

lead discussions aimed at concluding an agreement soon.

NOTE: The statement referred to Prime Minister Ehud Olmert of Israel.

Remarks on the Nomination of Congressman James A. Nussle To Be Director of the Office of Management and Budget

June 19, 2007

The President. Good afternoon. Welcome to the White House. I am here to say goodbye to a good friend and introduce the newest nominee to my Cabinet. Recently Rob Portman came and told me that after 14 years of public service in Washington, he's ready to head home to be with Jane and the family. I've known him for many years. There's no finer man in public service than Rob Portman. He's been a trusted adviser, and Laura and I am going to miss him.

Fortunately, we found a good man to succeed him. Today I'm pleased to announce my nomination of Jim Nussle to serve as Director of the Office of Management and Budget.

I'm proud to welcome Jim's wife Karen, his mom and dad, Lori and Mark, and his mother-in-law Eva Mae. Any man who invites his mother-in-law to a—[laughter]—has got to have good judgment. [Laughter] We're going to ask a lot of Jim, and I thank you all for supporting him in this.

The job of OMB Director is one of the most important in our Federal Government. The Director has a central responsibility for implementing the full range of my administration's agenda, from defense programs that will keep the American people safe to energy initiatives that will break our dependence on foreign oil to tax policies that keep our economy growing and creating jobs.

In all these areas, the OMB Director works to ensure that the American people get good value for every tax dollar they send to Washington. Jim Nussle is the right man to take on these challenges. For 16

years, Jim represented the people of northeast Iowa in the United States Congress. As a Member of Congress, Jim was a strong advocate for fiscal discipline and a champion of tax cuts that allowed the American people to keep more of what they earn. In 2001, Jim became chairman of the House Budget Committee. As a leader in Congress, Jim showed he can work with Members of both sides of the aisle to get positive things done for America. Jim's name and knowledge command respect on Capitol Hill. And as OMB Director, he will use his expertise about the budget process to ensure that the taxpayers' money is spent with respect and with restraint.

In his new post, Jim will continue the important work carried out by Rob Portman. Over the past 2 years, Rob has served my administration in two important jobs. As the United States Trade Representative, Rob negotiated several new trade agreements and reenergized the Doha talks at the World Trade Organization.

And as OMB Director, he helped me achieve our goal of cutting the Federal deficit in half and doing it 3 years ahead of schedule. He's helped me put forward a plan to balance the budget by 2012 by restraining Federal spending and keeping our taxes low. He's put Democratic leaders in Congress on notice that I will veto bills with excessive levels of spending. He has led my administration's efforts to curb the use of congressional earmarks and implement reforms that will make the earmark process more transparent.

I thank Rob for his service and good advice and, most of all, his friendship. I want to tell his wife Jane, that after 14 years of commuting to Washington, he's going to be back home in Ohio, especially on the weekends.

Rob is a tough act to follow, but that's why I picked Jim Nussle. He's a man of integrity, a man of vision, a man well qualified to hold this job. I ask the Senate to act quickly on his nomination. When confirmed, he'll make an outstanding OMB Director.

Congratulations to you.

[At this point, Director-designate Nussle made brief remarks]

The President. Good job. Well done.

[Office of Management and Budget Director Robert J. Portman made brief remarks]

The President. Good job. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:49 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Director-designate Nussle and Director Portman.

Statement on the Deaths of Firefighters in Charleston, South Carolina June 19, 2007

Laura and I mourn the devastating loss of some of America's bravest. Our prayers are with the families and friends of nine firefighters from Charleston, South Carolina, who selflessly gave their own lives to protect their community. These firefighters

were true heroes who demonstrated great skill and courage. Their unwavering commitment to their neighbors and to the city of Charleston is an inspiration to all Americans.

Remarks at the Congressional Picnic June 19, 2007

The President. Thank you all for coming. Laura and I welcome you to the South Lawn. This is an opportunity to thank the Members of Congress and their families for serving the United States.

First, I want to recognize the Speaker. Madam Speaker, thank you for joining us. It means a lot that you've come. I appreciate the leadership of the House and the Senate who've joined us. For all the wives and husbands, thank you for standing by your spouse. It's not easy to be in public office. It's a lot easier, though, when you have somebody who loves you to help you do your job. And so Laura and I want to thank you all, in particular. We're proud

to be serving with you. Occasionally, we might have our differences, but one thing we all agree on is, we represent the greatest country on the face of the Earth.

I want to thank our chef, Paul Prudhomme, from New Orleans, Louisiana—one of the great chefs in America. Thanks for coming, Paul. I thank Tony Snow and his bunch of, well, mediocre musicians—[laughter]—no, great musicians. Beats Workin', thanks for coming. Kermit, come up here. Kermit, we're proud to have you.

Kermit Ruffins. Well, thanks for having us.