

From the day I took office, I've been fortunate to have outstanding economic advisers at the Treasury Department and in the White House. I'm deeply grateful to Secretary Paul O'Neill and Dr. Larry Lindsey for their leadership, particularly in the aftermath of September the 11th, 2001. They share credit for an historic tax relief and other economic policies that moved our economy from recession to growth.

Paul and Larry are two of the most fine, honorable, decent men I've ever served with. They can be proud for all they have done for their country.

There is important work ahead to bring greater economic growth in the new year. This economy is strong, and we can make it stronger. I'm eager for the task, and so is our next Secretary of the Treasury. And

I hope the United States Senate will act quickly to confirm John Snow.

[At this point, Secretary-designate Snow made brief remarks.]

The President. Congratulations, sir. Welcome.

Secretary-designate Snow. Thank you.

The President. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11 a.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Carolyn Snow, wife of Secretary-designate Snow. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary-designate Snow. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the Peace Agreement in Indonesia December 9, 2002

I congratulate the Government of Indonesia and the leadership of the Free Aceh Movement on the peace agreement signed on December 9th. The United States strongly supports this courageous effort to end a conflict that has cost thousands of innocent lives in Aceh and torn at the fabric of Indonesia for almost three decades. I commend President Megawati and the people of Aceh for choosing the path of reconciliation over the path of violence. I applaud the determined efforts of the Henri Dunant Center which made this agreement possible.

The United States strongly supports the agreement's monitoring mechanisms, which will ensure that both sides follow through on their commitments. We welcome decisions by the Governments of Thailand and

the Philippines to deploy monitors in support of that mission. To reinforce the peace, the United States will work closely with Japan, Australia, and Indonesia's other partners in the coming months to provide humanitarian and reconstruction assistance for Aceh.

Today's agreement demonstrates that Indonesia's efforts to fight terror and maintain a united Indonesian nation are fully compatible with principled efforts to address legitimate political grievances. The agreement offers the hope of greater autonomy and respect for the people of Aceh. I call on all parties to the agreement to faithfully meet their commitments and build the better future that all peaceloving Indonesians expect and deserve.