

bounce in people's step. I detected the fact that I'm here in an exciting place for people to work. I appreciated when the plant manager and the CEO tells me that there—spends a lot of time educating people, adding added value so that people will be able to find those jobs that are necessary in the 21st century.

I'll tell you this, that if government and private sector doesn't continue to work together to make sure people have a skill set, the jobs will go somewhere else. And therefore, now is the time to educate our people. We live in a global economy, and, therefore, lawsuits matter. If you get sued all the time in America, it's going to make it harder for you to compete with people elsewhere. The amount of taxes you pay matters if you're going to be a competitive company and provide good jobs for people.

And the budget I've submitted to the United States Congress reflects all this. It says, we can balance the budget without raising your taxes. We're just going to have to be smart about how we spend your money. It also recognizes that the decisions made in the budget will affect how this company does business.

So you've got two things to pay attention to. One, will Micron remain competitive as a result of government policy. And two, will you have more money so you get to make the decisions? And my fundamental question to the American people is, who do you want making the decisions with your money? Do you want to make it yourself, or do you want the government making those decisions? The budget I've submitted says we can meet our priorities and let you make the decisions with the hard money—with the money you've earned through your hard work.

So I'm honored to be here. I appreciate you giving me a chance to come and express my views on an important subject. And I ask for God's blessings on you all. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:23 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Steven R. Appleton, chairman of the board and chief executive officer and president, Patrick T. Otte, site director, and Stephen Silberstein, plant manager, Micron Technology, Inc.; and Mayor Douglas S. Waldron of Manassas, VA.

Statement on the Creation of the Department of Defense Unified Combatant Command for Africa

February 6, 2007

Today I am pleased to announce my decision to create a Department of Defense Unified Combatant Command for Africa. I have directed the Secretary of Defense to stand up U.S. Africa Command by the end of fiscal year 2008.

This new command will strengthen our security cooperation with Africa and create new opportunities to bolster the capabilities of our partners in Africa. Africa Command will enhance our efforts to bring peace and security to the people of Africa and promote our common goals of development,

health, education, democracy, and economic growth in Africa.

We will be consulting with African leaders to seek their thoughts on how Africa Command can respond to security challenges and opportunities in Africa. We will also work closely with our African partners to determine an appropriate location for the new command in Africa.

NOTE: The statement referred to Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates.

Homeland Security Presidential Directive/HSPD-18—Medical Countermeasures Against Weapons of Mass Destruction January 31, 2007

Subject: Medical Countermeasures against Weapons of Mass Destruction

BACKGROUND

(1) Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)—chemical, biological, radiological, and nuclear agents (CBRN)—in the possession of hostile states or terrorists represent one of the greatest security challenges facing the United States. An attack utilizing WMD potentially could cause mass casualties, compromise critical infrastructure, adversely affect our economy, and inflict social and psychological damage that could negatively affect the American way of life.

(2) Our *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* (December 2002) and *Biodefense for the 21st Century* (April 2004) identify response and recovery as key components of our Nation's ability to manage the consequences of a WMD attack. Our primary goal is to prevent such an attack, but we must be fully prepared to respond to and recover from an attack if one occurs. Accordingly, we have made significant investments in our WMD consequence management capabilities in order to mitigate impacts to the public's health, the economy, and our critical infrastructure. The development and acquisition of effective medical countermeasures to mitigate illness, suffering, and death resulting from CBRN agents is central to our consequence management efforts.

(3) It is not presently feasible to develop and stockpile medical countermeasures against every possible threat. The development of vaccines and drugs to prevent or mitigate adverse health effects caused by exposure to biological agents, chemicals, or radiation is a time-consuming and costly process. This directive builds upon the vision and objectives articulated in our *National Strategy to Combat Weapons of Mass Destruction* and *Biodefense for the 21st Century* to ensure that our Nation's medical countermeasure research, development, and acquisition efforts:

(a) Target threats that have potential for catastrophic impact on our public health and are subject to medical mitigation;

(b) Yield a rapidly deployable and flexible capability to address both existing and evolving threats;

(c) Are part of an integrated WMD consequence management approach informed by current risk assessments of threats, vulnerabilities, and capabilities; and

(d) Include the development of effective, feasible, and pragmatic concepts of operation for responding to and recovering from an attack.

(4) In order to address the challenges presented by the diverse CBRN threat spectrum, optimize the investments necessary for medical countermeasures development, and ensure that our activities significantly enhance our domestic and international response and recovery capabilities, our decisions as to the research, development, and acquisition of medical countermeasures will be guided by three overarching principles:

(a) Our preparations will focus on countering current and anticipated threat agents that have the greatest potential for use by state and non-state actors to cause catastrophic public health consequences to the American people.

(b) We will invest in medical countermeasures and public health interventions that have the greatest potential to prevent, treat, and mitigate the consequences of WMD threats.