

our national interests; it's our national security interests we have a military tribunal available. It is in the interests of the safety of potential jurors that we have a military tribunal.

These are extraordinary times. And I would remind those who don't understand the decision I made, that Franklin Roosevelt made the same decision in World War II. Those were extraordinary times, as well.

This Government will do everything we can to defend the American people within the confines of our Constitution. And that's exactly how we're proceeding. And so, to the critics, I say, I made the absolute right decision.

Press Assistant Reed Dickens. Thank you all.

[At this point, the President turned toward Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.]

The President. Do you know where Al Qaida is? *[Laughter]*

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:12 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; and Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization.

Remarks at an Iftaar Dinner

November 19, 2001

Good evening, and welcome to the White House. I'm so honored to welcome such distinguished guests and ambassadors during the holy month of Ramadan.

America is made better by millions of Muslim citizens. America has close and important relations with many Islamic nations. So it is fitting for America to honor your friendship and the traditions of a great faith by hosting this Iftaar at the White House.

I want to thank our Secretary of State for being here, as well as members of my administration. I want to thank the Ambassadors for taking time in this holy month to come to join us in this feast.

Ramadan is a time of fasting and prayer for the Muslim faithful. So tonight we are reminded of God's greatness and His Com-

mandments to live in peace and to help neighbors in need. According to Muslim teachings, God first revealed His word in the Holy Koran to the Prophet Muhammad during the month of Ramadan. That word has guided billions of believers across the centuries, and those believers built a culture of learning and literature and science.

All the world continues to benefit from this faith and its achievements. Ramadan and the upcoming holiday season are a good time for people of different faiths to learn more about each other. And the more we learn, the more we find that many commitments are broadly shared. We share a commitment to family, to protect and love our children. We share a belief in God's justice and man's moral responsibility. And we share the same hope for a future of peace. We have much in common and much to learn from one another.

This evening we gather in a spirit of peace and cooperation. I appreciate your support of our objectives in the campaign against terrorism. Tonight that campaign continues in Afghanistan, so that the people of Afghanistan will soon know peace. The terrorists have no home in any faith. Evil has no holy days.

This evening we also gather in the spirit of generosity and charity. As this feast breaks the Ramadan fast, America is also sharing our table with the people of Afghanistan. We are proud to play a leading role in humanitarian relief efforts, with airdrops and truck convoys of food and medicine. America's children are donating their dollars to the Afghan children. And my administration is committed to help reconstruct that country and to support a stable government that represents all of the people of Afghanistan.

We are working for more opportunity and a better life for the people of Afghanistan and all the people of the Islamic world. America respects people of all faiths, and America seeks peace with people of all faiths.

I thank you for your friendship, and I wish you a blessed Ramadan.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:50 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House.

Remarks at So Others Might Eat

November 20, 2001

Thank you. Mel, thank you very much. I appreciate your leadership; I appreciate your vision; and I appreciate your heart. Father Adams referred to Mel—Mel's rescue from Cuba. He came over in a program called Pedro Pan, Peter Pan. And it's when his mother and dad decided that life in Cuba would be rough on young people, and they had great faith in America and great faith in a program that encouraged them to put their little boy on an airplane, and he flew to America.

When we swore in Mel, I'll never forget meeting his adoptive parents that provided a loving home. Mel's a perfect choice to understand what a loving home means. He saw one in a foreign land that enabled him to go from scared little boy to now Secretary of HUD. It's a marvelous story about America. It also helps me to be able to assure people that the Secretary who runs HUD has got a heart of gold and a deep compassion about all Americans, those newly arrived as well as those who have been here for a long period of time. I'm honored that Mel has agreed to serve our Government. And I'm absolutely confident America and the needs of America will be more easily met as a result of his leadership.

Oftentimes, when I speak around the Nation, I talk about the great strength of the Nation lies in the hearts and souls of our citizens. I was using military terms at times even before the war began. I talked about armies of compassion. I truly believe that's one of the wonderful strengths of America, that we've got armies of compassion all across our country.

And Father Adams is a general in the army of compassion. He won't admit it. He'll say he's a lowly foot soldier. *[Laughter]* But I saw the way he got people snapping to when it came time to introduce people in the kitchen. *[Laughter]* I see everybody with green aprons on. I suspect the general ordered that to be the case. But anyway—*[laughter]*—but I want to thank Father Adams and everybody else who works here for really bringing out the best in our country by helping people in need.

The other thing that I'm most impressed about the vision of Father Adams, besides being a social entrepreneur, somebody willing to think as aggressively as possible to help people in need, is that this is a program that attracts people from all faiths. That's important for the world to see, that our country is a country of a variety of faiths, that we respect other faiths, and that we're bound by some common principles: Love a neighbor just like you would like to be loved yourself. That's common to faith.

Last night we had an Iftaar dinner at the White House. That's a part of breaking the fast of Ramadan. I wanted to assure people that there are common values, even though we may have different ways to worship God. This program shows those common values. A neighbor in need needs to be helped. We need to constantly figure out ways to reach out and help somebody who may not be as fortunate as we are.

And as we come into the holiday season, the Thanksgiving season, the traditional holiday seasons of our country, we must always remember there are people who hurt in our society. And we will always remember, with blessings come the responsibility to help those in need. And so that's why I've come to So Others Might Eat, to highlight the successful programs that do make a difference in people's lives and to thank people for their concern and care for our fellow Americans who are in need.

There's no question that our country has been deeply wounded. We were attacked. After all, we're never used to being attacked. Never did we dream—I certainly never dreamt that I'd be the President where there is a war on our homefront.

But the evildoers never really—they must have not known who they were attacking. *[Laughter]* They must have thought we were soft and hateful. In fact, the attacks have united our country, have rallied a nation. And out of evil will come good, and part of my purpose as the President is to remind people of the good that can come out of these attacks.

No question that the outpouring of support for—in the direct aftermath of the September 11th attack was astounding. People gave: They gave blood; they gave money; they