

Bush lobbies for tax-cut proposal at Chamber of Commerce rally



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President George W. Bush spoke Monday about tax relief to the United States Chamber of Commerce in Washington, D.C.

by Naftali Bendavid
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collect twice as much income tax revenue in 2001 as it did in 1981," Bush said, adding again, "Enough is enough, folks."

Bush's address came on the day when Americans are perhaps most aware of how much they pay in taxes, and also at a pivotal time in the fight for his tax cut. The House recently approved Bush's \$1.6 trillion plan virtually intact, while the Senate approved a smaller cut of \$1.2 trillion over 10 years.

Members of the House and Senate will soon sit down to hammer out a compromise, and Bush is working hard to push the final figure closer to his original proposal.

As with all political fights, this has been in part a battle over images and slogans. Democrats held a news conference featuring a Lexus automobile and a muffler, arguing that under Bush's plan the rich would receive enough money for a luxury car while middle-income taxpayers would only get enough for the automobile part. Bush, in turn, has traveled the coun-

try proclaiming, "It's not the government's money, it's the people's money" and "Somebody's being overcharged, and I'm here to ask for a refund." Now "Enough is enough" has apparently been added to the list.

Some economists, however, take issue with the basic message Bush was sending Monday. The reason the tax burden has grown so much, these critics say, is not that average Americans are paying more, but that the number and income of wealthy Americans has increased so dramatically in recent years.

As is his usual practice, Bush spoke before a selected, highly supportive audience, in this case business leaders who interrupted him numerous times with applause, including several standing ovations.

Bush has alternately wooed and berated the senators whose support he will need for a tax cut. On Monday, he aimed somewhat sharper language at lawmakers who are concerned about its size, especially senators who voted recently to spend more on health and education rather than the tax cut.

"Some members of Congress complained that they did not have enough money to spend, but in 2001 the income tax will yield \$2 billion in revenues for each and every one of the 535 members of Congress," Bush said. "I think they should be able to get by on that - even the senators."

The Senate vote, he added, is "proving the point I make all across the country: If you send it, they will spend it."

Cancer researchers continue to study benefits, risks of aspirin

by William Hathaway
The Hartford Courant
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Once considered a medical pipe dream, the theory that aspirin can help prevent and treat a variety of cancers now seems firmly rooted in science, says Timothy Hla, head of the vascular biology laboratory at the University of Connecticut Health Center in Farmington.

What Hla and other scientists have not figured out yet, though, is how aspirin and related drugs accomplish this nifty trick. And they say that until more is known about the risks and benefits of therapy with pain relievers, it is too early to deploy them widely in the war against cancer.

"It's a hot field. There is no doubt there is an important biologic effect," says Dr. Michael Thun, head of epidemiology at the American Cancer Society. "But no one knows exactly what it is and how to use it."

Hla's laboratory is one of several in the United States trying to discover why aspirinlike drugs known as NSAIDs - nonsteroidal anti-inflammatory drugs - seem to be beneficial in combating cancer. The therapeutic benefits of aspirin already have been shown in heart disease and strokes.

Timothy Hla has reported on a study involving an enzyme called Cox-2, which is involved in the production of prostaglandins, substances that can cause inflammation. In the journal of Biological Chemistry, he linked the enzyme to a wide variety of cancers.

A decade ago, the enzyme turned up in large amounts in tumors Hla was studying, and he named it Cox-2 in a 1992 paper.

Aspirin suppresses the production of both Cox-2 and its close cousin, Cox-1. The connection between Cox-2 and tumors was intriguing, because in the mid-1980s, research had shown that people who took aspirin regularly had a 40 percent reduced risk of developing colorectal

cancer.

Research during the early 1990s showed that it was excess production of Cox-2 that causes inflammation and pain, while Cox-1 plays a more beneficial role in protecting the stomach lining.

The discovery led to a pell-mell rush to develop drugs that specifically act against Cox-2 to relieve chronic pain in arthritis and other ailments - without the excessive risk of dangerous stomach problems that long-term use of NSAIDs such as aspirin can cause.

The success of so-called Cox-2 inhibitors in fighting chronic pain has tended to overshadow ongoing research into their potential cancer-fighting benefits.

Studies have found large amounts of Cox-2 in cancers of the bladder, esophagus and head and neck. Last month, researchers reported that women who took aspirin at least three times a week had a 40 percent less chance of getting ovarian cancer.

Hla cautions that Cox-2 alone probably does not create tumors in people. He theorizes excess amounts of Cox-2 interfere with apoptosis, the body's ability to order damaged cells to destroy themselves - essentially cell suicide.

Mutated cancer cells take advantage of this lapse in the body's defenses to establish themselves in a variety of tissues, according to the theory.

"Our work is just one piece of the puzzle," Hla says. "Cancer is caused by a number of mutations, not just one."

In a few cases, such as the treatment of individuals with polyps known to develop into colon cancer, some oncologists already prescribe NSAIDs, says Dr. Dominick Pasquale, director of hematology and oncology at St. Francis Hospital and Medical Center in Hartford, Conn. Hla and Pasquale both caution that even Cox-2 inhibitors are not free of health risks, and they agree that more studies need to be done before aspirin-like drugs are regularly prescribed to prevent cancer.

WASHINGTON - President Bush, using the dreaded annual tax filing deadline to push his \$1.6 trillion tax cut plan, rolled out a new argument and slogan Monday, repeatedly telling cheering supporters at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce that "enough is enough."

Bush focused not only on the need for fairness and for an economic boost, as he usually does, but also on the size of the tax burden on the nation.

The federal government will take a bigger share of the U.S. economy this year, Bush said, than it has since 1944, when it was still fighting World War II.

"Our country is at peace, but our government is charging wartime prices," he said. "Enough is enough."

Bush was flanked by two enormous replicas of 1040 tax forms as he spoke. "The U.S. government will

Revisionist history in Japan minimizes atrocities before, during WWII

by Doug Struck
The Washington Post
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The abduction and forced prostitution of tens of thousands of "comfort women" for Japanese soldiers during World War II did not happen. Or if it did, Japanese scholar Tadae Takubo does not want his daughter to read about it.

Much the same can be said, Takubo believes, about the 1937 Nanjing massacre by Japanese troops known as the Rape of Nanking, Japan's brutal occupation of Korea and other acts committed during the war - a war, he implies, that Japan was forced to undertake.

The views of Takubo and other revisionist Japanese historians, reflected in a new junior high school history textbook, are threatening to explode the improving relations between Japan and South Korea, and have piqued the anger of China and North Korea as well.

South Korea recalled its ambassador to Tokyo last week and canceled official visits. Lawmakers in Seoul are calling for a boycott of Japanese goods.

Street demonstrations have erupted outside the Japanese Embassy in South Korea. Even President Kim Dae-jung, who supports quiet diplomacy, has criticized the Japanese government. And a South Korean lawmaker staged an unusual six-day hunger strike beside the Japanese parliament.

"It's intolerable to misrepresent what Japan did in that era. It's intolerable to use a distorted textbook to teach it at school," said Kim Young-jin, 53, who came to Japan on April 10 to protest the textbook and decided spontaneously, he said, to stage a sit-in. Before he ended the hunger strike Monday, he had attracted a small crowd of supporters and garnered extra protection from police.

This is an old story for Japan, which still seems to be a captive of its wartime past. Politicians, from Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori on down, have regularly gotten into trouble for statements that seem to reflect a lingering sentiment in favor of Japan's colonial expansionism, which carried its armies into China, Korea, Taiwan and Southeast Asia.

Similar controversies over the treatment of wartime history in Japanese textbooks arose in the 1960s and 1980s, reviving bitter feelings between Japan and the people it formerly ruled. But Japan had hoped that time and diplomacy had finally put those problems behind, at least concerning its ties with South Korea.

Relations with South Korea had improved tremendously, boosted by the 1998 acceptance by Kim Dae-jung of Japan's apology for its 1910-45 occupa-

tion of Korea. Tourism and trade between the countries have boomed. Seoul ended its ban on Japanese pop culture, which has flooded South Korea. The two countries are jointly sponsoring the World Cup soccer finals next year.

But now Korean newspaper editorials decry "Japan's extreme nationalism." The Korea Herald, in one such column, protested that "the Japanese

Japan's conquests should be seen in the context of empires held by European powers.

They argue that the "Greater East Asian War," which evokes a term used by the imperial government during the war, was really a battle to secure independence for Asian peoples. And Takubo said, "Unlike Germany, Japan has never tried to massacre one people based on ideology," a distinction that



WASHINGTON POST PHOTO BY SHIGEHICO TOGO

Supporters encourage South Korean lawmaker Kim Young-jin on the last day of his hunger strike outside Japan's parliament building in Tokyo to protest a new history textbook. The views of revisionist Japanese historians, reflected in a new junior high school history textbook, have piqued the anger of South Korea, China and North Korea.

must wake up from the erroneous perception that they were the victims of World War II." In China, the official news agency said "a handful of ultrarightist forces are still trying to reverse the verdict on Japan's wars of aggression."

"This is very serious," a top Japanese Foreign Ministry official, who asked not to be identified, said with a sigh. "We have tried to explain that we have done all that can be done. But they feel it's not enough. I think the disappointment at a deep level for the Korean people will have a long-term effect."

Takubo and others in the Japanese Society for History Textbook Reform see it differently.

"This is blatant interference by a foreign country," said co-author Nobukatsu Fujioka, a professor at Tokyo University, in an appearance with Takubo last week to defend the Junior High School Social Studies New History Textbook.

"All nations have a right to interpret their history in their own way, and pass down that interpretation. I think that is a part of sovereignty," he said.

The revisionists argue that claims of Japanese atrocities in the war are, as Fujioka put it, "wartime propaganda ... just a rumor;" that descriptions of its occupations are one-sided; and that

sounds hollow to those with a memory of the vast number of casualties of the Japanese conquests.

The revisionists say descriptions of Japan's colonization of Korea fail to give credit for roads, bridges and other infrastructure built by Japan at the time. But to many Koreans, that is akin to arguing that a condemned man got a good last meal. They recall a brutal occupation in which hundreds of thousands of men were forced into virtual slavery, women were taken for sexual services and Japanese authorities tried to stamp out the use of the Korean language and names.

Takubo said his group decided to write a history text because "We have too little patriotism in current Japan." His group's literature says it offers an alternative to "history fabricated by the victors" of the war in which "Japan was made to bear sole responsibility for the ravages of war. Japan was never permitted to present its case."

When their book was submitted to the Education Ministry screening committee, critics outside Japan began to protest. But after requiring 137 amendments to the book - which the authors describe as minor - the screening committee on April 3 approved the text to be offered to school districts next year.

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