

the war. We need to be united when it comes to battling recession, as well. It's time to set aside all the politics, all the posturing, and figure out how to take care of workers whose lives were affected because of the attacks on 9/11.

But as we do so, always remember that people may want an unemployment check to help them through tough times, but what they really want is a permanent paycheck. And therefore, jobs ought to be the central core of any economic development plan that we can run out of the United States Congress.

So when I submit my budget to the United States Congress, these will be my priorities. We've made our choices to match the great challenges and opportunities of our time. Our great challenge is to protect the American people. Our great opportunity is to advance the cause of justice and human dignity and freedom all

across the world. In this cause, our military is showing the world America at its best.

And so, on behalf of an entire nation, I want to say thanks to the men and women who wear our uniform, and thanks to the Reserve Officers Association for your sacrifices and your support of our great land.

Thank you for having me, and may God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:23 p.m. in the Ballroom at the Washington Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to Col. Charles L. "Chip" Holsworth, USAFR, national president, Reserve Officers Association; Gen. John P. Jumper, USAF, chief of staff, U.S. Air Force; and David S.C. Chu, Under Secretary of Defense for Personnel and Readiness. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks on Signing the Victims of Terrorism Tax Relief Act of 2001 *January 23, 2002*

Thanks for coming. Please be seated. Thank you all very much. We've come together today to remember and recognize victims of terrorism and to sign a piece of legislation that will provide a tangible measure of support for their families.

The Victims of Terrorism Tax Relief Act will provide some tax relief to families of those killed in the attacks on September the 11th, the anthrax attacks after September the 11th, and the Oklahoma City bombing. This is a small gesture compared to the overwhelming generosity of the American people in times of tragedy. Yet this will help to extend that generosity because it exempts payments from charities to victims' families from Federal taxes. This legislation is a bipartisan symbol of the Federal Government's concern for families who suffered such great loss.

I want to thank the Members of Congress who are here. I particularly want to thank those who worked on the bill: Senator Torricelli of New Jersey; Senators Schumer and Clinton of New York—and by the way, welcome back to the White House—Senator Nickles of Oklahoma; Senators Allen and Warner of Virginia; Senator Baucus of Montana; Congressman Rangel of New York; Congressman Fossella of New York; Congressman Thomas of California, who couldn't be here; and all the other Members, both Republicans and Democrats. Welcome back to town, and welcome to the White House.

We're joined today by families who have lost loved ones in the great acts of evil. As you draw on faith and personal strength to cope with your grief, I hope you'll also find comfort in the knowledge that your

Nation stands with you and prays for you. We mourn those whom we've lost, and we face the future together.

In times like these, we realize both the purpose and the limitations of Government. The Government cannot take away your pain and sorrow, but it can bring the killers to justice. It can devote its energy and resources to try to prevent other families from experiencing what you're going through and can help remove some of the financial obligations it imposes to ease your burdens.

The Oklahoma City bombing was a terrible crime, and justice was done. And I can assure each of you that justice will be done to all those who are responsible for the evil acts of September the 11th.

We've already driven the Taliban from power in Afghanistan, and we're helping a new government take its place. We've infiltrated Al Qaida caves. We destroyed their camps. We will continue to destroy their bunkers and their hideaways. We've put them on the run, and we'll hunt them down, wherever they try to hide, and bring them to justice.

As we wage the war on terrorism abroad, we will also comfort families deeply hurt by terrorism here at home. The Members of the United States Congress who came together to pass this bill I'll sign today had one goal in mind: to help ease your financial burdens as you struggle to cope with the loss of your loved ones.

Many families lost their primary wage earners in the attack on the Murrah Federal Building, in the attacks of September the 11th, and in the anthrax attacks after September the 11th. This financial strain deepens the emotional and psychological impact of the initial tragedies. The legislation passed by Congress will relieve the tax burden on families who have lost loved ones. Under this law, the Federal Government will collect no income taxes on wages earned by terrorism victims in the year of their death or in the preceding year.

Families of victims killed in the Oklahoma City bombing will receive a tax refund on behalf of their relatives. Some death benefits paid by employers will be exempt from Federal taxation. Lower State tax rates will apply to victims of terrorist attacks as well as to members of the armed services who have been killed in combat zones. And to help insure that families receive as much relief as possible from charitable organizations, payments from charitable organizations to victims' families will be exempt from Federal taxation.

The Victims of Terrorism Tax Relief Act is an important example of our national unity and resolve, and it's my honor to sign it today.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:18 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. H.R. 2884, approved January 23, was assigned Public Law No. 107-134.

## Letter to Congressional Leaders on Continuation of the National Emergency With Respect to Terrorists Who Threaten To Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process

January 18, 2002

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national

emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the