



M A R C H 2 0 0 6

Esther Johnson Named Job Corps National Director

First African-American Woman to Head Program

WASHINGTON—The U.S. Department of Labor announced the appointment of Esther R. Johnson as the new national director of the Office of Job Corps, within the U.S. Department of Labor. Ms. Johnson, a seasoned government executive with considerable career public service experience in education and employment policy, is the first African-American woman to head the Job Corps in the program's 41-year history.

Johnson is a life-long public servant with extensive experience at both federal and state levels.

She holds a Doctorate in Educational Administration from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University and both Master of Arts and Bachelor of Arts degrees in education from Virginia Commonwealth University.



“The Job Corps has a proud history, and I am excited about the opportunity to build on this legacy by pursuing educational and high skills training strategies for our youth that will keep them in step with the needs of the 21st Century workforce.”

— ESTHER JOHNSON

President Welcomes President Sirleaf of Liberia to the White House

First Woman Elected President to Any Country on the Continent of Africa

PRESIDENT BUSH: I find that one of the interesting parts of my job is to be able to talk to pioneers, and Madam President, you're a pioneer. You're the first woman elected President to any country on the continent of Africa. And that requires courage, and vision, and the desire to improve the lives of your people. And I congratulate you on that.

PRESIDENT SIRLEAF: As the first democratic-elected woman, I represent the expectations and aspirations of women in Liberia, in Africa, and I dare say, the world. And I must be able to deliver for them. My performance must justify.

Our people have new hope, they have new promise in the future as a result of the strong position you took that enabled us to get this opportunity for national renewal. We have taken the necessary first steps to restoring dignity to our people, starting to fix our economy, to get our international credibility and reputation back. And we're confident that Liberian people are ready to do what it takes. They're back at work; our country is open for business. We're beginning to put in all the processes that will enable us to manage our resources that God has been so good to us in giving us, for the good of our people.



President George W. Bush welcomes Liberia's President Ellen Johnson Sirleaf to the Oval Office at the White House, Tuesday, March 21, 2006. President Sirleaf is the first woman elected President to any country on the continent of Africa.

President Bush Welcomes President Obasanjo of Nigeria to the White House

President Bush met in the Oval Office with President Obasanjo of Nigeria. The two leaders discussed several issues, including the deteriorating security situation in Darfur and the Sudan.

President Bush said, “We’re deeply concerned about the humiliation, the rape, the murder that is taking place ... against the citizens of Darfur. The two leaders discussed how to move forward, how to make it clear to the Sudanese government that there will be an international response in working toward a peace.

President Bush and President Obasanjo talked about a dual track, that the rebels must come together and negotiate with the government, and at the same time, bolster the AU peacekeeping force with a Blue Helmet force. The President explained his desire to have a NATO make sure that force is robust.”



President George W. Bush speaks with Nigerian President Olesegun Obasanjo on the South Lawn Wednesday, March 29, 2006, during his visit to the White House



President George W. Bush welcomes Nigerian President Olesegun Obasanjo to the Oval Office Wednesday, March 29, 2006.

“Free societies are peaceful societies. When governments are accountable to their own citizens, when people are free to speak and assemble, when minorities are protected, then justice prevails. And so does the cause of peace.

The advance of freedom is the story of our time, and we’re seeing new chapters written before our eyes. Since the beginning of 2005, we’ve witnessed remarkable democratic changes across the globe. The people of Afghanistan have elected their first democratic parliament in more than a generation. The people of Lebanon have recovered their independence and chosen their leaders in free elections. The people of Kyrgyzstan have driven a corrupt regime from power and voted for democratic change. The people of Liberia have overcome decades of violence and are now led by the first woman elected as a head of state in any African nation. And the courageous people of Iraq have gone to the polls not once, not twice, but three times, choosing a transitional government, a democratic constitution, and a new government under that constitution.”

— PRESIDENT BUSH

President Discusses War on Terror and the Plan for Victory



“The ideals that have inspired our history – freedom, democracy, and human dignity – are increasingly inspiring individuals and nations throughout the world. ... We choose leadership over isolationism, and the pursuit of free trade and open markets over protectionism. We choose to deal with challenges now rather than leaving them for future generations. We fight our enemies abroad instead of waiting for them to arrive in our country. We seek to shape the world, not merely be shaped by it; to influence events for the better instead of being at their mercy.”

— PRESIDENT BUSH

President Bush discusses the War on Terror in Wheeling, West Virginia.

On March 16, 2006, the White House released President Bush’s second term National Security Strategy (NSS), which reflects the President’s most solemn obligation: to protect the security of the American people.

The NSS explains how we are working to protect the American people, advance American interests, enhance global security, and expand global liberty and prosperity. The strategy is founded upon two pillars:

- The first pillar is promoting freedom, justice, and human dignity – working to end tyranny, to promote effective democracies, and to extend prosperity through free and fair trade and wise development policies.

The President’s National Security Strategy specifically focuses on the following areas:

- Champion Aspirations for Human Dignity

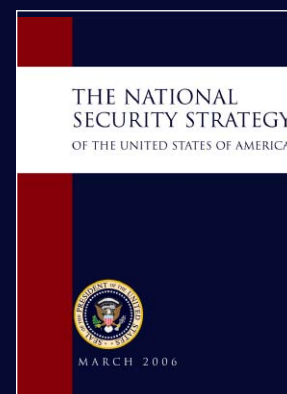
“A free Iraq is important for the United States of America. It was important to remove a threat; it was important to deal with threats before they fully materialized; but a free Iraq also does some other things. One, it serves as an amazing example — it will serve as an amazing example for people who are desperate for freedom.

I believe freedom and liberty can change enemies into allies. I believe freedom has the power to transform societies. It’s not easy work, its difficult work.”

— PRESIDENT BUSH

- Strengthen Alliances to Defeat Global Terrorism and Work to Prevent Attacks Against Us and Our Friends
- Work with Others to Defuse Regional Conflicts
- Prevent Our Enemies from Threatening Us, Our Allies, and Our Friends with Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD)
- Ignite a New Era of Global Economic Growth through Free Markets and Free Trade
- Expand the Circle of Development by Opening Societies and Building the Infrastructure of Democracy
- Develop Agendas for Cooperative Action with the Other Centers of Global Power
- Transform America’s National Security Institutions to Meet the Challenges and Opportunities of the 21st Century
- Engage the Opportunities and Confront the Challenges of Globalization

To view the President’s National Security Strategy in PDF format go to the following link:
www.whitehouse.gov/nsc/nss/2006/



Economic Growth Continues — Almost 5 Million Jobs Created Since August 2003

GDP Growth Is Strong. Real GDP increased 3.5 percent in 2005, and growth was revised up from an original estimate of 1.1 percent to a 1.6 percent annual rate for the fourth quarter of 2005.

State Unemployment Rates Fall. As of January, the unemployment rate is now at a record low in five states: Nevada, Florida, West Virginia, Montana, and Idaho. Over the past year, unemployment rates have decreased in 46 states.

Incomes Increase. Real disposable incomes have risen 2.2 percent over the past 12 months. Since January 2001, real after-tax income per person has risen 8.2 percent. Real household net worth is at an all-time high of \$51.1 trillion, and the median net worth of American households rose 1.5 percent between 2001 and 2004.

Manufacturing Expansion Continues. The Institute for Supply Management (ISM), a private research group, reports manufacturing activity grew for the 33rd consecutive month in February.

Retail Sales Rise. Nominal retail sales rose 2.3 percent in January and are up 8.8 percent over the past 12 months. In January, real consumer spending posted a solid 0.4 percent gain and increased 3.6 percent over the past year.



Housing Starts Reach Highest Level In Over 30 Years. Housing starts in January totaled a seasonally adjusted annual rate of 2.276 million units — up 14.5 percent from December and the highest level in over 30 years.

The President's Agenda To Grow A Vibrant Economy

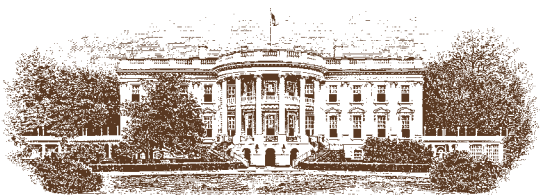
President Bush's Pro-Growth Policies Will Ensure Continued Economic Opportunity. The President has asked Congress to make tax relief permanent and presented a disciplined budget to halve the deficit by 2009.

The President Proposed The American Competitiveness Initiative (ACI) To Encourage Innovation Throughout The Economy. The ACI will increase Federal investment in critical research, provide children with a strong math and science foundation, and ensure the Nation continues leading in innovation.

The President Submitted Line-Item Veto Legislation To Stop Wasteful Spending, Reduce The Budget Deficit, And Improve Accountability. Special fast-track procedures would be created to guarantee an up-or-down vote by a simple majority in Congress on a proposal by the President to rescind specific spending or tax legislation that has been passed.



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