

solution is a program called “interior repatriation” where we fly or bus these illegal immigrants all the way back to their hometowns in the interior of Mexico. By returning illegal Mexican immigrants to their homes, far away from desert crossings, we’re saving lives and making it more difficult for them to turn right around and cross back into America.

As we improve and expand our efforts to secure our borders, we must also recognize that enforcement cannot work unless it’s part of a comprehensive immigration reform that includes a temporary-worker program. If an employer has a job that no American is willing to take, we need to find a way to fill that demand by matching willing employers with willing workers from foreign countries on a temporary and legal basis. I’ll work with Members of Congress to create a program that will provide for our economy’s labor needs without harming American workers and without granting amnesty, and that will relieve pressure on our borders.

A critical part of any temporary-worker program is ensuring that our immigration laws are enforced at work sites. America is a country of laws. We must not allow dishonest employers to flout those laws. So we’ve doubled the resources for work site enforcement since 2004.

We have much more work ahead of us. But the Homeland Security bill I signed this week provides vital support for our efforts to deal with the problem of illegal immigration and make all Americans safer and more secure.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:20 p.m. on October 21 in Los Angeles, CA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 22. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 21 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks Following a Cabinet Meeting and an Exchange With Reporters *October 24, 2005*

The President. Thank the members of my Cabinet for being here. We’ve just had a discussion about a variety of subjects. These men and women are showing extraordinary leadership to the American people, and I want to thank you for your continued service.

Secretary Chertoff briefed me and briefed the Cabinet about Hurricane Wilma. I also discussed Wilma with FEMA Director Paulison as well as the Governor of Florida, the State of Florida, Jeb Bush.

I signed a major disaster declaration today. We have prepositioned food, medicine, communications equipment, urban search and rescue teams. We will work

closely with local and State authorities to respond to this hurricane.

I urge local citizens to listen to the local authorities about returning back to your homes. Those folks are on the ground. They know what they’re talking about, and it’s important that you pay attention to the messages coming out of people there to help you in Florida. We all ask for God’s blessings on those who are in harm’s way.

Secondly, we discussed responses to Katrina and Rita. We have a duty in the Federal Government to work with State and local authorities to help the citizens in Mississippi and Louisiana and Alabama and Texas. There’s more help to be done, and we need to do so in a fiscally sound

way. We can meet our obligations if we set priorities. We can meet our obligations if we in Washington show the courage to not fund programs that aren't working. I look forward to working with Congress to make sure that the taxpayers understand that we can balance compassion with fiscal sanity and fiscal responsibility.

So I want to thank—again, thank the members of the Cabinet. I'll be glad to answer a couple of questions.

Nedra [Nedra Pickler, Associated Press].

CIA Employee's Identity Disclosure Investigation

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You said several weeks ago that Special Counsel Peter Fitzgerald was handling the CIA leak investigation in a very dignified way. Yet some of your Republican supporters have recently suggested he may be an overzealous prosecutor or one obsessing over legal technicalities. Have you revised your thinking on this issue?

The President. Nedra, I also said—this may be the fourth time I've been asked about this, which I appreciate; you're doing your job—I'm not going to comment about it. This is a very serious investigation, and I haven't changed my mind about whether or not I'm going to comment on it publicly.

Fine-looking shades you got there.

Q. Thanks, Mr. President. Bono style. [Laughter]

The President. Wait a minute. You don't need to be endorsing any products here in the Cabinet—[laughter].

Associate Justice-Designate Harriet E. Miers

Q. Mr. President, as a newspaper reported on Saturday, is the White House working on a contingency plan for the withdrawal of Harriet Miers's nomination?

The President. Harriet Miers is an extraordinary woman. She was a legal pioneer

in Texas. She was ranked one of the top 50 women lawyers in the United States on a consistent basis. She is—look, I understand that people want to know more about her, and that's the way the process should work.

Recently, requests, however, have been made by Democrats and Republicans about paperwork and—out of this White House that would make it impossible for me and other Presidents to be able to make sound decisions. In other words, they've asked for paperwork about the decisionmaking process, what her recommendations were, and that would breach very important confidentiality. And it's a redline I'm not willing to cross. People can learn about Harriet Miers through hearings, but we are not going to destroy this business about people being able to walk into the Oval Office and say, "Mr. President, here's my advice to you. Here's what I think is important." And that's not only important for this President; it's important for future Presidents.

Harriet Miers is a fine person, and I expect her to have a good, fair hearing on Capitol Hill.

Thank you all for coming.

Nomination for Federal Reserve Board Chairman

Q. [Inaudible]—on a Federal Reserve Chairman, Mr. President?

The President. Be making an announcement soon.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:45 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. A reporter referred to Patrick J. Fitzgerald, U.S. Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, and Department of Justice CIA leak investigation Special Prosecutor; and musician and activist Bono. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks Announcing the Nomination of Ben S. Bernanke To Be Chairman of the Federal Reserve

October 24, 2005

The President. Good afternoon. One of a President's most important appointments is Chairman of the Federal Reserve. In our economy, the Fed is the independent body responsible for setting monetary policy, for overseeing the integrity of our banking system, for containing the risk that can arise in financial markets, and for ensuring a functioning payment system. Across the world, the Fed is the symbol of the integrity and the reliability of our financial system, and the decisions of the Fed affects the lives and livelihoods of all Americans.

To lead this institution, a Chairman must be a person of impeccable credentials, sound policy judgment, and character. Today I'm honored to announce that I'm nominating Ben Bernanke to be the next Chairman of the Federal Reserve.

Over the course of a career marked by great accomplishment, Ben has done path-breaking work in the field of monetary policy, taught advanced economics at some of our top universities, and served with distinction on the Fed's Board of Governors. He's earned a reputation for intellectual rigor and integrity. He commands deep respect in the global financial community, and he'll be an outstanding Chairman of the Federal Reserve.

Ben will replace a legend, Alan Greenspan, who will retire when his current term runs out at the end of January. For nearly two decades, Chairman Greenspan has shepherded our economy through its highs and its lows. Under a steady chairmanship, the United States economy has come through a stock market crash, financial crises from Mexico to Asia, two recessions, corporate scandals, and shocks ranging from devastating natural disasters to a terrorist attack in the heart of America's financial center.

Through all these challenges, Chairman Greenspan's prudent judgment and wise policies have kept inflation low. He's played a major role in America's strong economic growth. He has dominated his age like no central banker in history. He has contributed to a better life for all Americans, and I thank him for his service.

Ben Bernanke is the right man to build on the record Alan Greenspan has established. Ben graduated from Harvard with top honors, earned a doctorate in economics from Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He's built a record of excellence as both an academic and policymaker. He is the author of several scholarly books and is one of the most cited economists in the world. As Fed Governor, Ben advocated greater transparency in communication with the public and markets. His speeches were widely admired for their keen insight and clear, simple language.

Ben's career has also been distinguished by leadership. He was chairman of Princeton's economics department, founding director of Princeton's Bendheim Center for Finance, and a founding editor of the *International Journal of Central Banking*. Since June, he has served as Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers.

Ben is also a kind and decent man who is held in high regard by all those who've worked with him. He has the support of a strong and loving family. I'm pleased to see that Ben's wife, Anna, and his two children, Alyssa and Joel, are with us today.

I want to thank Ben for his willingness to serve in a position so important for world markets and so vital to the well being of the American people. I urge the Senate to act promptly to confirm Ben Bernanke as the 14th Chairman of the Federal Reserve.

Ben, thanks for serving.