

of both political parties to develop an education plan that starts making sure children learn before they just get shuffled through the system.

One of the saddest facts about my country is that there are a significant number of fourth grade students who cannot read at grade level. Imagine a child who can't read in the fourth grade is a child that's not going to be able to read in the eighth grade. And if a child can't read in the eighth grade, it's likely that child's not going to be able to read sufficiently when they get out of high school and, therefore, won't be able to go to college. It's a shame in America that that's the case.

So as part of an education bill I managed to get through Congress last year, we've got a significant reading initiative, where we'll work with the States and the local jurisdictions to focus on an education program that emphasizes reading. This year I hope to work with my wife and others on a early childhood development program, so the youngsters get the building blocks to learn how to read.

I'm actually working my way to your question, I promise you—[laughter]—be-

cause education is the best anticrime program. It's important to enforce law. It's important to hold people accountable for their actions. It is important to have consistent policy that says, "If you harm somebody, there will be a punishment for that harm." But in the best interests for my country, the long-term solution is to make sure the education system works for everybody. And when that happens, there will be a more hopeful future for people, and there will be less poverty, less hopelessness, and less crime.

Listen, thank you for letting me come. God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:35 a.m. in the main hall. In his remarks, he referred to Vice President Hu Jintao of China, who introduced the President; President Jiang Zemin of China; and U.S. Ambassador to China Clark T. Randt, Jr. A participant in the question-and-answer session referred to the theater missile defense (TMD) system. Participants asked their questions in Chinese and then in English.

Statement on the Train Fire in Al-Avyat, Egypt *February 22, 2002*

I am profoundly saddened by the terrible loss of life in the train fire in Al-Avyat. This tragedy is all the more horrible because it took place during the holiday of Eid al-Adha. Laura and I and all of the

American people offer our deepest sympathy and condolences to President Mubarak, the Egyptian people, and especially to those families who have lost loved ones.

The President's Radio Address *February 23, 2002*

Good morning. As I return from a successful trip to Asia, the United States Sen-

ate will return from its recess for an important debate on America's energy security.

As our economy continues to grow, U.S. oil consumption is projected to increase by about one-third during the next 20 years. Our demand for electricity is expected to rise by 45 percent. America is already using more energy than our domestic resources can provide, and unless we act to increase our energy independence, our reliance on foreign sources of energy will only increase. I have a balanced, comprehensive, and aggressive energy plan that will help address this challenge. The plan has five main parts.

First, it promotes conservation. It increases funding for energy efficiency and renewable energy programs and supports the development of fuel-efficient vehicles.

Second, my plan will modernize our energy delivery systems. America can't meet tomorrow's energy needs with yesterday's infrastructure. Just as the Internet has made our information more convenient, new technology can make our energy cleaner, cheaper, and more efficient by upgrading powerlines and connecting producers and consumers across the whole country.

Third, my new budget invests in new technologies such as fuel cells that may someday power our cars with hydrogen and emit only water.

Fourth, my plan offers tax credits and other incentives for the use of renewable energy sources like wind power, solar power, and fuels derived from crops. Renewable energy can increase our energy independence and help our farm economy.

Conservation technology and renewables are important. Yet they alone cannot solve our energy problems. We must also reduce America's dependence on foreign sources of oil by encouraging safe and clean exploration at home.

On my way to visit Asia, I stopped in Alaska, a place of tremendous natural beauty and important energy resources. I met with many Alaskans, including native leaders, who want to preserve the grandeur of their State while carefully developing the energy beneath a small fraction of it. New technology makes this possible; our national security makes it urgent. Alaskans know firsthand that modern technology allows us to bring oil to the surface cleanly and safely, while protecting our environment and wildlife. We should listen to Alaskans who support exploring ANWR in a safe and clean way.

Passing my comprehensive energy plan is not just important for energy security, it is also vital to our economic security. Economic growth requires reliable and affordable energy, and labor organizations support my plan because they know my energy plan means thousands of new jobs across America.

We all remember the blackouts and the sky-high energy bills of recent summers. I urge Congress to protect consumers from these wild swings in energy prices for the future. The House has passed my agenda for energy independence; now I urge the Senate to act.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 3:30 p.m. on February 21 at the St. Regis Hotel in Beijing, China, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 23. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 22 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks at the National Governors' Association Dinner *February 24, 2002*

Ladies and gentlemen, Laura and I would like to welcome you all to the White House. It's good to see a lot of our friends, and we're so honored you are here.

Tonight is a special night for us, but it's no more special—but especially special for three people, three birthday people: Governor Siegelman, Governor Ryan, and Governor Swift. Happy birthday.

I also want to welcome members of my Cabinet and my team who are here. I've assembled a fabulous team. They bring a lot of experience to their jobs. I'm really proud of the Cabinet members who have been Governors: Tommy Thompson, John Ashcroft, Tom Ridge, and Christie Whitman. They understand firsthand the issues that Governors face every day. And my administration is working hard to make sure the Federal Government is more responsive to your needs.

Since we met last, America has been attacked and has been wounded by terrorists. We've been inspired by acts of courage and generosity. And this Nation has confirmed a deep sense of national purpose. We're determined to protect the American people by fighting terror wherever it is found. This cause will take years, require the patience of the American people, and it will require participation of all levels of government.

And we've made a very good beginning. Our military has routed the Taliban, and

we're hunting down Al Qaida. We've worked to take preventive measures to stop any attack, and we're prepared to respond should they come.

The Governors have taken threats seriously, and you've acted quickly to confront them. And our Nation is grateful.

At every stage of this crisis, I have benefited from your counsel. I've been inspired by your leadership. I was touched by my friend George Pataki's calm demeanor during the crisis in New York. I know our Nation needs to develop a national strategy to protect the homeland, and that's why I picked a fellow Governor, a former Governor, and a good friend, Tom Ridge, to lead the effort.

America's Governors have displayed leadership at a time when history demanded it. And so it's with deep respect and gratitude that I offer this toast to the Governors of the United States.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:10 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Don Siegelman of Alabama; Gov. George H. Ryan of Illinois; Gov. Jane Swift of Massachusetts; and Gov. George E. Pataki of New York. This transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 25.

Remarks on a Comprehensive Energy Policy *February 25, 2002*

Thank you all for coming today. I'm honored to be joined by Secretary of Energy Spence Abraham and Administrator Christie Todd Whitman of the Environmental Protection Agency. We're here to

discuss an energy plan, a comprehensive energy plan that recognizes that through technology, we can increase our national security and economic security by reducing demand for petrochemicals, and at the