the tired faces of rescuers, I have stood in awe of the American people.

And I hope you will join me--I hope you will join me in expressing thanks to one American for the strength and calm and comfort she brings to our nation in crisis, our First Lady, Laura Bush. (Applause.)

None of us would ever wish the evil that was done on September the 11th. Yet after America was attacked, it was as if our entire country looked into a mirror and saw our better selves. We were reminded that we are citizens, with obligations to each other, to our country, and to history. We began to think less of the goods we can accumulate, and more about the good we can do.

For too long our culture has said, "If it feels good, do it." Now America is embracing a new ethic and a new creed: "Let's roll." (Applause.) In the sacrifice of soldiers, the fierce brotherhood of firefighters, and the bravery and generosity of ordinary citizens, we have glimpsed what a new culture of responsibility could look like. We want to be a nation that serves goals larger than self. We've been offered a unique opportunity, and we must not let this moment pass. (Applause.)

My call tonight is for every American to commit at least two years--4,000 hours over the rest of your lifetime--to the service of your neighbors and your nation. (Applause.) Many are already serving, and I thank you. If you aren't sure how to help, I've got a good place to start. To sustain and extend the best that has emerged in America, I invite you to join the new USA Freedom Corps. The Freedom Corps will focus on three areas of need: responding in case of crisis at home; rebuilding our communities; and extending American compassion throughout the world.

One purpose of the USA Freedom Corps will be homeland security. America needs retired doctors and nurses who can be mobilized in major emergencies; volunteers to help police and fire departments; transportation and utility workers well-trained in spotting danger.

Our country also needs citizens working to rebuild our communities. We need mentors to love children, especially children whose parents are in prison. And we need more talented teachers in troubled schools. USA Freedom Corps will expand and improve the good efforts of AmeriCorps and Senior Corps to recruit more than 200,000 new volunteers.

And America needs citizens to extend the compassion of our country to every part of the world. So we will renew the promise of the Peace Corps, double its volunteers over the next five years--(applause)--and ask it to join a new effort to encourage development and education and opportunity in the Islamic world. (Applause.)

This time of adversity offers a unique moment of opportunity--a moment we must seize to change our culture. Through the gathering momentum of millions of acts of service and decency and kindness, I know we can overcome evil with greater good. (Applause.) And we have a great opportunity during this time of war to lead the world toward the values that will bring lasting peace.

All fathers and mothers, in all societies, want their children to be educated, and live free from poverty and violence. No people on Earth yearn to be oppressed, or aspire to servitude, or eagerly await the midnight knock of the secret police.

If anyone doubts this, let them look to Afghanistan, where the Islamic "street" greeted the fall of tyranny with song and celebration. Let the skeptics look to Islam's own rich history, with its centuries of learning, and tolerance and progress. America will lead by defending liberty and justice because they are right and true and unchanging for all people everywhere. (Applause.)

No nation owns these aspirations, and no nation is exempt from them. We have no intention of imposing our culture. But America will always stand firm for the non-negotiable demands of human dignity: the rule of law; limits on the power of the state; respect for women; private property; free speech; equal justice; and religious tolerance. (Applause.)

America will take the side of brave men and women who advocate these values around the world, including the Islamic world, because we have a greater objective than eliminating threats and containing resentment. We seek a just and peaceful world beyond the war on terror.

In this moment of opportunity, a common danger is erasing old rivalries. America is working with Russia and China and India, in ways we have never before, to achieve peace and prosperity. In every region, free markets and free trade and free societies are proving their power to lift lives. Together with friends and allies from Europe to Asia, and Africa to Latin America, we will demonstrate that the

forces of terror cannot stop the momentum of freedom. (Applause.)

The last time I spoke here, I expressed the hope that life would return to normal. In some ways, it has. In others, it never will. Those of us who have lived through these challenging times have been changed by them. We've come to know truths that we will never question: evil is real, and it must be opposed. (Applause.) Beyond all differences of race or creed, we are one country, mourning together and facing danger together. Deep in the American character, there is honor, and it is stronger than cynicism. And many have discovered again that even in tragedy--especially in tragedy--God is near. (Applause.)

In a single instant, we realized that this will be a decisive decade in the history of liberty, that we've been called to a unique role in human events. Rarely has the world faced a choice more clear or consequential.

Our enemies send other people's children on missions of suicide and murder. They embrace tyranny and death as a cause and a creed. We stand for a different choice, made long ago, on the day of our founding. We affirm it again today. We choose freedom and the dignity of every life. (Applause.)

Steadfast in our purpose, we now press on. We have known freedom's price. We have shown freedom's power. And in this great conflict, my fellow Americans, we will see freedom's victory.

Thank you all. May God bless. (Applause.)

State of the Union Address

George W. Bush

January 29, 2003

Mr. Speaker, Vice President Cheney, members of Congress, distinguished citizens and fellow citizens: Every year, by law and by custom, we meet here to consider the state of the union. This year, we gather in this chamber deeply aware of decisive days that lie ahead.

You and I serve our country in a time of great consequence. During this session of Congress, we have the duty to reform domestic programs vital to our country; we have the opportunity to save millions of lives abroad from a terrible disease. We will work for a prosperity that is broadly shared, and we will answer every danger and every enemy that threatens the American people.

In all these days of promise and days of reckoning, we can be confident. In a whirlwind of change and hope and peril, our faith is sure, our resolve is firm, and our union is strong.

This country has many challenges. We will not deny, we will not ignore, we will not pass along our problems to other Congresses, to other presidents, and other generations. We will confront them with focus and clarity and courage.

During the last two years, we have seen what can be accomplished when we work together. To lift the standards of our public schools, we achieved historic education reform -- which must now be carried out in every school and in every classroom, so that every child in America can read and learn and succeed in life. To protect our country, we reorganized our government and created the Department of Homeland Security, which is mobilizing against the threats of a new era. To bring our economy out of recession, we delivered the largest tax relief in a generation. To insist on integrity in American business we passed tough reforms, and we are holding corporate criminals to account.

Some might call this a good record; I call it a good start. Tonight I ask the House and Senate to join me in the next bold steps to serve our fellow citizens.

Our first goal is clear: We must have an economy that grows fast enough to employ every man and woman who seeks a job. After recession, terrorist attacks, corporate scandals and stock market declines, our economy is recovering -- yet it's not growing fast enough, or strongly enough. With unemployment rising, our nation needs more small businesses to open, more companies to invest and expand, more employers to put up the sign that says, "Help Wanted."

Jobs are created when the economy grows; the economy grows when Americans have more money to spend and invest; and the best and fairest way to make sure Americans have that money is not to tax it away in the first place.

I am proposing that all the income tax reductions set for 2004 and 2006 be made permanent and effective this year. And under my plan, as soon as I sign the bill, this extra money will start showing up in workers' paychecks. Instead of gradually reducing the marriage penalty, we should do it now. Instead of slowly raising the child credit to \$1,000, we should send the checks to American families now.

The tax relief is for everyone who pays income taxes -- and it will help our economy immediately: 92 million Americans will keep, this year, an average of almost \$1,000 more of their own money. A family of four with an income of \$40,000 would see their federal income taxes fall from \$1,178 to \$45 per year. Our plan will improve the bottom line for more than 23 million small businesses.

You, the Congress, have already passed all these reductions, and promised them for future years. If this tax relief is good for Americans three, or five, or seven years from now, it is even better for Americans today.

We should also strengthen the economy by treating investors equally in our tax laws. It's fair to tax a company's profits. It is not fair to again tax the shareholder on the same profits. To boost investor confidence, and to help the nearly 10 million senior who receive dividend income, I ask you to end the unfair double taxation of dividends.

Lower taxes and greater investment will help this economy expand. More jobs mean more taxpayers, and higher revenues to our government. The best way to address the deficit and move toward a balanced budget is to encourage economic growth, and to show some spending discipline in Washington, D.C.

We must work together to fund only our most important priorities. I will send you a budget that increases discretionary spending by 4 percent next year -- about as much as the average family's

income is expected to grow. And that is a good benchmark for us. Federal spending should not rise any faster than the paychecks of American families.

A growing economy and a focus on essential priorities will also be crucial to the future of Social Security. As we continue to work together to keep Social Security sound and reliable, we must offer younger workers a chance to invest in retirement accounts that they will control and they will own.

Our second goal is high quality, affordable health care for all Americans. The American system of medicine is a model of skill and innovation, with a pace of discovery that is adding good years to our lives. Yet for many people, medical care costs too much -- and many have no coverage at all. These problems will not be solved with a nationalized health care system that dictates coverage and rations care.

Instead, we must work toward a system in which all Americans have a good insurance policy, choose their own doctors, and seniors and low-income Americans receive the help they need. Instead of bureaucrats and trial lawyers and HMOs, we must put doctors and nurses and patients back in charge of American medicine.

Health care reform must begin with Medicare; Medicare is the binding commitment of a caring society. We must renew that commitment by giving seniors access to preventive medicine and new drugs that are transforming health care in America.

Seniors happy with the current Medicare system should be able to keep their coverage just the way it is. And just like you -- the members of Congress, and your staffs, and other federal employees -- all seniors should have the choice of a health care plan that provides prescription drugs.

My budget will commit an additional \$400 billion over the next decade to reform and strengthen Medicare. Leaders of both political parties have talked for years about strengthening Medicare. I urge the members of this new Congress to act this year.

To improve our health care system, we must address one of the prime causes of higher cost, the constant threat that physicians and hospitals will be unfairly sued. Because of excessive litigation, everybody pays more for health care, and many parts of America are losing fine doctors. No one has ever been healed by a frivolous lawsuit. I urge the Congress to pass medical liability reform.

Our third goal is to promote energy independence for our country, while dramatically improving the environment. I have sent you a comprehensive energy plan to promote energy efficiency and conservation, to develop cleaner technology, and to produce more energy at home. I have sent you Clear Skies legislation that mandates a 70-percent cut in air pollution from power plants over the next 15 years. I have sent you a Healthy Forests Initiative, to help prevent the catastrophic fires that devastate communities, kill wildlife, and burn away millions of acres of treasured forest.

I urge you to pass these measures, for the good of both our environment and our economy. Even more, I ask you to take a crucial step and protect our environment in ways that generations before us could not have imagined.

In this century, the greatest environmental progress will come about not through endless lawsuits or command-and-control regulations, but through technology and innovation. Tonight I'm proposing

\$1.2 billion in research funding so that America can lead the world in developing clean, hydrogen-powered automobiles.

A single chemical reaction between hydrogen and oxygen generates energy, which can be used to power a car -- producing only water, not exhaust fumes. With a new national commitment, our scientists and engineers will overcome obstacles to taking these cars from laboratory to showroom, so that the first car driven by a child born today could be powered by hydrogen, and pollution-free.

Join me in this important innovation to make our air significantly cleaner, and our country much less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Our fourth goal is to apply the compassion of America to the deepest problems of America. For so many in our country -- the homeless and the fatherless, the addicted -- the need is great. Yet there's power, wonder-working power, in the goodness and idealism and faith of the American people.

Americans are doing the work of compassion every day -- visiting prisoners, providing shelter for battered women, bringing companionship to lonely seniors. These good works deserve our praise; they deserve our personal support; and when appropriate, they deserve the assistance of the federal government.

I urge you to pass both my faith-based initiative and the Citizen Service Act, to encourage acts of compassion that can transform America, one heart and one soul at a time.

Last year, I called on my fellow citizens to participate in the USA Freedom Corps, which is enlisting tens of thousands of new volunteers across America. Tonight I ask Congress and the American people to focus the spirit of service and the resources of government on the needs of some of our most vulnerable citizens -- boys and girls trying to grow up without guidance and attention, and children who have to go through a prison gate to be hugged by their mom or dad.

I propose a \$450-million initiative to bring mentors to more than a million disadvantaged junior high students and children of prisoners. Government will support the training and recruiting of mentors; yet it is the men and women of America who will fill the need. One mentor, one person can change a life forever. And I urge you to be that one person.

Another cause of hopelessness is addiction to drugs. Addiction crowds out friendship, ambition, moral conviction, and reduces all the richness of life to a single destructive desire. As a government, we are fighting illegal drugs by cutting off supplies and reducing demand through anti-drug education programs. Yet for those already addicted, the fight against drugs is a fight for their own lives. Too many Americans in search of treatment cannot get it. So tonight I propose a new \$600-million program to help an additional 300,000 Americans receive treatment over the next three years.

Our nation is blessed with recovery programs that do amazing work. One of them is found at the Healing Place Church in Baton Rouge, Louisiana. A man in the program said, "God does miracles in people's lives, and you never think it could be you." Tonight, let us bring to all Americans who struggle with drug addiction this message of hope: The miracle of recovery is possible, and it could be you.

By caring for children who need mentors, and for addicted men and women who need treatment,

we are building a more welcoming society -- a culture that values every life. And in this work we must not overlook the weakest among us. I ask you to protect infants at the very hour of their birth and end the practice of partial-birth abortion. And because no human life should be started or ended as the object of an experiment, I ask you to set a high standard for humanity, and pass a law against all human cloning.

The qualities of courage and compassion that we strive for in America also determine our conduct abroad. The American flag stands for more than our power and our interests. Our founders dedicated this country to the cause of human dignity, the rights of every person, and the possibilities of every life. This conviction leads us into the world to help the afflicted, and defend the peace, and confound the designs of evil men.

In Afghanistan, we helped liberate an oppressed people. And we will continue helping them secure their country, rebuild their society, and educate all their children -- boys and girls. In the Middle East, we will continue to seek peace between a secure Israel and a democratic Palestine. Across the Earth, America is feeding the hungry -- more than 60 percent of international food aid comes as a gift from the people of the United States. As our nation moves troops and builds alliances to make our world safer, we must also remember our calling as a blessed country is to make this world better.

Today, on the continent of Africa, nearly 30 million people have the AIDS virus -- including 3 million children under the age 15. There are whole countries in Africa where more than one-third of the adult population carries the infection. More than 4 million require immediate drug treatment. Yet across that continent, only 50,000 AIDS victims -- only 50,000 -- are receiving the medicine they need.

Because the AIDS diagnosis is considered a death sentence, many do not seek treatment. Almost all who do are turned away. A doctor in rural South Africa describes his frustration. He says, "We have no medicines. Many hospitals tell people, you've got AIDS, we can't help you. Go home and die." In an age of miraculous medicines, no person should have to hear those words.

AIDS can be prevented. Anti-retroviral drugs can extend life for many years. And the cost of those drugs has dropped from \$12,000 a year to under \$300 a year -- which places a tremendous possibility within our grasp. Ladies and gentlemen, seldom has history offered a greater opportunity to do so much for so many.

We have confronted, and will continue to confront, HIV/AIDS in our own country. And to meet a severe and urgent crisis abroad, tonight I propose the Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief -- a work of mercy beyond all current international efforts to help the people of Africa. This comprehensive plan will prevent 7 million new AIDS infections, treat at least 2 million people with life-extending drugs, and provide humane care for millions of people suffering from AIDS, and for children orphaned by AIDS.

I ask the Congress to commit \$15 billion over the next five years, including nearly \$10 billion in new money, to turn the tide against AIDS in the most afflicted nations of Africa and the Caribbean.

This nation can lead the world in sparing innocent people from a plague of nature. And this nation is leading the world in confronting and defeating the man-made evil of international terrorism.

There are days when our fellow citizens do not hear news about the war on terror. There's never a day when I do not learn of another threat, or receive reports of operations in progress, or give an order in this global war against a scattered network of killers. The war goes on, and we are winning.

To date, we've arrested or otherwise dealt with many key commanders of al Qaeda. They include a man who directed logistics and funding for the September the 11th attacks; the chief of al Qaeda operations in the Persian Gulf, who planned the bombings of our embassies in East Africa and the USS Cole; an al Qaeda operations chief from Southeast Asia; a former director of al Qaeda's training camps in Afghanistan; a key al Qaeda operative in Europe; a major al Qaeda leader in Yemen. All told, more than 3,000 suspected terrorists have been arrested in many countries. Many others have met a different fate. Let's put it this way -- they are no longer a problem to the United States and our friends and allies.

We are working closely with other nations to prevent further attacks. America and coalition countries have uncovered and stopped terrorist conspiracies targeting the American embassy in Yemen, the American embassy in Singapore, a Saudi military base, ships in the Straits of Hormuz and the Straits the Gibraltar. We've broken al Qaeda cells in Hamburg, Milan, Madrid, London, Paris, as well as, Buffalo, New York.

We have the terrorists on the run. We're keeping them on the run. One by one, the terrorists are learning the meaning of American justice.

As we fight this war, we will remember where it began -- here, in our own country. This government is taking unprecedented measures to protect our people and defend our homeland. We've intensified security at the borders and ports of entry, posted more than 50,000 newly-trained federal screeners in airports, begun inoculating troops and first responders against smallpox, and are deploying the nation's first early warning network of sensors to detect biological attack. And this year, for the first time, we are beginning to field a defense to protect this nation against ballistic missiles.

I thank the Congress for supporting these measures. I ask you tonight to add to our future security with a major research and production effort to guard our people against bioterrorism, called Project Bioshield. The budget I send you will propose almost \$6 billion to quickly make available effective vaccines and treatments against agents like anthrax, botulinum toxin, Ebola, and plague. We must assume that our enemies would use these diseases as weapons, and we must act before the dangers are upon us.

Since September the 11th, our intelligence and law enforcement agencies have worked more closely than ever to track and disrupt the terrorists. The FBI is improving its ability to analyze intelligence, and is transforming itself to meet new threats. Tonight, I am instructing the leaders of the FBI, the CIA, the Homeland Security, and the Department of Defense to develop a Terrorist Threat Integration Center, to merge and analyze all threat information in a single location. Our government must have the very best information possible, and we will use it to make sure the right people are in the right places to protect all our citizens.

Our war against terror is a contest of will in which perseverance is power. In the ruins of two towers, at the western wall of the Pentagon, on a field in Pennsylvania, this nation made a pledge, and we renew that pledge tonight: Whatever the duration of this struggle, and whatever the difficulties, we will not permit the triumph of violence in the affairs of men -- free people will set the course of

history.

Today, the gravest danger in the war on terror, the gravest danger facing America and the world, is outlaw regimes that seek and possess nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons. These regimes could use such weapons for blackmail, terror, and mass murder. They could also give or sell those weapons to terrorist allies, who would use them without the least hesitation.

This threat is new; America's duty is familiar. Throughout the 20th century, small groups of men seized control of great nations, built armies and arsenals, and set out to dominate the weak and intimidate the world. In each case, their ambitions of cruelty and murder had no limit. In each case, the ambitions of Hitlerism, militarism, and communism were defeated by the will of free peoples, by the strength of great alliances, and by the might of the United States of America.

Now, in this century, the ideology of power and domination has appeared again, and seeks to gain the ultimate weapons of terror. Once again, this nation and all our friends are all that stand between a world at peace, and a world of chaos and constant alarm. Once again, we are called to defend the safety of our people, and the hopes of all mankind. And we accept this responsibility.

America is making a broad and determined effort to confront these dangers. We have called on the United Nations to fulfill its charter and stand by its demand that Iraq disarm. We're strongly supporting the International Atomic Energy Agency in its mission to track and control nuclear materials around the world. We're working with other governments to secure nuclear materials in the former Soviet Union, and to strengthen global treaties banning the production and shipment of missile technologies and weapons of mass destruction.

In all these efforts, however, America's purpose is more than to follow a process -- it is to achieve a result: the end of terrible threats to the civilized world. All free nations have a stake in preventing sudden and catastrophic attacks. And we're asking them to join us, and many are doing so. Yet the course of this nation does not depend on the decisions of others. Whatever action is required, whenever action is necessary, I will defend the freedom and security of the American people.

Different threats require different strategies. In Iran, we continue to see a government that represses its people, pursues weapons of mass destruction, and supports terror. We also see Iranian citizens risking intimidation and death as they speak out for liberty and human rights and democracy. Iranians, like all people, have a right to choose their own government and determine their own destiny -- and the United States supports their aspirations to live in freedom.

On the Korean Peninsula, an oppressive regime rules a people living in fear and starvation. Throughout the 1990s, the United States relied on a negotiated framework to keep North Korea from gaining nuclear weapons. We now know that that regime was deceiving the world, and developing those weapons all along. And today the North Korean regime is using its nuclear program to incite fear and seek concessions. America and the world will not be blackmailed.

America is working with the countries of the region -- South Korea, Japan, China, and Russia -- to find a peaceful solution, and to show the North Korean government that nuclear weapons will bring only isolation, economic stagnation, and continued hardship. The North Korean regime will find respect in the world and revival for its people only when it turns away from its nuclear ambitions.

Our nation and the world must learn the lessons of the Korean Peninsula and not allow an even greater threat to rise up in Iraq. A brutal dictator, with a history of reckless aggression, with ties to terrorism, with great potential wealth, will not be permitted to dominate a vital region and threaten the United States.

Twelve years ago, Saddam Hussein faced the prospect of being the last casualty in a war he had started and lost. To spare himself, he agreed to disarm of all weapons of mass destruction. For the next 12 years, he systematically violated that agreement. He pursued chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons, even while inspectors were in his country. Nothing to date has restrained him from his pursuit of these weapons -- not economic sanctions, not isolation from the civilized world, not even cruise missile strikes on his military facilities.

Almost three months ago, the United Nations Security Council gave Saddam Hussein his final chance to disarm. He has shown instead utter contempt for the United Nations, and for the opinion of the world. The 108 U.N. inspectors were sent to conduct -- were not sent to conduct a scavenger hunt for hidden materials across a country the size of California. The job of the inspectors is to verify that Iraq's regime is disarming. It is up to Iraq to show exactly where it is hiding its banned weapons, lay those weapons out for the world to see, and destroy them as directed. Nothing like this has happened.

The United Nations concluded in 1999 that Saddam Hussein had biological weapons sufficient to produce over 25,000 liters of anthrax -- enough doses to kill several million people. He hasn't accounted for that material. He's given no evidence that he has destroyed it.

The United Nations concluded that Saddam Hussein had materials sufficient to produce more than 38,000 liters of botulinum toxin -- enough to subject millions of people to death by respiratory failure. He hadn't accounted for that material. He's given no evidence that he has destroyed it.

Our intelligence officials estimate that Saddam Hussein had the materials to produce as much as 500 tons of sarin, mustard and VX nerve agent. In such quantities, these chemical agents could also kill untold thousands. He's not accounted for these materials. He has given no evidence that he has destroyed them.

U.S. intelligence indicates that Saddam Hussein had upwards of 30,000 munitions capable of delivering chemical agents. Inspectors recently turned up 16 of them -- despite Iraq's recent declaration denying their existence. Saddam Hussein has not accounted for the remaining 29,984 of these prohibited munitions. He's given no evidence that he has destroyed them.

From three Iraqi defectors we know that Iraq, in the late 1990s, had several mobile biological weapons labs. These are designed to produce germ warfare agents, and can be moved from place to a place to evade inspectors. Saddam Hussein has not disclosed these facilities. He's given no evidence that he has destroyed them.

The International Atomic Energy Agency confirmed in the 1990s that Saddam Hussein had an advanced nuclear weapons development program, had a design for a nuclear weapon and was working on five different methods of enriching uranium for a bomb. The British government has learned that Saddam Hussein recently sought significant quantities of uranium from Africa. Our intelligence sources tell us that he has attempted to purchase high-strength aluminum tubes suitable for nuclear weapons production. Saddam Hussein has not credibly explained these activities. He clearly has much to hide.

The dictator of Iraq is not disarming. To the contrary; he is deceiving. From intelligence sources we know, for instance, that thousands of Iraqi security personnel are at work hiding documents and materials from the U.N. inspectors, sanitizing inspection sites and monitoring the inspectors themselves. Iraqi officials accompany the inspectors in order to intimidate witnesses.

Iraq is blocking U-2 surveillance flights requested by the United Nations. Iraqi intelligence officers are posing as the scientists inspectors are supposed to interview. Real scientists have been coached by Iraqi officials on what to say. Intelligence sources indicate that Saddam Hussein has ordered that scientists who cooperate with U.N. inspectors in disarming Iraq will be killed, along with their families.

Year after year, Saddam Hussein has gone to elaborate lengths, spent enormous sums, taken great risks to build and keep weapons of mass destruction. But why? The only possible explanation, the only possible use he could have for those weapons, is to dominate, intimidate, or attack.

With nuclear arms or a full arsenal of chemical and biological weapons, Saddam Hussein could resume his ambitions of conquest in the Middle East and create deadly havoc in that region. And this Congress and the America people must recognize another threat. Evidence from intelligence sources, secret communications, and statements by people now in custody reveal that Saddam Hussein aids and protects terrorists, including members of al Qaeda. Secretly, and without fingerprints, he could provide one of his hidden weapons to terrorists, or help them develop their own.

Before September the 11th, many in the world believed that Saddam Hussein could be contained. But chemical agents, lethal viruses and shadowy terrorist networks are not easily contained. Imagine those 19 hijackers with other weapons and other plans -- this time armed by Saddam Hussein. It would take one vial, one canister, one crate slipped into this country to bring a day of horror like none we have ever known. We will do everything in our power to make sure that that day never comes.

Some have said we must not act until the threat is imminent. Since when have terrorists and tyrants announced their intentions, politely putting us on notice before they strike? If this threat is

permitted to fully and suddenly emerge, all actions, all words, and all recriminations would come too late. Trusting in the sanity and restraint of Saddam Hussein is not a strategy, and it is not an option.

The dictator who is assembling the world's most dangerous weapons has already used them on whole villages -- leaving thousands of his own citizens dead, blind, or disfigured. Iraqi refugees tell us how forced confessions are obtained -- by torturing children while their parents are made to watch. International human rights groups have catalogued other methods used in the torture chambers of Iraq: electric shock, burning with hot irons, dripping acid on the skin, mutilation with electric drills, cutting out tongues, and rape. If this is not evil, then evil has no meaning.

And tonight I have a message for the brave and oppressed people of Iraq: Your enemy is not surrounding your country -- your enemy is ruling your country. And the day he and his regime are removed from power will be the day of your liberation.

The world has waited 12 years for Iraq to disarm. America will not accept a serious and mounting threat to our country, and our friends and our allies. The United States will ask the U.N. Security Council to convene on February the 5th to consider the facts of Iraq's ongoing defiance of the world. Secretary of State Powell will present information and intelligence about Iraqi's legal -- Iraq's illegal weapons programs, its attempt to hide those weapons from inspectors, and its links to terrorist groups.

We will consult. But let there be no misunderstanding: If Saddam Hussein does not fully disarm, for the safety of our people and for the peace of the world, we will lead a coalition to disarm him.

Tonight I have a message for the men and women who will keep the peace, members of the American Armed Forces: Many of you are assembling in or near the Middle East, and some crucial hours may lay ahead. In those hours, the success of our cause will depend on you. Your training has prepared you. Your honor will guide you. You believe in America, and America believes in you.

Sending Americans into battle is the most profound decision a President can make. The technologies of war have changed; the risks and suffering of war have not. For the brave Americans who bear the risk, no victory is free from sorrow. This nation fights reluctantly, because we know the cost and we dread the days of mourning that always come.

We seek peace. We strive for peace. And sometimes peace must be defended. A future lived at the mercy of terrible threats is no peace at all. If war is forced upon us, we will fight in a just cause and by just means -- sparing, in every way we can, the innocent. And if war is forced upon us, we will fight with the full force and might of the United States military -- and we will prevail.

And as we and our coalition partners are doing in Afghanistan, we will bring to the Iraqi people food and medicines and supplies -- and freedom.

Many challenges, abroad and at home, have arrived in a single season. In two years, America has gone from a sense of invulnerability to an awareness of peril; from bitter division in small matters to calm unity in great causes. And we go forward with confidence, because this call of history has come to the right country.

Americans are a resolute people who have risen to every test of our time. Adversity has revealed the character of our country, to the world and to ourselves. America is a strong nation, and honorable

in the use of our strength. We exercise power without conquest, and we sacrifice for the liberty of strangers.

Americans are a free people, who know that freedom is the right of every person and the future of every nation. The liberty we prize is not America's gift to the world, it is God's gift to humanity.

We Americans have faith in ourselves, but not in ourselves alone. We do not know -- we do not claim to know all the ways of Providence, yet we can trust in them, placing our confidence in the loving God behind all of life, and all of history.

May He guide us now. And may God continue to bless the United States of America.

State of the Union Address
George W. Bush
January 20, 2004

Mr. Speaker, Vice President Cheney, Members of Congress, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens:

America this evening is a Nation called to great responsibilities. And we are rising to meet them.

As we gather tonight, hundreds of thousands of American servicemen and women are deployed across the world in the war on terror. By bringing hope to the oppressed, and delivering justice to the violent, they are making America more secure.

Each day, law enforcement personnel and intelligence officers are tracking terrorist threats; analysts are examining airline passenger lists; the men and women of our new Homeland Security Department are patrolling our coasts and borders. And their vigilance is protecting America.

Americans are proving once again to be the hardest working people in the world. The American economy is growing stronger. The tax relief you passed is working.

Tonight, Members of Congress can take pride in great works of compassion and reform that skeptics had thought impossible. You are raising the standards of our public schools; and you are giving our senior citizens prescription drug coverage under Medicare.

We have faced serious challenges together - and now we face a choice. We can go forward with confidence and resolve - or we can turn back to the dangerous illusion that terrorists are not plotting and outlaw regimes are no threat to us. We can press on with economic growth, and reforms in education and Medicare - or we can turn back to the old policies and old divisions.

We have not come all this way - through tragedy, and trial, and war - only to falter and leave our work unfinished. Americans are rising to the tasks of history, and they expect the same of us. In their efforts, their enterprise, and their character, the American people are showing that the state of our

Union is confident and strong.

Our greatest responsibility is the active defense of the American people. Twenty-eight months have passed since September 11th, 2001 - over two years without an attack on American soil - and it is tempting to believe that the danger is behind us. That hope is understandable, comforting - and false. The killing has continued in Bali, Jakarta, Casablanca, Riyadh, Mombassa, Jerusalem, Istanbul, and Baghdad. The terrorists continue to plot against America and the civilized world. And by our will and courage, this danger will be defeated.

Inside the United States, where the war began, we must continue to give homeland security and law enforcement personnel every tool they need to defend us. And one of those essential tools is the PATRIOT Act, which allows Federal law enforcement to better share information, to track terrorists, to disrupt their cells, and to seize their assets. For years, we have used similar provisions to catch embezzlers and drug traffickers. If these methods are good for hunting criminals, they are even more important for hunting terrorists. Key provisions of the PATRIOT Act are set to expire next year. The terrorist threat will not expire on that schedule. Our law enforcement needs this vital legislation to protect our citizens - you need to renew the PATRIOT Act.

America is on the offensive against the terrorists who started this war. Last March, Khalid Shaikh Mohammed, a mastermind of September 11th, awoke to find himself in the custody of U.S. and Pakistani authorities. Last August 11th brought the capture of the terrorist Hambali, who was a key player in the attack in Indonesia that killed over 200 people. We are tracking al-Qaida around the world - and nearly two-thirds of their known leaders have now been captured or killed. Thousands of very skilled and determined military personnel are on a manhunt, going after the remaining killers who hide in cities and caves - and, one by one, we will bring the terrorists to justice.

As part of the offensive against terror, we are also confronting the regimes that harbor and support terrorists, and could supply them with nuclear, chemical, or biological weapons. The United States and our allies are determined: We refuse to live in the shadow of this ultimate danger.

The first to see our determination were the Taliban, who made Afghanistan the primary training base of al-Qaida killers. As of this month, that country has a new constitution, guaranteeing free elections and full participation by women. Businesses are opening, health care centers are being established, and the boys and girls of Afghanistan are back in school. With help from the new Afghan Army, our coalition is leading aggressive raids against surviving members of the Taliban and al-Qaida. The men and women of Afghanistan are building a nation that is free, and proud, and fighting terror - and America is honored to be their friend.

Since we last met in this chamber, combat forces of the United States, Great Britain, Australia, Poland, and other countries enforced the demands of the United Nations, ended the rule of Saddam Hussein - and the people of Iraq are free. Having broken the Baathist regime, we face a remnant of violent Saddam supporters. Men who ran away from our troops in battle are now dispersed and attack from the shadows.

These killers, joined by foreign terrorists, are a serious, continuing danger. Yet we are making progress against them. The once all-powerful ruler of Iraq was found in a hole, and now sits in a prison cell. Of the top 55 officials of the former regime, we have captured or killed 45. Our forces are on the offensive, leading over 1,600 patrols a day, and conducting an average of 180 raids every week.

We are dealing with these thugs in Iraq, just as surely as we dealt with Saddam Hussein's evil regime.

The work of building a new Iraq is hard, and it is right. And America has always been willing to do what it takes for what is right. Last January, Iraq's only law was the whim of one brutal man. Today our coalition is working with the Iraqi Governing Council to draft a basic law, with a bill of rights. We are working with Iraqis and the United Nations to prepare for a transition to full Iraqi sovereignty by the end of June. As democracy takes hold in Iraq, the enemies of freedom will do all in their power to spread violence and fear. They are trying to shake the will of our country and our friends - but the United States of America will never be intimidated by thugs and assassins. The killers will fail, and the Iraqi people will live in freedom.

Month by month, Iraqis are assuming more responsibility for their own security and their own future. And tonight we are honored to welcome one of Iraq's most respected leaders: the current President of the Iraqi Governing Council, Adnan Pachachi. Sir, America stands with you and the Iraqi people as you build a free and peaceful nation.

Because of American leadership and resolve, the world is changing for the better. Last month, the leader of Libya voluntarily pledged to disclose and dismantle all of his regime's weapons of mass destruction programs, including a uranium enrichment project for nuclear weapons. Colonel Qadhafi correctly judged that his country would be better off, and far more secure, without weapons of mass murder. Nine months of intense negotiations involving the United States and Great Britain succeeded with Libya, while 12 years of diplomacy with Iraq did not. And one reason is clear: For diplomacy to be effective, words must be credible - and no one can now doubt the word of America.

Different threats require different strategies. Along with nations in the region, we are insisting that North Korea eliminate its nuclear program. America and the international community are demanding that Iran meet its commitments and not develop nuclear weapons. America is committed to keeping the world's most dangerous weapons out of the hands of the world's most dangerous regimes.

When I came to this rostrum on September 20th, 2001, I brought the police shield of a fallen officer, my reminder of lives that ended, and a task that does not end. I gave to you and to all Americans my complete commitment to securing our country and defeating our enemies. And this pledge, given by one, has been kept by many. You in the Congress have provided the resources for our defense, and cast the difficult votes of war and peace. Our closest allies have been unwavering. America's intelligence personnel and diplomats have been skilled and tireless.

And the men and women of the American military - they have taken the hardest duty. We have seen their skill and courage in armored charges, and midnight raids, and lonely hours on faithful watch. We have seen the joy when they return, and felt the sorrow when one is lost. I have had the honor of meeting our servicemen and women at many posts, from the deck of a carrier in the Pacific, to a mess hall in Baghdad. Many of our troops are listening tonight. And I want you and your families to know: America is proud of you. And my Administration, and this Congress, will give you the resources you need to fight and win the war on terror.

I know that some people question if America is really in a war at all. They view terrorism more as a crime - a problem to be solved mainly with law enforcement and indictments. After the World Trade Center was first attacked in 1993, some of the guilty were indicted, tried, convicted, and sent to

prison. But the matter was not settled. The terrorists were still training and plotting in other nations, and drawing up more ambitious plans. After the chaos and carnage of September 11th, it is not enough to serve our enemies with legal papers. The terrorists and their supporters declared war on the United States - and war is what they got.

Some in this chamber, and in our country, did not support the liberation of Iraq. Objections to war often come from principled motives. But let us be candid about the consequences of leaving Saddam Hussein in power. We are seeking all the facts - already the Kay Report identified dozens of weapons of mass destruction-related program activities and significant amounts of equipment that Iraq concealed from the United Nations. Had we failed to act, the dictator's weapons of mass destruction programs would continue to this day. Had we failed to act, Security Council resolutions on Iraq would have been revealed as empty threats, weakening the United Nations and encouraging defiance by dictators around the world. Iraq's torture chambers would still be filled with victims - terrified and innocent. The killing fields of Iraq - where hundreds of thousands of men, women, and children vanished into the sands - would still be known only to the killers. For all who love freedom and peace, the world without Saddam Hussein's regime is a better and safer place.

Some critics have said our duties in Iraq must be internationalized. This particular criticism is hard to explain to our partners in Britain, Australia, Japan, South Korea, the Philippines, Thailand, Italy, Spain, Poland, Denmark, Hungary, Bulgaria, Ukraine, Romania, the Netherlands, Norway, El Salvador, and the 17 other countries that have committed troops to Iraq. As we debate at home, we must never ignore the vital contributions of our international partners, or dismiss their sacrifices. From the beginning, America has sought international support for operations in Afghanistan and Iraq, and we have gained much support. There is a difference, however, between leading a coalition of many nations, and submitting to the objections of a few. America will never seek a permission slip to defend the security of our people.

We also hear doubts that democracy is a realistic goal for the greater Middle East, where freedom is rare. Yet it is mistaken, and condescending, to assume that whole cultures and great religions are incompatible with liberty and self-government. I believe that God has planted in every heart the desire to live in freedom. And even when that desire is crushed by tyranny for decades, it will rise again.

As long as the Middle East remains a place of tyranny, despair, and anger, it will continue to produce men and movements that threaten the safety of America and our friends. So America is pursuing a forward strategy of freedom in the greater Middle East. We will challenge the enemies of reform, confront the allies of terror, and expect a higher standard from our friends. To cut through the barriers of hateful propaganda, the Voice of America and other broadcast services are expanding their programming in Arabic and Persian - and soon, a new television service will begin providing reliable news and information across the region. I will send you a proposal to double the budget of the National Endowment for Democracy, and to focus its new work on the development of free elections, free markets, free press, and free labor unions in the Middle East. And above all, we will finish the historic work of democracy in Afghanistan and Iraq, so those nations can light the way for others, and help transform a troubled part of the world.

America is a Nation with a mission - and that mission comes from our most basic beliefs. We have no desire to dominate, no ambitions of empire. Our aim is a democratic peace - a peace founded upon the dignity and rights of every man and woman. America acts in this cause with friends and

allies at our side, yet we understand our special calling: This great Republic will lead the cause of freedom.

In these last three years, adversity has also revealed the fundamental strengths of the American economy. We have come through recession, and terrorist attack, and corporate scandals, and the uncertainties of war. And because you acted to stimulate our economy with tax relief, this economy is strong, and growing stronger.

You have doubled the child tax credit from 500 to a thousand dollars, reduced the marriage penalty, begun to phase out the death tax, reduced taxes on capital gains and stock dividends, cut taxes on small businesses, and you have lowered taxes for every American who pays income taxes.

Americans took those dollars and put them to work, driving this economy forward. The pace of economic growth in the third quarter of 2003 was the fastest in nearly 20 years. New home construction: the highest in almost 20 years. Home ownership rates: the highest ever. Manufacturing activity is increasing. Inflation is low. Interest rates are low. Exports are growing. Productivity is high. And jobs are on the rise.

These numbers confirm that the American people are using their money far better than government would have - and you were right to return it.

America's growing economy is also a changing economy. As technology transforms the way almost every job is done, America becomes more productive, and workers need new skills. Much of our job growth will be found in high-skilled fields like health care and biotechnology. So we must respond by helping more Americans gain the skills to find good jobs in our new economy.

All skills begin with the basics of reading and math, which are supposed to be learned in the early grades of our schools. Yet for too long, for too many children, those skills were never mastered. By passing the No Child Left Behind Act, you have made the expectation of literacy the law of our country. We are providing more funding for our schools - a 36 percent increase since 2001. We are requiring higher standards. We are regularly testing every child on the fundamentals. We are reporting results to parents, and making sure they have better options when schools are not performing. We are making progress toward excellence for every child.

But the status quo always has defenders. Some want to undermine the No Child Left Behind Act by weakening standards and accountability. Yet the results we require are really a matter of common sense: We expect third graders to read and do math at third grade level - and that is not asking too much. Testing is the only way to identify and help students who are falling behind.

This Nation will not go back to the days of simply shuffling children along from grade to grade without them learning the basics. I refuse to give up on any child - and the No Child Left Behind Act is opening the door of opportunity to all of America's children.

At the same time, we must ensure that older students and adults can gain the skills they need to find work now. Many of the fastest-growing occupations require strong math and science preparation, and training beyond the high school level. So tonight I propose a series of measures called Jobs for the 21st Century. This program will provide extra help to middle- and high school students who fall behind in reading and math, expand Advanced Placement programs in low-income schools, and invite

math and science professionals from the private sector to teach part-time in our high schools. I propose larger Pell Grants for students who prepare for college with demanding courses in high school. I propose increasing our support for America's fine community colleges, so they can train workers for the industries that are creating the most new jobs. By all these actions, we will help more and more Americans to join in the growing prosperity of our country.

Job training is important, and so is job creation. We must continue to pursue an aggressive, pro-growth economic agenda.

Congress has some unfinished business on the issue of taxes. The tax reductions you passed are set to expire. Unless you act, the unfair tax on marriage will go back up. Unless you act, millions of families will be charged 300 dollars more in Federal taxes for every child. Unless you act, small businesses will pay higher taxes. Unless you act, the death tax will eventually come back to life. Unless you act, Americans face a tax increase. What the Congress has given, the Congress should not take away: For the sake of job growth, the tax cuts you passed should be permanent.

Our agenda for jobs and growth must help small business owners and employees with relief from needless Federal regulation, and protect them from junk and frivolous lawsuits. Consumers and businesses need reliable supplies of energy to make our economy run - so I urge you to pass legislation to modernize our electricity system, promote conservation, and make America less dependent on foreign sources of energy. My Administration is promoting free and fair trade, to open up new markets for America's entrepreneurs, and manufacturers, and farmers, and to create jobs for America's workers. Younger workers should have the opportunity to build a nest egg by saving part of their Social Security taxes in a personal retirement account. We should make the Social Security system a source of ownership for the American people.

And we should limit the burden of government on this economy by acting as good stewards of taxpayer dollars. In two weeks, I will send you a budget that funds the war, protects the homeland, and meets important domestic needs, while limiting the growth in discretionary spending to less than four percent. This will require that Congress focus on priorities, cut wasteful spending, and be wise with the people's money. By doing so, we can cut the deficit in half over the next five years.

Tonight I also ask you to reform our immigration laws, so they reflect our values and benefit our economy. I propose a new temporary worker program to match willing foreign workers with willing employers, when no Americans can be found to fill the job. This reform will be good for our economy - because employers will find needed workers in an honest and orderly system. A temporary worker program will help protect our homeland - allowing border patrol and law enforcement to focus on true threats to our national security. I oppose amnesty, because it would encourage further illegal immigration, and unfairly reward those who break our laws. My temporary worker program will preserve the citizenship path for those who respect the law, while bringing millions of hardworking men and women out from the shadows of American life.

Our Nation's health care system, like our economy, is also in a time of change. Amazing medical technologies are improving and saving lives. This dramatic progress has brought its own challenge, in the rising costs of medical care and health insurance. Members of Congress, we must work together to help control those costs and extend the benefits of modern medicine throughout our country.

Meeting these goals requires bipartisan effort - and two months ago, you showed the way. By

strengthening Medicare and adding a prescription drug benefit, you kept a basic commitment to our seniors: You are giving them the modern medicine they deserve.

Starting this year, under the law you passed, seniors can choose to receive a drug discount card, saving them 10 to 25 percent off the retail price of most prescription drugs - and millions of low-income seniors can get an additional 600 dollars to buy medicine. Beginning next year, seniors will have new coverage for preventive screenings against diabetes and heart disease, and seniors just entering Medicare can receive wellness exams.

In January of 2006, seniors can get prescription drug coverage under Medicare. For a monthly premium of about 35 dollars, most seniors who do not have that coverage today can expect to see their drug bills cut roughly in half. Under this reform, senior citizens will be able to keep their Medicare just as it is, or they can choose a Medicare plan that fits them best - just as you, as Members of Congress, can choose an insurance plan that meets your needs. And starting this year, millions of Americans will be able to save money tax-free for their medical expenses, in a health savings account.

I signed this measure proudly, and any attempt to limit the choices of our seniors, or to take away their prescription drug coverage under Medicare, will meet my veto.

On the critical issue of health care, our goal is to ensure that Americans can choose and afford private health care coverage that best fits their individual needs. To make insurance more affordable, Congress must act to address rapidly rising health care costs. Small businesses should be able to band together and negotiate for lower insurance rates, so they can cover more workers with health insurance - I urge you to pass Association Health Plans. I ask you to give lower-income Americans a refundable tax credit that would allow millions to buy their own basic health insurance. By computerizing health records, we can avoid dangerous medical mistakes, reduce costs, and improve care. To protect the doctor-patient relationship, and keep good doctors doing good work, we must eliminate wasteful and frivolous medical lawsuits. And tonight I propose that individuals who buy catastrophic health care coverage, as part of our new health savings accounts, be allowed to deduct 100 percent of the premiums from their taxes.

A government-run health care system is the wrong prescription. By keeping costs under control, expanding access, and helping more Americans afford coverage, we will preserve the system of private medicine that makes America's health care the best in the world.

We are living in a time of great change - in our world, in our economy, and in science and medicine. Yet some things endure - courage and compassion, reverence and integrity, respect for differences of faith and race. The values we try to live by never change. And they are instilled in us by fundamental institutions, such as families, and schools, and religious congregations. These institutions - the unseen pillars of civilization - must remain strong in America, and we will defend them.

We must stand with our families to help them raise healthy, responsible children. And when it comes to helping children make right choices, there is work for all of us to do.

One of the worst decisions our children can make is to gamble their lives and futures on drugs. Our government is helping parents confront this problem, with aggressive education, treatment, and law enforcement. Drug use in high school has declined by 11 percent over the past two years. Four hundred thousand fewer young people are using illegal drugs than in the year 2001. In my budget, I

have proposed new funding to continue our aggressive, community-based strategy to reduce demand for illegal drugs. Drug testing in our schools has proven to be an effective part of this effort. So tonight I propose an additional 23 million dollars for schools that want to use drug testing as a tool to save children's lives. The aim here is not to punish children, but to send them this message: We love you, and we don't want to lose you.

To help children make right choices, they need good examples. Athletics play such an important role in our society, but, unfortunately, some in professional sports are not setting much of an example. The use of performance-enhancing drugs like steroids in baseball, football, and other sports is dangerous, and it sends the wrong message - that there are shortcuts to accomplishment, and that performance is more important than character. So tonight I call on team owners, union representatives, coaches, and players to take the lead, to send the right signal, to get tough, and to get rid of steroids now.

To encourage right choices, we must be willing to confront the dangers young people face - even when they are difficult to talk about. Each year, about three million teenagers contract sexually transmitted diseases that can harm them, or kill them, or prevent them from ever becoming parents. In my budget, I propose a grassroots campaign to help inform families about these medical risks. We will double Federal funding for abstinence programs, so schools can teach this fact of life: Abstinence for young people is the only certain way to avoid sexually transmitted diseases. Decisions children make now can affect their health and character for the rest of their lives. All of us - parents, schools, government - must work together to counter the negative influence of the culture, and to send the right messages to our children.

A strong America must also value the institution of marriage. I believe we should respect individuals as we take a principled stand for one of the most fundamental, enduring institutions of our civilization. Congress has already taken a stand on this issue by passing the Defense of Marriage Act, signed in 1996 by President Clinton. That statute protects marriage under Federal law as the union of a man and a woman, and declares that one state may not redefine marriage for other states. Activist judges, however, have begun redefining marriage by court order, without regard for the will of the people and their elected representatives. On an issue of such great consequence, the people's voice must be heard. If judges insist on forcing their arbitrary will upon the people, the only alternative left to the people would be the constitutional process. Our Nation must defend the sanctity of marriage.

The outcome of this debate is important - and so is the way we conduct it. The same moral tradition that defines marriage also teaches that each individual has dignity and value in God's sight.

It is also important to strengthen our communities by unleashing the compassion of America's religious institutions. Religious charities of every creed are doing some of the most vital work in our country - mentoring children, feeding the hungry, taking the hand of the lonely. Yet government has often denied social service grants and contracts to these groups, just because they have a cross or Star of David or crescent on the wall. By Executive Order, I have opened billions of dollars in grant money to competition that includes faith-based charities. Tonight I ask you to codify this into law, so people of faith can know that the law will never discriminate against them again.

In the past, we have worked together to bring mentors to the children of prisoners, and provide treatment for the addicted, and help for the homeless. Tonight I ask you to consider another group of Americans in need of help. This year, some 600,000 inmates will be released from prison back into

society. We know from long experience that if they can't find work, or a home, or help, they are much more likely to commit more crimes and return to prison. So tonight, I propose a four-year, 300 million dollar Prisoner Re-Entry Initiative to expand job training and placement services, to provide transitional housing, and to help newly released prisoners get mentoring, including from faith-based groups. America is the land of the second chance - and when the gates of the prison open, the path ahead should lead to a better life.

For all Americans, the last three years have brought tests we did not ask for, and achievements shared by all. By our actions, we have shown what kind of Nation we are. In grief, we found the grace to go on. In challenge, we rediscovered the courage and daring of a free people. In victory, we have shown the noble aims and good heart of America. And having come this far, we sense that we live in a time set apart.

I have been a witness to the character of the American people, who have shown calm in times of danger, compassion for one another, and toughness for the long haul. All of us have been partners in a great enterprise. And even some of the youngest understand that we are living in historic times. Last month a girl in Lincoln, Rhode Island, sent me a letter. It began, "Dear George W. Bush." "If there is anything you know, I Ashley Pearson age 10 can do to help anyone, please send me a letter and tell me what I can do to save our country." She added this P.S.: "If you can send a letter to the troops ... please put, 'Ashley Pearson believes in you.'" Tonight, Ashley, your message to our troops has just been conveyed. And yes, you have some duties yourself. Study hard in school, listen to your mom and dad, help someone in need, and when you and your friends see a man or woman in uniform, say "thank you." And while you do your part, all of us here in this great chamber will do our best to keep you and the rest of America safe and free.

My fellow citizens, we now move forward, with confidence and faith. Our Nation is strong and steadfast. The cause we serve is right, because it is the cause of all mankind. The momentum of freedom in our world is unmistakable - and it is not carried forward by our power alone. We can trust in that greater power Who guides the unfolding of the years. And in all that is to come, we can know that His purposes are just and true.

May God bless the United States of America. Thank you.

State of the Union Address
George W. Bush
February 2, 2005

Mr. Speaker, Vice President Cheney, members of Congress, fellow citizens:

As a new Congress gathers, all of us in the elected branches of government share a great privilege: We've been placed in office by the votes of the people we serve. And tonight that is a privilege we share with newly-elected leaders of Afghanistan, the Palestinian Territories, Ukraine, and a free and

sovereign Iraq.

Two weeks ago, I stood on the steps of this Capitol and renewed the commitment of our nation to the guiding ideal of liberty for all. This evening I will set forth policies to advance that ideal at home and around the world.

Tonight, with a healthy, growing economy, with more Americans going back to work, with our nation an active force for good in the world -- the state of our union is confident and strong.

Our generation has been blessed -- by the expansion of opportunity, by advances in medicine, by the security purchased by our parents' sacrifice. Now, as we see a little gray in the mirror -- or a lot of gray -- and we watch our children moving into adulthood, we ask the question: What will be the state of their union? Members of Congress, the choices we make together will answer that question. Over the next several months, on issue after issue, let us do what Americans have always done, and build a better world for our children and our grandchildren.

First, we must be good stewards of this economy, and renew the great institutions on which millions of our fellow citizens rely. America's economy is the fastest growing of any major industrialized nation. In the past four years, we provided tax relief to every person who pays income taxes, overcome a recession, opened up new markets abroad, prosecuted corporate criminals, raised homeownership to its highest level in history, and in the last year alone, the United States has added 2.3 million new jobs. When action was needed, the Congress delivered -- and the nation is grateful.

Now we must add to these achievements. By making our economy more flexible, more innovative, and more competitive, we will keep America the economic leader of the world.

America's prosperity requires restraining the spending appetite of the federal government. I welcome the bipartisan enthusiasm for spending discipline. I will send you a budget that holds the growth of discretionary spending below inflation, makes tax relief permanent, and stays on track to cut the deficit in half by 2009. My budget substantially reduces or eliminates more than 150 government programs that are not getting results, or duplicate current efforts, or do not fulfill essential priorities. The principle here is clear: Taxpayer dollars must be spent wisely, or not at all.

To make our economy stronger and more dynamic, we must prepare a rising generation to fill the jobs of the 21st century. Under the No Child Left Behind Act, standards are higher, test scores are on the rise, and we're closing the achievement gap for minority students. Now we must demand better results from our high schools, so every high school diploma is a ticket to success. We will help an additional 200,000 workers to get training for a better career, by reforming our job training system and strengthening America's community colleges. And we'll make it easier for Americans to afford a college education, by increasing the size of Pell Grants.

To make our economy stronger and more competitive, America must reward, not punish, the efforts and dreams of entrepreneurs. Small business is the path of advancement, especially for women and minorities, so we must free small businesses from needless regulation and protect honest job-creators from junk lawsuits. Justice is distorted, and our economy is held back by irresponsible class-actions and frivolous asbestos claims -- and I urge Congress to pass legal reforms this year.

To make our economy stronger and more productive, we must make health care more affordable,

and give families greater access to good coverage -- and more control over their health decisions. I ask Congress to move forward on a comprehensive health care agenda with tax credits to help low-income workers buy insurance, a community health center in every poor county, improved information technology to prevent medical error and needless costs, association health plans for small businesses and their employees -- -- expanded health savings accounts -- and medical liability reform that will reduce health care costs and make sure patients have the doctors and care they need.

To keep our economy growing, we also need reliable supplies of affordable, environmentally responsible energy. Nearly four years ago, I submitted a comprehensive energy strategy that encourages conservation, alternative sources, a modernized electricity grid, and more production here at home -- including safe, clean nuclear energy. My Clear Skies legislation will cut power plant pollution and improve the health of our citizens. And my budget provides strong funding for leading-edge technology -- from hydrogen-fueled cars, to clean coal, to renewable sources such as ethanol. Four years of debate is enough: I urge Congress to pass legislation that makes America more secure and less dependent on foreign energy.

All these proposals are essential to expand this economy and add new jobs -- but they are just the beginning of our duty. To build the prosperity of future generations, we must update institutions that were created to meet the needs of an earlier time. Year after year, Americans are burdened by an archaic, incoherent federal tax code. I've appointed a bipartisan panel to examine the tax code from top to bottom. And when their recommendations are delivered, you and I will work together to give this nation a tax code that is pro-growth, easy to understand, and fair to all.

America's immigration system is also outdated -- unsuited to the needs of our economy and to the values of our country. We should not be content with laws that punish hardworking people who want only to provide for their families, and deny businesses willing workers, and invite chaos at our border. It is time for an immigration policy that permits temporary guest workers to fill jobs Americans will not take, that rejects amnesty, that tells us who is entering and leaving our country, and that closes the border to drug dealers and terrorists.

One of America's most important institutions -- a symbol of the trust between generations -- is also in need of wise and effective reform. Social Security was a great moral success of the 20th century, and we must honor its great purposes in this new century. The system, however, on its current path, is headed toward bankruptcy. And so we must join together to strengthen and save Social Security.

Today, more than 45 million Americans receive Social Security benefits, and millions more are nearing retirement -- and for them the system is sound and fiscally strong. I have a message for every American who is 55 or older: Do not let anyone mislead you; for you, the Social Security system will not change in any way. For younger workers, the Social Security system has serious problems that will grow worse with time. Social Security was created decades ago, for a very different era. In those days, people did not live as long. Benefits were much lower than they are today. And a half-century ago, about sixteen workers paid into the system for each person drawing benefits.

Our society has changed in ways the founders of Social Security could not have foreseen. In today's world, people are living longer and, therefore, drawing benefits longer. And those benefits are scheduled to rise dramatically over the next few decades. And instead of sixteen workers paying in for every beneficiary, right now it's only about three workers. And over the next few decades that number

will fall to just two workers per beneficiary. With each passing year, fewer workers are paying ever-higher benefits to an ever-larger number of retirees.

So here is the result: Thirteen years from now, in 2018, Social Security will be paying out more than it takes in. And every year afterward will bring a new shortfall, bigger than the year before. For example, in the year 2027, the government will somehow have to come up with an extra \$200 billion to keep the system afloat -- and by 2033, the annual shortfall would be more than \$300 billion. By the year 2042, the entire system would be exhausted and bankrupt. If steps are not taken 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.

I recognize that 2018 and 2042 may seem a long way off. But those dates are not so distant, as any parent will tell you. If you have a five-year-old, you're already concerned about how you'll pay for college tuition 13 years down the road. If you've got children in their 20s, as some of us do, the idea of Social Security collapsing before they retire does not seem like a small matter. And it should not be a small matter to the United States Congress. You and I share a responsibility. We must pass reforms that solve the financial problems of Social Security once and for all.

Fixing Social Security permanently will require an open, candid review of the options. Some have suggested limiting benefits for wealthy retirees. Former Congressman Tim Penny has raised the possibility of indexing benefits to prices rather than wages. During the 1990s, my predecessor, President Clinton, spoke of increasing the retirement age. Former Senator John Breaux suggested discouraging early collection of Social Security benefits. The late Senator Daniel Patrick Moynihan recommended changing the way benefits are calculated. All these ideas are on the table.

I know that none of these reforms would be easy. But we have to move ahead with courage and honesty, because our children's retirement security is more important than partisan politics. I will work with members of Congress to find the most effective combination of reforms. I will listen to anyone who has a good idea to offer. We must, however, be guided by some basic principles. We must make Social Security permanently sound, not leave that task for another day. We must not jeopardize our economic strength by increasing payroll taxes. We must ensure that lower-income Americans get the help they need to have dignity and peace of mind in their retirement. We must guarantee there is no change for those now retired or nearing retirement. And we must take care that any changes in the system are gradual, so younger workers have years to prepare and plan for their future.

As we fix Social Security, we also have the responsibility to make the system a better deal for younger workers. And the best way to reach that goal is through voluntary personal retirement accounts. Here is how the idea works. Right now, a set portion of the money you earn is taken out of your paycheck to pay for the Social Security benefits of today's retirees. If you're a younger worker, I believe you should be able to set aside part of that money in your own retirement account, so you can build a nest egg for your own future.

Here's why the personal accounts are a better deal. Your money will grow, over time, at a greater rate than anything the current system can deliver -- and your account will provide money for retirement over and above the check you will receive from Social Security. In addition, you'll be able to pass along the money that accumulates in your personal account, if you wish, to your children and -- or grandchildren. And best of all, the money in the account is yours, and the government can never take it away.

The goal here is greater security in retirement, so we will set careful guidelines for personal accounts. We'll make sure the money can only go into a conservative mix of bonds and stock funds. We'll make sure that your earnings are not eaten up by hidden Wall Street fees. We'll make sure there are good options to protect your investments from sudden market swings on the eve of your retirement. We'll make sure a personal account cannot be emptied out all at once, but rather paid out over time, as an addition to traditional Social Security benefits. And we'll make sure this plan is fiscally responsible, by starting personal retirement accounts gradually, and raising the yearly limits on contributions over time, eventually permitting all workers to set aside four percentage points of their payroll taxes in their accounts.

Personal retirement accounts should be familiar to federal employees, because you already have something similar, called the Thrift Savings Plan, which lets workers deposit a portion of their paychecks into any of five different broadly-based investment funds. It's time to extend the same security, and choice, and ownership to young Americans.

Our second great responsibility to our children and grandchildren is to honor and to pass along the values that sustain a free society. So many of my generation, after a long journey, have come home to family and faith, and are determined to bring up responsible, moral children. Government is not the source of these values, but government should never undermine them.

Because marriage is a sacred institution and the foundation of society, it should not be re-defined by activist judges. For the good of families, children, and society, I support a constitutional amendment to protect the institution of marriage.

Because a society is measured by how it treats the weak and vulnerable, we must strive to build a culture of life. Medical research can help us reach that goal, by developing treatments and cures that save lives and help people overcome disabilities -- and I thank the Congress for doubling the funding of the National Institutes of Health. To build a culture of life, we must also ensure that scientific advances always serve human dignity, not take advantage of some lives for the benefit of others. We should all be able to agree -- -- we should all be able to agree on some clear standards. I will work with Congress to ensure that human embryos are not created for experimentation or grown for body parts, and that human life is never bought and sold as a commodity. America will continue to lead the world in medical research that is ambitious, aggressive, and always ethical.

Because courts must always deliver impartial justice, judges have a duty to faithfully interpret the law, not legislate from the bench. As President, I have a constitutional responsibility to nominate men and women who understand the role of courts in our democracy, and are well-qualified to serve on the bench -- and I have done so. The Constitution also gives the Senate a responsibility: Every judicial nominee deserves an up or down vote.

Because one of the deepest values of our country is compassion, we must never turn away from any citizen who feels isolated from the opportunities of America. Our government will continue to support faith-based and community groups that bring hope to harsh places. Now we need to focus on giving young people, especially young men in our cities, better options than apathy, or gangs, or jail. Tonight I propose a three-year initiative to help organizations keep young people out of gangs, and show young men an ideal of manhood that respects women and rejects violence. Taking on gang life will be one part of a broader outreach to at-risk youth, which involves parents and pastors, coaches and community leaders, in programs ranging from literacy to sports. And I am proud that the leader of

this nationwide effort will be our First Lady, Laura Bush.

Because HIV/AIDS brings suffering and fear into so many lives, I ask you to reauthorize the Ryan White Act to encourage prevention, and provide care and treatment to the victims of that disease. And as we update this important law, we must focus our efforts on fellow citizens with the highest rates of new cases, African American men and women.

Because one of the main sources of our national unity is our belief in equal justice, we need to make sure Americans of all races and backgrounds have confidence in the system that provides justice. In America we must make doubly sure no person is held to account for a crime he or she did not commit -- so we are dramatically expanding the use of DNA evidence to prevent wrongful conviction. Soon I will send to Congress a proposal to fund special training for defense counsel in capital cases, because people on trial for their lives must have competent lawyers by their side.

Our third responsibility to future generations is to leave them an America that is safe from danger, and protected by peace. We will pass along to our children all the freedoms we enjoy -- and chief among them is freedom from fear.

In the three and a half years since September the 11th, 2001, we have taken unprecedented actions to protect Americans. We've created a new department of government to defend our homeland, focused the FBI on preventing terrorism, begun to reform our intelligence agencies, broken up terror cells across the country, expanded research on defenses against biological and chemical attack, improved border security, and trained more than a half-million first responders. Police and firefighters, air marshals, researchers, and so many others are working every day to make our homeland safer, and we thank them all.

Our nation, working with allies and friends, has also confronted the enemy abroad, with measures that are determined, successful, and continuing. The al Qaeda terror network that attacked our country still has leaders -- but many of its top commanders have been removed. There are still governments that sponsor and harbor terrorists -- but their number has declined. There are still regimes seeking weapons of mass destruction -- but no longer without attention and without consequence. Our country is still the target of terrorists who want to kill many, and intimidate us all -- and we will stay on the offensive against them, until the fight is won.

Pursuing our enemies is a vital commitment of the war on terror -- and I thank the Congress for providing our servicemen and women with the resources they have needed. During this time of war, we must continue to support our military and give them the tools for victory.

Other nations around the globe have stood with us. In Afghanistan, an international force is helping provide security. In Iraq, 28 countries have troops on the ground, the United Nations and the European Union provided technical assistance for the elections, and NATO is leading a mission to help train Iraqi officers. We're cooperating with 60 governments in the Proliferation Security Initiative, to detect and stop the transit of dangerous materials. We're working closely with the governments in Asia to convince North Korea to abandon its nuclear ambitions. Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and nine other countries have captured or detained al Qaeda terrorists. In the next four years, my administration will continue to build the coalitions that will defeat the dangers of our time.

In the long-term, the peace we seek will only be achieved by eliminating the conditions that feed

radicalism and ideologies of murder. If whole regions of the world remain in despair and grow in hatred, they will be the recruiting grounds for terror, and that terror will stalk America and other free nations for decades. The only force powerful enough to stop the rise of tyranny and terror, and replace hatred with hope, is the force of human freedom. Our enemies know this, and that is why the terrorist Zarqawi recently declared war on what he called the "evil principle" of democracy. And we've declared our own intention: America will stand with the allies of freedom to support democratic movements in the Middle East and beyond, with the ultimate goal of ending tyranny in our world.

The United States has no right, no desire, and no intention to impose our form of government on anyone else. That is one of the main differences between us and our enemies. They seek to impose and expand an empire of oppression, in which a tiny group of brutal, self-appointed rulers control every aspect of every life. Our aim is to build and preserve a community of free and independent nations, with governments that answer to their citizens, and reflect their own cultures. And because democracies respect their own people and their neighbors, the advance of freedom will lead to peace.

That advance has great momentum in our time -- shown by women voting in Afghanistan, and Palestinians choosing a new direction, and the people of Ukraine asserting their democratic rights and electing a president. We are witnessing landmark events in the history of liberty. And in the coming years, we will add to that story.

The beginnings of reform and democracy in the Palestinian territories are now showing the power of freedom to break old patterns of violence and failure. Tomorrow morning, Secretary of State Rice departs on a trip that will take her to Israel and the West Bank for meetings with Prime Minister Sharon and President Abbas. She will discuss with them how we and our friends can help the Palestinian people end terror and build the institutions of a peaceful, independent, democratic state. To promote this democracy, I will ask Congress for \$350 million to support Palestinian political, economic, and security reforms. The goal of two democratic states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace, is within reach -- and America will help them achieve that goal.

To promote peace and stability in the broader Middle East, the United States will work with our friends in the region to fight the common threat of terror, while we encourage a higher standard of freedom. Hopeful reform is already taking hold in an arc from Morocco to Jordan to Bahrain. The government of Saudi Arabia can demonstrate its leadership in the region by expanding the role of its people in determining their future. And the great and proud nation of Egypt, which showed the way toward peace in the Middle East, can now show the way toward democracy in the Middle East.

To promote peace in the broader Middle East, we must confront regimes that continue to harbor terrorists and pursue weapons of mass murder. Syria still allows its territory, and parts of Lebanon, to be used by terrorists who seek to destroy every chance of peace in the region. You have passed, and we are applying, the Syrian Accountability Act -- and we expect the Syrian government to end all support for terror and open the door to freedom. Today, Iran remains the world's primary state sponsor of terror -- pursuing nuclear weapons while depriving its people of the freedom they seek and deserve. We are working with European allies to make clear to the Iranian regime that it must give up its uranium enrichment program and any plutonium reprocessing, and end its support for terror. And to the Iranian people, I say tonight: As you stand for your own liberty, America stands with you.

Our generational commitment to the advance of freedom, especially in the Middle East, is now being tested and honored in Iraq. That country is a vital front in the war on terror, which is why the

terrorists have chosen to make a stand there. Our men and women in uniform are fighting terrorists in Iraq, so we do not have to face them here at home. And the victory of freedom in Iraq will strengthen a new ally in the war on terror, inspire democratic reformers from Damascus to Tehran, bring more hope and progress to a troubled region, and thereby lift a terrible threat from the lives of our children and grandchildren.

We will succeed because the Iraqi people value their own liberty -- as they showed the world last Sunday. Across Iraq, often at great risk, millions of citizens went to the polls and elected 275 men and women to represent them in a new Transitional National Assembly. A young woman in Baghdad told of waking to the sound of mortar fire on election day, and wondering if it might be too dangerous to vote. She said, "Hearing those explosions, it occurred to me -- the insurgents are weak, they are afraid of democracy, they are losing. So I got my husband, and I got my parents, and we all came out and voted together."

Americans recognize that spirit of liberty, because we share it. In any nation, casting your vote is an act of civic responsibility; for millions of Iraqis, it was also an act of personal courage, and they have earned the respect of us all.

One of Iraq's leading democracy and human rights advocates is Safia Taleb al-Suhail. She says of her country, "We were occupied for 35 years by Saddam Hussein. That was the real occupation. Thank you to the American people who paid the cost, but most of all, to the soldiers." Eleven years ago, Safia's father was assassinated by Saddam's intelligence service. Three days ago in Baghdad, Safia was finally able to vote for the leaders of her country -- and we are honored that she is with us tonight.

The terrorists and insurgents are violently opposed to democracy, and will continue to attack it. Yet, the terrorists' most powerful myth is being destroyed. The whole world is seeing that the car bombers and assassins are not only fighting coalition forces, they are trying to destroy the hopes of Iraqis, expressed in free elections. And the whole world now knows that a small group of extremists will not overturn the will of the Iraqi people.

We will succeed in Iraq because Iraqis are determined to fight for their own freedom, and to write their own history. As Prime Minister Allawi said in his speech to Congress last September, "Ordinary Iraqis are anxious to shoulder all the security burdens of our country as quickly as possible." That is the natural desire of an independent nation, and it is also the stated mission of our coalition in Iraq. The new political situation in Iraq opens a new phase of our work in that country.

At the recommendation of our commanders on the ground, and in consultation with the Iraqi government, we will increasingly focus our efforts on helping prepare more capable Iraqi security forces -- forces with skilled officers and an effective command structure. As those forces become more self-reliant and take on greater security responsibilities, America and its coalition partners will increasingly be in a supporting role. In the end, Iraqis must be able to defend their own country -- and we will help that proud, new nation secure its liberty.

Recently an Iraqi interpreter said to a reporter, "Tell America not to abandon us." He and all Iraqis can be certain: While our military strategy is adapting to circumstances, our commitment remains firm and unchanging. We are standing for the freedom of our Iraqi friends, and freedom in Iraq will make America safer for generations to come. We will not set an artificial timetable for leaving Iraq, because that would embolden the terrorists and make them believe they can wait us out. We are in Iraq

to achieve a result: A country that is democratic, representative of all its people, at peace with its neighbors, and able to defend itself. And when that result is achieved, our men and women serving in Iraq will return home with the honor they have earned.

Right now, Americans in uniform are serving at posts across the world, often taking great risks on my orders. We have given them training and equipment; and they have given us an example of idealism and character that makes every American proud. The volunteers of our military are unrelenting in battle, unwavering in loyalty, unmatched in honor and decency, and every day they're making our nation more secure. Some of our servicemen and women have survived terrible injuries, and this grateful country will do everything we can to help them recover. And we have said farewell to some very good men and women, who died for our freedom, and whose memory this nation will honor forever.

One name we honor is Marine Corps Sergeant Byron Norwood of Pflugerville, Texas, who was killed during the assault on Fallujah. His mom, Janet, sent me a letter and told me how much Byron loved being a Marine, and how proud he was to be on the front line against terror. She wrote, "When Byron was home the last time, I said that I wanted to protect him like I had since he was born. He just hugged me and said, 'You've done your job, Mom. Now it is my turn to protect you.'" Ladies and gentlemen, with grateful hearts, we honor freedom's defenders, and our military families, represented here this evening by Sergeant Norwood's mom and dad, Janet and Bill Norwood.

In these four years, Americans have seen the unfolding of large events. We have known times of sorrow, and hours of uncertainty, and days of victory. In all this history, even when we have disagreed, we have seen threads of purpose that unite us. The attack on freedom in our world has reaffirmed our confidence in freedom's power to change the world. We are all part of a great venture: To extend the promise of freedom in our country, to renew the values that sustain our liberty, and to spread the peace that freedom brings.

As Franklin Roosevelt once reminded Americans, "Each age is a dream that is dying, or one that is coming to birth." And we live in the country where the biggest dreams are born. The abolition of slavery was only a dream -- until it was fulfilled. The liberation of Europe from fascism was only a dream -- until it was achieved. The fall of imperial communism was only a dream -- until, one day, it was accomplished. Our generation has dreams of its own, and we also go forward with confidence. The road of Providence is uneven and unpredictable -- yet we know where it leads: It leads to freedom.

Thank you, and may God bless America.

State of the Union Address
George W. Bush
January 31, 2006

Mr. Speaker, Vice President Cheney, Members of Congress, Members of the Supreme Court and

diplomatic corps, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens:

Today our Nation lost a beloved, graceful, courageous woman who called America to its founding ideals and carried on a noble dream. Tonight we are comforted by the hope of a glad reunion with the husband who was taken from her so long ago, and we are grateful for the good life of Coretta Scott King.

Each time I am invited to this rostrum, I am humbled by the privilege, and mindful of the history we have seen together. We have gathered under this Capitol dome in moments of national mourning and national achievement. We have served America through one of the most consequential periods of our history -- and it has been my honor to serve with you.

In a system of two parties, two chambers, and two elected branches, there will always be differences and debate. But even tough debates can be conducted in a civil tone, and our differences cannot be allowed to harden into anger. To confront the great issues before us, we must act in a spirit of good will and respect for one another -- and I will do my part. Tonight the state of our Union is strong -- and together we will make it stronger.

In this decisive year, you and I will make choices that determine both the future and the character of our country. We will choose to act confidently in pursuing the enemies of freedom -- or retreat from our duties in the hope of an easier life. We will choose to build our prosperity by leading the world economy -- or shut ourselves off from trade and opportunity. In a complex and challenging time, the road of isolationism and protectionism may seem broad and inviting -- yet it ends in danger and decline. The only way to protect our people ... the only way to secure the peace ... the only way to control our destiny is by our leadership -- so the United States of America will continue to lead.

Abroad, our Nation is committed to an historic, long-term goal -- we seek the end of tyranny in our world. Some dismiss that goal as misguided idealism. In reality, the future security of America depends on it. On September 11th, 2001, we found that problems originating in a failed and oppressive state seven thousand miles away could bring murder and destruction to our country. Dictatorships shelter terrorists, feed resentment and radicalism, and seek weapons of mass destruction. Democracies replace resentment with hope, respect the rights of their citizens and their neighbors, and join the fight against terror. Every step toward freedom in the world makes our country safer, and so we will act boldly in freedom's cause.

Far from being a hopeless dream, the advance of freedom is the great story of our time. In 1945, there were about two dozen lonely democracies on Earth. Today, there are 122. And we are writing a new chapter in the story of self-government -- with women lining up to vote in Afghanistan ... and millions of Iraqis marking their liberty with purple ink ... and men and women from Lebanon to Egypt debating the rights of individuals and the necessity of freedom. At the start of 2006, more than half the people of our world live in democratic nations. And we do not forget the other half -- in places like Syria, Burma, Zimbabwe, North Korea, and Iran -- because the demands of justice, and the peace of this world, require their freedom as well.

No one can deny the success of freedom, but some men rage and fight against it. And one of the main sources of reaction and opposition is radical Islam -- the perversion by a few of a noble faith into an ideology of terror and death. Terrorists like bin Laden are serious about mass murder -- and all of us must take their declared intentions seriously. They seek to impose a heartless system of totalitarian control throughout the Middle East, and arm themselves with weapons of mass murder. Their aim is to seize power in Iraq, and use it as a safe haven to launch attacks against America and the world. Lacking the military strength to challenge us directly, the terrorists have chosen the weapon of fear. When they murder children at a school in Beslan ... or blow up commuters in London ... or behead a bound captive ... the terrorists hope these horrors will break our will, allowing the violent to inherit the Earth. But they have miscalculated: We love our freedom, and we will fight to keep it.

In a time of testing, we cannot find security by abandoning our commitments and retreating within our borders. If we were to leave these vicious attackers alone, they would not leave us alone. They would simply move the battlefield to our own shores. There is no peace in retreat. And there is no honor in retreat. By allowing radical Islam to work its will -- by leaving an assaulted world to fend for itself -- we would signal to all that we no longer believe in our own ideals, or even in our own courage. But our enemies and our friends can be certain: The United States will not retreat from the world, and we will never surrender to evil.

America rejects the false comfort of isolationism. We are the Nation that saved liberty in Europe, and liberated death camps, and helped raise up democracies, and faced down an evil empire. Once again, we accept the call of history to deliver the oppressed, and move this world toward peace.

We remain on the offensive against terror networks. We have killed or captured many of their leaders -- and for the others, their day will come.

We remain on the offensive in Afghanistan -- where a fine president and national assembly are fighting terror while building the institutions of a new democracy.

And we are on the offensive in Iraq, with a clear plan for victory. First, we are helping Iraqis build

an inclusive government, so that old resentments will be eased, and the insurgency marginalized. Second, we are continuing reconstruction efforts, and helping the Iraqi government to fight corruption and build a modern economy, so all Iraqis can experience the benefits of freedom. Third, we are striking terrorist targets while we train Iraqi forces that are increasingly capable of defeating the enemy. Iraqis are showing their courage every day, and we are proud to be their allies in the cause of freedom.

Our work in Iraq is difficult, because our enemy is brutal. But that brutality has not stopped the dramatic progress of a new democracy. In less than three years, that nation has gone from dictatorship, to liberation, to sovereignty, to a constitution, to national elections. At the same time, our coalition has been relentless in shutting off terrorist infiltration, clearing out insurgent strongholds, and turning over territory to Iraqi security forces. I am confident in our plan for victory ... I am confident in the will of the Iraqi people ... I am confident in the skill and spirit of our military. Fellow citizens, we are in this fight to win, and we are winning.

The road of victory is the road that will take our troops home. As we make progress on the ground, and Iraqi forces increasingly take the lead, we should be able to further decrease our troop levels -- but those decisions will be made by our military commanders, not by politicians in Washington, D.C.

Our coalition has learned from experience in Iraq. We have adjusted our military tactics and changed our approach to reconstruction. Along the way, we have benefited from responsible criticism and counsel offered by Members of Congress of both parties. In the coming year, I will continue to reach out and seek your good advice.

Yet there is a difference between responsible criticism that aims for success, and defeatism that refuses to acknowledge anything but failure. Hindsight alone is not wisdom. And second-guessing is not a strategy.

With so much in the balance, those of us in public office have a duty to speak with candor. A sudden withdrawal of our forces from Iraq would abandon our Iraqi allies to death and prison ... put men like bin Laden and Zarqawi in charge of a strategic country ... and show that a pledge from America means little. Members of Congress: however we feel about the decisions and debates of the past, our Nation has only one option: We must keep our word, defeat our enemies, and stand behind the American military in its vital mission.

Our men and women in uniform are making sacrifices -- and showing a sense of duty stronger than all fear. They know what it is like to fight house to house in a maze of streets ... to wear heavy gear in the desert heat ... to see a comrade killed by a roadside bomb. And those who know the costs also know the stakes. Marine Staff Sergeant Dan Clay was killed last month fighting the enemy in Fallujah. He left behind a letter to his family, but his words could just as well be addressed to every American. Here is what Dan wrote: "I know what honor is. It has been an honor to protect and serve all of you. I faced death with the secure knowledge that you would not have to.... Never falter! Don't hesitate to honor and support those of us who have the honor of protecting that which is worth protecting."

Staff Sergeant Dan Clay's wife, Lisa, and his mom and dad, Sara Jo and Bud, are with us this evening. Our Nation is grateful to the fallen, who live in the memory of our country. We are grateful to all who volunteer to wear our Nation's uniform -- and as we honor our brave troops, let us never

forget the sacrifices of America's military families.

Our offensive against terror involves more than military action. Ultimately, the only way to defeat the terrorists is to defeat their dark vision of hatred and fear by offering the hopeful alternative of political freedom and peaceful change. So the United States of America supports democratic reform across the broader Middle East. Elections are vital -- but they are only the beginning. Raising up a democracy requires the rule of law, protection of minorities, and strong, accountable institutions that last longer than a single vote. The great people of Egypt have voted in a multi-party presidential election -- and now their government should open paths of peaceful opposition that will reduce the appeal of radicalism. The Palestinian people have voted in elections -- now the leaders of Hamas must recognize Israel, disarm, reject terrorism, and work for lasting peace. Saudi Arabia has taken the first steps of reform -- now it can offer its people a better future by pressing forward with those efforts. Democracies in the Middle East will not look like our own, because they will reflect the traditions of their own citizens. Yet liberty is the future of every nation in the Middle East, because liberty is the right and hope of all humanity.

The same is true of Iran, a nation now held hostage by a small clerical elite that is isolating and repressing its people. The regime in that country sponsors terrorists in the Palestinian territories and in Lebanon -- and that must come to an end. The Iranian government is defying the world with its nuclear ambitions -- and the nations of the world must not permit the Iranian regime to gain nuclear weapons. America will continue to rally the world to confront these threats. And tonight, let me speak directly to the citizens of Iran: America respects you, and we respect your country. We respect your right to choose your own future and win your own freedom. And our Nation hopes one day to be the closest of friends with a free and democratic Iran.

To overcome dangers in our world, we must also take the offensive by encouraging economic progress, fighting disease, and spreading hope in hopeless lands. Isolationism would not only tie our hands in fighting enemies, it would keep us from helping our friends in desperate need. We show compassion abroad because Americans believe in the God-given dignity and worth of a villager with HIV/AIDS, or an infant with malaria, or a refugee fleeing genocide, or a young girl sold into slavery. We also show compassion abroad because regions overwhelmed by poverty, corruption, and despair are sources of terrorism, organized crime, human trafficking, and the drug trade.

In recent years, you and I have taken unprecedented action to fight AIDS and malaria, expand the education of girls, and reward developing nations that are moving forward with economic and political reform. For people everywhere, the United States is a partner for a better life. Short-changing these efforts would increase the suffering and chaos of our world, undercut our long-term security, and dull the conscience of our country. I urge Members of Congress to serve the interests of America by showing the compassion of America.

Our country must also remain on the offensive against terrorism here at home. The enemy has not lost the desire or capability to attack us. Fortunately, this Nation has superb professionals in law enforcement, intelligence, the military, and homeland security. These men and women are dedicating their lives to protecting us all, and they deserve our support and our thanks. They also deserve the same tools they already use to fight drug trafficking and organized crime -- so I ask you to reauthorize the Patriot Act.

It is said that prior to the attacks of September 11th, our government failed to connect the dots of

the conspiracy. We now know that two of the hijackers in the United States placed telephone calls to al-Qaida operatives overseas. But we did not know about their plans until it was too late. So to prevent another attack -- based on authority given to me by the Constitution and by statute -- I have authorized a terrorist surveillance program to aggressively pursue the international communications of suspected al-Qaida operatives and affiliates to and from America. Previous presidents have used the same constitutional authority I have -- and Federal courts have approved the use of that authority. Appropriate Members of Congress have been kept informed. This terrorist surveillance program has helped prevent terrorist attacks. It remains essential to the security of America. If there are people inside our country who are talking with al-Qaida, we want to know about it -- because we will not sit back and wait to be hit again.

In all these areas -- from the disruption of terror networks, to victory in Iraq, to the spread of freedom and hope in troubled regions -- we need the support of friends and allies. To draw that support, we must always be clear in our principles and willing to act. The only alternative to American leadership is a dramatically more dangerous and anxious world. Yet we also choose to lead because it is a privilege to serve the values that gave us birth. American leaders -- from Roosevelt to Truman to Kennedy to Reagan -- rejected isolation and retreat, because they knew that America is always more secure when freedom is on the march. Our own generation is in a long war against a determined enemy -- a war that will be fought by Presidents of both parties, who will need steady bipartisan support from the Congress. And tonight I ask for yours. Together, let us protect our country, support the men and women who defend us, and lead this world toward freedom.

Here at home, America also has a great opportunity: We will build the prosperity of our country by strengthening our economic leadership in the world.

Our economy is healthy, and vigorous, and growing faster than other major industrialized nations. In the last two-and-a-half years, America has created 4.6 million new jobs -- more than Japan and the European Union combined. Even in the face of higher energy prices and natural disasters, the American people have turned in an economic performance that is the envy of the world.

The American economy is pre-eminent -- but we cannot afford to be complacent. In a dynamic world economy, we are seeing new competitors like China and India. This creates uncertainty, which makes it easier to feed people's fears. And so we are seeing some old temptations return. Protectionists want to escape competition, pretending that we can keep our high standard of living while walling off our economy. Others say that the government needs to take a larger role in directing the economy, centralizing more power in Washington and increasing taxes. We hear claims that immigrants are somehow bad for the economy -- even though this economy could not function without them. All these are forms of economic retreat, and they lead in the same direction -- toward a stagnant and second-rate economy.

Tonight I will set out a better path -- an agenda for a Nation that competes with confidence -- an agenda that will raise standards of living and generate new jobs. Americans should not fear our economic future, because we intend to shape it.

Keeping America competitive begins with keeping our economy growing. And our economy grows when Americans have more of their own money to spend, save, and invest. In the last five years, the tax relief you passed has left 880 billion dollars in the hands of American workers, investors, small businesses, and families -- and they have used it to help produce more than four years

of uninterrupted economic growth. Yet the tax relief is set to expire in the next few years. If we do nothing, American families will face a massive tax increase they do not expect and will not welcome.

Because America needs more than a temporary expansion, we need more than temporary tax relief. I urge the Congress to act responsibly, and make the tax cuts permanent.

Keeping America competitive requires us to be good stewards of tax dollars. Every year of my presidency, we have reduced the growth of non-security discretionary spending -- and last year you passed bills that cut this spending. This year my budget will cut it again, and reduce or eliminate more than 140 programs that are performing poorly or not fulfilling essential priorities. By passing these reforms, we will save the American taxpayer another 14 billion dollars next year -- and stay on track to cut the deficit in half by 2009. I am pleased that Members of Congress are working on earmark reform -- because the Federal budget has too many special interest projects. And we can tackle this problem together, if you pass the line-item veto.

We must also confront the larger challenge of mandatory spending, or entitlements. This year, the first of about 78 million Baby Boomers turn 60, including two of my Dad's favorite people -- me, and President Bill Clinton. This milestone is more than a personal crisis -- it is a national challenge. The retirement of the Baby Boom generation will put unprecedented strains on the Federal government. By 2030, spending for Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid alone will be almost 60 percent of the entire Federal budget. And that will present future Congresses with impossible choices -- staggering tax increases, immense deficits, or deep cuts in every category of spending.

Congress did not act last year on my proposal to save Social Security, yet the rising cost of entitlements is a problem that is not going away -- and with every year we fail to act, the situation gets worse. So tonight, I ask you to join me in creating a commission to examine the full impact of Baby Boom retirements on Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. This commission should include Members of Congress of both parties, and offer bipartisan answers. We need to put aside partisan politics, work together, and get this problem solved.

Keeping America competitive requires us to open more markets for all that Americans make and grow. One out of every five factory jobs in America is related to global trade, and we want people everywhere to buy American. With open markets and a level playing field, no one can out-produce or out-compete the American worker.

Keeping America competitive requires an immigration system that upholds our laws, reflects our values, and serves the interests of our economy. Our Nation needs orderly and secure borders. To meet this goal, we must have stronger immigration enforcement and border protection. And we must have a rational, humane guest worker program that rejects amnesty ... allows temporary jobs for people who seek them legally ... and reduces smuggling and crime at the border.

Keeping America competitive requires affordable health care. Our government has a responsibility to help provide health care for the poor and the elderly, and we are meeting that responsibility. For all Americans, we must confront the rising cost of care ... strengthen the doctor-patient relationship ... and help people afford the insurance coverage they need. We will make wider use of electronic records and other health information technology, to help control costs and reduce dangerous medical errors. We will strengthen Health Savings Accounts -- by making sure individuals and small business employees can buy insurance with the same advantages that people working for big

businesses now get. We will do more to make this coverage portable, so workers can switch jobs without having to worry about losing their health insurance. And because lawsuits are driving many good doctors out of practice -- leaving women in nearly 1,500 American counties without a single OB-GYN -- I ask the Congress to pass medical liability reform this year.

Keeping America competitive requires affordable energy. Here we have a serious problem: America is addicted to oil, which is often imported from unstable parts of the world.

The best way to break this addiction is through technology. Since 2001, we have spent nearly 10 billion dollars to develop cleaner, cheaper, more reliable alternative energy sources -- and we are on the threshold of incredible advances. So tonight, I announce the Advanced Energy Initiative -- a 22-percent increase in clean-energy research at the Department of Energy, to push for breakthroughs in two vital areas. To change how we power our homes and offices, we will invest more in zero-emission coal-fired plants; revolutionary solar and wind technologies; and clean, safe nuclear energy.

We must also change how we power our automobiles. We will increase our research in better batteries for hybrid and electric cars, and in pollution-free cars that run on hydrogen. We will also fund additional research in cutting-edge methods of producing ethanol, not just from corn but from wood chips, stalks, or switch grass. Our goal is to make this new kind of ethanol practical and competitive within six years. Breakthroughs on this and other new technologies will help us reach another great goal: to replace more than 75 percent of our oil imports from the Middle East by 2025. By applying the talent and technology of America, this country can dramatically improve our environment ... move beyond a petroleum-based economy ... and make our dependence on Middle Eastern oil a thing of the past.

And to keep America competitive, one commitment is necessary above all: We must continue to lead the world in human talent and creativity. Our greatest advantage in the world has always been our educated, hard-working, ambitious people -- and we are going to keep that edge. Tonight I announce the American Competitiveness Initiative, to encourage innovation throughout our economy, and to give our Nation's children a firm grounding in math and science.

First: I propose to double the Federal commitment to the most critical basic research programs in the physical sciences over the next ten years. This funding will support the work of America's most creative minds as they explore promising areas such as nanotechnology, supercomputing, and alternative energy sources.

Second: I propose to make permanent the research and development tax credit, to encourage bolder private-sector investment in technology. With more research in both the public and private sectors, we will improve our quality of life -- and ensure that America will lead the world in opportunity and innovation for decades to come.

Third: We need to encourage children to take more math and science, and make sure those courses are rigorous enough to compete with other nations. We have made a good start in the early grades with the No Child Left Behind Act, which is raising standards and lifting test scores across our country. Tonight I propose to train 70,000 high school teachers, to lead advanced-placement courses in math and science ... bring 30,000 math and science professionals to teach in classrooms ... and give early help to students who struggle with math, so they have a better chance at good, high-wage jobs. If we ensure that America's children succeed in life, they will ensure that America succeeds in the world.

Preparing our Nation to compete in the world is a goal that all of us can share. I urge you to support the American Competitiveness Initiative ... and together we will show the world what the American people can achieve.

America is a great force for freedom and prosperity. Yet our greatness is not measured in power or luxuries, but by who we are and how we treat one another. So we strive to be a compassionate, decent, hopeful society.

In recent years, America has become a more hopeful Nation. Violent crime rates have fallen to their lowest levels since the 1970s. Welfare cases have dropped by more than half over the past decade. Drug use among youth is down 19 percent since 2001. There are fewer abortions in America than at any point in the last three decades, and the number of children born to teenage mothers has been falling for a dozen years in a row.

These gains are evidence of a quiet transformation -- a revolution of conscience, in which a rising generation is finding that a life of personal responsibility is a life of fulfillment. Government has played a role. Wise policies such as welfare reform, drug education, and support for abstinence and adoption have made a difference in the character of our country. And everyone here tonight, Democrat and Republican, has a right to be proud of this record.

Yet many Americans, especially parents, still have deep concerns about the direction of our culture, and the health of our most basic institutions. They are concerned about unethical conduct by public officials, and discouraged by activist courts that try to redefine marriage. And they worry about children in our society who need direction and love ... and about fellow citizens still displaced by natural disaster ... and about suffering caused by treatable diseases.

As we look at these challenges, we must never give in to the belief that America is in decline, or that our culture is doomed to unravel. The American people know better than that. We have proven the pessimists wrong before -- and we will do it again.

A hopeful society depends on courts that deliver equal justice under law. The Supreme Court now has two superb new members, Chief Justice John Roberts and Justice Sam Alito. I thank the Senate for confirming both of them. And I will continue to nominate men and women who understand that judges must be servants of the law, and not legislate from the bench. Today marks the official retirement of a very special American. For 24 years of faithful service to our Nation, the United States is grateful to Justice Sandra Day O'Connor.

A hopeful society has institutions of science and medicine that do not cut ethical corners, and that recognize the matchless value of every life. Tonight I ask you to pass legislation to prohibit the most egregious abuses of medical research -- human cloning in all its forms ... creating or implanting embryos for experiments ... creating human-animal hybrids ... and buying, selling, or patenting human embryos. Human life is a gift from our Creator -- and that gift should never be discarded, devalued, or put up for sale.

A hopeful society expects elected officials to uphold the public trust. Honorable people in both parties are working on reforms to strengthen the ethical standards of Washington -- and I support your efforts. Each of us has made a pledge to be worthy of public responsibility -- and that is a pledge we must never forget, never dismiss, and never betray.

As we renew the promise of our institutions, let us also show the character of America in our compassion and care for one another.

A hopeful society gives special attention to children who lack direction and love. Through the Helping America's Youth Initiative, we are encouraging caring adults to get involved in the life of a child -- and this good work is led by our First Lady, Laura Bush. This year we will add resources to encourage young people to stay in school -- so more of America's youth can raise their sights and achieve their dreams.

A hopeful society comes to the aid of fellow citizens in times of suffering and emergency -- and stays at it until they are back on their feet. So far the Federal government has committed 85 billion dollars to the people of the Gulf Coast and New Orleans. We are removing debris, repairing highways, and building stronger levees. We are providing business loans and housing assistance. Yet as we meet these immediate needs, we must also address deeper challenges that existed before the storm arrived. In New Orleans and in other places, many of our fellow citizens have felt excluded from the promise of our country. The answer is not only temporary relief, but schools that teach every child ... and job skills that bring upward mobility ... and more opportunities to own a home and start a business. As we recover from a disaster, let us also work for the day when all Americans are protected by justice, equal in hope, and rich in opportunity.

A hopeful society acts boldly to fight diseases like HIV/AIDS, which can be prevented, and treated, and defeated. More than a million Americans live with HIV, and half of all AIDS cases occur among African-Americans. I ask Congress to reform and reauthorize the Ryan White Act ... and provide new funding to states, so we end the waiting lists for AIDS medicine in America. We will also lead a nationwide effort, working closely with African-American churches and faith-based groups, to deliver rapid HIV tests to millions, end the stigma of AIDS, and come closer to the day when there are no new infections in America.

Fellow citizens, we have been called to leadership in a period of consequence. We have entered a great ideological conflict we did nothing to invite. We see great changes in science and commerce that will influence all our lives. And sometimes it can seem that history is turning in a wide arc, toward an unknown shore.

Yet the destination of history is determined by human action, and every great movement of history comes to a point of choosing. Lincoln could have accepted peace at the cost of disunity and continued slavery. Martin Luther King could have stopped at Birmingham or at Selma, and achieved only half a victory over segregation. The United States could have accepted the permanent division of Europe, and been complicit in the oppression of others. Today, having come far in our own historical journey, we must decide: Will we turn back, or finish well?

Before history is written down in books, it is written in courage. Like Americans before us, we will show that courage and we will finish well. We will lead freedom's advance. We will compete and excel in the global economy. We will renew the defining moral commitments of this land. And so we move forward -- optimistic about our country, faithful to its cause, and confident of victories to come.

Thank you, God bless you, and may God bless America.

State of the Union Address
George W. Bush
January 23, 2007

Thank you very much. And tonight, I have a high privilege and distinct honor of my own -- as the first President to begin the State of the Union message with these words: Madam Speaker (Applause.)

In his day, the late Congressman Thomas D'Alesandro, Jr. from Baltimore, Maryland, saw Presidents Roosevelt and Truman at this rostrum. But nothing could compare with the sight of his only daughter, Nancy, presiding tonight as Speaker of the House of Representatives. (Applause.) Congratulations, Madam Speaker. (Applause.)

Two members of the House and Senate are not with us tonight, and we pray for the recovery and speedy return of Senator Tim Johnson and Congressman Charlie Norwood. (Applause.)

Madam Speaker, Vice President Cheney, members of Congress, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens:

The rite of custom brings us together at a defining hour -- when decisions are hard and courage is needed. We enter the year 2007 with large endeavors underway, and others that are ours to begin. In all of this, much is asked of us. We must have the will to face difficult challenges and determined enemies -- and the wisdom to face them together.

Some in this chamber are new to the House and the Senate -- and I congratulate the Democrat majority. (Applause.) Congress has changed, but not our responsibilities. Each of us is guided by our own convictions -- and to these we must stay faithful. Yet we're all held to the same standards, and called to serve the same good purposes: To extend this nation's prosperity; to spend the people's money wisely; to solve problems, not leave them to future generations; to guard America against all evil; and to keep faith with those we have sent forth to defend us. (Applause.)

We're not the first to come here with a government divided and uncertainty in the air. Like many before us, we can work through our differences, and achieve big things for the American people. Our citizens don't much care which side of the aisle we sit on -- as long as we're willing to cross that aisle when there is work to be done. (Applause.) Our job is to make life better for our fellow Americans, and to help them to build a future of hope and opportunity -- and this is the business before us tonight.

A future of hope and opportunity begins with a growing economy -- and that is what we have. We're now in the 41st month of uninterrupted job growth, in a recovery that has created 7.2 million new jobs -- so far. Unemployment is low, inflation is low, and wages are rising. This economy is on the move, and our job is to keep it that way, not with more government, but with more enterprise. (Applause.)

Next week, I'll deliver a full report on the state of our economy. Tonight, I want to discuss three

economic reforms that deserve to be priorities for this Congress.

First, we must balance the federal budget. (Applause.) We can do so without raising taxes. (Applause.) What we need is impose spending discipline in Washington, D.C. We set a goal of cutting the deficit in half by 2009, and met that goal three years ahead of schedule. (Applause.) Now let us take the next step. In the coming weeks, I will submit a budget that eliminates the federal deficit within the next five years. (Applause.) I ask you to make the same commitment. Together, we can restrain the spending appetite of the federal government, and we can balance the federal budget. (Applause.)

Next, there is the matter of earmarks. These special interest items are often slipped into bills at the last hour -- when not even C-SPAN is watching. (Laughter.) In 2005 alone, the number of earmarks grew to over 13,000 and totaled nearly \$18 billion. Even worse, over 90 percent of earmarks never make it to the floor of the House and Senate -- they are dropped into committee reports that are not even part of the bill that arrives on my desk. You didn't vote them into law. I didn't sign them into law. Yet, they're treated as if they have the force of law. The time has come to end this practice. So let us work together to reform the budget process, expose every earmark to the light of day and to a vote in Congress, and cut the number and cost of earmarks at least in half by the end of this session. (Applause.)

And, finally, to keep this economy strong we must take on the challenge of entitlements. Social Security and Medicare and Medicaid are commitments of conscience, and so it is our duty to keep them permanently sound. Yet, we're failing in that duty. And this failure will one day leave our children with three bad options: huge tax increases, huge deficits, or huge and immediate cuts in benefits. Everyone in this chamber knows this to be true -- yet somehow we have not found it in ourselves to act. So let us work together and do it now. With enough good sense and goodwill, you and I can fix Medicare and Medicaid -- and save Social Security. (Applause.)

Spreading opportunity and hope in America also requires public schools that give children the knowledge and character they need in life. Five years ago, we rose above partisan differences to pass the No Child Left Behind Act, preserving local control, raising standards, and holding those schools accountable for results. And because we acted, students are performing better in reading and math, and minority students are closing the achievement gap.

Now the task is to build on the success, without watering down standards, without taking control from local communities, and without backsliding and calling it reform. We can lift student achievement even higher by giving local leaders flexibility to turn around failing schools, and by giving families with children stuck in failing schools the right to choose someplace better. (Applause.) We must increase funds for students who struggle -- and make sure these children get the special help they need. (Applause.) And we can make sure our children are prepared for the jobs of the future and our country is more competitive by strengthening math and science skills. The No Child Left Behind Act has worked for America's children -- and I ask Congress to reauthorize this good law. (Applause.)

A future of hope and opportunity requires that all our citizens have affordable and available health care. (Applause.) When it comes to health care, government has an obligation to care for the elderly, the disabled, and poor children. And we will meet those responsibilities. For all other Americans, private health insurance is the best way to meet their needs. (Applause.) But many Americans cannot afford a health insurance policy.

And so tonight, I propose two new initiatives to help more Americans afford their own insurance. First, I propose a standard tax deduction for health insurance that will be like the standard tax deduction for dependents. Families with health insurance will pay no income or payroll tax -- or payroll taxes on \$15,000 of their income. Single Americans with health insurance will pay no income or payroll taxes on \$7,500 of their income. With this reform, more than 100 million men, women, and children who are now covered by employer-provided insurance will benefit from lower tax bills. At the same time, this reform will level the playing field for those who do not get health insurance through their job. For Americans who now purchase health insurance on their own, this proposal would mean a substantial tax savings -- \$4,500 for a family of four making \$60,000 a year. And for the millions of other Americans who have no health insurance at all, this deduction would help put a basic private health insurance plan within their reach. Changing the tax code is a vital and necessary step to making health care affordable for more Americans. (Applause.)

My second proposal is to help the states that are coming up with innovative ways to cover the uninsured. States that make basic private health insurance available to all their citizens should receive federal funds to help them provide this coverage to the poor and the sick. I have asked the Secretary of Health and Human Services to work with Congress to take existing federal funds and use them to create "Affordable Choices" grants. These grants would give our nation's governors more money and more flexibility to get private health insurance to those most in need.

There are many other ways that Congress can help. We need to expand Health Savings Accounts. (Applause.) We need to help small businesses through Association Health Plans. (Applause.) We need to reduce costs and medical errors with better information technology. (Applause.) We will encourage price transparency. And to protect good doctors from junk lawsuits, we passing medical liability reform. (Applause.) In all we do, we must remember that the best health care decisions are made not by government and insurance companies, but by patients and their doctors. (Applause.)

Extending hope and opportunity in our country requires an immigration system worthy of America -- with laws that are fair and borders that are secure. When laws and borders are routinely violated, this harms the interests of our country. To secure our border, we're doubling the size of the Border Patrol, and funding new infrastructure and technology.

Yet even with all these steps, we cannot fully secure the border unless we take pressure off the border -- and that requires a temporary worker program. We should establish a legal and orderly path for foreign workers to enter our country to work on a temporary basis. As a result, they won't have to try to sneak in, and that will leave Border Agents free to chase down drug smugglers and criminals and terrorists. (Applause.) We'll enforce our immigration laws at the work site and give employers the tools to verify the legal status of their workers, so there's no excuse left for violating the law. (Applause.)

We need to uphold the great tradition of the melting pot that welcomes and assimilates new arrivals. (Applause.) We need to resolve the status of the illegal immigrants who are already in our country without animosity and without amnesty. (Applause.) Convictions run deep in this Capitol when it comes to immigration. Let us have a serious, civil, and conclusive debate, so that you can pass, and I can sign, comprehensive immigration reform into law. (Applause.)

Extending hope and opportunity depends on a stable supply of energy that keeps America's economy running and America's environment clean. For too long our nation has been dependent on

foreign oil. And this dependence leaves us more vulnerable to hostile regimes, and to terrorists -- who could cause huge disruptions of oil shipments, and raise the price of oil, and do great harm to our economy.

It's in our vital interest to diversify America's energy supply -- the way forward is through technology. We must continue changing the way America generates electric power, by even greater use of clean coal technology, solar and wind energy, and clean, safe nuclear power. (Applause.) We need to press on with battery research for plug-in and hybrid vehicles, and expand the use of clean diesel vehicles and biodiesel fuel. (Applause.) We must continue investing in new methods of producing ethanol -- (applause) -- using everything from wood chips to grasses, to agricultural wastes.

We made a lot of progress, thanks to good policies here in Washington and the strong response of the market. And now even more dramatic advances are within reach. Tonight, I ask Congress to join me in pursuing a great goal. Let us build on the work we've done and reduce gasoline usage in the United States by 20 percent in the next 10 years. (Applause.) When we do that we will have cut our total imports by the equivalent of three-quarters of all the oil we now import from the Middle East.

To reach this goal, we must increase the supply of alternative fuels, by setting a mandatory fuels standard to require 35 billion gallons of renewable and alternative fuels in 2017 -- and that is nearly five times the current target. (Applause.) At the same time, we need to reform and modernize fuel economy standards for cars the way we did for light trucks -- and conserve up to 8.5 billion more gallons of gasoline by 2017.

Achieving these ambitious goals will dramatically reduce our dependence on foreign oil, but it's not going to eliminate it. And so as we continue to diversify our fuel supply, we must step up domestic oil production in environmentally sensitive ways. (Applause.) And to further protect America against severe disruptions to our oil supply, I ask Congress to double the current capacity of the Strategic Petroleum Reserve. (Applause.)

America is on the verge of technological breakthroughs that will enable us to live our lives less dependent on oil. And these technologies will help us be better stewards of the environment, and they will help us to confront the serious challenge of global climate change. (Applause.)

A future of hope and opportunity requires a fair, impartial system of justice. The lives of our citizens across our nation are affected by the outcome of cases pending in our federal courts. We have a shared obligation to ensure that the federal courts have enough judges to hear those cases and deliver timely rulings. As President, I have a duty to nominate qualified men and women to vacancies on the federal bench. And the United States Senate has a duty, as well, to give those nominees a fair hearing, and a prompt up-or-down vote on the Senate floor. (Applause.)

For all of us in this room, there is no higher responsibility than to protect the people of this country from danger. Five years have come and gone since we saw the scenes and felt the sorrow that the terrorists can cause. We've had time to take stock of our situation. We've added many critical protections to guard the homeland. We know with certainty that the horrors of that September morning were just a glimpse of what the terrorists intend for us -- unless we stop them.

With the distance of time, we find ourselves debating the causes of conflict and the course we have followed. Such debates are essential when a great democracy faces great questions. Yet one

question has surely been settled: that to win the war on terror we must take the fight to the enemy. (Applause.)

From the start, America and our allies have protected our people by staying on the offense. The enemy knows that the days of comfortable sanctuary, easy movement, steady financing, and free flowing communications are long over. For the terrorists, life since 9/11 has never been the same.

Our success in this war is often measured by the things that did not happen. We cannot know the full extent of the attacks that we and our allies have prevented, but here is some of what we do know: We stopped an al Qaeda plot to fly a hijacked airplane into the tallest building on the West Coast. We broke up a Southeast Asian terror cell grooming operatives for attacks inside the United States. We uncovered an al Qaeda cell developing anthrax to be used in attacks against America. And just last August, British authorities uncovered a plot to blow up passenger planes bound for America over the Atlantic Ocean. For each life saved, we owe a debt of gratitude to the brave public servants who devote their lives to finding the terrorists and stopping them. (Applause.)

Every success against the terrorists is a reminder of the shoreless ambitions of this enemy. The evil that inspired and rejoiced in 9/11 is still at work in the world. And so long as that's the case, America is still a nation at war.

In the mind of the terrorist, this war began well before September the 11th, and will not end until their radical vision is fulfilled. And these past five years have given us a much clearer view of the nature of this enemy. Al Qaeda and its followers are Sunni extremists, possessed by hatred and commanded by a harsh and narrow ideology. Take almost any principle of civilization, and their goal is the opposite. They preach with threats, instruct with bullets and bombs, and promise paradise for the murder of the innocent.

Our enemies are quite explicit about their intentions. They want to overthrow moderate governments, and establish safe havens from which to plan and carry out new attacks on our country. By killing and terrorizing Americans, they want to force our country to retreat from the world and abandon the cause of liberty. They would then be free to impose their will and spread their totalitarian ideology. Listen to this warning from the late terrorist Zarqawi: "We will sacrifice our blood and bodies to put an end to your dreams, and what is coming is even worse." Osama bin Laden declared: "Death is better than living on this Earth with the unbelievers among us."

These men are not given to idle words, and they are just one camp in the Islamist radical movement. In recent times, it has also become clear that we face an escalating danger from Shia extremists who are just as hostile to America, and are also determined to dominate the Middle East. Many are known to take direction from the regime in Iran, which is funding and arming terrorists like Hezbollah -- a group second only to al Qaeda in the American lives it has taken.

The Shia and Sunni extremists are different faces of the same totalitarian threat. Whatever slogans they chant, when they slaughter the innocent they have the same wicked purposes. They want to kill Americans, kill democracy in the Middle East, and gain the weapons to kill on an even more horrific scale.

In the sixth year since our nation was attacked, I wish I could report to you that the dangers had ended. They have not. And so it remains the policy of this government to use every lawful and proper

tool of intelligence, diplomacy, law enforcement, and military action to do our duty, to find these enemies, and to protect the American people. (Applause.)

This war is more than a clash of arms -- it is a decisive ideological struggle, and the security of our nation is in the balance. To prevail, we must remove the conditions that inspire blind hatred, and drove 19 men to get onto airplanes and to come and kill us. What every terrorist fears most is human freedom

-- societies where men and women make their own choices, answer to their own conscience, and live by their hopes instead of their resentments. Free people are not drawn to violent and malignant ideologies -- and most will choose a better way when they're given a chance. So we advance our own security interests by helping moderates and reformers and brave voices for democracy. The great question of our day is whether America will help men and women in the Middle East to build free societies and share in the rights of all humanity. And I say, for the sake of our own security, we must. (Applause.)

In the last two years, we've seen the desire for liberty in the broader Middle East -- and we have been sobered by the enemy's fierce reaction. In 2005, the world watched as the citizens of Lebanon raised the banner of the Cedar Revolution, they drove out the Syrian occupiers and chose new leaders in free elections. In 2005, the people of Afghanistan defied the terrorists and elected a democratic legislature. And in 2005, the Iraqi people held three national elections, choosing a transitional government, adopting the most progressive, democratic constitution in the Arab world, and then electing a government under that constitution. Despite endless threats from the killers in their midst, nearly 12 million Iraqi citizens came out to vote in a show of hope and solidarity that we should never forget. (Applause.)

A thinking enemy watched all of these scenes, adjusted their tactics, and in 2006 they struck back. In Lebanon, assassins took the life of Pierre Gemayel, a prominent participant in the Cedar Revolution. Hezbollah terrorists, with support from Syria and Iran, sowed conflict in the region and are seeking to undermine Lebanon's legitimately elected government. In Afghanistan, Taliban and al Qaeda fighters tried to regain power by regrouping and engaging Afghan and NATO forces. In Iraq, al Qaeda and other Sunni extremists blew up one of the most sacred places in Shia Islam -- the Golden Mosque of Samarra. This atrocity, directed at a Muslim house of prayer, was designed to provoke retaliation from Iraqi Shia -- and it succeeded. Radical Shia elements, some of whom receive support from Iran, formed death squads. The result was a tragic escalation of sectarian rage and reprisal that continues to this day.

This is not the fight we entered in Iraq, but it is the fight we're in. Every one of us wishes this war were over and won. Yet it would not be like us to leave our promises unkept, our friends abandoned, and our own security at risk. (Applause.) Ladies and gentlemen: On this day, at this hour, it is still within our power to shape the outcome of this battle. Let us find our resolve, and turn events toward victory. (Applause.)

We're carrying out a new strategy in Iraq -- a plan that demands more from Iraq's elected government, and gives our forces in Iraq the reinforcements they need to complete their mission. Our goal is a democratic Iraq that upholds the rule of law, respects the rights of its people, provides them security, and is an ally in the war on terror.

In order to make progress toward this goal, the Iraqi government must stop the sectarian violence in its capital. But the Iraqis are not yet ready to do this on their own. So we're deploying reinforcements of more than 20,000 additional soldiers and Marines to Iraq. The vast majority will go to Baghdad, where they will help Iraqi forces to clear and secure neighborhoods, and serve as advisers embedded in Iraqi Army units. With Iraqis in the lead, our forces will help secure the city by chasing down the terrorists, insurgents, and the roaming death squads. And in Anbar Province, where al Qaeda terrorists have gathered and local forces have begun showing a willingness to fight them, we're sending an additional 4,000 United States Marines, with orders to find the terrorists and clear them out. (Applause.) We didn't drive al Qaeda out of their safe haven in Afghanistan only to let them set up a new safe haven in a free Iraq.

The people of Iraq want to live in peace, and now it's time for their government to act. Iraq's leaders know that our commitment is not open-ended. They have promised to deploy more of their own troops to secure Baghdad -- and they must do so. They pledged that they will confront violent radicals of any faction or political party -- and they need to follow through, and lift needless restrictions on Iraqi and coalition forces, so these troops can achieve their mission of bringing security to all of the people of Baghdad. Iraq's leaders have committed themselves to a series of benchmarks -- to achieve reconciliation, to share oil revenues among all of Iraq's citizens, to put the wealth of Iraq into the rebuilding of Iraq, to allow more Iraqis to re-enter their nation's civic life, to hold local elections, and to take responsibility for security in every Iraqi province. But for all of this to happen, Baghdad must be secure. And our plan will help the Iraqi government take back its capital and make good on its commitments.

My fellow citizens, our military commanders and I have carefully weighed the options. We discussed every possible approach. In the end, I chose this course of action because it provides the best chance for success. Many in this chamber understand that America must not fail in Iraq, because you understand that the consequences of failure would be grievous and far-reaching.

If American forces step back before Baghdad is secure, the Iraqi government would be overrun by extremists on all sides. We could expect an epic battle between Shia extremists backed by Iran, and Sunni extremists aided by al Qaeda and supporters of the old regime. A contagion of violence could spill out across the country -- and in time, the entire region could be drawn into the conflict.

For America, this is a nightmare scenario. For the enemy, this is the objective. Chaos is the greatest ally -- their greatest ally in this struggle. And out of chaos in Iraq would emerge an emboldened enemy with new safe havens, new recruits, new resources, and an even greater determination to harm America. To allow this to happen would be to ignore the lessons of September the 11th and invite tragedy. Ladies and gentlemen, nothing is more important at this moment in our history than for America to succeed in the Middle East, to succeed in Iraq and to spare the American people from this danger. (Applause.)

This is where matters stand tonight, in the here and now. I have spoken with many of you in person. I respect you and the arguments you've made. We went into this largely united, in our assumptions and in our convictions. And whatever you voted for, you did not vote for failure. Our country is pursuing a new strategy in Iraq, and I ask you to give it a chance to work. And I ask you to support our troops in the field, and those on their way. (Applause.)

The war on terror we fight today is a generational struggle that will continue long after you and I

have turned our duties over to others. And that's why it's important to work together so our nation can see this great effort through. Both parties and both branches should work in close consultation. It's why I propose to establish a special advisory council on the war on terror, made up of leaders in Congress from both political parties. We will share ideas for how to position America to meet every challenge that confronts us. We'll show our enemies abroad that we are united in the goal of victory.

And one of the first steps we can take together is to add to the ranks of our military so that the American Armed Forces are ready for all the challenges ahead. (Applause.) Tonight I ask the Congress to authorize an increase in the size of our active Army and Marine Corps by 92,000 in the next five years. (Applause.) A second task we can take on together is to design and establish a volunteer Civilian Reserve Corps. Such a corps would function much like our military reserve. It would ease the burden on the Armed Forces by allowing us to hire civilians with critical skills to serve on missions abroad when America needs them. It would give people across America who do not wear the uniform a chance to serve in the defining struggle of our time.

Americans can have confidence in the outcome of this struggle because we're not in this struggle alone. We have a diplomatic strategy that is rallying the world to join in the fight against extremism. In Iraq, multinational forces are operating under a mandate from the United Nations. We're working with Jordan and Saudi Arabia and Egypt and the Gulf States to increase support for Iraq's government.

The United Nations has imposed sanctions on Iran, and made it clear that the world will not allow the regime in Tehran to acquire nuclear weapons. (Applause.) With the other members of the Quartet -- the U.N., the European Union, and Russia -- we're pursuing diplomacy to help bring peace to the Holy Land, and pursuing the establishment of a democratic Palestinian state living side-by-side with Israel in peace and security. (Applause.) In Afghanistan, NATO has taken the lead in turning back the Taliban and al Qaeda offensive -- the first time the Alliance has deployed forces outside the North Atlantic area. Together with our partners in China, Japan, Russia, and South Korea, we're pursuing intensive diplomacy to achieve a Korean Peninsula free of nuclear weapons. (Applause.)

We will continue to speak out for the cause of freedom in places like Cuba, Belarus, and Burma [1] -- and continue to awaken the conscience of the world to save the people of Darfur. (Applause.)

American foreign policy is more than a matter of war and diplomacy. Our work in the world is also based on a timeless truth: To whom much is given, much is required. We hear the call to take on the challenges of hunger and poverty and disease -- and that is precisely what America is doing. We must continue to fight HIV/AIDS, especially on the continent of Africa. (Applause.) Because you funded our Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, the number of people receiving life-saving drugs has grown from 50,000 to more than 800,000 in three short years. I ask you to continue funding our efforts to fight HIV/AIDS. I ask you to provide \$1.2 billion over five years so we can combat malaria in 15 African countries. (Applause.)

I ask that you fund the Millennium Challenge Account, so that American aid reaches the people who need it, in nations where democracy is on the rise and corruption is in retreat. And let us continue to support the expanded trade and debt relief that are the best hope for lifting lives and eliminating poverty. (Applause.)

When America serves others in this way, we show the strength and generosity of our country. These deeds reflect the character of our people. The greatest strength we have is the heroic kindness,

courage, and self-sacrifice of the American people. You see this spirit often if you know where to look -- and tonight we need only look above to the gallery.

Dikembe Mutombo grew up in Africa, amid great poverty and disease. He came to Georgetown University on a scholarship to study medicine -- but Coach John Thompson got a look at Dikembe and had a different idea. (Laughter.) Dikembe became a star in the NBA, and a citizen of the United States. But he never forgot the land of his birth, or the duty to share his blessings with others. He built a brand new hospital in his old hometown. A friend has said of this good-hearted man: "Mutombo believes that God has given him this opportunity to do great things." And we are proud to call this son of the Congo [2] a citizen of the United States of America. (Applause.)

After her daughter was born, Julie Aigner-Clark searched for ways to share her love of music and art with her child. So she borrowed some equipment, and began filming children's videos in her basement. The Baby Einstein Company was born, and in just five years her business grew to more than \$20 million in sales. In November 2001, Julie sold Baby Einstein to the Walt Disney Company, and with her help Baby Einstein has grown into a \$200 million business. Julie represents the great enterprising spirit of America. And she is using her success to help others -- producing child safety videos with John Walsh of the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children. Julie says of her new project: "I believe it's the most important thing that I have ever done. I believe that children have the right to live in a world that is safe." And so tonight, we are pleased to welcome this talented business entrepreneur and generous social entrepreneur -- Julie Aigner-Clark. (Applause.)

Three weeks ago, Wesley Autrey was waiting at a Harlem subway station with his two little girls, when he saw a man fall into the path of a train. With seconds to act, Wesley jumped onto the tracks, pulled the man into the space between the rails, and held him as the train passed right above their heads. He insists he's not a hero. He says: "We got guys and girls overseas dying for us to have our freedoms. We have got to show each other some love." There is something wonderful about a country that produces a brave and humble man like Wesley Autrey. (Applause.)

Tommy Rieman was a teenager pumping gas in Independence, Kentucky, when he enlisted in the United States Army. In December 2003, he was on a reconnaissance mission in Iraq when his team came under heavy enemy fire. From his Humvee, Sergeant Rieman returned fire; he used his body as a shield to protect his gunner. He was shot in the chest and arm, and received shrapnel wounds to his legs -- yet he refused medical attention, and stayed in the fight. He helped to repel a second attack, firing grenades at the enemy's position. For his exceptional courage, Sergeant Rieman was awarded the Silver Star. And like so many other Americans who have volunteered to defend us, he has earned the respect and the gratitude of our entire country. (Applause.)

In such courage and compassion, ladies and gentlemen, we see the spirit and character of America -- and these qualities are not in short supply. This is a decent and honorable country -- and resilient, too. We've been through a lot together. We've met challenges and faced dangers, and we know that more lie ahead. Yet we can go forward with confidence -- because the State of our Union is strong, our cause in the world is right, and tonight that cause goes on. God bless. (Applause.)

See you next year. Thank you for your prayers.

State of the Union Address
George W. Bush
January 28, 2008

THE PRESIDENT: Madam Speaker, Vice President Cheney, members of Congress, distinguished guests, and fellow citizens: Seven years have passed since I first stood before you at this rostrum. In that time, our country has been tested in ways none of us could have imagined. We faced hard decisions about peace and war, rising competition in the world economy, and the health and welfare of our citizens. These issues call for vigorous debate, and I think it's fair to say we've answered the call. Yet history will record that amid our differences, we acted with purpose. And together, we showed the world the power and resilience of American self-government.

All of us were sent to Washington to carry out the people's business. That is the purpose of this body. It is the meaning of our oath. It remains our charge to keep.

The actions of the 110th Congress will affect the security and prosperity of our nation long after this session has ended. In this election year, let us show our fellow Americans that we recognize our responsibilities and are determined to meet them. Let us show them that Republicans and Democrats can compete for votes and cooperate for results at the same time. (Applause.)

From expanding opportunity to protecting our country, we've made good progress. Yet we have unfinished business before us, and the American people expect us to get it done.

In the work ahead, we must be guided by the philosophy that made our nation great. As Americans, we believe in the power of individuals to determine their destiny and shape the course of history. We believe that the most reliable guide for our country is the collective wisdom of ordinary citizens. And so in all we do, we must trust in the ability of free peoples to make wise decisions, and empower them to improve their lives for their futures.

To build a prosperous future, we must trust people with their own money and empower them to grow our economy. As we meet tonight, our economy is undergoing a period of uncertainty. America has added jobs for a record 52 straight months, but jobs are now growing at a slower pace. Wages are up, but so are prices for food and gas. Exports are rising, but the housing market has declined. At kitchen tables across our country, there is a concern about our economic future.

In the long run, Americans can be confident about our economic growth. But in the short run, we can all see that that growth is slowing. So last week, my administration reached agreement with Speaker Pelosi and Republican Leader Boehner on a robust growth package that includes tax relief for individuals and families and incentives for business investment. The temptation will be to load up the bill. That would delay it or derail it, and neither option is acceptable. (Applause.) This is a good agreement that will keep our economy growing and our people working. And this Congress must pass it as soon as possible. (Applause.)

We have other work to do on taxes. Unless Congress acts, most of the tax relief we've delivered

over the past seven years will be taken away. Some in Washington argue that letting tax relief expire is not a tax increase. Try explaining that to 116 million American taxpayers who would see their taxes rise by an average of \$1,800. Others have said they would personally be happy to pay higher taxes. I welcome their enthusiasm. I'm pleased to report that the IRS accepts both checks and money orders. (Laughter and applause.)

Most Americans think their taxes are high enough. With all the other pressures on their finances, American families should not have to worry about their federal government taking a bigger bite out of their paychecks. There's only one way to eliminate this uncertainty: Make the tax relief permanent. (Applause.) And members of Congress should know: If any bill raises taxes reaches my desk, I will veto it. (Applause.)

Just as we trust Americans with their own money, we need to earn their trust by spending their tax dollars wisely. Next week, I'll send you a budget that terminates or substantially reduces 151 wasteful or bloated programs, totaling more than \$18 billion. The budget that I will submit will keep America on track for a surplus in 2012. American families have to balance their budgets; so should their government. (Applause.)

The people's trust in their government is undermined by congressional earmarks -- special interest projects that are often snuck in at the last minute, without discussion or debate. Last year, I asked you to voluntarily cut the number and cost of earmarks in half. I also asked you to stop slipping earmarks into committee reports that never even come to a vote. Unfortunately, neither goal was met. So this time, if you send me an appropriations bill that does not cut the number and cost of earmarks in half, I'll send it back to you with my veto. (Applause.)

And tomorrow, I will issue an executive order that directs federal agencies to ignore any future earmark that is not voted on by Congress. If these items are truly worth funding, Congress should debate them in the open and hold a public vote. (Applause.)

Our shared responsibilities extend beyond matters of taxes and spending. On housing, we must trust Americans with the responsibility of homeownership and empower them to weather turbulent times in the housing market. My administration brought together the HOPE NOW alliance, which is helping many struggling homeowners avoid foreclosure. And Congress can help even more. Tonight I ask you to pass legislation to reform Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, modernize the Federal Housing Administration, and allow state housing agencies to issue tax-free bonds to help homeowners refinance their mortgages. (Applause.) These are difficult times for many American families, and by taking these steps, we can help more of them keep their homes.

To build a future of quality health care, we must trust patients and doctors to make medical decisions and empower them with better information and better options. We share a common goal: making health care more affordable and accessible for all Americans. (Applause.) The best way to achieve that goal is by expanding consumer choice, not government control. (Applause.) So I have proposed ending the bias in the tax code against those who do not get their health insurance through their employer. This one reform would put private coverage within reach for millions, and I call on the Congress to pass it this year. (Applause.)

The Congress must also expand health savings accounts, create Association Health Plans for small businesses, promote health information technology, and confront the epidemic of junk medical

lawsuits. (Applause.) With all these steps, we will help ensure that decisions about your medical care are made in the privacy of your doctor's office -- not in the halls of Congress. (Applause.)

On education, we must trust students to learn if given the chance, and empower parents to demand results from our schools. In neighborhoods across our country, there are boys and girls with dreams -- and a decent education is their only hope of achieving them.

Six years ago, we came together to pass the No Child Left Behind Act, and today no one can deny its results. Last year, fourth and eighth graders achieved the highest math scores on record. Reading scores are on the rise. African American and Hispanic students posted all-time highs. (Applause.) Now we must work together to increase accountability, add flexibility for states and districts, reduce the number of high school dropouts, provide extra help for struggling schools.

Members of Congress: The No Child Left Behind Act is a bipartisan achievement. It is succeeding. And we owe it to America's children, their parents, and their teachers to strengthen this good law. (Applause.)

We must also do more to help children when their schools do not measure up. Thanks to the D.C. Opportunity Scholarships you approved, more than 2,600 of the poorest children in our Nation's Capital have found new hope at a faith-based or other non-public school. Sadly, these schools are disappearing at an alarming rate in many of America's inner cities. So I will convene a White House summit aimed at strengthening these lifelines of learning. And to open the doors of these schools to more children, I ask you to support a new \$300 million program called Pell Grants for Kids. We have seen how Pell Grants help low-income college students realize their full potential. Together, we've expanded the size and reach of these grants. Now let us apply that same spirit to help liberate poor children trapped in failing public schools. (Applause.)

On trade, we must trust American workers to compete with anyone in the world and empower them by opening up new markets overseas. Today, our economic growth increasingly depends on our ability to sell American goods and crops and services all over the world. So we're working to break down barriers to trade and investment wherever we can. We're working for a successful Doha Round of trade talks, and we must complete a good agreement this year. At the same time, we're pursuing opportunities to open up new markets by passing free trade agreements.

I thank the Congress for approving a good agreement with Peru. And now I ask you to approve agreements with Colombia and Panama and South Korea. (Applause.) Many products from these nations now enter America duty-free, yet many of our products face steep tariffs in their markets. These agreements will level the playing field. They will give us better access to nearly 100 million customers. They will support good jobs for the finest workers in the world: those whose products say "Made in the USA." (Applause.)

These agreements also promote America's strategic interests. The first agreement that will come before you is with Colombia, a friend of America that is confronting violence and terror, and fighting drug traffickers. If we fail to pass this agreement, we will embolden the purveyors of false populism in our hemisphere. So we must come together, pass this agreement, and show our neighbors in the region that democracy leads to a better life. (Applause.)

Trade brings better jobs and better choices and better prices. Yet for some Americans, trade can

mean losing a job, and the federal government has a responsibility to help. (Applause.) I ask Congress to reauthorize and reform trade adjustment assistance, so we can help these displaced workers learn new skills and find new jobs. (Applause.)

To build a future of energy security, we must trust in the creative genius of American researchers and entrepreneurs and empower them to pioneer a new generation of clean energy technology. (Applause.) Our security, our prosperity, and our environment all require reducing our dependence on oil. Last year, I asked you to pass legislation to reduce oil consumption over the next decade, and you responded. Together we should take the next steps: Let us fund new technologies that can generate coal power while capturing carbon emissions. (Applause.) Let us increase the use of renewable power and emissions-free nuclear power. (Applause.) Let us continue investing in advanced battery technology and renewable fuels to power the cars and trucks of the future. (Applause.) Let us create a new international clean technology fund, which will help developing nations like India and China make greater use of clean energy sources. And let us complete an international agreement that has the potential to slow, stop, and eventually reverse the growth of greenhouse gases. (Applause.)

This agreement will be effective only if it includes commitments by every major economy and gives none a free ride. (Applause.) The United States is committed to strengthening our energy security and confronting global climate change. And the best way to meet these goals is for America to continue leading the way toward the development of cleaner and more energy-efficient technology. (Applause.)

To keep America competitive into the future, we must trust in the skill of our scientists and engineers and empower them to pursue the breakthroughs of tomorrow. Last year, Congress passed legislation supporting the American Competitiveness Initiative, but never followed through with the funding. This funding is essential to keeping our scientific edge. So I ask Congress to double federal support for critical basic research in the physical sciences and ensure America remains the most dynamic nation on Earth. (Applause.)

On matters of life and science, we must trust in the innovative spirit of medical researchers and empower them to discover new treatments while respecting moral boundaries. In November, we witnessed a landmark achievement when scientists discovered a way to reprogram adult skin cells to act like embryonic stem cells. This breakthrough has the potential to move us beyond the divisive debates of the past by extending the frontiers of medicine without the destruction of human life. (Applause.)

So we're expanding funding for this type of ethical medical research. And as we explore promising avenues of research, we must also ensure that all life is treated with the dignity it deserves. And so I call on Congress to pass legislation that bans unethical practices such as the buying, selling, patenting, or cloning of human life. (Applause.)

On matters of justice, we must trust in the wisdom of our founders and empower judges who understand that the Constitution means what it says. (Applause.) I've submitted judicial nominees who will rule by the letter of the law, not the whim of the gavel. Many of these nominees are being unfairly delayed. They are worthy of confirmation, and the Senate should give each of them a prompt up-or-down vote. (Applause.)

In communities across our land, we must trust in the good heart of the American people and empower them to serve their neighbors in need. Over the past seven years, more of our fellow citizens have discovered that the pursuit of happiness leads to the path of service. Americans have volunteered in record numbers. Charitable donations are higher than ever. Faith-based groups are bringing hope to pockets of despair, with newfound support from the federal government. And to help guarantee equal treatment of faith-based organizations when they compete for federal funds, I ask you to permanently extend Charitable Choice. (Applause.)

Tonight the armies of compassion continue the march to a new day in the Gulf Coast. America honors the strength and resilience of the people of this region. We reaffirm our pledge to help them build stronger and better than before. And tonight I'm pleased to announce that in April we will host this year's North American Summit of Canada, Mexico, and the United States in the great city of New Orleans. (Applause.)

There are two other pressing challenges that I've raised repeatedly before this body, and that this body has failed to address: entitlement spending and immigration. Every member in this chamber knows that spending on entitlement programs like Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid is growing faster than we can afford. We all know the painful choices ahead if America stays on this path: massive tax increases, sudden and drastic cuts in benefits, or crippling deficits. I've laid out proposals to reform these programs. Now I ask members of Congress to offer your proposals and come up with a bipartisan solution to save these vital programs for our children and our grandchildren. (Applause.)

The other pressing challenge is immigration. America needs to secure our borders -- and with your

help, my administration is taking steps to do so. We're increasing worksite enforcement, deploying fences and advanced technologies to stop illegal crossings. We've effectively ended the policy of "catch and release" at the border, and by the end of this year, we will have doubled the number of border patrol agents. Yet we also need to acknowledge that we will never fully secure our border until we create a lawful way for foreign workers to come here and support our economy. (Applause.) This will take pressure off the border and allow law enforcement to concentrate on those who mean us harm. We must also find a sensible and humane way to deal with people here illegally. Illegal immigration is complicated, but it can be resolved. And it must be resolved in a way that upholds both our laws and our highest ideals. (Applause.)

This is the business of our nation here at home. Yet building a prosperous future for our citizens also depends on confronting enemies abroad and advancing liberty in troubled regions of the world.

Our foreign policy is based on a clear premise: We trust that people, when given the chance, will choose a future of freedom and peace. In the last seven years, we have witnessed stirring moments in the history of liberty. We've seen citizens in Georgia and Ukraine stand up for their right to free and fair elections. We've seen people in Lebanon take to the streets to demand their independence. We've seen Afghans emerge from the tyranny of the Taliban and choose a new president and a new parliament. We've seen jubilant Iraqis holding up ink-stained fingers and celebrating their freedom. These images of liberty have inspired us. (Applause.)

In the past seven years, we've also seen images that have sobered us. We've watched throngs of mourners in Lebanon and Pakistan carrying the caskets of beloved leaders taken by the assassin's hand. We've seen wedding guests in blood-soaked finery staggering from a hotel in Jordan, Afghans and Iraqis blown up in mosques and markets, and trains in London and Madrid ripped apart by bombs. On a clear September day, we saw thousands of our fellow citizens taken from us in an instant. These horrific images serve as a grim reminder: The advance of liberty is opposed by terrorists and extremists -- evil men who despise freedom, despise America, and aim to subject millions to their violent rule.

Since 9/11, we have taken the fight to these terrorists and extremists. We will stay on the offense, we will keep up the pressure, and we will deliver justice to our enemies. (Applause.)

We are engaged in the defining ideological struggle of the 21st century. The terrorists oppose every principle of humanity and decency that we hold dear. Yet in this war on terror, there is one thing we and our enemies agree on: In the long run, men and women who are free to determine their own destinies will reject terror and refuse to live in tyranny. And that is why the terrorists are fighting to deny this choice to the people in Lebanon, Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and the Palestinian Territories. And that is why, for the security of America and the peace of the world, we are spreading the hope of freedom. (Applause.)

In Afghanistan, America, our 25 NATO allies, and 15 partner nations are helping the Afghan people defend their freedom and rebuild their country. Thanks to the courage of these military and civilian personnel, a nation that was once a safe haven for al Qaeda is now a young democracy where boys and girls are going to school, new roads and hospitals are being built, and people are looking to the future with new hope. These successes must continue, so we're adding 3,200 Marines to our forces in Afghanistan, where they will fight the terrorists and train the Afghan Army and police. Defeating the Taliban and al Qaeda is critical to our security, and I thank the Congress for supporting America's

vital mission in Afghanistan. (Applause.)

In Iraq, the terrorists and extremists are fighting to deny a proud people their liberty, and fighting to establish safe havens for attacks across the world. One year ago, our enemies were succeeding in their efforts to plunge Iraq into chaos. So we reviewed our strategy and changed course. We launched a surge of American forces into Iraq. We gave our troops a new mission: Work with the Iraqi forces to protect the Iraqi people, pursue the enemy in its strongholds, and deny the terrorists sanctuary anywhere in the country.

The Iraqi people quickly realized that something dramatic had happened. Those who had worried that America was preparing to abandon them instead saw tens of thousands of American forces flowing into their country. They saw our forces moving into neighborhoods, clearing out the terrorists, and staying behind to ensure the enemy did not return. And they saw our troops, along with Provincial Reconstruction Teams that include Foreign Service officers and other skilled public servants, coming in to ensure that improved security was followed by improvements in daily life. Our military and civilians in Iraq are performing with courage and distinction, and they have the gratitude of our whole nation. (Applause.)

The Iraqis launched a surge of their own. In the fall of 2006, Sunni tribal leaders grew tired of al Qaeda's brutality and started a popular uprising called "The Anbar Awakening." Over the past year, similar movements have spread across the country. And today, the grassroots surge includes more than 80,000 Iraqi citizens who are fighting the terrorists. The government in Baghdad has stepped forward, as well -- adding more than 100,000 new Iraqi soldiers and police during the past year.

While the enemy is still dangerous and more work remains, the American and Iraqi surges have achieved results few of us could have imagined just one year ago. (Applause.) When we met last year, many said that containing the violence was impossible. A year later, high profile terrorist attacks are down, civilian deaths are down, sectarian killings are down.

When we met last year, militia extremists -- some armed and trained by Iran -- were wreaking havoc in large areas of Iraq. A year later, coalition and Iraqi forces have killed or captured hundreds of militia fighters. And Iraqis of all backgrounds increasingly realize that defeating these militia fighters is critical to the future of their country.

When we met last year, al Qaeda had sanctuaries in many areas of Iraq, and their leaders had just offered American forces safe passage out of the country. Today, it is al Qaeda that is searching for safe passage. They have been driven from many of the strongholds they once held, and over the past year, we've captured or killed thousands of extremists in Iraq, including hundreds of key al Qaeda leaders and operatives.

Last month, Osama bin Laden released a tape in which he railed against Iraqi tribal leaders who have turned on al Qaeda and admitted that coalition forces are growing stronger in Iraq. Ladies and gentlemen, some may deny the surge is working, but among the terrorists there is no doubt. Al Qaeda is on the run in Iraq, and this enemy will be defeated. (Applause.)

When we met last year, our troop levels in Iraq were on the rise. Today, because of the progress just described, we are implementing a policy of "return on success," and the surge forces we sent to Iraq are beginning to come home.

This progress is a credit to the valor of our troops and the brilliance of their commanders. This evening, I want to speak directly to our men and women on the front lines. Soldiers and sailors, airmen, Marines, and Coast Guardsmen: In the past year, you have done everything we've asked of you, and more. Our nation is grateful for your courage. We are proud of your accomplishments. And tonight in this hallowed chamber, with the American people as our witness, we make you a solemn pledge: In the fight ahead, you will have all you need to protect our nation. (Applause.) And I ask Congress to meet its responsibilities to these brave men and women by fully funding our troops. (Applause.)

Our enemies in Iraq have been hit hard. They are not yet defeated, and we can still expect tough fighting ahead. Our objective in the coming year is to sustain and build on the gains we made in 2007, while transitioning to the next phase of our strategy. American troops are shifting from leading operations, to partnering with Iraqi forces, and, eventually, to a protective overwatch mission. As part of this transition, one Army brigade combat team and one Marine Expeditionary Unit have already come home and will not be replaced. In the coming months, four additional brigades and two Marine battalions will follow suit. Taken together, this means more than 20,000 of our troops are coming home. (Applause.)

Any further drawdown of U.S. troops will be based on conditions in Iraq and the recommendations of our commanders. General Petraeus has warned that too fast a drawdown could result in the "disintegration of the Iraqi security forces, al Qaeda-Iraq regaining lost ground, [and] a marked increase in violence." Members of Congress: Having come so far and achieved so much, we must not allow this to happen. (Applause.)

In the coming year, we will work with Iraqi leaders as they build on the progress they're making toward political reconciliation. At the local level, Sunnis, Shia, and Kurds are beginning to come together to reclaim their communities and rebuild their lives. Progress in the provinces must be matched by progress in Baghdad. (Applause.) We're seeing some encouraging signs. The national government is sharing oil revenues with the provinces. The parliament recently passed both a pension law and de-Baathification reform. They're now debating a provincial powers law. The Iraqis still have a distance to travel. But after decades of dictatorship and the pain of sectarian violence, reconciliation is taking place -- and the Iraqi people are taking control of their future. (Applause.)

The mission in Iraq has been difficult and trying for our nation. But it is in the vital interest of the United States that we succeed. A free Iraq will deny al Qaeda a safe haven. A free Iraq will show millions across the Middle East that a future of liberty is possible. A free Iraq will be a friend of America, a partner in fighting terror, and a source of stability in a dangerous part of the world.

By contrast, a failed Iraq would embolden the extremists, strengthen Iran, and give terrorists a base from which to launch new attacks on our friends, our allies, and our homeland. The enemy has made its intentions clear. At a time when the momentum seemed to favor them, al Qaida's top commander in Iraq declared that they will not rest until they have attacked us here in Washington. My fellow Americans: We will not rest either. We will not rest until this enemy has been defeated. (Applause.) We must do the difficult work today, so that years from now people will look back and say that this generation rose to the moment, prevailed in a tough fight, and left behind a more hopeful region and a safer America. (Applause.)

We're also standing against the forces of extremism in the Holy Land, where we have new cause

for hope. Palestinians have elected a president who recognizes that confronting terror is essential to achieving a state where his people can live in dignity and at peace with Israel. Israelis have leaders who recognize that a peaceful, democratic Palestinian state will be a source of lasting security. This month in Ramallah and Jerusalem, I assured leaders from both sides that America will do, and I will do, everything we can to help them achieve a peace agreement that defines a Palestinian state by the end of this year. The time has come for a Holy Land where a democratic Israel and a democratic Palestine live side-by-side in peace. (Applause.)

We're also standing against the forces of extremism embodied by the regime in Tehran. Iran's rulers oppress a good and talented people. And wherever freedom advances in the Middle East, it seems the Iranian regime is there to oppose it. Iran is funding and training militia groups in Iraq, supporting Hezbollah terrorists in Lebanon, and backing Hamas' efforts to undermine peace in the Holy Land. Tehran is also developing ballistic missiles of increasing range, and continues to develop its capability to enrich uranium, which could be used to create a nuclear weapon.

Our message to the people of Iran is clear: We have no quarrel with you. We respect your traditions and your history. We look forward to the day when you have your freedom. Our message to the leaders of Iran is also clear: Verifiably suspend your nuclear enrichment, so negotiations can begin. And to rejoin the community of nations, come clean about your nuclear intentions and past actions, stop your oppression at home, cease your support for terror abroad. But above all, know this: America will confront those who threaten our troops. We will stand by our allies, and we will defend our vital interests in the Persian Gulf. (Applause.)

On the home front, we will continue to take every lawful and effective measure to protect our country. This is our most solemn duty. We are grateful that there has not been another attack on our soil since 9/11. This is not for the lack of desire or effort on the part of the enemy. In the past six years, we've stopped numerous attacks, including a plot to fly a plane into the tallest building in Los Angeles and another to blow up passenger jets bound for America over the Atlantic. Dedicated men and women in our government toil day and night to stop the terrorists from carrying out their plans. These good citizens are saving American lives, and everyone in this chamber owes them our thanks. (Applause.)

And we owe them something more: We owe them the tools they need to keep our people safe. And one of the most important tools we can give them is the ability to monitor terrorist communications. To protect America, we need to know who the terrorists are talking to, what they are saying, and what they're planning. Last year, Congress passed legislation to help us do that. Unfortunately, Congress set the legislation to expire on February the 1st. That means if you don't act by Friday, our ability to track terrorist threats would be weakened and our citizens will be in greater danger. Congress must ensure the flow of vital intelligence is not disrupted. Congress must pass liability protection for companies believed to have assisted in the efforts to defend America. We've had ample time for debate. The time to act is now. (Applause.)

Protecting our nation from the dangers of a new century requires more than good intelligence and a strong military. It also requires changing the conditions that breed resentment and allow extremists to prey on despair. So America is using its influence to build a freer, more hopeful, and more compassionate world. This is a reflection of our national interest; it is the calling of our conscience.

America opposes genocide in Sudan. (Applause.) We support freedom in countries from Cuba and

Zimbabwe to Belarus and Burma. (Applause.)

America is leading the fight against global poverty, with strong education initiatives and humanitarian assistance. We've also changed the way we deliver aid by launching the Millennium Challenge Account. This program strengthens democracy, transparency, and the rule of law in developing nations, and I ask you to fully fund this important initiative. (Applause.)

America is leading the fight against global hunger. Today, more than half the world's food aid comes from the United States. And tonight, I ask Congress to support an innovative proposal to provide food assistance by purchasing crops directly from farmers in the developing world, so we can build up local agriculture and help break the cycle of famine. (Applause.)

America is leading the fight against disease. With your help, we're working to cut by half the number of malaria-related deaths in 15 African nations. And our Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief is treating 1.4 million people. We can bring healing and hope to many more. So I ask you to maintain the principles that have changed behavior and made this program a success. And I call on you to double our initial commitment to fighting HIV/AIDS by approving an additional \$30 billion over the next five years. (Applause.)

America is a force for hope in the world because we are a compassionate people, and some of the most compassionate Americans are those who have stepped forward to protect us. We must keep faith with all who have risked life and limb so that we might live in freedom and peace. Over the past seven years, we've increased funding for veterans by more than 95 percent. And as we increase funding -- (applause.) And as increase funding we must also reform our veterans system to meet the needs of a new war and a new generation. (Applause.) I call on the Congress to enact the reforms recommended by Senator Bob Dole and Secretary Donna Shalala, so we can improve the system of care for our wounded warriors and help them build lives of hope and promise and dignity. (Applause.)

Our military families also sacrifice for America. They endure sleepless nights and the daily struggle of providing for children while a loved one is serving far from home. We have a responsibility to provide for them. So I ask you to join me in expanding their access to child care, creating new hiring preferences for military spouses across the federal government, and allowing our troops to transfer their unused education benefits to their spouses or children. (Applause.) Our military families serve our nation, they inspire our nation, and tonight our nation honors them. (Applause.)

The strength -- the secret of our strength, the miracle of America, is that our greatness lies not in our government, but in the spirit and determination of our people. (Applause.) When the Federal Convention met in Philadelphia in 1787, our nation was bound by the Articles of Confederation, which began with the words, "We the undersigned delegates." When Gouverneur Morris was asked to draft a preamble to our new Constitution, he offered an important revision and opened with words that changed the course of our nation and the history of the world: "We the people."

By trusting the people, our Founders wagered that a great and noble nation could be built on the liberty that resides in the hearts of all men and women. By trusting the people, succeeding generations transformed our fragile young democracy into the most powerful nation on Earth and a beacon of hope for millions. And so long as we continue to trust the people, our nation will prosper, our liberty will be secure, and the state of our Union will remain strong. (Applause.)

So tonight, with confidence in freedom's power, and trust in the people, let us set forth to do their business. God bless America. (Applause.)

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