

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Labor

Elaine L. Chao, who introduced the President.

The President's Radio Address *March 17, 2001*

Good morning. For several months, economic indicators have pointed toward a slowdown, and now many Americans are beginning to feel its impact in your lives. The stock market is causing worries; high energy prices are straining family budgets; and some American workers and small-business people have been directly affected by layoffs and slowing retail sales. We have been hearing too much troubling economic news. It is time for the United States Congress to give Americans some good economic news: tax relief for everyone who pays income taxes.

This would be good news for families struggling to pay off debt and to save for the future. It would be good news for small businesses that need customers with money to spend. And it would be good news for our broader economy, good news for economic growth and job creation and consumer confidence.

The House of Representatives has already passed a large part of my tax relief plan. Now it is up to the Senate. It is only common sense to give our economy a boost in a slowdown. Yet tax relief is more than common sense; it is a matter of principle. My tax relief plan is also a tax reform plan. It corrects some of the worst, most unfair abuses in our current tax system. And I would be recommending these changes in any economic circumstance.

On principle, our Tax Code should reward hard work and overtime by men and women struggling to enter the middle class. Right now they face some of the highest marginal rates in the Tax Code. So we

lower those rates to encourage their dreams.

On principle, our Tax Code should honor family. That's why we double the per-child tax credit and reduce the marriage penalty.

On principle, no one in America should have to pay more than a third of their paycheck to the Federal Government. So we reduce tax rates for everyone in every bracket.

On principle, every family, every farmer, and small-business person should be free to pass on their life's work to those they love. So we abolish the death tax.

These are not Republican principles or Democratic principles; these are principles that are shared by Americans in both parties and Americans in no party. This is the reason my tax relief plan has so much momentum. Americans want our Tax Code to be reasonable and simple and fair. These are goals that unite our country, and these are goals that have shaped my plan.

The Senate should act quickly on my plan for two good reasons: First, tax relief is good news for our economy, which needs some good news. Second, my tax reform plan will treat everyone fairly.

If you agree with me, I hope you'll tell your Senator that you agree. Together we can help make our Nation more prosperous and our tax system more fair.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:06 p.m. on March 16 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 17. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 16

but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori of Japan
and an Exchange With Reporters
March 19, 2001

President Bush. It's my honor to welcome the Prime Minister of our close friend to the Oval Office. Mr. Prime Minister, welcome.

This meeting is an important meeting because it gives us both a chance to confirm the importance of our relationship. We view Japan as a very strong friend and ally, and that's the way it's going to be during my administration. And we've got such a good friendship and such a strong alliance that we're able to overcome occasional problems that might arise. We can do so in the spirit of friendship.

So I'm honored that the Prime Minister is here. We're going to have a—we'll discuss a lot of issues: We'll discuss our economies; we'll discuss trade; we'll discuss our alliance and how best to work together to keep the peace. I'm looking forward to a very fruitful and important discussion.

Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Mori. I have spoken to President Bush over the phone three times, but I am delighted today that I am able to have a face-to-face meeting with the President. In today's meeting, as the President just said, I would like to reaffirm the strong alliance between Japan and the United States and would like to discuss a very—a broad range of issues, including various issues in international affairs, and would like to set out the fundamental direction in which the Japan-U.S. alliance should head in the 21st century.

I would like to explain the various measures which our Government has taken so that the Japanese economy will have a fully sustainable economic growth. And I'd like

to express my strong determination to pursue necessary policies for that. I'd also like to express to the President my hope that United States will take appropriate macro-economic policies to deal with the U.S. economy that is slowing down.

Bank of Japan's Zero-Interest-Rate Policy

[At this point, a question was asked in Japanese, and a translation was not provided.]

Prime Minister Mori. I, of course, will be explaining to the President the decision made by the Bank of Japan yesterday, and I sincerely hope that it will have—and I am certain that it will have a positive effect on our economy.

U.S. and Japanese Economies

Q. Mr. President, with both the Japanese and the American economies in such fragile states, could you explain how you see the interrelationship between the economies and what you'd like to see the Japanese Government do to address its problems and particularly in the financial sector?

President Bush. First, we've got to get our own economy growing the way I know it can. That's why I'm advocating tax relief and free trade regulatory relief. And I look forward to explaining to the Prime Minister that we do have a plan to give our economy a second wind. I'm very confident about our economy. I know it can beat expectations. I will explain that to him, as clearly as I can, about when our policies are in place, how optimistic I am about economic growth.

And secondly, I look forward to hearing Japan's view of reform, internal reform. I'm