

There has never been a time like this in which we have the power to create knowledge and the power to create havoc, and both those powers rest in the same hands.

We live in an age when one person sitting at one computer, can come up with an idea, travel through cyberspace, and take humanity to new heights. Yet, someone can sit at the same computer, hack into a computer system and potentially paralyze a company, a city, or a government.

Thanks to the hard work of many people, our computer systems were ready for Y2K. But that experience did underscore how really interconnected we all are. Today, our critical systems, from power structures to air traffic control, are connected and run by computers. We must make those systems more secure so that America can be more secure.

Today we are releasing a national plan to defend America's cyberspace, the product of a 3-year effort. This plan is not the end of the discussion, but the beginning of a dialog with Congress, with the American people, and especially with the private sector. We need to do more to bring people into the field of computer security. That's why I am proposing a new program that will offer college scholarships to students in the field of computer security in exchange for their public service afterward. This program will create a new generation of computer security specialists who will work to defend our Nation's computers.

We also need to accelerate and broaden our research into computer security. Today I am proposing to create a new institute that will fill research gaps that neither public nor private sectors are filling today. The Institute for Information Infrastructure Protection will bring to bear the finest computer scientists and engineers from the private sector, from universities, and from other research facilities to find ways to close these gaps.

As part of the 2001 budget, I am requesting \$91 million for these and other reforms as part of an overall \$2 billion budget to help meet our security challenges. I will work hard to get these measures passed. I will continue to work equally hard to uphold the privacy rights of the American people, as well as the proprietary rights of American businesses. As I said before, it is essential that we do not undermine liberty in the name of liberty.

Information technology has helped to create the unprecedented prosperity we enjoy at the end of the 20th century. This morning we will announce that the unemployment rate for all of this past year was 4.2 percent. That's the lowest in 30 years, the lowest annual unemployment rate since 1969, the lowest annual minority unemployment rates for African-Americans and Hispanics ever recorded. It is important to recognize the role technology has played in this remarkable economic prosperity. But it is also important to recognize the challenges that we face out there in the security area.

I hope that this will be a completely non-partisan issue and that we will work together to ensure that information technology will create unprecedented prosperity in the 21st century, in an atmosphere and environment that makes all Americans more secure.

Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President—

*The President.* One each. Go ahead, John [John Roberts, CBS News].

*Elian Gonzalez*

Q. Governor Bush of Florida is appealing to you to rescind the INS order regarding Elian Gonzalez. Is that something you would even consider?

*The President.* I believe that they followed the law and the procedures. This is a volatile and difficult case. And those who want to challenge it will have to follow the law and the procedures. I think that's the only way to do this. We need to keep this out of the political process as much as possible, within the established legal channels.

*Israel-Syria Peace Talks*

Q. Are you satisfied with the cooperation that you've been getting from the Israeli and Syrian negotiators in Shepherdstown?

*The President.* Yes. This is difficult stuff. This is very hard. But let me say, they're working hard, and they're trying to find ways to resolve their differences. And they're trying to imagine the end of the road here. It's a difficult, difficult set of negotiations, but we're working in a steady way, and I'm satisfied that everybody is working in good faith.

Q. How long do you expect this to take?

*The President.* I don't know—until we finish.

Q. Mr. President, how do you see your role in Shepherdstown to get these talks moving?