

It's been an amazing event—series of events that have taken place. One of the most heartening things for me is to know that thousands of Americans are reassessing their values, moms and dads are asking what they can do to be better parents—that as a result of the evil doer, not only are we responding militarily and not only have we put this broad coalition together that says we'll rid the world of terror, but here at home people are saying, "Gosh, let me reassess my life." It's so important for moms and dads to know that the most important job they will ever have is to love their children with all their heart and all their soul.

I'm so pleased to report to you that the great fabric of the country, in terms of helping people, exists because of faith-based institutions, regardless of their religion; all across neighborhoods in America, that people are asking the question, "What can I do to help"; that the great mosaic of America is made up of the millions of acts of kindness which takes place every single day. September the 11th was an attack on our country, but it didn't affect our heart; it didn't affect our soul.

My great hope for the year 2002 is that people who want to work can find a job.

My hope is that our military is safe in their mission. I understand the war on terror is going to beyond probably 2002. I

have no unrealistic aspirations about a calendar, a quick calendar.

But my true hope, as well, is that the great compassion of America and the value system that has made us so different and so unique continues to be vibrant and strong; that people, when they want to know how to help America, turn to a neighbor in need and say, "I want to help, to provide comfort for a child who may need a loving mentor," to say to somebody elderly on your block, "Gosh, I want to provide you company."

That's the great—that's my hope for the country, that our compassion continues to well up and that this great American experience continues to touch every possible heart. I pray for peace, I pray for prosperity, and I pray for the greatest land on the face of the Earth—America.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:15 p.m. in the school's Aldo Rossi Field House. In his remarks, he referred to Katie Harman, Miss America 2002; Mayor Vera Katz of Portland; Charles J. Swindells, U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand; John V. Harker, president and chief executive officer, InFocus Corp.; Representative Greg Walden of Oregon; and Sfc. Nathan Ross Chapman, USA, who was killed January 4 by hostile fire in Afghanistan.

Remarks Following a Meeting With the Economic Team and the Federal Reserve Board Chairman and an Exchange With Reporters January 7, 2002

The President. I want to thank Chairman Greenspan for coming. He's here to offer his independent advice and counsel about the state of our economy. I want to thank my economic team for keeping me abreast of what we're learning during our Christmas break. I look forward to a substantive discussion about how to wisely put policy

in place that will help this economy recover.

I'm—we're making good progress in winning the war in Afghanistan, and we've got to make good progress about helping people find work. The cornerstone of any good policy is going to be to take care of—help people help themselves, and take care of

those who may have lost their job as a result of 9/11. But always remember, the most important thing for those who have lost their job is to be able to find work. And so the question I'm going to ask and the question I hope Congress asks is, how best to create jobs? What can you do to encourage economic growth so that people who want to work can find work?

I'm optimistic that 2002 is going to be a better year than 2001. And we will discuss ways here to make—to figure out how Government can make that happen. One thing I will do, after the course of these discussions and some discussions later on this week, will put in my budget an economic stimulus package.

And speaking of that, I hope that when Congress comes back, they will have listened to their constituents and that Congress will realize that America, like me, is tired of partisan bickering, that we ought to come together, we ought to unify around some sensible policy and not try to play politics with tax relief or, for that matter, economic stimulus packages.

I'll be glad to answer a few questions. Fournier [Ron Fournier, Associated Press].

National Priorities and the Federal Budget

Q. Mr. President, can you increase funding for the military and homeland security without dipping into the Social Security and Medicare accounts? And Chairman Greenspan, if I could—

The President. Well, wait. I promised him that he could come. He's an independent soul, and he can have a press conference elsewhere. But one of the things we're not going to do is drag the Chairman into a press conference. Otherwise, he won't come back—[laughter]—to the White House.

Q. I'm sure he would—

The President. Well, you can find him at his place of business. Sorry to tell you how to do—it's a new year. [Laughter] I plan to be much more assertive with the press.

Q. [Inaudible]—going to ask him if he thought the recession was over, that's all.

The President. Okay. I said to the American people that this Nation might have to run deficits in time of war, in times of a national emergency, or in times of a recession. And we're still in all three. We had a national emergency; we're trying to win a war; and we're in a recession. So I have no problem figuring out ways to win the war, figuring out ways to protect the homeland—and those will be the priorities of my budget—and at the same time—and spending the money necessary to do both—and at the same time, recognizing that we may not balance the budget for this year.

It makes sense to spend money necessary to win the war; it makes sense to spend money necessary to protect the homeland. And we're in a recession. There are some talk about raising taxes. That would be a disaster, to raise taxes in the midst of a recession. Even—I think you'll find that to be—most economists agree with that point of view. Certainly, if they're fair about it, they will say that.

And so I—as I said out there, somebody must be reading a different kind of economics textbook here in Washington. And most of the people that I spoke to in California and Oregon understood that we shouldn't be raising taxes in a recession. Yes.

Economic Stimulus Package

Q. Mr. President, given that there was real progress on a stimulus package in December—[inaudible]—will your package, your proposal take effect more quickly than the one you proposed in December? And in addition to that, do you think, in the meantime, further interest rate cuts might be a way to provide an immediate boost?

The President. Well, first in terms of monetary policy, I'll leave that in the hands of our Chairman, Chairman Greenspan. He's done a fabulous job in running the

Federal Reserve. And for that, America should be grateful.

Secondly, we did make very good progress on an economic stimulus package. We had a bill come out of the House of Representatives, and there was a bill that could have passed the United States Senate. There was enough votes, had the bill been brought up on the floor, that it would have passed. It took good features from the Republican point of view; it took good features from the Democrat point of view. We brought it together and made a very good package. That's pretty darn good progress, except along the way there was an attitude that said, "Well, maybe we don't need a package." I happen to believe we do need one, and there was a good one that could have passed.

Stretch. I mean, Little Stretch [David Gregory, NBC News]. [Laughter]

Q. Thank you for that. [Laughter]

The President. That's your new name, by the way.

Q. Oh, it is? Okay, good. Thank you.

The President. It's a new year.

Q. [Inaudible]—new year. Why does everything have to be so black and white? Is there not room to maybe phase in the tax cut in the out-years more slowly to protect the Government's bottom line—don't start laughing yet. And the second thing is, what will you say as elements of a new stimulus package? Do you think there's a way to break this logjam?

The President. Well, first of all, the logjam was broken in December of this year. Republicans and Democrats realized it was time to act. We came together, and something would have passed the Senate. In terms of finding a solution that bridged good ideas from both parties, that's happened.

And your first question was, Little Stretch?

Taxes and Economic Recovery

Q. Why does it have to be so black and white on the issue of raising taxes? Couldn't you—

The President. Because a tax cut is part of the prescription for economic recovery. By reducing taxes at a time when our economy was slowing down, the Congress, working with the administration, did the absolute right thing to provide a stimulus. And to change in the midst of the phasing-in of the tax relief plan would send the absolute wrong signal to the economy. It would say we weren't real about it; we weren't serious about tax relief. Tax relief is a part of the economic recovery plan.

Listen, thank you all very much—yes, a couple more. It's a new spirit.

Q. Which one?

The President. You're after Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters], I promise.

Situation in South Asia

Q. Does it appear that war now has been averted between India and Pakistan, and has Pakistan done enough to crack down on terrorists?

The President. I think it's very important for President Musharraf to make a clear statement to the world that he intends to crack down on terror. And I believe if he does that and continues to do what he's doing, it will provide the—it will provide relief, pressure relief, on a situation that's still serious. I don't believe the situation is defused yet. But I do believe there is a way to do so. And we're working hard to convince both the Indians and the Pakis there's a way to deal with their problems without going to war.

Airline Treatment of Secret Service Agent

Q. Mr. President, during the holidays you stood by your Secret Service agent. And American Airlines has come out with a new statement today saying that he was bitter and hostile. What are your thoughts

about the situation with your Arab American agent now as it pertains to him trying to—

The President. Well, I know there's an investigation going on, and I look forward to see the findings. But as I said, if he was mistreated because of his ethnicity, I'm going to be plenty hot—that means angry. And I know the man. I am most appreciative of his service to me and my wife. He is an honorable fellow. But I don't know enough about the details of this particular incident, but I know there's an in-

vestigation going on, and I look forward to seeing it. I would be surprised if he was hostile. But I wasn't there, so it's hard for me to comment on something which I did not see.

Listen, thank you all for giving me a chance to visit with you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:33 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Pervez Musharraf of Pakistan; and Secret Service Agent Walied Shater.

Remarks on Signing the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 in Hamilton, Ohio

January 8, 2002

The President. Thank you all very much.
Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A!
U.S.A.!

The President. Okay. I know you all are anxious to get back to class. [*Laughter*] So please be seated. [*Laughter*] Thank you for such a warm welcome. It's great to be in the home of the Big Blue, Hamilton High School. I want to thank you all for coming. I particularly want to thank my friend the Governor of the great State of Ohio, Governor Taft, for being here. I want to thank Tracey Miller for being so hospitable. I want to thank all who have come to witness this historic moment.

For those of you who have studied the history of our Government, you know most bills are signed at the White House. But I decided to sign this bill in one of the most important places in America, a public school.

We've got large challenges here in America. There's no greater challenge than to make sure that every child—and all of us on this stage mean every child, not just a few children—every single child, regardless of where they live, how they're raised,

the income level of their family, every child receive a first-class education in America.

And as you know, we've got another challenge, and that's to protect America from evil ones. And I want to assure the seniors and juniors and sophomores here at Hamilton High School that the effort that this great country is engaged in, the effort to defend freedom and to defend our people, the effort to rout out terror wherever it exists, is noble and just and right, and your great country will prevail in this effort.

I long for peace. But I also understand that if we do not lead the world against terror, that your children and your grandchildren will not grow up in a society that is as free as the society we have today. Freedom is the precious gift that one generation can pass to the next. It is a gift and a promise that I intend to keep to the American children.

And we owe the children of America a good education. And today begins a new era, a new time in public education in our country. As of this hour, America's schools will be on a new path of reform and a new path of results.