

a problem, blame somebody else,” to a culture in which each of us understand that we are responsible for something greater than ourself. That was clearly defined on an airplane that crashed in Pennsylvania, when several people on that plane told their loved ones goodbye. They told them they loved them. They said a prayer. They said, “Let’s roll,” and drove an airplane into the ground to save other people’s lives. It is a symbol of what is possible in America. It is a sign that there are people in this Nation willing to make a sacrifice to help a neighbor in need, willing to make a sacrifice to make their community a better place.

That’s how you win the war on terror. You understand that there is a responsibility that comes with living in the greatest country on the face of the Earth. The great news is, America is rallying to the cause. I can’t tell you what an honor it is to be the President of a nation full of such great and decent and compassionate and tough and firm and freedom-loving human beings.

I want to thank you all for coming. I want to thank you for supporting Mike Fisher. May God bless you all, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:03 p.m. in the Ballroom at the Four Seasons Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Jane M. Earll, candidate for Lieutenant Governor of Pennsylvania; David Girard-diCarlo, cochairman, chief executive officer, and managing partner, Blank Rome Comisky & McCauley LLP; Manuel N. Stamatakis, president and chief executive officer, Capital Management Enterprises; Alan Novak, chairman, Robert Asher, national committeeman, and Christine J. Toretti, national committeewoman, Republican State Committee of Pennsylvania; and Harold B. Hairston, commissioner, Philadelphia Fire Department.

Remarks on the Ready To Learn Program

April 3, 2002

Thank you all. Thank you. Laura and I are honored to have you all here today, and thank you for coming. Some of you have been to the White House before, and I know we’ve got some first-time visitors here. For example, this will be the first time the Vowelles

have ever been to the White House. [*Laughter*] Theo and Cleo Lion are also here to sing a song titled “W Trouble.” [*Laughter*] I don’t know the song, but the theme is familiar. [*Laughter*] My mom often used to say, “The trouble with W”—[*laughter*]—although she didn’t put that to words.

We’re delighted that so many children can be a part of this special event here in the East Room. Thank you all for coming. It’s so good to see you. It is wonderful to see children so young and so eager to learn, with so many fun opportunities to learn together. Every child is born with a love of learning—every child. We adults have a responsibility to give them every possible chance to learn and to start early.

I appreciate the Secretary of Education, Rod Paige, for being here today. Thank you, Mr. Secretary. I want to thank all the good folks at PBS for coming. I appreciate your concern for our Nation’s children. And as Laura said, we’ve been aware of your programming for a long time.

I notice that we’ve got a larger-than-usual contingent of White House staff here today. I know they’re not here to see me. [*Laughter*] They’re here to see Mr. Rogers. [*Laughter*] When he comes to the White House, it’s sure to be a beautiful day in the neighborhood. [*Laughter*] It is impossible for us to count the number of lives you have touched. But you have had a huge impact on thousands and thousands of children. And there are thousands and thousands of parents and Americans who are grateful for your service to the country. In “Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood,” every child is welcomed into the world of learning—not just a few, not just ones from certain neighborhoods, but every child.

Our goal as a nation must be to make sure that no child is denied the chance to grow in knowledge and character from their very first years. Public Broadcasting System has excelled in carrying out that responsibility. Shows like “Between the Lions” bring a combination of charm, creativity, inclusiveness, and as importantly, proven teaching methods to the task of educating young children. And these shows are being used in Head Start and day care centers to encourage early learning. The Ready To Learn program helps

make all these shows possible, and my administration is proud to support it.

America is making great progress in education reform. We're providing higher levels of support for our schools, higher standards for performance in the classrooms. We're giving teachers the resources and training necessary for their mission. We're respecting local control of our schools and respect the authority of parents, so that moms and dads have greater say in how their children are educated.

Under the bipartisan reforms we passed into law, all students in America have a better chance to learn and excel and to live out their dreams. Yet, as we prepare our schools to teach, we must prepare our children to learn. As we raise educational standards, which we must do, each of our children needs an equal opportunity to meet those standards.

And creating that opportunity must begin early, even before school starts. On the first day of school, children need to know letters and numbers. They need a strong vocabulary, and they need to love books. These are the building blocks of learning, and this Nation must provide them.

Early learning is a priority for my Government. By implementing a new accountability system, we'll make sure every Head Start center is providing early learning in the best way possible. Starting this summer, we will train Head Start teachers in proven methods to encourage early reading and language skills. And the Federal Government will work with States to promote early learning programs.

More than anyone else, parents need to be involved. Laura has begun an important effort to get new parents the information they need to start their sons and daughters on the path to learning. And we're so proud to be working with PBS and a host of other organizations to get this information out more broadly.

Reading to your children is a joy. We believe it's a responsibility. Parents are the first teachers in their children's lives, and they can also be the best.

I thank all the parents in this room for what you do and for the important example you set. I want to thank the teachers who are here for devoting yourselves to one of

the great callings in life. I want to thank the broadcasters and others who play such an important part in the life of our country.

Again, welcome to the White House. May God bless the Nation's children. And may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:23 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to PBS television characters the Vowelles and Theo and Cleo Lion from the program "Between the Lions"; and Fred Rogers, creator, writer, and host of the PBS television series "Mister Rogers' Neighborhood."

Remarks on the Situation in the Middle East

April 4, 2002

Good morning. During the course of one week, the situation in the Middle East has deteriorated dramatically. Last Wednesday, my Special Envoy, Anthony Zinni, reported to me that we were on the verge of a cease-fire agreement that would have spared Palestinian and Israeli lives. That hope fell away when a terrorist attacked a group of innocent people in a Netanya hotel, killing many men and women in what is a mounting toll of terror.

In the days since, the world has watched with growing concern the horror of bombings and burials and the stark picture of tanks in the street. Across the world, people are grieving for Israelis and Palestinians who have lost their lives.

When an 18-year-old Palestinian girl is induced to blow herself up and in the process kills a 17-year-old Israeli girl, the future itself is dying—the future of the Palestinian people and the future of the Israeli people. We mourn the dead, and we mourn the damage done to the hope of peace, the hope of Israel's and the Israelis' desire for a Jewish state at peace with its neighbors, the hope of the Palestinian people to build their own independent state.

Terror must be stopped. No nation can negotiate with terrorists, for there is no way to make peace with those whose only goal is death.