

tears. Because of the sacrifices of our men and women in uniform, two terror regimes are gone forever, freedom is on the march, and America is more secure.

At our National Cemetery, we take comfort from knowing that the men and women who are serving freedom's cause understand their purpose and its price. Marine Captain Ryan Beaupre of St. Anne, Illinois, was killed in the first hours of the war. He wrote his mom and dad a letter that was to be opened only in the event he didn't come home. He wrote, "Realize that I died doing something that I truly love for a purpose greater than myself."

Army Sergeant Michael Evans of Marrero, Louisiana, felt the same way. He was killed on January 28th while on patrol in western Baghdad. In his own farewell letter to his family, the 22-year-old reminded those he left behind to stay strong. He said, "My death will mean nothing if you stop now. I know it will be hard, but I gave my life so you could live. Not just live but live free."

For some of our young heroes, courage and service was a family tradition. Lance Corporal Darrell Schumann of Hampton, Virginia, was a machine gunner for the Marines, but his parents were Air Force. He liked to say, "Air Force by birth, Marine by choice, and American by the grace of God." Corporal Schumann was among the first to enter the battle against insurgents in Fallujah, and he was proud of what he—what we are achieving. He later died in a helicopter crash. In his last letter from

Iraq, he wrote, "I do wish America could see how awesome a job we're doing."

These are the men and women who wear our uniform. These are the men and women who defend our freedom. And these are the men and women who are buried here. As we look across these acres, we begin to tally the cost of our freedom, and we count it a privilege to be citizens of the country served by so many brave men and women. And we must honor them by completing the mission for which they gave their lives, by defeating the terrorists, advancing the cause of liberty, and building a safer world.

A day will come when there will be no one left who knew the men and women buried here. Yet Americans will still come to visit, to pay tribute to the many who gave their lives for freedom, who liberated the oppressed, and who left the world a safer and better place. Today we pray that they have found peace with their Creator, and we resolve that their sacrifice will always be remembered by a grateful Nation.

May God continue to bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:27 a.m. in the Amphitheater at Arlington National Cemetery. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Defense Donald H. Rumsfeld; Secretary of Veterans Affairs R. James Nicholson; and Gen. Richard B. Myers, USAF, Chairman, Joint Chiefs of Staff. The Prayer for Peace, Memorial Day proclamation of May 20 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

The President's News Conference May 31, 2005

The President. Thank you. Please be seated. I hope you enjoyed your Memorial Day weekend.

My message to Congress when they come back is this, that our economy is

strong, but we need to work together to make sure that we continue to have a prosperous economy, so people can find jobs. I say it's strong because we've added over 3.5 million new jobs over the last 2 years,

and the unemployment rate is 5.2 percent. More Americans are working today than ever before. Homeownership is at an all-time high. Small businesses are flourishing. Families are taking home more of what they earn.

Obviously, these are hopeful signs. But Congress can make sure that the signs remain hopeful, and here are four good things they need to do.

First, they need to finish the work on an energy bill. We've gone more than a decade without an energy strategy. And as a result, we have grown more dependent on foreign sources of energy, and consumers see the consequences of that at the gas pump on a daily basis.

For the past 4 years, I've called on Congress to pass legislation that encourages energy conservation, that promotes domestic production in environmentally friendly ways, that helps diversify away from foreign oil, that modernizes the electricity grid, that's got a substantial amount of research and development money to help us transition from the hydrocarbon economy to a diversified source of energy economy.

The House passed a bill, and the Senate Energy Committee passed an energy bill this past week. I appreciate their good work. Now they need to get the bill off the floor, into conference, resolve their differences, and get me a bill before the August recess. That's what the American people expect, and that's what I expect.

Second, Congress needs to be wise about the taxpayers' dollars. I proposed a disciplined Federal budget that holds discretionary spending growth below the rate of inflation and reduces discretionary spending for nonsecurity programs. The House and the Senate have worked together to pass a responsible budget resolution that meets our priorities and keeps us on track to cut the deficit in half by 2009. The weeks ahead will bring important decisions on spending bills, and the weeks ahead will bring in efforts to rein in mandatory spending. We look forward to working with Con-

gress to do just that. Congress must keep its commitment to spending restraint if we want this economy to continue to grow.

Third, Congress needs to ratify the Central American and Dominican Republic Free Trade Agreement; that's called CAFTA. This agreement is a good deal for American workers and farmers and small businesses. See, about 80 percent of the products from Central America and the Dominican Republic now enter the United States duty-free, yet our exports to Central America and the Dominican Republic face hefty tariffs. CAFTA will level the playing field by making about 80 percent of American exports to those countries duty-free. I've always said I'm for free and fair trade. This makes our trade with the CAFTA countries fair, and that's important. After all, the CAFTA agreement will open a market of 44 million consumers to our producers, to our workers, the products that our workers make, to our farmers.

We'll lower barriers in key sectors like textiles, which will make American manufacturers more profitable and competitive in the global market. It will keep jobs here in America. And it will support young democracies. And that's going to be important. There's a geopolitical as well as economic concern for CAFTA. And Congress needs to pass this piece of legislation.

And finally, Congress needs to move forward with Social Security reform. I'm going to continue traveling our country talking about Social Security reform. I'll remind our seniors who are getting a check today that nothing will change, and yet I'm going to continue to remind the people that we've got a serious problem for younger workers. Part of Social Security reform, Congress should ensure that future generations receive benefits equal to or greater than the benefits today's seniors get. And Congress should help those who rely most on Social Security by increasing benefits faster for low-income workers than those workers who are better off.