

be \$150 billion or more sent out to American consumers and incentives inherent in that to—for American businesses to invest.

Now, the Secretary briefed us—Secretary Paulson—that we anticipate that the checks will start being sent in the second week of May. And that's going to be very positive news for our consumers. And it's a part of our active plan to help deal with these uncertain times.

One way Congress, if they really want to make a substantial difference in creating certainty during uncertain times, is to make the tax cuts we passed permanent. You see, if you're somebody worried about three-dollar gasoline and you think your taxes may be going up in 2 years, then it—the uncertain price of gasoline creates more uncertainty for you as you plan your future. And Congress needs to make these tax cuts permanent, and they need to think about the American consumer and the American family and the American small-business owner during these times of difficulty and make the tax cuts permanent, send a clear signal to the American people.

Secondly, obviously, the housing issue is one that we're deeply concerned about. We want people being able to stay in their homes. We don't support legislation that

will reward lenders—you know, that will bail out lenders—and we don't support legislation that will cause interest rates to go up, like the legislation in the Senate. What we do support is an aggressive plan, led by Secretary Paulson and Secretary Jackson, to help people stay in their homes, to help them refinance their mortgages, to help them make the financial adjustments necessary to help us through this difficult period of time.

And so I want to thank you all for your briefing. I appreciate your concern about our fellow citizens. We share concerns about it. We want them doing well. And we believe that in the long term, we're going to do just fine. This is a resilient economy. We've got good, hard-working people in America. The entrepreneurial spirit is strong. And we'll make it through this period, just like we've made it through other periods of uncertainty during my Presidency. And each time, we came out stronger and better, and that's what's going to happen this time too.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:41 a.m. at the Department of Labor.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Denmark-United States Social Security Agreement *February 28, 2008*

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act, as amended by the Social Security Amendments of 1977 (Public Law 95-216, 42 U.S.C. 433(e)(1)), I transmit herewith the Agreement Between the United States of America and the Kingdom of Denmark on Social Security, which consists of two separate instruments: a principal agreement and an administrative ar-

angement. The agreement was signed at Copenhagen on June 13, 2007.

The United States-Denmark Agreement is similar in objective to the social security agreements already in force with Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom.

Such bilateral agreements provide for limited coordination between the United States and foreign social security systems to eliminate dual social security coverage and taxation, and to help prevent the loss of benefit protection that can occur when workers divide their careers between two countries. The United States-Denmark Agreement contains all provisions mandated by section 233 and other provisions that I deem appropriate to carry out the purposes of section 233, pursuant to section 233(c)(4).

I also transmit for the information of the Congress a report prepared by the Social Security Administration explaining the key points of the Agreement, along with a para-

graph-by-paragraph explanation of the provisions of the principal agreement and the related administrative arrangement. Attached to this report is the report required by section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act, which describes the effect of the Agreement on income and expenditures of the U.S. Social Security program and the number of individuals affected by the Agreement.

I commend to the Congress the United States-Denmark Social Security Agreement and related documents.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
February 28, 2008.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Secretary General Jakob Gijsbert “Jaap” de Hoop Scheffer of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization February 29, 2008

President Bush. It's my honor to welcome the Secretary General of NATO back to the Oval Office. Last time I was with the Secretary General, I was trying to keep up with him on my mountain bike. He is a dear friend and a strong leader.

I appreciate, Jaap, your helping to transform NATO so it deals with the threats of the 21st century. You've done your job with great dignity and clarity of thought. And I'm looking forward to coming to Bucharest to support your efforts to make sure NATO is a relevant organization aimed at bringing security and peace to the world.

We've had a lot of things to discuss. A couple of key points: one, Afghanistan, the United States is committed to the NATO mission in Afghanistan. We're committed to a comprehensive strategy that helps folks in Afghanistan realize security, at the same time, economic prosperity and political progress.

Secondly, our hope is that nations that have applied to join NATO continue to

meet their MAP obligations. And I'm looking forward to getting an assessment of the progress that these three nations have made, from you, before we take the vote on enlargement.

I appreciate very much NATO's role in helping to provide some sense of stability in the Balkans. Thank you for doing a training mission in Iraq. Overall, thanks for being a force for good. And I'm proud to welcome you back here.

Secretary General de Hoop Scheffer. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you. Thank you, George.

Four working weeks until the Bucharest summit of NATO, I can echo the President's words. First of all, NATO's operations and missions, we have a long-term commitment vis-a-vis Afghanistan. I thank the President for the United States contribution in the NATO framework, which is an essential one. All 26 NATO allies are there, and we are there for the long haul. We are there to support President Karzai