

of democracy so people can live in peace and freedom.

As our Government's leader in relief and reconstruction, USAID and its predecessors have done this kind of work before. You have done big jobs in the past, such as the Marshall plan. And we're committed to not only solving this problem, but we're committed to the work that goes on year-round in nearly a hundred countries, countries that include Iraq and Afghanistan, where you're helping to build—to bring a better future to millions of people who have been newly liberated and to regions in the world like Darfur in the Sudan, where you're helping to reduce deaths and violence in that troubled region.

The efforts of USAID is essential for the foreign policy of the United States of America. Your efforts and the efforts of others, especially to create jobs, promote

markets, improve health, fight HIV/AIDS, and help democracy take root, are instrumental to making the world a better place and to protecting the American people.

From Sudan to Sumatra, the world has seen America at its best through the work you do. Sometimes you don't get thanked enough. I don't know how many times a President has been by to say thanks, but I'll tell you this: It's my distinct honor to come by and say thanks. I appreciate your compassion. I appreciate your love for your fellow human being, and thank you for the work you do.

May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:32 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; and Andrew S. Natsios, Administrator, U.S. Agency for International Development.

Remarks on the Nomination of Michael Chertoff To Be Secretary of Homeland Security

January 11, 2005

Good morning. I'm pleased to announce my nomination of Judge Michael Chertoff to be the Secretary of Homeland Security.

Mike is a talented and experienced public servant. In his stellar career, he has been a judge on the United States Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit; he's been an Assistant Attorney General of the United States; he's been the U.S. Attorney for New Jersey; a Federal prosecutor in New York City; and a law clerk to Supreme Court Justice William Brennan. He's been confirmed by the Senate three times.

In all of his roles, Mike has shown a deep commitment to the cause of justice and an unwavering determination to protect the American people. Mike has also been a key leader in the war on terror. On September the 11th, 2001, he was managing the Criminal Division of the Department

of Justice, an 800-person operation devoted to enforcing our Nation's criminal laws. In the days after September the 11th, Mike helped trace the terrorist attacks to the Al Qaida network. He understood immediately that the strategy on the war on terror is to prevent attacks before they occur. His energy and intellect put him at the center of many vital homeland security improvements, especially increased information sharing within the FBI and with State and local officials.

He's faced countless challenging decisions and has helped to protect his fellow Americans while protecting their civil liberties. I'm grateful that the judge has agreed to bring his exceptional judgment and integrity to an urgent new responsibility. I'm confident that he will be a

strong, effective leader for the Department of Homeland Security.

Two years ago, we created this new Department to ensure a comprehensive, unified effort to protect the American people against new dangers. Since that time, the employees of the Department have carried out the largest reorganization of the Government in a half a century. Under the direction of Secretary Tom Ridge, the Department of Homeland Security has improved airline security, enhanced the protection of our borders and ports of entry, and taken vital steps to safeguard the Nation's critical infrastructure. Tom Ridge has the gratitude of our entire Nation. I thank him for his leadership. I appreciate his hard work.

The Department of Homeland Security will also continue working to reduce the Nation's vulnerabilities to weapons of mass destruction and cyberterrorism. We are engaged in a daily mission to prepare effective responses to any future attack and to closely coordinate homeland security efforts with State and local officials. Our Nation is still at war. We're focused. We're taking decisive actions on the homefront that are critical to winning this war.

When Mike is confirmed by the Senate, the Department of Homeland Security will be led by a practical organizer, a skilled manager, and a brilliant thinker. As head of the Criminal Division and as a U.S. At-

torney in New Jersey, Mike built an impressive record of cutting through redtape and moving organizations into action. He's worked cooperatively with the Federal and State and local law enforcement officials. He will always be a friend to America's first-responders.

Mike is a strong and decent man. As an attorney, he has prosecuted organized crime and corporate fraud. He stood against racial profiling. He's worked with the NAACP Legal Defense Fund to represent poor inmates on death row. He's earned the respect of lawyers of many backgrounds and of politicians on both sides of the aisle. This is the third time I've asked Mike to serve our Nation, and I'm grateful he's agreed. I'm also grateful to Meryl, Mike's wife, and his family. I urge the Senate to promptly confirm this outstanding nominee as America's second Secretary of Homeland Security.

Congratulations, Mike.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:03 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Meryl Chertoff, wife of Secretary-designate Chertoff. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary-designate Chertoff. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks in a Discussion on Social Security Reform *January 11, 2005*

The President. Thank you all. Please be seated. Listen, thanks for coming today. As you can see, I am joined by some fellow citizens here on the stage who have come to talk about one of the great causes of our generation, and that is how to strengthen and save Social Security for generations to come.

I know this is an issue that some would rather not be talking about. It's an issue that is kind of—I think some think has got too much political danger attached to it, and so therefore let's just kind of, maybe, move it down to the next group of people coming to Washington, or maybe things will get better by ignoring it. That's