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George W. Bush

The White House,
December 5, 2001.

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NOTE: This Executive order was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 6, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on December 10.

Remarks Announcing the Appointment of Andrew von Eschenbach as the Director of the National Cancer Institute

December 6, 2001

Thank you all very much, and welcome to the White House. Today our Nation is at a war to defend our way of life. But we've been engaged in a war to defend our quality of life for many decades. The war on cancer has been a top priority of medical and research communities, and it's a top priority of this administration.

As we stand on the brink of amazing breakthroughs in cancer research, breakthroughs that will lead to new cancer therapies and hopefully to cancer cures, I'm pleased to introduce the man who will lead the National Cancer Institute in its war on cancer, Dr. Andrew von Eschenbach.

I want to welcome Andy's family. Thank you all for coming. I want to thank my friend Tommy Thompson for doing such a fine job as the Secretary of Health and Human Services. Another member of my Cabinet is here, the Director of Homeland Security, Governor Tom Ridge. Thank you for coming, Tom. And I've got to recognize my parents' old Congressman, Bill Archer from Houston. Thank you for coming, Bill. Tell them hello back home.

Thirty years ago, this month, President Richard Nixon signed into law legislation authorizing the Director of the National Cancer Institute to develop an expanded, intensified, and coordinated cancer research program. The Cancer Progress Report of 2001 was released earlier this week, and it contains good news. We've made substantial progress in the war on cancer over the past three decades. Advances in science to prevent, detect, and treat cancer have directly contributed to an overall reduction in both new cancer cases and cancer death rates.

The National Cancer Institute has provided the funding and the expertise to make money of these advances possible—many of these advances possible. The NCI has funded billions of dollars in research, exploring hundreds of methods to combat cancer. We know that early detection often makes the difference between life and death. So NCI-funded scientists are exploring effective methods to detect the first signs of cancer. We know that more focused cancer treatments can make cancer therapy less painful. So NCI-funded scientists are actively investigating drugs that may stop tumor growth by preventing new blood vessels from reaching the tumor.

We still have a long way to go. Despite our victories, each day 3,400 Americans are diagnosed with some form of cancer, and more than 1,500 die from the disease. Almost every American family has been touched by cancer. But each new discovery brings hope. And the Government can bolster that hope by funding vital medical research and by attracting talented people to conduct the research.

Andy von Eschenbach is one of America's finest medical researchers. He got his start in the medical field right here in Washington, DC, where he attended Georgetown University Medical School. He's been a member of the faculty at the University of Texas, M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston, Texas, since 1977.

Andy is the director of M.D. Anderson's prostate cancer research program. He is a professor of urology, a consulting professor of cancer biology, and a surgeon. He understands that basic research is the foundation to any success in eliminating cancer and that research breakthroughs must be translated into effective treatments for patients.

Andy also understands personally the importance of our war on cancer. He is a two-time cancer survivor, all too familiar with cancer's frightening effects. He will bring to

his new position not only expertise and talent and dedication but compassion for the millions of cancer patients and their families who are struggling with this disease.

Several principles will guide the National Cancer Institute. The Institute will fund and conduct aggressive basic research in order to understand the fundamental nature of cancer. NCI researchers and clinicians will collaborate with other Federal health agencies to translate advances in research into new tools to fight cancer. NCI will work cooperatively with other Government agencies and with private organizations to expand research opportunities. Researchers and practitioners will not only strive to eliminate and cure cancer but to help cancer survivors lead richer and fuller lives. And the Institute will conduct research to help close the prevention and treatment gap for minorities, who are disproportionately affected by cancer.

Our war against cancer is a war waged on behalf of all Americans of every background. We now have technologies and research opportunities unthinkable just years ago, which make the defeat of cancer a realistic hope. With the right leadership, the dreams of three decades of research, and the hopes of every person and every family struggling with cancer, we may reach our goal within the new decade. And we've chosen a great man to lead the cause.

Welcome.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:48 p.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Dr. von Eschenbach.

Remarks on Lighting the National Christmas Tree

December 6, 2001

Be seated, please—except for you all. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank you very much and welcome you all to this year's Christmas Pageant of Peace. During this time of conflict and challenge, we once again celebrate the season of hope and the season of joy. We give thanks to our Nation and to our families and to our friends.

The First Lady and I are so honored to be here. I want to thank Peter Nostrand and the committee for putting this together, and I particularly want to thank the entertainment committee—the person in charge of getting these fantastic entertainers to come tonight. Thank you from the bottom of our hearts.

I want to thank all the employees and sponsors who put on this magnificent event. I want to thank Fran Mainella, the Director of the National Park Service, and all the Park Service employees who have worked hard to put this event on.

I want to thank Santa Claus for being here tonight. [*Laughter*] I've been looking for you, Santa. [*Laughter*]

In a moment, we will light the National Christmas Tree, a tradition Americans have been celebrating since 1923. The history of this event has included some memorable moments, including 60 years ago, less than 3 weeks after the attack on Pearl Harbor, when Prime Minister Winston Churchill made an appearance with President Franklin Roosevelt to light the tree.

Now once again, we celebrate Christmas in a time of testing, with American troops far from home. This season finds our country with losses to mourn and great tasks to complete. In all those tasks, it is worth recalling the words from a beautiful Christmas hymn. In the third verse of "Oh Holy Night" we sing, "His law is love, and His gospel is peace. Chains ye shall break, for the slave is our brother. And in His name all oppression shall cease."

America seeks peace and believes in justice. We fight only when necessary. We fight so that oppression may cease, and even in the midst of war, we pray for peace on Earth and good will to men.

This is a time of the year for families and friends to gather together, not simply to celebrate the season but to renew the bonds of love and affection that give fulfillment to our lives. And this is a year we will not forget those who lost loved ones in the attacks on September the 11th and on the battlefield. They will remain in our prayers.

It is now my honor to invite Leon Patterson and Faith Elseth and Laura to join me up here as we light the National Christmas