

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

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STATE OF THE UNION EXCERPTS

As Prepared for Delivery

The American people expect their elected leaders from both parties to work together on the important issues facing the Nation. Tonight the President will lay out an ambitious agenda, driven by bold and innovative concepts. He will discuss the importance of forging common ground with the new Congress and explain that to keep America safe, we must prevail in the war on terror.

"Some in this Chamber are new to the House and Senate - and I congratulate the Democratic majority. Congress has changed, but our responsibilities have not...We are not the first to come here with government divided and uncertainty in the air. Like many before us, we can work through our differences, and achieve big things for the American people."

"Our citizens don't much care which side of the aisle we sit on - as long as we are willing to cross that aisle when there is work to be done. Our job is to make life better for our fellow Americans, and help them to build a future of hope and opportunity - and this is the business before us tonight."

On our growing economy:

"A future of hope and opportunity begins with a growing economy - and that is what we have...Unemployment is low, inflation is low, and wages are rising. This economy is on the move - and our job is to keep it that way, not with more government but with more enterprise."

On the importance of strengthening and re-authorizing No Child Left Behind this year:

"Five years ago, we rose above partisan differences to pass the No Child Left Behind Act...And because we acted, students

are performing better in reading and math, and minority students are closing the achievement gap."

"Now the task is to build on this success, without watering down standards ... without taking control from local communities ... and without backsliding and calling it reform...And we can make sure our children are prepared for the jobs of the future, and our country is more competitive, by strengthening math and science skills."

On the President's new health care initiatives:

"[I]n all we do, we must remember that the best healthcare decisions are made not by government and insurance companies, but by patients and their doctors."

On comprehensive immigration reform:

"Extending hope and opportunity in our country requires an immigration system worthy of America - with laws that are fair and borders that are secure. When laws and borders are routinely violated, this harms the interests of our country... Yet...we cannot fully secure the border unless we take pressure off the border - and that requires a temporary worker program."

On strengthening America's energy security:

"Extending hope and opportunity depends on a stable supply of energy that keeps America's economy running and America's environment clean. For too long our Nation has been dependent on foreign oil. And this dependence leaves us more vulnerable to hostile regimes, and to terrorists - who could cause huge disruptions of oil shipments ... raise the price of oil ... and do great harm to our economy. It is in our vital interest to diversify America's energy supply - and the way forward is through technology."

On the war on terror:

"For all of us in this room, there is no higher responsibility than to protect the people of this country from danger...[T]o win the war on terror we must take the fight to the enemy. >From the start, America and our allies have protected our people by staying on the offense. The enemy knows that the days of comfortable sanctuary, easy movement, steady financing, and free flowing communications

are long over. For the terrorists, life since Nine-Eleven has never been the same."

"[O]ur military commanders and I have carefully weighed the options. We discussed every possible approach. In the end, I chose this course of action because it provides the best chance of success. Many in this chamber understand that America must not fail in Iraq - because you understand that the consequences of failure would be grievous and far reaching."

"The war on terror we fight today is a generational struggle that will continue long after you and I have turned our duties over to others. That is why it is important to work together so our Nation can see this great effort through."

"Both parties and both branches should work in close consultation. And this is why I propose to establish a special advisory council on the war on terror, made up of leaders in Congress from both political parties. We will share ideas for how to position America to meet every challenge that confronts us. And we will show our enemies abroad that we are united in the goal of victory."

On American foreign policy:

"American foreign policy is more than a matter of war and diplomacy. Our work in the world is also based on a timeless truth: To whom much is given, much is required. We hear the call to take on the challenges of hunger, poverty, and disease - and that is precisely what America is doing. We must continue to fight HIV/AIDS, especially on the continent of Africa."

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