

I want to thank some of our Nation's leading economists for coming today to share their thoughts with me about our economy and the strength of our Nation, how best to make sure people can find work.

We had a great discussion about the plan that I laid out for the Congress to consider and to enact, a plan which focuses on job creation, a plan which recognizes that money in the consumers' pocket will help grow this economy, a plan that recognizes there are some long-term things we can do to make sure the investor feels comfortable taking risks in America. It is a plan that recognizes that economic growth is not as strong as it should be. It's a plan that's good for all Americans. It is a plan that addresses our needs, and it's a plan that Congress needs to pass.

These economists can speak for themselves after they leave, but they have given good advice and sound judgment, and for that, I'm grateful.

I'll take a couple of questions. Ron.

#### *Diversity in Higher Education*

*Q.* Sir, last week in this room, you came out against quotas, which have been unconstitutional for 25 years. You didn't answer the central question, and that is whether race can be used as a factor in admissions. Dr. Rice says it could be. Colin Powell says it should be. What is your position? Can it be used as—

*The President.* Well, my position is, is that as the—as the brief says, that there are clearly unconstitutional means to achieve diversity, there are race-neutral ways to achieve diversity—which I have put in place as the Governor of Texas—and that we'll leave the Court to define the outer limits of the Constitution.

Adam [Adam Entous, Reuters].

*Q.* Yes, Mr. President—

*Q.* You won't answer that question then?

*The President.* I just answered it.

*Q.* Whether or not you believe—

*The President.* No, I answered it. The courts will make the definition of the outer limits of the—and as Condi Rice said, she felt very comfortable in saying on national TV the decision I made was the right decision.

Adam.

#### *Iraq*

*Q.* Thank you. Thank you, Mr. President. The French are saying they would block a U.N. resolution authorizing force on Iraq. Are you frustrated by these comments? Can you still reach a consensus?

*The President.* Well, Adam, first of all, it's important for the American citizens and the citizens around the world to understand that Saddam Hussein possesses some of the world's deadliest weapons. He poses a serious threat to America and our friends and allies. The world came together, including the French, to say he must disarm. He's not disarming. As a matter of fact, it appears to be a rerun of a bad movie. He is delaying. He is deceiving. He is asking for time. He's playing hide-and-seek with inspectors.

One thing is for certain, he's not disarming. So the United States of America, in the name of peace, will continue to insist he does disarm, and we will keep the pressure on Saddam Hussein.

Angle [Jim Angle, FOX News].

*Q.* Mr. President, when do you intend to make a decision about whether or not the inspection process is—actually has any hope of really disarming Saddam?

*The President.* It's clear to me now that he is not disarming. And surely, our friends have learned lessons from the past. Surely we have learned how this man deceives and delays. He's giving people the run-around. And as many of my advisers said on TV this week, time is running out. I believe in the name of peace, he must disarm. And we will lead a coalition of willing nations to disarm him. Make no mistake about that, he will be disarmed.