

11th had a significant impact on our economy. And then we discovered some of our corporate CEOs forgot to tell the truth, and that affected confidence. And then, as you may remember, Tom, we had the steady drumbeat to war. As I mentioned in my press conference the other day, on our TV screens there was a—on some TV screens—there was a constant reminder for the American people, “March to War.” War is not a very pleasant subject in people’s minds. It’s not conducive for the investment of capital.

In spite of all those obstacles and because this administration has acted firmly, our economy is growing. And we’re confident that over time, people will be able to find a job. But we’re not going to rest, and there’s more to do. We need an energy policy. We need tort reform. We need Congress to join with the administration to promote progrowth policies. But this economy is vibrant and strong, just like our country is vibrant and strong. We’ve overcome a lot, but there’s more to do. And there’s no question there’s more to do. And we will do it.

Patsy.

North Korea

Q. Thank you, sir. Does your offer still stand for assistance to North Korea if they give up their nuclear program? And how can you deal with someone like Kim Chong-il, a man you don’t trust?

The President. Yes. Thank you for bringing that question up, because we had some—what we think as positive developments. As you know, we were very concerned about trying to enter into a bilateral agreement with Kim Chong-il because of the fact that he didn’t tell the truth to previous administrations. And so we took a new tack, and that was to work with our—with China, primarily China, initially, to engage China in the process so that there is more than one voice speaking to Mr. Kim Chong-il.

And thanks to the Chinese leadership—and we do applaud Hu Jintao and his administration for agreeing to be a responsible party in the neighborhood in which they live—it looks like we’ll have a multinational forum. What that really means is that more than the United States and China will show up to have a meaningful discussion with Mr.

Kim Chong-il. That means Japan will be there. After all, Japan is an important part of the neighborhood. South Korea will be there. They’ve had a vested interest in having discussions and dialogs with Kim Chong-il. And Russia has agreed to join, which means there are now five nations in North Korea sitting at a table, all aimed at convincing—the discussions will be all aimed at convincing Mr. Kim Chong-il to change his attitude about nuclear weaponry.

In the past, it was the lone voice of the United States speaking clearly about this. Now we’ll have other parties who have got a vested interest in peace on the Korean Peninsula. And so I would say the progress is being—is good progress. And we’re upbeat about the fact that others are assuming responsibility for peace besides the United States of America. And we’ll see how the dialog goes. We fully understand the past. We are hopeful, however, that Mr. Kim Chong-il, because he’s hearing other voices, will make the decision to totally dismantle his nuclear weapons program, that he will allow there to be complete transparency and verifiability. And we’re optimistic that that can happen.

Listen, thank you all for coming. For those of you in Crawford, I will see you—going to Crawford, I will see you soon. As you can tell, I got my summer buzz. [*Laughter*] I’m ready to get down there and enjoy the weather.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:20 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea; and President Hu Jintao of China.

Statement on the Senate Filibuster of Judicial Nominees

August 1, 2003

This week, a minority of Senators continued to filibuster highly qualified judicial nominees who enjoy the support of a majority of Senators. These obstructionist tactics are unprecedented, unfair, and unfaithful to the Senate’s constitutional responsibility to vote on judicial nominees.

These highly qualified nominees have stellar records that represent the mainstream of

American law and values and strong bipartisan support from those who know them best. Instead of allowing an up-or-down vote, a minority of Senators have been filibustering Miguel Estrada for nearly 5 months and Priscilla Owen for 3 months and are now obstructing the nomination of Bill Pryor. The failure to hold votes on these nominations not only is inconsistent with the Senate's constitutional responsibility but also has caused extended judicial vacancies that are harmful to the American judicial system.

Every judicial nominee should receive an up-or-down vote in the full Senate, no matter who is President or which party controls the Senate. It is time to move past the partisan politics of the past and do what is right for the American legal system and the American people. Let each Senator vote how he or she thinks best, but give the nominees a vote.

NOTE: The statement referred to Miguel A. Estrada, nominee to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit; Priscilla Owen, nominee to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit; and William H. Pryor, Jr., nominee to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Eleventh Circuit.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

July 26

In the morning, at Camp David, MD, the President had an intelligence briefing.

July 27

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC. Later, he hosted a White House tee-ball game on the South Lawn and made welcoming remarks to the participants.

Also in the afternoon, the President had a telephone conversation with American cyclist Lance Armstrong to congratulate him on winning his fifth Tour de France earlier in the day.

July 28

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing. Later, he had a telephone conversation with Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan to discuss the situations in Iraq and North Korea and economic development in Japan.

Later in the morning, the President traveled to Pittsburgh, PA.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Washington, DC.

July 29

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

In the afternoon, in the Old Family Dining Room, the President had lunch with Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel. Later, he met with Foreign Minister Saud al-Faysal al Saud and Ambassador to the U.S. Prince Bandar of Saudi Arabia to discuss the recent congressional report on the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks.

Later in the afternoon, the President met with a bipartisan group of Senators to discuss proposed energy legislation.

The President announced his intention to appoint Duane Acklie as a member of the Board of Directors of the Student Loan Marketing Association and, upon appointment, to designate him as chairman.

The President declared a major disaster in Florida and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding on June 13 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Tennessee and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, high winds, and heavy rain on July 21-22.

July 30

In the morning, the President had an intelligence briefing.

During the day, the President had a telephone conversation with President Hu Jintao of China to discuss the situation in North Korea.

The President announced his intention to reappoint William K. Sessions III as a vice chair of the U.S. Sentencing Commission.