

to explore their interest in science and engineering. That in itself is an incredibly important contribution to our country, to excite youngsters about the promise and hope of science and promise and hope of engineering. By involving students in your work and creating opportunities for young Americans to learn about career opportunities in the sciences, you're opening minds and opening doors to future researchers. Your impact will be felt for decades to come, and that's why I've come to speak to you.

So on behalf of all Americans, I want to thank you for your commitment to im-

proving lives and exploring new horizons. I congratulate you for your hard work. I urge you not to stop, to keep using your God-given talents and your God-given genius to make the world better for all of us.

May God bless your work, and God bless America. Congratulations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:10 a.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building.

Statement on Iran *July 12, 2002*

We have seen throughout history the power of one simple idea: When given a choice, people will choose freedom. As we have witnessed over the past few days, the people of Iran want the same freedoms, human rights, and opportunities as people around the world. Their Government should listen to their hopes.

In the last two Iranian Presidential elections and in nearly a dozen parliamentary and local elections, the vast majority of the Iranian people voted for political and economic reform. Yet their voices are not being listened to by the unelected people who are the real rulers of Iran. Uncompromising, destructive policies have persisted, and far too little has changed in the daily lives of the Iranian people. Iranian students, journalists, and Parliamentarians are still arrested, intimidated, and abused for advocating reform or criticizing the ruling regime. Independent publications are suppressed. And talented students and profes-

sionals, faced with the dual specter of too few jobs and too many restrictions on their freedom, continue to seek opportunities abroad rather than help build Iran's future at home. Meanwhile, members of the ruling regime and their families continue to obstruct reform while reaping unfair benefits.

Iran is an ancient land, home to a proud culture with a rich heritage of learning and progress. The future of Iran will be decided by the people of Iran. Right now, the Iranian people are struggling with difficult questions about how to build a modern 21st-century society that is at once Muslim, prosperous, and free. There is a long history of friendship between the American people and the people of Iran. As Iran's people move towards a future defined by greater freedom, greater tolerance, they will have no better friend than the United States of America.