

That was my message to Congress on Tuesday. And now, I hope you'll send a message in favor of tax relief to your Congressman or your Senator. After all, the surplus is your money.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 1:05 p.m. on March 2 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 3. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 2 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

### **Statement on the National Guard Aircraft Tragedy in Georgia**

*March 3, 2001*

I was deeply saddened to learn of the loss of 21 members of the Florida and Virginia National Guard aboard a C-23 transport plane that crashed this morning outside Macon, Georgia. This tragic loss on a routine training mission reminds us of the sacrifices made each and every day by all of our men and women in uniform. The price of freedom is never free. Today's events remind us that it is sometimes unspeakably high. On behalf of the entire Bush family, I extend our deepest condolences to the families of the victims and to all members of the 171st Aviation Battalion of the Florida Army National Guard and the 203d Red Horse Flight of the Virginia Air National Guard. Our thoughts and prayers are with you all during this very difficult time.

### **Remarks on Arrival in Hampton, Virginia**

*March 4, 2001*

Well, thank you all very much. And thank you for your service to this great land of ours. Laura and I are thrilled to be here. I'm traveling today with members of my Cabinet: the Secretary of State, Colin Powell, and Alma—she is the true general in that family—[*laughter*]*—*the Secretary of Defense, Secretary Rumsfeld, and his bride; the Secretary of Energy, Secretary Abraham, and his bride.

We've assembled the finest national security team of any administration. We under-

stand our job is to keep the peace. But we also understand in order to do so, our military must be well prepared, well trained, well housed, and well paid.

One of the first policy speeches I gave was to send the message, loud and clear, to the U.S. Congress that we expect there to be a pay raise for those who wear the uniform. But what you can expect from us is a clear mission, a clear, focused mission that says our military will be trained and ready to fight and win war and, therefore, prevent war from happening in the first place.

We're honored to be here. Thank you for your service to America. Our country and the world is better off for it.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1 p.m. at Langley Air Force Base. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary Powell's wife, Alma; Secretary Rumsfeld's wife, Joyce; and Secretary Abraham's wife, Jane. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **Remarks at the Christening Ceremony for the U.S.S. Ronald Reagan in Newport News, Virginia**

*March 4, 2001*

Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. Mr. Secretary, thank you for those kind words. I picked the right man to be the Secretary of Defense at this time in history.

Mrs. Reagan, it is an honor to be with you. Reagan family members, friends of the great President, Laura and I are honored to be here.

We join with the Governor and Senator of this State in asking for God's blessings on those who lost their lives yesterday and for their families.

Bill, thank you very much for your hospitality. Secretary Powell and Secretary Abraham, Leader Lott, Chairman Warner—I can't tell if you're trying to retire me early—[*laughter*]*—*or influence my behavior.

Senator Allen, Governor Gilmore, Representative Scott, and Members of Congress, Justice Kennedy, Admiral Clark, welcome. But most of all, I want to welcome the men