

- Under the United States-Mexico Voluntary Repatriation Program, more than 35,000 persons, including 20,500 in 2005, were returned to their home in a secure, legal, and humanitarian way.
- To increase maritime security, the United States and Canada completed joint exercises on the St. Clair and Detroit Rivers in September and in February during Super Bowl XL. Officers, who were cross-designated on vessels of the other nation, could authorize pursuit of suspect vessels crossing jurisdictions.
- To advance preparedness to address a cyber incident affecting critical infrastructure, authorities from the United States and Canada completed a multinational exercise, Cyberstorm, in February 2006.
- To enhance aviation security, the United States, Canada, and Mexico completed training on principles to protect aircraft from terrorism threats, on marksmanship skills, and on emergency procedures.
- To enhance port security, Canada and the United States concluded port facility visits at Oakland, CA and Vancouver, BC in October 2005 to facilitate the development of benchmark security standards.
- To ensure food safety while facilitating trade, a Food Safety Coordinating Task

Force was formed and is developing a prioritized list of standards to compare for similarities, differences, and scientific bases for the differences. These efforts will facilitate the development of North American standards and, as appropriate, the removal of differences in standards.

- To enhance clarity and compatibility of energy regulation, Canadian, U.S. and Mexican regulators began regular meetings to exchange information on regulatory standards and energy market developments and to discuss bringing gas from Alaska to the North American market.
- To reduce marine air pollution, Canada and the United States have coordinated data collection, marine inventory development and air quality monitoring. The two countries are preparing to approach the International Maritime Organization to designate special areas for controlling sulfur emissions from marine vessels.
- Canada and the United States are developing Mutual Assistance Arrangements, which will enhance our preparedness for cross-border public health emergencies; Mexico has been invited to participate.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this joint statement.

## **Statement on the Earthquakes in Iran** *March 31, 2006*

On behalf of the American people, Laura and I express our sincere condolences for the loss of life and suffering caused by the series of earthquakes in the Iranian Province of Lorestan. Our thoughts and prayers

are with families and individuals who have lost loved ones. The United States stands ready to assist the people of Iran, and we hereby extend an offer of humanitarian assistance.

## The President's Radio Address *April 1, 2006*

Good morning. As tax day approaches later this month, many American families are now finishing their tax returns. And as you do, an important debate is taking place in Washington that will affect the amount you will pay in the years ahead.

I believe our economy grows when you're allowed to keep more of your hard-earned money and make your own decisions about how to save, spend, and invest. So, working with Congress, we've provided tax relief for all Americans who pay income taxes. We lowered tax rates to let workers keep more of their paychecks. We doubled the child tax credit and reduced the marriage penalty, and we put the death tax on the road to extinction. We also cut taxes on dividends and capital gains and expanded incentives for small businesses to invest so they could grow and create new jobs.

Since 2001, the tax relief we delivered has left \$880 billion in the hands of American workers and small businesses and families like yours, and you've used that money to help produce more than 4 years of uninterrupted economic growth. Last year, our economy grew at a healthy 3.5 percent, faster than any other major industrialized nation.

One politician in Washington said in 2003 that our tax cuts were "ruining our economy and costing us jobs." The truth is that since August 2003, America has added almost 5 million new jobs. Our unemployment rate is now 4.8 percent—lower than the average of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s. Real after-tax income is up 8 percent per person since the beginning of 2001. More Americans now own their own homes than at any time in our history, and minority homeownership is at record levels. Consumer confidence is at its highest level in nearly 4 years. Productivity has grown

strongly over the past 5 years, and our small-business sector is thriving.

The evidence is overwhelming; the opponents of tax cuts were wrong. Tax relief has helped to create jobs and opportunities for American families, and it's helped our economy grow. By maintaining our progrowth economic policies and practicing spending restraint in Washington, we can keep our economy growing and stay on track to meet our goal of cutting the budget deficit in half by 2009.

The problem is that the tax relief we passed is set to expire over the next few years. Some Democrats in Washington are insisting that we let that happen—or even repeal the tax cuts now. In either case, that would weaken our economy and would leave American families with a big tax hike that they do not expect and will not welcome. Because America needs more than a temporary economic expansion, we need more than temporary tax relief. To keep our economy growing, to keep our businesses investing, and to keep creating jobs, we need to ensure that you keep more of what you earn. So Congress needs to make the tax relief permanent.

Making tax relief permanent includes extending the tax cuts on dividends and capital gains. These tax cuts have been vital to our economic growth. By lowering the cost of capital, this tax relief has given businesses an incentive to invest and expand, and that has helped create jobs and opportunity. I urge the Congress to extend these progrowth tax cuts, so our businesses can plan with confidence and keep creating jobs for American workers.

The debate in Congress over taxes ultimately comes down to this: Who knows best how to use your money, politicians in Washington or you? I believe the money we spend in Washington is your money, not the Government's money. I trust you