

Rothman Statement On President Bush's State of the Union Address

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Washington, DC -- Congressman Steve Rothman (D-NJ9) today issued the following statement regarding President Bush's State of the Union address.

"While we certainly face homeland security concerns, the possibility of imminent military engagement in Iraq, and a sluggish economy, the United States of America remains strong and continues to be the greatest country on the face of the earth. We, as a people and as a government, can and will meet all these challenges and continue the progress that has blessed our nation for the last 226 years.

"I respectfully disagree with the president's economic policy. It spends almost nothing in 2003, while squandering more than \$500 billion in later years on people who don't need it. Instead, I would spend \$150 billion this year on tax cuts to all taxpayers and small businesses, along with significant aid to states, not only to jumpstart our economy now, but to help with the burden of higher local property taxes. At a time when we are experiencing a sluggish economy, the possibility of war in Iraq, and the imminent retirement of the Baby Boomers who will be collecting what is left of Social Security and Medicare, I cannot endorse the president's economic plan, which would add more than \$1.2 trillion to our national debt over the next 10 years and do almost nothing to help the economy this year.

"On the national security front, President Bush has made it quite clear that this nation is prepared to disarm Saddam Hussein of his weapons of mass destruction if the Iraqi leader continues to refuse to do so himself. I pray that the use of force will not prove necessary and that Saddam Hussein will comply with all existing U.N. resolutions to disarm. I am mindful that action on our part will not come without serious risk to many courageous American men and women serving in our military, and likely many innocent Iraqi citizens. The financial cost of the war, too, will be considerable.

"Saddam Hussein poses a clear and present threat to the United States and her allies. Given his proven willingness to use weapons of mass destruction, having used chemical weapons against the Kurds, against his own people, and against the Iranians, it is clear to me that we must eliminate his stockpile of weapons before they are used against more innocent people, including United States citizens.

"We cannot allow Iraq to reach the position North Korea now has - acquiring nuclear weapons and using them to extort economic and strategic military concessions from the West."

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