

Apr. 3 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2001

Remarks Calling on China To Return the United States Military Crew and
Surveillance Aircraft
April 3, 2001

Good afternoon. I want to report to the American people, and especially to the families involved, that I've just talked with Brigadier General Sealock, who earlier today met with our 24 men and women in China.

The general tells me they are in good health; they suffered no injuries; and they have not been mistreated. I know this is a relief to their loved ones and to all Americans.

Our crewmembers expressed their faith in America, and we have faith in them. They send their love to their families. They said they're looking forward to coming home, and we are looking forward to bringing them home.

This is an unusual situation in which an American military aircraft had to make an emergency landing on Chinese soil. Our approach has been to keep this accident from becoming an international incident. We have allowed the Chinese Government time to do the right thing. But now it is time for our service men and women to return

home, and it is time for the Chinese Government to return our plane.

This accident has the potential of undermining our hopes for a fruitful and productive relationship between our two countries. To keep that from happening, our service men and women need to come home.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:03 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. Neal Sealock, USA, U.S. Embassy Defense Attache in Beijing. On Sunday, April 1, a U.S. Navy EP-3E Aries II electronic surveillance aircraft made an emergency landing on China's Hainan Island after a mid-air collision with a Chinese F-8 fighter jet over the South China Sea. The 24-member crew (21 men and 3 women), consisting of one Marine, one Air Force, and 22 Navy personnel, had been held by the Chinese since the incident. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on Estate Tax Legislation
April 4, 2001

The House of Representatives action on eliminating the death tax is a victory for fairness and a vote for economic growth. I applaud the spirit of cooperation in both parties that led to today's result.

The death tax lacks common sense and thwarts free enterprise. It is unfair to families who have devoted their lives to building family farms and small businesses. Today's

vote is an important step toward restoring fairness in the Tax Code by eliminating the double and triple taxation that results from the death tax.

I look forward to continuing to work with Members of Congress from both parties to enact real and meaningful tax relief for the American people.