

I've come to talk a little bit about the character of the country, and it's a character being defined by the moment at hand. History will look back at us; generations will look back at us; and I believe they're going to say, thanks, thanks to the people who stood strong when it came to defending freedom, thanks to those who sacrificed in our military, thanks to the Congress for making sure the military had the resources necessary to take on a long struggle.

Listen, you've just got to know, there's no cave deep enough—there's no cave deep enough—for the long arm of American justice. There is no calendar. There is no calendar on my desk that says, if we don't get—if so-and-so doesn't show up, then this thing ends. That's just not the way I think. I'm a patient man, and so is the American people, much to the chagrin—much to the chagrin of the enemy that still wants to take us on.

And we'll look back at the history of America, though—I believe this is going to happen—and say what a fantastic period of time it was for kids to grow up in our country where we insisted upon quality education for every child, where there was after-school programs available, manned by loving citizens who put their arm around those who might seem hopeless and say, “I love you a lot. I love you a lot, and you're going to college.”

This is a time when you're going to find, I believe, in American history where our Government, instead of fearing faith and faith-based programs, welcomes faith and faith-based programs into the compassionate delivery—[*applause*]. This will be a time in American history when those of us in Washington, DC, or in the State capitals, recognize that oftentimes the most hopeful and promising programs of help come from places of worship. It doesn't matter what their religion is; the people hear that universal call to love somebody just like they'd like to be loved themselves.

This is a period of time when America, instead of cowering in the face of terrorism, stood defiantly in the face of evil; when not only did we fight for freedom, but we promoted the peace. And this will be a time in history when our Nation's compassion comes forth, where the collective face of America

is a compassionate, joyous nation, that will not allow evil to prevail and, in turn, make sure our neighbors are loved just like they'd like to be loved themselves.

You can understand why I'm optimistic about our country, because I am the President of the greatest Nation on the face of the earth. Thank you for coming. May God bless. May God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:43 a.m. at the Klein Auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Leslie Lenkowsky, chief executive officer, Corporation for National and Community Service. The President's principles for the proposed legislation were outlined in “Principles and Reforms for a Citizen Service Act,” made available April 9 on the White House Web site.

Remarks at a Republican Luncheon in Greenwich, Connecticut

April 9, 2002

Thank you for that warm welcome. It's nice to be back in the State in which I was born. I was running for Congress one time, and they accused me of not being able to represent the people of west Texas because I was born in Connecticut. And I said, “Heck, I just wanted to be close to my mother on that day.” [*Laughter*]

I know I've got a lot of people here are friends of Mother and Dad's. I just want you to know they're doing great, and so am I, and so is my wife. I'm sorry Laura couldn't be with us today. She went to the Queen Mother's funeral in London, and she's flying back tonight. But let me just tell you, for somebody who is a public school librarian, who wasn't all that thrilled about politics and all that in love with politicians, she's made a fabulous First Lady; she really has. She's brought a lot of comfort to the Nation when we needed to be comforted, and she brings a quiet dignity that I'm most proud of.

I also want to thank my friend Johnny Rowland. I'm here because I want the people of Connecticut to reelect Johnny. He's done a heck of a job as your Governor. And you get a good Lieutenant Governor with him as well. I appreciate Lieutenant Governor

Jodi Rell* for being here. Thank you very much. It's great to see you again. Lieutenant Governor Rell and I spent some quality time campaigning together, and I found her to be a very bright, very accomplished soul. It's great to see you again, Jodi.⁶

And I'm also here because I want Denny Hastert to be the Speaker of the House. It is important that we elect Republicans from Connecticut to support Denny Hastert.

I remember one time, right after—in the fall, people said, “Well, do you plan on campaigning?” I said, “Yes, I plan on campaigning.” It is in my interest to campaign for good candidates, because I think it's in the Nation's interest that we have people like Chris Shays and Nancy Johnson and Rob Simmons represent the good people of Connecticut in Washington, DC.

I appreciate Shays. [*Laughter*] Sometimes, he appreciates me. [*Laughter*] But I enjoy working with him because he's a man of deep compassion. He cares deeply about the human condition, and so does his wife, Betsi. And it's been an honor to call them friends, and I appreciate you all very much.

I want to thank Charlie Glazer, the event chairman, longtime friend. I appreciate your tireless work. And I want to thank those who represent the grassroots of the Connecticut party. Oftentimes, those of us in public office only focus on one aspect of politics. But I like to remind people that it takes the good folks dialing the phones and mailing the mail, holding those signs up—at least the ones that say nice things on them. [*Laughter*] They're the ones who really oftentimes don't get the credit. And so for those of you who have toiled in the vineyards on behalf of candidates such as me and those on the stage, thanks from the bottom of our heart. And thank you all for helping the party, which helps Johnny, and helping the two candidates who have got serious challenges.

First, on Johnny. The way we like to put it in Texas is, he's the kind of fellow that does in office what he said he would do. I can't tell you how important it is to have people who hold office who deliver. And one of the jobs of a Governor is to help restore faith in the political process of a particular State. And the best way to defeat cynicism

is to accomplish things on behalf of everybody, is to rise above the traditional noise that tends to dominate the political scene and perform. And that's what Johnny has done. He said he would cut taxes, and he did. He said he would reduce those taxes which inhibited growth in the State of Connecticut, and he did. And as a result, the economy here has been vibrant and exciting, thanks to Johnny's leadership.

Listen, he understands what I understand: Governments don't create wealth—we know that—but governments need to create an environment in which people are willing to risk capital, in which the entrepreneur can flourish. That's what's happening in Connecticut, thanks to Johnny Rowland's leadership.

I gave a speech the other day on the importance of making sure that children learn how to read early in life, so that when they start kindergarten, there's not this huge learning gap that takes place in America. Johnny figured that out way before my speech. He figured out preschool education was important before a lot of other people knew it was important. And I appreciate Johnny's efforts on focusing the State of Connecticut and his budget on preschool programs as well as spending billions of dollars to make sure class sizes are smaller in the State of Connecticut.

Listen, we passed historic education reform in Washington, DC. And thanks to the Members on the stage and both Republicans and Democrats working together, finally, in Washington, we were able to pass a meaningful piece of legislation, part of which is to not only hold people to high standards and to expect the best out of every child, but part of it is we're going to trust the Governors and local people to figure out the path to excellence. And it gives me great confidence in supporting such a bill, knowing that Johnny Rowland is the Governor of the State of Connecticut.

Serious crime has dropped by 15.7 percent in the State of Connecticut since Johnny's been the Governor. His record speaks for itself, and I'm confident the State will be wise enough to send Johnny back to the state-house for another term. I certainly hope so, because he's a good man.

And Nancy Johnson's got a race. And surely the people of her congressional district are

* White House correction.

going to be wise enough to send this good soul back to Washington, DC, because she is a good soul. She's the dean of the delegation. She's a leader in the Republican Party. She has got enormous respect on both sides of the aisle, and that's important. If you're a person who goes to Washington to get something done, you've got to have the respect on both sides of the aisle, and Nancy Johnson does. She is—she has been in the Oval Office more than one time with steady counsel and good advice, and she's not afraid to give it. *[Laughter]*

She is a leading authority on health care and retirement security. If I've heard her say one time, I've heard her say 50 times, "Let's work together to get a plan to make sure our seniors have got prescription drug coverage." I agree with Nancy. We need to work together to achieve some important national objectives.

Nancy is a builder. She's a good, steady soul. She is working on pension reform, and she proudly stood with me when it came time to cut the taxes. And I want you to know we cut the taxes right at the right time. She understands that when you give people their money back or let them keep their own money in the first place, it increases demand. And when you increase demand, somebody is going to supply something for you. And when they supply that good or service, it means jobs. Cutting taxes, which I understand was unpopular on some of the opinion pages around America, was the exact right thing to do, and I want to thank Nancy and Rob and Chris for their support.

And we sent the death tax on its way. We're getting rid of that death tax. But unfortunately, there is a quirk in the law that means that the repeal of the death tax is not permanent. It's hard for me to explain why you eliminate the death tax, and all of a sudden it's able to come back to life. *[Laughter]* That's Washington. *[Laughter]*

We need to make the tax cuts permanent, and the three Members from the United States Congress understand that the repeal of the death tax is an important part of letting people realize the American Dream. And we've got small-business owners all over the country who've worked all their life, who want to leave their business to their heirs,

to a son or a daughter, and can't do so because of the death tax.

Listen, getting rid of the death tax was great for farmers and ranchers. It's good to—it's a good policy if you're worried about urban sprawl, so they can keep the farmland in their families for generations. And we need to make it permanent. We need to make sure that the good work we did doesn't change because of a quirk in how Washington works. So the three Members up here are going to be important to make sure that the repeal of the death tax is forever, and that will be good for the country.

And I appreciate Rob Simmons. He and I showed up about the same time in Washington. *[Laughter]* And he is doing a fine, fine job. He's respected. When he speaks, people listen to what he has to say. As you know, he has had a lifetime of service to the country. He worked for the CIA after he served in the Army. He worked on the Senate staff. He's in the State legislature. He's worked hard, very hard, at every position he's held. And he's been a very fine Member of the United States Congress. He cares deeply about our veterans. He's a member of the Committee of Veteran Affairs. He knows our country owes a lot to the people who have worn the uniform. He's also on the Armed Services Committee. The Armed Services Committee is important for the State of Connecticut. It's important to have his voice heard on behalf of not only Connecticut, of course, but the entire Nation. But I'm confident he'd tell you things about Connecticut first. *[Laughter]* And the people of his district will be doing the State of Connecticut a very important service to send him back to Washington, DC, as well.

I have mentioned a couple of the issues that we've worked on, education and tax relief. But there's a lot to do in Washington. We need an energy policy, an energy policy on the one hand that enhances conservation, that unleashes the technology of the country to enable our cars to run cleaner, our plants to burn cleaner. But we need to explore more, too. We need to be less dependent on foreign sources of crude oil. This was made pretty clear the other day when Saddam Hussein stands up and announces he's going to try to organize an oil boycott. You

know my opinion about Saddam. [Laughter] The world's not going to follow him. But it just goes to show how important it is to diversify our supply away from places like Iraq.

We need to have trade promotion authority passed for the good of American workers. I need to be able to negotiate trade agreements with countries all around the world. That bill passed the House, just like the energy bill. It stalled in the Senate.

Nothing seems to be moving out of the Senate these days. A faith-based initiative passed the House. It is now sponsored by Joe Lieberman of Connecticut. It's stalled in the Senate.

We've got a lot of work to do in Washington, DC, and I appreciate these House Members' support. But there's no greater work to be done than to protect the American people. I have submitted a budget that prioritizes homeland defense and our national security. I submitted a budget that recognizes that we've got to prepare America for whatever emergency may come, a budget that puts ample amount of money in place to enable our first-responders, our brave police and firefighters and EMS crews all around the country, to have the equipment and training necessary to respond should the enemy hit us again.

I know the Coast Guard Academy is based here. In my budget, I beefed up the Coast Guard in order to make sure that our borders are more secure.

We've got to change the INS, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, so we understand who's coming into our country and what is their purpose for coming into our country. We've got to make sure we have a mechanism in place to deal with any bioterrorist attack that may occur. And so we've got—and I've got a good man, a friend of Johnny's and mine who is a fellow Governor of ours from Pennsylvania named Tom Ridge, running this operation.

You also need to know that every morning that I'm in Washington, I go into the Oval Office—which is a fabulous office, by the way. [Laughter] It's a great shrine to our country. I sit at the desk where the Roosevelts—I guess since I'm a President, I can call them the Roosevelt boys—sat at the

desk, John Kennedy, Ronald Reagan. And I think my dad had a different desk.

And so I sit there and open up a threat assessment that our people put together about noise we hear of one kind or another about the enemy still is interested in hitting us. And so I'm reminded every day that my job is to protect America, which I'm going to do. Any time we get a hint, any time we get any evidence that somebody might be thinking about doing something, you need to know we're moving, and we're moving in a way that would make you proud.

But the best way to secure the homeland is to find the enemy wherever they try to hide and bring them to justice. The best way—make no mistake about it—you should not be confused about the nature of the people we're dealing with. They hate us because we're free. They hate the thought that Americans welcome all religions; they can't stand that thought. They hate the thought that we educate everybody. They hate our freedoms. They hate the fact that we hold each individual—we dignify each individual. We believe in the dignity of every person. They can't stand that.

And the only way they know to express themselves is through killing, coldblooded killing. And so we need to treat them the way they are, as international criminals. And that's why my defense budget is the largest increase in 20 years. You know, the price of freedom is high, but for me it's never too high because we fight for freedom.

I've tried to speak as clearly as I possibly can. You're either with us, or you're not with us. You're either with us, or you're against us. And the good news is, there's a lot of people with us. A lot of people love freedom like we do, and we've got a vast coalition we've put together that we work on. I had the honor of welcoming Tony Blair down to the ranch. We've got no finer friend, no stronger partner in our quest for freedom than Tony Blair.

I also said that if you hide a terrorist or feed one, you're just as guilty as a terrorist. And the Taliban found out exactly what we meant. We went into Afghanistan not as conquerors but as liberators.

It is so hard for people to understand, the fact that this was a government—it's hard for

people in America to understand that this is a government that would not let young girls go to school. I mean, these were barbaric, backward people. And we got them out of office. And not only did we get them out of office, we kept a nation from starving. We're helping with their health care system. I am so proud of the contributions that our military and Americans have made. It is a signal to the world that we're not only tough—if somebody wants to take us on, they will have made a bad mistake. But we're also compassionate, and we care deeply about the plight of our fellow human beings, no matter what part of the world they live in.

The enemy must be chagrined. You know, first of all, I can't imagine what went through their mind when they attacked. I like to remind people, they must have felt we were so materialistic and so self-absorbed and so weak and feeble that all we would do would be to file a lawsuit. [*Laughter*]

They thought we would grow weary. They thought we would tire. Man, are they wrong. This Nation is united and strong. And it's important that we be patient and united and strong, because there are still a lot of them out there. There just are; that's the reality. I deal with reality every day. But there's no cave deep enough for these people to hide in. You just need to know that.

The other day we hauled in a guy named Abu Zubaydah. He's one of the top operatives plotting and planning death and destruction on the United States. He's not plotting and planning anymore. He's where he belongs.

History has called us into action, and this Nation is responding. You've got to understand my mindset and what I think. We've got to act on behalf of the little ones. We've got to secure the world and this civilization as we know it from these evil people. We just have to do this.

And that includes making sure that some of the world's worst leaders who desire to possess the world's worst weapons don't team up with faceless, Al Qaida-type killer organizations. We owe it to the future of this country to lead a coalition against nations that are so evil and, at the same time, desire incredibly evil weapons. And you just need to know, so long as I'm the President, my focus is

going to be defending freedom and making sure that, when they look back at history, they will have said the United States did what was necessary to keep the world free from terror and barbaric behavior.

And I want to thank these Members for their strong support of the defense budget that I submitted. And my call, of course, to the Congress is that instead of passing the defense budget last, like they always try to do, let's pass it first; let's get it done. Let's make sure our troops understand they're going to have the best equipment, the best training, and the best pay possible early in the budget cycle, not late.

I believe strongly in the inherent good of our country. I'm an optimistic fellow because I know what a great land we are—have—and what a great people we are. I believe out of this evil that has been done to our Nation will come incredible good. There's no doubt in my mind; there's no doubt in my mind, if we're firm and deliberate and tough, we'll achieve peace in places where we never dreamt there would be peace. If we're steady and rout out terror wherever it exists, we can achieve peace. And I know this country can respond to the evil acts by responding with acts of kindness and decency.

People say, "What can I do to help?" The answer is, love a neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself. If you want to help America fight evil, do some good in your neighborhood. Put your arm around a child who may wonder whether or not the American experience is meant for them and say, "I love you." And more than that, teach them how to read, so they can understand what America is all about. If you really want to help, support your schools. Help people understand that loneliness and despair do not have to be a way of life. Walk across the street to a shut-in who may live in your neighborhood and say, "I care for you. What can I do to help you today?"

It's small acts of kindness and decency that define the true face of America for the world. If you want to fight evil, do some good. And it's that gathering momentum of millions of acts of kindness which will have the American people stand squarely in the face of the evildoers.

And that's happening in America. It is. Our culture is beginning to change from one of—that basically said, “If it feels good, just go ahead and do it,” and, “If you've got a problem, blame somebody else,” to one in which we're all responsible for the decisions we make in life, that we're responsible for loving our children. The most important job you'll ever have as a mother or father is to love your children with all your heart and all your soul.

A responsible period of time says that you will be involved in your community, that you shouldn't just take from the great American experience but you've got to give and you've got to help people in need. It means we've got corporate responsibility in America. CEOs of corporate America must not only be responsible for full disclosure of assets and liabilities, but they must also stay focused on the health and welfare of their workers.

There is a responsibility era emerging in America to the better—to the better—and as a result, we'll be able to overcome evil with good.

And perhaps that change of attitude and change of culture is best reflected by what took place on Flight 93. For me, it was one of the most meaningful stories of September 11th and on. It's the story of average Americans flying an airplane—on an airplane, traveling our country just like everybody else has done—most everybody has done—just got on an airplane and said, “I'm going to go somewhere,” for business or pleasure, whatever it was. And they were told on their telephones that America was under attack. And they told their loved ones they loved them, and they said a prayer, and they drove the plane in the ground to save others' lives.

It is the ultimate—it's the ultimate statement of personal responsibility to serve something greater than yourself. And that's what's happening in America. Americans all around our country are serving something greater than their own self-promotion. And that's good. And that's the American spirit. And that's why I am so incredibly optimistic about the future of this country, because we're a land full of decent and caring and compassionate Americans.

Thank you all for coming today, and may God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:55 p.m. in the Regency Ballroom at the Hyatt Regency Greenwich. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Abu Zubaydah, a leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization, who was captured on March 28.

Remarks Following Discussions With Secretary General Lord Robertson of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

April 9, 2002

President Bush It's an honor to welcome Lord Robertson back here to the White House. NATO is an anchor of security for both Europe and for the United States. And Lord Robertson is a very strong leader who is helping NATO meet the challenges of the new century.

Since September the 11th, NATO has been a bulwark in the fight against terror. On September the 12th, for the first time in history, NATO invoked Article V, declaring an attack on one of its members is an attack on all.

NATO did so to show its strong support for the United States. And NATO nations are backing up those words with action. More than a dozen of our NATO Allies are contributing forces to the war against terror in Afghanistan. NATO aircraft have been deployed to patrol our skies in support of America's security. And the airspace of NATO members has been critical to coalition air operations. The United States is deeply, deeply grateful for this support.

This past weekend in Texas, I thanked Prime Minister Tony Blair for the many valuable contributions of Great Britain. Today, on behalf of the American people, I thank Lord Robertson for his leadership and for the help of our NATO friends.

The United States will consult closely with our allies as we move forward in the war against terror. This is an important moment for NATO, and as we prepare for the NATO summit in Prague later this year, we must address some critical challenges. NATO must develop new, flexible capabilities to meet the threats of the 21st century.