

they hide. We'll do everything we can to secure the homeland.

We heard a briefing today from Tom Ridge about how the reorganization of the Homeland Security Department is going. It's very important for Congress and the Senate to confirm Tom as quickly as possible and to confirm his team, so they can get doing the work of the American people.

Here at home, I hope the Congress will extend the unemployment benefits for—for the American workers who don't have a job—soon, as quickly as possible. As well, it's important for Congress to pass the '03 appropriations bills. We're living under continuing resolutions. The agency heads here are—want to have their budgets finalized so that they can have certainty in the appropriations with which they have to work. Congress has got work to do.

Tomorrow I'm going to talk about how to continue the economic growth that we have, to ensure our economy is as robust as possible. I look forward to the speech in Chicago, because it is a plan that speaks directly to the American citizen that we'll do everything we can to revitalize the small-business sector, to make sure it remains strong so people can find work.

We've put together a fine economic team. I hope the Congress—the Senate acts quickly to confirm John Snow and Bill Donaldson. They need to move quickly.

I look forward to working with the leadership in the House and the Senate. Doesn't matter who's in charge, we'll work with them. Obviously, we're pleased that Senator Frist will be leading the Senate. We'll work with him. We'll continue to work with Senator Daschle, and we'll work with Speaker Hastert, Leader DeLay, and Congressman Pelosi as well.

We have got a job to do for the American people, and we'll do that job, to make sure the country is secure, to win the war on terror, and make sure people can find work.

Let me answer some questions. Sandra [Sandra Sobieraj, Associated Press], this is

your last day, I understand, and therefore, you get to ask the only question—I mean, you get to ask—[laughter].

President's Economic Plan

Q. The first question to the last? You said that your economic plan will speak directly to the American citizen. The Democrats say that it speaks most directly to the richest American taxpayers. How do you answer that criticism and the charge that you're just going to lead to deeper deficits?

The President. Well, the critics hadn't seen the plan. This is a plan that provides tax relief to the working citizens. It's a plan that is a very fair plan. It's a plan that recognizes, when somebody has more of their own money, they're likely to spend it, which creates more jobs.

Our administration is concerned about deficits, and the way they deal with deficits is you, one, control spending. And I hope Congress lives up to their words. When they talk about deficits, they can join us in making sure we don't overspend. They can join us and make sure that the appropriations process is focused on those issues that—those items that are absolutely necessary for the American people.

I'm pleased that Members of the Congress are talking about deficits. It means they understand their obligations not to overspend the people's money. And the second way to deal with deficits is to encourage revenue growth. And the way to encourage revenue growth is to encourage the private sector to grow. And tomorrow I'll be talking about ways to encourage the growth of the private sector.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Iraq

Q. Sir, with 3 weeks to go until the U.N. inspectors report back, are you seeing any signs of compliance by Iraq? Saddam says it's carrying out intelligence work.

The President. Well, I thought that was an interesting statement on his part. When