

So it is now my great honor to welcome the 2005 winners of the President's Environmental Youth Awards. The Acting Administrator will do the duties.

[At this point, Acting Administrator Stephen L. Johnson introduced the award recipients from each region, and the President congratulated them.]

The President. Listen, thank you all for coming. We're proud to have you here in the White House. I want to welcome and congratulate our students again. I really

want to welcome your parents too. You've done a good job. And I want to thank your teachers. Teaching is a noble profession. We hope you enjoy the White House as much as Laura and I do.

God bless you all. Welcome.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:27 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Deborah Johnson, wife of Acting Administrator Johnson, and their son, Matthew Johnson.

Statement on Senate Confirmation of John D. Negroponte as Director of National Intelligence *April 21, 2005*

I commend the Senate for moving quickly to confirm John Negroponte as the first Director of National Intelligence. I congratulate John on his confirmation, and I look forward to working closely with him. As the DNI, Ambassador Negroponte will lead a unified intelligence community as it reforms and adapts to the new challenges

of the 21st century. The United States continues to make progress in the global war on terror against the enemies of freedom who target innocent civilians and seek weapons of mass destruction. I appreciate John's willingness to once again serve his country and the many men and women who serve in the intelligence community.

Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Energy Legislation *April 21, 2005*

I commend the House for taking an important step to secure our energy future and to reduce our dependence on foreign sources of energy. The House energy legislation is largely consistent with the key objectives of my comprehensive national energy policy: increasing conservation and efficiency, expanding domestic production in environmentally responsible ways, diversifying our energy supply with more renew-

ables and clean fuels, and modernizing our energy infrastructure. For more than a decade, our Nation has not had a sensible, balanced, and comprehensive energy strategy. An energy bill will help us make better use of the energy supplies we have and will make our supply of energy more affordable and more secure for the future. I look forward to swift Senate action so that I can sign a bill into law by August.

Statement on Senate Passage of Appropriations Legislation for Afghanistan, Iraq, and the War on Terror

April 21, 2005

I applaud the Senate for its strong bipartisan support for our troops and our continued effort to win the war on terror. New democracies are taking root in Iraq and Afghanistan, and America is proud to stand with them. Both countries are assuming greater responsibility for their own security,

which will help our troops return home as quickly as possible with the honor they have earned. I urge the House and Senate to reach a final agreement that focuses taxpayer dollars on providing the tools our troops and diplomats need now, so that I can sign a bill into law as soon as possible.

Remarks on the Nomination of General Peter Pace To Be Chairman and Admiral Edmund P. Giambastiani, Jr., To Be Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff

April 22, 2005

The President. Good morning. As President, my most solemn duty is protecting the American people. In meeting this responsibility, one of the most important decisions I make is the appointment of the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Today I'm pleased to announce my decision to nominate General Peter Pace to take on this vital job.

When confirmed by the Senate, General Pete Pace will be the first marine in history to hold this vital position. He knows the job well. For the past 3½ years, he has served under our superb Secretary of Defense, Don Rumsfeld. He has been the Deputy to one of the most outstanding Chairmen our Nation has ever had, General Richard Myers.

As my most senior military adviser, General Myers has helped prepare military forces so they can meet the threats of this new century. This is a huge task, even in peacetime. Dick Myers did it while defending America from one of the most determined and vicious enemies we have ever faced. On General Myers's watch, we toppled two brutal dictatorships in Afghanistan and Iraq and liberated more than 50 mil-

lion people. By removing the Taliban and Saddam Hussein, we have made America safer and put a troubled region on the path to freedom and peace.

I want to thank General Dick Myers for his able service over four decades and his tireless dedication to duty and country. And I also thank his wife, Mary Jo. Dick Myers has had four jobs with four stars, but the distinction that he is proudest of is not a military one. Last year, the National Father's Day Council named him Father of the Year.

I'm confident that the great work that General Dick Myers set in motion at the Pentagon will continue under the leadership of General Pete Pace. The first thing America needs to know about Pete Pace is that he is a marine. To the American people, marine is shorthand for "can do." And I'm counting on Pete Pace to bring the Marine spirit to these new responsibilities.

General Pete Pace's life is the story of the American Dream. His father was an immigrant from Italy. Pete Pace was born in Brooklyn. He grew up in New Jersey, and he graduated from the U.S. Naval