

This bill was passed because Members of Congress looked at sound science, did the best they could to get all the politics out of the way for good legislation. Members from both parties came together, people from different regions of the country. A broad range of people who care about our forests were listened to, whether they be conservationists, or resource managers, people from the South, people from the West, people from New York. You see, we all share duties of stewardship. And today we shared in an important accomplishment.

For the good of our forests and for the good of our people, I'm honored to sign this important piece of legislation. I'm honored to be here to sign the Healthy Forest Restoration Act of 2003.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:40 a.m. at the U.S. Department of Agriculture. In his remarks, he referred to Under Secretary of Agriculture for Natural Resources and Environment Mark Rey. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. H.R. 1904, approved December 3, was assigned Public Law No. 108-148.

### **Statement on Signing the 21st Century Nanotechnology Research and Development Act**

*December 3, 2003*

Today, I have signed S. 189, the "21st Century Nanotechnology Research and Development Act." The Act authorizes appropriations for research in nanoscience, nanoengineering, and nanotechnology research and other related activities.

Several provisions of the Act, including sections 2(d)(2), 3(c)(1), 4(d), and 5(d), purport to call for executive branch officials to submit to the Congress proposals for legislation, including funding legislation. The executive branch shall implement these provisions in a manner consistent with the President's constitutional authority to supervise the unitary executive branch and to recommend for the consideration of the Congress such measures as the President judges necessary and expedient.

The executive branch shall construe section 2(b)(4)(E) of the Act in a manner con-

sistent with the Government's obligation under the Due Process Clause of the Fifth Amendment to the Constitution to ensure equal protection of the laws.

**George W. Bush**

The White House,  
December 3, 2003.

NOTE: S. 189, approved December 3, was assigned Public Law No. 108-153. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

### **Remarks Prior to Discussions With King Abdullah II of Jordan and an Exchange With Reporters**

*December 4, 2003*

**President Bush.** We're going to have some opening statements, and then I'll take a couple of questions—two questions. The Jordanian press may want to ask a question.

First, Your Majesty, thanks for coming. It's great to have you back. I view His Majesty as one of our really close friends in the world. You know, I went to London recently and gave a speech about reform and reform in the Middle East and the possibilities of governments that adhere to rule of law and transparency and women's rights and economic freedom. And Your Majesty, you're doing just that. I'm proud of your leadership. It's—you're a modern leader with a big heart and a vision for what is best for your people.

I also want to thank you for your very strong support in our mutual desire to bring peace to the Middle East. We made a tough decision when it came to Iraq, and Your Majesty, you stood with us. And we made the right decision when it came to Iraq, because Iraq will be free and will be peaceful. And that's in your interests, and it's in our interests, and it's in the world's interests that we succeed.

I look forward to discussing with you a wide range of issues of our—of mutual concern. And I look forward to your wise counsel and advice.

**King Abdullah II.** Thank you, sir. Well, Mr. President, again, it's always a pleasure to see you and to be back here in Washington. I'm very grateful for your support for

the region, what you're trying to do to bring peace and stability for all of us in the Middle East—Iraq, the Israelis, the Palestinians. And so I'm looking forward to our discussions today, and see how we can best bring hope to all of the people of our part of the world.

And the President has always been very courageous in trying to do the right thing and to push for a dialog and hope for all of us in the Middle East. And I'm very appreciative.

**President Bush.** Thanks for coming.

We'll answer a couple of questions, starting with this fellow right there, Scott [Scott Lindlaw, Associated Press].

### **Steel Tariffs**

**Q.** Thank you, Mr. President. Are you going to repeal all the steel tariffs today?

**President Bush.** I am making a decision—let me—the decision I make will be based upon my strong belief that America's consumers, the American economy is better off with a world that trades freely and a world that trades fairly. And I listened to an International Trade Commission report about the effects that steel imports were having upon our important industry. I acted. I acted to give the steel industry time to adjust. I acted in time for us to say to the world that we will trade, but we want to trade in a fair way. And the decision will be announced here shortly.

### **Discussion With Prime Minister Blair**

**Q.** Did you talk to Mr. Blair about it today?

**President Bush.** No, it didn't come up today with Prime Minister Blair. I did talk with the Prime Minister today. Let's see, you're not the only guy asking questions throughout this thing, but—

**Q.** No.

**President Bush.** —it's good that you recognize that. I did talk to the Prime Minister. We talked about our—we talked about Iraq. We talked about NATO, and we had a good discussion. I talk to him about once a week, maybe once every 2 weeks. His Majesty just was with the Prime Minister.

**King Abdullah II.** Yes, the day before yesterday.

**President Bush.** Steady friend of ours, a steady friend of Jordan's as well.

Anybody here from the Jordanian press that you would like to call on?

### **Roadmap for Peace**

**Q.** Your Majesty, given some of the recent events, such as the Palestinians' factions are meeting in Cairo, Geneva Accords, and the Palestinian—proposals, do you feel that there is hope to revive the negotiations? What is your next step to revive the roadmap?

**King Abdullah II.** Well, the President has always been out front in trying to move the process forward. There is a lot of difficulties on the ground at the moment, as we know, but we've all been working very hard behind the scenes to encourage the Palestinian Prime Minister to be able to have the dialog with the Israelis. We believe that there will be, I hope, some small steps on the ground that move the process forward. We haven't given up on the peace process. The President has been very dedicated from day one. We appreciate his support. But it's going to be a tough road ahead for all of us.

**President Bush.** Steven [Steve Holland, Reuters].

**Q.** The Geneva Accord, do you think some of these proposals should be included in an overall peace agreement? And why is Secretary Powell meeting with these people?

**President Bush.** Everybody knows where I stand. I gave a speech right here in Rose Garden in June of 2002. I laid out what I believe is necessary to achieve peace in the Middle East. It starts with having a Palestinian state that is at peace with Israel, a Palestinian state based upon democratic principles, a Palestinian state which recognizes the hopes and aspirations of the Palestinian people, and a Palestinian state with leadership which is committed to defeating and dismantling the terrorist organizations who are trying to prevent a Palestinian state from emerging.

I also talked about the need for the Israelis to keep in mind that if they support a Palestinian state, which they have told me they do, that the conditions on the ground must be such for a Palestinian state to be able to emerge. And that's why we're continuing to talk to them about the illegal settlements and outposts—illegal outposts and settlements as well as the fence.

As well nations in the neighborhood must take responsibility. The King and I have spent a lot of time talking about this subject. He understands fully what I'm talking about. I want to remind you that it was in Jordan where His Majesty hosted us. I stood up with His Majesty as well as Prime Minister Sharon and then Prime Minister Abu Mazen and made a public declaration that we were prepared to work together for the creation of a Palestinian state. Abu Mazen has since been shoved aside, and the process stalled. What the Palestinians need is leadership willing to remain committed to the aspirations of their people and bold enough to stand up and fight off the terrorists' organizations. And His Majesty and I will be glad to work with such leaders as they emerge.

#### **Geneva Accords**

**Q.** This is a productive process, the Geneva Accords and Secretary Powell's meeting?

**President Bush.** Well, I think it's productive, so long as they adhere to the principles I have just outlined. And that is, we must fight off terror, that there must be security, and there must be the emergence of a Palestinian state that is democratic and free.

And it's—the position of this Government is clear, and it's firm. We appreciate people discussing peace. We just want to make sure people understand that the principles to peace are clear.

Thank you all for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:07 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel; and former Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority. King Abdullah II referred to Prime Minister Ahmed Korei of the Palestinian Authority. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

#### **Remarks on Signing the Fair and Accurate Credit Transactions Act of 2003**

*December 4, 2003*

Thank you all for coming. Please be seated. Thanks. Good morning, everybody.

Thanks for coming to the Roosevelt Room. Today we're taking important steps to ensure that all Americans of every income and background have fair access to credit.

For our economy, reliable access to credit and capital is essential to growth and prosperity. For individuals, a chance to get ahead and to make a better life often depends on building credit. So many decisions, like buying a home or financing a car or owning a small business, are made easier by good credit. The bill I'm about to sign will help make sure that hard-working, law-abiding citizens are treated fairly when they apply for credit.

This bill also confronts the problem of identity theft. A growing number of Americans are victimized by criminals who assume their identities and cause havoc in their financial affairs. With this legislation, the Federal Government is protecting our citizens by taking the offensive against identity theft.

I appreciate the fact that I'm joined up here by the Secretary of the Treasury, John Snow, and Tim Muris, who is the Chairman of the Federal Trade Commission. Muris is responsible for writing the regulations to make sure that the intention of the Congress is met.

And speaking about the Congress, I want to thank the Members of the Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, who are here to join in the bill signing, good, honorable Members who have worked hard to protect our citizens. I appreciate Senator Paul Sarbanes for joining us today. I'm honored that Senator Bob Bennett has joined us as well, as well as Maria Cantwell and Elizabeth Dole. Thank you, Senators, for coming. Thanks for your good work on this. I also want to thank Richard Shelby for his good work. He's not with us today, but Shelby gets some credit. *[Laughter]* From the House—*[laughter]*—Congressman Oxley—I appreciate you, Mr. Chairman—Paul Gillmor, Spencer Bachus—thanks for coming, Spence. I appreciate you sponsoring this piece of legislation. Steve LaTourette and Darlene Hooley are here. Thank you all for coming.

Again, I want to again congratulate the Congress for working on this important piece of legislation and exceeding expectations, I