

May 18 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2001

Remarks Greeting Crewmembers of the United States Navy Surveillance Aircraft Downed in China and an Exchange With Reporters
May 18, 2001

The President. Welcome to the Oval Office. The Vice President and I are thrilled to be able to look you in the eye and say thanks for your service to the country. I remember in my phone call saying, “Gosh, I hope I can welcome you to the Oval Office,” and here you are.

You handled yourselves with such class and dignity, it was important for our Nation to realize the fine caliber of people that serve our country. And we’re really proud of you. We appreciate your mission, but most of all, we appreciate your character. And so it’s my honor to welcome you here. I look forward to giving you a tour around this majestic office, a shrine to the greatness of America.

Situation in the Middle East

I want to say one other thing before we visit informally. Today the violence in the Middle East took on a new level of intensity. Our country is deeply concerned, first and foremost, for those who lost their life and for the families affected. It is essential that the leaders in the Middle East speak out clearly against violence.

We must break the cycle of violence in order to begin meaningful discussions about any kind of political settlement. My administration will continue to work with the parties involved, reminding folks that violence will not lead to peace, obviously. Violence will make it so difficult for there to be any political settlement.

I’m concerned any time anybody loses life. I’m especially concerned about suicide bombers that have disregard for themselves and, obviously, for innocent folks. We will continue to work hard to bring peace to that important part of the region.

Thank you all for coming.

EP-3 Surveillance Aircraft in China

Q. What is the latest on the spy plane?

The President. We’re working to get the plane home. We’re making progress about getting the plane home. But today we get to celebrate the fact that the crew is home. And that’s the most important thing.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:40 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the Safe Harbor Water Power Corporation in Conestoga, Pennsylvania
May 18, 2001

Thank you very much. Please be seated. Well, Governor, thank you very much. It’s an honor to be back in your beautiful State. I’m glad you told me you were overseas recently; I thought you might have been boycotting my last visit to your State—[*laughter*]*—*which was Monday. [*Laughter*]

Laura and I consider Tom and Michele close personal friends, as well as political allies. And I know the people of Pennsylvania consider him to be an excellent Governor, because he is one.

I want to thank you all for coming. And I also want to thank the hundreds of citizens that lined the road as we came in,

to wave. It makes a fellow feel pretty good to see all the flags and the salutes. This is a wonderful place to come, not only because it speaks volumes about the policy that I'm going to address today, but it also reminds me of how wonderful our country is, how good and solid the people are that inhabit the great land called America. So if you see any of them that were on the road coming in, tell them the President says, thanks a lot for the hospitality.

I'm also honored to be traveling today with Members of the United States Congress. The United States Senator—I was going to say, the senior Senator, but I'm looking for some votes from him—[*laughter*]*—but that's Arlen Specter, who is doing a great job for the people of Pennsylvania; and the younger Senator, Senator Rick Santorum, as well. As well, a friend of mine from the great State of Alaska is with us, chairman of the Energy Committee, Frank Murkowski. I think old Frank must be looking for a cup of coffee somewhere. [Laughter]*

We also have the Congressman from this area, Congressman Todd Platts—where are you, Todd? There you go. Thank you, buddy—and Congressman Joe Pitts and Congressman George Gekas as well, from the State of Pennsylvania. And we're pleased, as well, to have a Member of the United States Congress from the West who, like Murkowski, takes great interest in energy policy, and that's Congressman Jim Hansen from the State of Utah. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

I want to thank Marshall Kaiser and the hard-working employees of Safe Harbor who made our visit so special. Thank you for making all the arrangements, and thanks for setting up this spectacular place to deliver a few remarks and to sign some important documents.

You know, when I ran for office, I told the people of our country that I would put together a Cabinet of some of the finest Americans that would be—who would be willing to serve. And I did so. I'm

blessed with a great Cabinet, and two of the fine Cabinet members are here with us: Spence Abraham and Christie Todd Whitman. And I thank them so much for their leadership.

I was pretty plainspoken about what I intended to do, should I be fortunate enough to become the President. And when I put my hand on the Bible that day, right afterwards, I intended to get to work. I said, "It's time to get after it, time to do in office what I said I would do." And that's what's taken place in Washington.

First, I said, if I happened to be the President, I was going to fight for meaningful, real tax relief to make sure the working people got to put some of that surplus in their pockets. And we're about to have tax cuts for the American people. And my call to Congress is to get it done before Memorial Day, to get the money to the people before the great Memorial Day holiday, so people have got more money to spend and save and more money in their pockets to take care of some of these energy prices that exist as a result of the failure to have an energy plan for America.

Secondly, I said, give us a chance—and we had put together a group of Congressmen and Senators to pass meaningful, real reform of our education system, one that would empower local folks, to give more power at the local level because we recognize one size does not fit all when it comes to the education of the children, but also one that says, if you receive Federal money, show us whether or not children are learning to read and write and add and subtract, because we want to know. We want to know whether or not the very faces of our future are learning, and if they're not—if they're not, we won't sit idly by in America. When we find youngsters who can't read, we'll correct the problems early, before it's too late, because our motto is, "Not one single child will be left behind in America."

I told the people of our country we would boost the morale of the military by having a clear mission and also making sure our troops were better paid and better housed. And my budget reflects that commitment to the military.

And I told the people during the campaign that we've got a problem with energy in America. Our demand is going up, and the supplies aren't going up with demand, and therefore, there is pressure on price. I said it in the campaign, and I'm saying it to you now: This Nation must adopt a national energy plan to make sure our consumers and workers and entrepreneurs have the capacity to realize the visions of a better life that we all have for America.

And so, yesterday I gave a speech that did just that, a speech that recognizes we have a problem. I figured I was elected to solve problems, if there are problems—not just to hold the office but to solve problems. And so we laid out a plan that has 100 different proposals—more than 100 proposals as to how to get after this energy problem we face and what to do about it. And it starts with encouraging and enhancing conservation efforts all around America. We can do a better job of conserving in this country. We can have policies that encourage conservation. We can have research that yields to better methodology for conservation.

But all of us must do a better job of conserving, as well. Each of us must be mindful of being conscious about wasting electricity. We're going to have better cars, I'm convinced of it, that have better mileage, rely less upon hydrocarbons. We'll have better homes, many of which will be powered by solar energy. This future is fantastic for the country. And a lot of it is based upon good, sound conservation measures.

But as I reminded the people yesterday, a State that has done a fantastic job in conservation has been the State of California. They're the second best at conservation measures. And yet, they're lacking en-

ergy; they're having blackouts. And we all must be deeply concerned about our fellow citizens in the great State of California. But the problems in California shows that you cannot conserve your way to energy independence, that not only do we need to have good conservation, but we must have a diversified base of supply, including hydroelectric supply.

And I also talked about the need to make sure that we had a modern infrastructure to be able to get energy from the powerplant to the light switch, that we've got to do a better job of modernizing the capacity to move not only electricity but products like natural gas from point A to point B, in order to have an energy—to have a country where we have abundant and cheaper and safer and cleaner energy sources.

So this is a vision that recognizes, one, we have a problem, and the willingness to confront it; but two, a vision that relies upon common sense, and it relies upon ingenuity of the American people and the entrepreneurial instincts of our country.

And it's great to be here in Pennsylvania, because Pennsylvania is a State that's on the forefront of diversification and conservation. And it's an appropriate place to be, because this dam is a symbol of the new age of environmental possibilities. It's powering Pennsylvania's economy, while at the same time restoring Pennsylvania wildlife. It goes to show that economic growth and a good environmental policy do not have to be zero-sum. It doesn't have to be either/or.

And one of the most important things we've got to do in this country is change the tone about the debate about economic growth and the environment. You know, it seems like recently, those of us who used to not be in Washington, we'd be looking up there and seeing that people would rather argue than discuss. They'd rather call names, rather than come up with solutions.

They'd rather point fingers at people, rather than holding out the hand of constructive dialog. And it's got to change.

And this is an administration that's committed—committed—to putting the people ahead of politics and talking about dialog and discussing important issues in a way that will bring honor to the process, so that when youngsters look up at our Nation's Capitol, they're proud of what they see.

And we laid out a plan, and I hope there's good, honorable debate about the plan, because it's based upon common sense and it's based upon hope and it's based upon new technologies.

I think it's very important for our country to realize what Spence talked about, and that is the need to make sure we diversify our energy supplies. It's important to do so for national security reasons, for starters. As I mentioned yesterday in Iowa—we went to a place that was doing research on biomass and value-added processing, and I said to the folks there, I said, "I would much rather have our economy powered by crops grown in Iowa than barrels of oil coming out of Iraq." It's in our Nation's interest that we diversify. It's in our Nation's interest that we become less dependent upon nations, some of which really don't care for what we believe in. And I believe we can do so.

Now, that's going to mean we've got to understand the power and promise of nuclear energy, that we've got to be willing to discuss nuclear energy and recognize that nuclear power is much safer than it's ever been and, at the same time, use sound science to help us find the right place to store the product of nuclear power.

It means we've got to understand the hope and promise of natural gas and be willing to explore for natural gas in places that heretofore have been off limits, such as remote areas of Alaska.

I want you all to understand that the debate about ANWR is one that is not based—as far as I'm concerned—based

upon sound fact. You see, first of all, ANWR—what we're talking about is 2,000 acres amongst, I believe it's 19 million acres; secondly, the technology has changed so that one is able to have a single drill site and explore for reservoir miles away from the drill site; thirdly, the explorationists are willing to only move equipment during the winter, which means they'll be on ice roads, and remove the equipment as the ice begins to melt, so that the fragile tundra is protected.

People have got to understand that it's possible that we could find, and likely find, 600,000 barrels of oil a day out of ANWR. That's what we import from Saudi—I mean, from Iraq. It makes sense, folks, for us to have an environmentally sensitive exploration plan in America in order to diversify supply, not only for national security reasons but for international reasons, as well.

We need more natural gas in America. Natural gas is a clean burning fuel. There's a lot of it. But in order to find it, we're going to have to move it by pipeline. And we need more pipeline, and we need safer pipelines, and technology allows us to do so.

There's a lot of discussion about alternative sources of energy. Hydroelectric power is one, and our Nation must welcome hydroelectric power as a renewable resource. They talk about solar energy. We're very much in support of the alternative forms of energy. I hope some day that these renewables will be the dominant source of energy in America. I'm not so sure how realistic that is, but nevertheless, they'll play an integral part of the energy mix in America. And my administration, through incentives and research, will encourage them to be.

I firmly believe we can solve this problem. I know we can't solve it without a plan, and that's why I've laid one out. I know we can't solve it without an administration being willing to say, "This is a tough issue, but we want to tackle it. We want

to take it on. We want to lead the people.” And so we’re willing to do that. It’s right for America that we do so. It’s the right thing for this country. It’s the right thing for people who are coming up in a land that want to realize their dreams.

And it’s right to change the tone in Washington, DC, as well. And we need your help to do so. When you hear these folks—it doesn’t matter what side of the debate they’re on—who are willing to kind of castigate somebody who may have a good idea, stand up and let them have it. [Laughter] This is too important an issue. It’s too important an issue to allow the rhetoric to deteriorate.

And so what I’m here to tell you is, is that you’ve got an administration that’s willing to take the lead on a tough issue; an administration that’s going to bring some commonsense practice to energy policy; and an administration that is willing to talk not only about conservation but enhancing supply and the means to get supply to those who use it; an administration who understands the responsibility of the high offices that we hold; an administration that looks forward to working with my fellow Americans to get it done.

I said yesterday, and I know it’s true, that we’re going to lead the world when it comes to energy and how to do it and how to balance our needs and still have economic growth and how to have good environmental policy with economic growth. Because one thing we’re not short of—we may be short of certain forms of energy, but we’re not short of the American spirit. We’re not short of innovative people. We’re not short of hard-working Americans. We’re not short of the entrepreneurial spirit. As a matter of fact, we’ve got a plentiful supply of all those. And as a result, this great Nation is going to be a leader, not a follower, when it comes to energy policy.

Yesterday I talked about the need for us to act. And today I have the honor of acting. I’m going to sign two Executive orders to promote energy security, and I’m

honored to do so right here in the great State of Pennsylvania. I’m sure there were some folks that were watching the speech or heard about the speech, probably saying, “Yes, all we’ve got now is another report that’s going to sit on a shelf in Washington, just to gather a little dust.” I can assure the American people that mine is an administration that’s not interested in gathering dust. We’re interested in acting.

And so today—one of the Executive orders will bring new energy projects online faster, and that’s especially important this year, as we end—as we work together to end the blackouts in California. And the other will ensure that the Federal Government pays due attention to energy when it makes decisions, because the fuel that powers our economy should never be a second thought.

To bring projects faster online, I’m ordering all Federal agencies to expedite their review of energy-related permits while maintaining safety, public health, and environmental protections. These protections are vital, and so is energy. And we don’t want to either—we don’t want either of them snarled in bureaucratic tangles, as local governments or entrepreneurs seek permit after permit from agency after agency. This Executive order creates an inter-agency task force to examine how to move good projects through the Federal bureaucracy as quickly as possible. And to underscore my administration’s commitment to reconciling energy production and environmental protection, the task force will be chaired by the Chairman of the Council of Environmental Quality.

The next Executive order prods the Federal Government to take America’s energy supplies very seriously. Any Federal agency that proposes a major regulatory action that significantly affects energy must, from now on, file a statement of energy impact if the decision will have an adverse affect on energy supply, distribution, or use. And the

agency must describe what reasonable alternatives to its decision may exist. The statement of energy impact is not a red light preventing any agency from taking any action. It is a yellow light that says, pause and think before you make decisions that squeeze consumer's pocketbooks, that may cause energy shortages or that may make us more dependent on foreign energy.

These two orders are the next steps toward a brighter energy future. Thank you for joining me as I sign them.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. on the intake deck. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Tom Ridge of Pennsylvania and his wife, Michele; and Marshall J. Kaiser, president and chief executive officer, Safe Harbor Water Power Corporation. The President also referred to ANWR, the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge. The Executive orders of May 18 are listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Remarks on the Observance of Cuban Independence Day May 18, 2001

Sientese. [Laughter] *Bienvenidos a la casa de todos que—quien viven en este grande pais.* Welcome to the White House.

Mr. Secretary, you were an easy pick. [Laughter] There's no question you do a fabulous job on behalf of America. Thank you for taking the assignment.

Another member of my team who is here who helps us have a strong and certain foreign policy is *Senorita* Condoleezza Arroz. [Laughter] That means "Rice." [Laughter]

Senator Graham, thank you for being here. We're honored by your presence. I know you're a strong friend of Cuba's. And of course, to—and it's great that Ileana and Lincoln are with us, as well. Thank you.

I noticed when Gloria sang the Cuban anthem, that the first two people on their feet were the two Congresspeople from south Florida. And Lincoln, I did notice that you were braced at attention, too, I might add—proud. So it's great to have you all here.

Gloria, thank you very much. Sorry you brought your husband—but no. [Laughter] We love Emilio. He's a good man. And Gloria, thank you for coming and bringing *tu ninita*. Thank you all for being here. We love your music. Your husband has

been such a good friend of me and my family's, and so have you.

The great poet—man, you must be a strong person with a beautiful heart and a wonderful artistic touch. Angel, welcome to the White House. And Lizebet, thank you for coming. I don't think many in America know your story, that you were picked up on a raft, and that you played the national anthem on your violin when you were picked up. That's beautiful.

And finally—*por fin, por fin, "la Voz"*—[laughter]—Jon Secada. Thank you, Jon, for being here. I appreciate you very much. Glad you're here.

It's a great honor for me to welcome you all to the White House to celebrate May 20th, Cuban Independence Day. It's a day when we honor the warm family ties, the faith, the history, and heritage that unite our two peoples.

As Angel and Lizebet and so many others remind us, it is a day when we pay thanks to the magnificent contributions of Cubans to our national life. They enrich every field, from science to industry to the arts, including my favorite performing art, baseball. [Laughter] But mostly, today is a day when we reflect on the greatnesses of Cuba's far-too-distant past and the brightness of its