

Remarks at an Iftaar Dinner

November 7, 2002

Good evening. Thank you all for coming. I'm honored to welcome such a distinguished group of Ambassadors and American citizens to the White House to help usher in the holy month of Ramadan.

Islam is a religion that brings hope and comfort to more than a billion people around the world. It has made brothers and sisters of every race. It has given birth to a rich culture of learning and literature and science. Tonight we honor the traditions of a great faith by hosting this Iftaar at the White House.

I'm honored that our great Secretary of State is with us today. Mr. Secretary, thank you for being here. I appreciate Your Highness Sheikh Hamad bin Zayid of the United Arab Emirates for coming. I want to thank members of my administration who are here, in particular, Dr. Elias Zerhouni, who's the Director of the National Institute of Health. I want to thank all the Ambassadors who are here. It's good to see you all again—the other representatives from the Organization of Islamic Conference. I appreciate so very much my fellow Americans here, many from the Muslim community.

Ramadan is a special time of prayer and fasting, contemplation of God's greatness, and service to those in need. According to Muslim teachings, this season commemorates the revelation of God's word in the Holy Koran to the prophet Muhammad. Today, this word inspires faithful Muslims to lead lives of honesty and integrity and compassion.

In hosting tonight's Iftaar, I send a message to all the nations represented by their Ambassadors here tonight: America treasures your friendship; America honors your faith. We see in Islam a religion that traces its origins back to God's call on Abraham. We share your belief in God's justice and your insistence on man's moral responsibility. We thank the many Muslim nations who stand with us against terror, nations that are often victims of terror, themselves.

Tonight's Iftaar also sends a message to all Americans: Our Nation is waging a war on a radical network of terrorists, not on a

religion and not on a civilization. If we wage this war to defend our principles, we must live up to those principles, ourselves. And one of the deepest commitments of America is tolerance. No one should be treated unkindly because of the color of their skin or the content of their creed. No one should be unfairly judged by appearance or ethnic background or religious faith. We must uphold these values of progress and pluralism and tolerance.

George Washington said that America gives to bigotry no sanction, to persecution no assistance. This was our policy at our Nation's founding; this is our policy today. America rejects all forms of religious intolerance. America grieves with all the victims of religious bigotry. And America opposes all who commit evil in God's name.

Ramadan and the upcoming holiday seasons are a good time to remember the ties of friendship and respect that bind us together. Learning from each other, we can build bridges of mutual trust and understanding. Working together, we can create a better future for people of all faiths.

I thank you for coming to the White House this evening. I wish you all a blessed Ramadan. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:05 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Minister of State for Foreign Affairs Hamdan bin Zayid Al Nuhayyan of the United Arab Emirates.

Remarks on the Passage of a United Nations Security Council Resolution on Iraq

November 8, 2002

Good morning. With the resolution just passed, the United Nations Security Council has met important responsibilities, upheld its principles, and given clear and fair notice that Saddam Hussein must fully disclose and destroy his weapons of mass destruction. He must submit to any and all methods to verify his compliance. His cooperation must be prompt and unconditional, or he will face the severest consequences.

The world has now come together to say that the outlaw regime in Iraq will not be

permitted to build or possess chemical, biological, or nuclear weapons. That is the judgment of the United States Congress. That is the judgment of the United Nations Security Council. Now the world must insist that that judgment be enforced.

Iraq's obligation to disarm is not new or even recent. To end the Persian Gulf war and ensure its own survival, Iraq's regime agreed to disarm in April of 1991. For over a decade the Iraqi regime has treated its own pledge with contempt. As today's resolution states, Iraq is already in material breach of past U.N. demands. Iraq has aggressively pursued weapons of mass destruction, even while inspectors were inside the country. Iraq has undermined the effectiveness of weapons inspectors with ploys, delays, and threats, making their work impossible and leading to 4 years of no inspections at all.

The world has learned from this experience an essential lesson: Inspections will not result in a disarmed Iraq unless the Iraqi regime fully cooperates. Inspectors do not have the power to disarm an unwilling regime. They can only confirm that a government has decided to disarm itself. History has shown that when Iraq's leaders stall inspections and impede the progress, it means they have something to hide.

The resolution approved today presents the Iraqi regime with a test, a final test. Iraq must now, without delay or negotiations, fully disarm, welcome full inspections, and fundamentally change the approach it has taken for more than a decade.

The regime must allow immediate and unrestricted access to every site, every document, and every person identified by inspectors. Iraq can be certain that the old game of cheat-and-retreat, tolerated at other times, will no longer be tolerated. Any act of delay or defiance will be an additional breach of Iraq's international obligations and a clear signal that the Iraqi regime has once again abandoned the path of voluntary compliance.

With the passage of this resolution, the world must not lapse into unproductive debates over whether specific instances of Iraqi noncompliance are serious. Any Iraqi noncompliance is serious because such bad faith will show that Iraq has no intention of disarming. If we're to avert war, all nations must

continue to pressure Saddam Hussein to accept this resolution and to comply with its obligations and his obligations.

America will be making only one determination: Is Iraq meeting the terms of the Security Council resolution or not? The United States has agreed to discuss any material breach with the Security Council, but without jeopardizing our freedom of action to defend our country. If Iraq fails to fully comply, the United States and other nations will disarm Saddam Hussein.

I've already met with the head of the U.N. inspections program and the head of the International Atomic Energy Agency, which has responsibility for nuclear matters. I've assured them that the United States will fully support their efforts, including a request for information that can help identify illegal activities and materials in Iraq. I encourage every member of the United Nations to strongly support the inspection teams. And now the inspectors have an important responsibility to make full use of the tools we have given them in this resolution.

All patriotic Iraqis should embrace this resolution as an opportunity for Iraq to avoid war and end its isolation. Saddam Hussein cannot hide his weapons of mass destruction from international inspectors without the cooperation of hundreds and thousands of Iraqis, those who work in the weapons program and those who are responsible for concealing the weapons. We call on those Iraqis to convey whatever information they have to inspectors, the United States, or other countries, in whatever manner they can. By helping the process of disarmament, they help their country.

Americans recognize what is at stake. In fighting a war on terror, we are determined to oppose every source of catastrophic harm that threatens our country, our friends, and our allies. We are actively pursuing dangerous terror networks across the world. And we oppose a uniquely dangerous regime, a regime that has harbored terrorists and can supply terrorists with weapons of mass destruction, a regime that has built such terrible weapons and has used them to kill thousands, a brutal regime with a history of both reckless ambition and reckless miscalculation.

The United States of America will not live at the mercy of any group or regime that has the motive and seeks the power to murder Americans on a massive scale. The threat to America also threatens peace and security in the Middle East and far beyond. If Iraq's dictator is permitted to acquire nuclear weapons, he could resume his pattern of intimidation and conquest and dictate the future of a vital region.

In confronting this threat, America seeks the support of the world. If action becomes necessary, we will act in the interests of the world. And America expects Iraqi compliance with all U.N. resolutions.

The time has come for the Iraqi people to escape oppression, find freedom, and live in hope.

I want to thank the Secretary of State Colin Powell for his leadership, his good work, and his determination over the past 2 months. He's worked tirelessly and successfully for a resolution that recognizes important concerns of our Security Council partners and makes Iraq's responsibilities clear. I also thank our Ambassador to the United Nations, John Negroponte, and his team at our U.N. mission in New York for their hard work and outstanding service to our country. Secretary of State Powell's team has done a fine job.

The American people are grateful to the Security Council for passing this historic resolution. Members of the Council acted with courage and took a principled stand. The United Nations has shown the kind of international leadership promised by its charter and required by our times. Now comes the hard part. The Security Council must maintain its unity and sense of purpose so that the Iraq regime cannot revert to the strategies of obstruction and deception it used so successfully in the past.

The outcome of the current crisis is already determined: The full disarmament of weapons of mass destruction by Iraq will occur. The only question for the Iraqi regime is to decide how. The United States prefers that Iraq meet its obligations voluntarily, yet we are prepared for the alternative. In either case, the just demands of the world will be met.

Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:44 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Hans Blix, Executive Chairman, United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission; and Mohamed ElBaradei, Director General, International Atomic Energy Agency.

Remarks Honoring the 2002 Stanley Cup Champion Detroit Red Wings *November 8, 2002*

Thank you all for coming. Gosh, we're honored you're here. Thanks for coming, and welcome to the White House.

I am honored to be greeting the mighty Detroit hockey team, winners of the Stanley Cup 3 out of the last 6 years, 10 times winners of the Stanley Cup and the team that made Detroit "Hockeytown."

It's an honor to be with the Ilitches. Mike and Marian are the—who do a really good job of setting the right tone for this club. I knew Mike when he was a Detroit Tiger owner. And this goes to prove it's easier to win in hockey than in baseball, I guess. *[Laughter]*

We're glad you all are here. Mr. Commissioner, thank you for coming. I appreciate you being here. It's an honor also to be on the stage with a great coach, a man whose name appears on the Stanley Cup 10 times—9 times as a coach. Obviously, he knows what he's doing. *[Laughter]* He gets all these ruffians skating in the same direction, is a pretty good—*[laughter]*.

But I'm real proud of you, Scotty. I know the people of Detroit love you, and they're going to miss your leadership.

If I hadn't already asked—announced that yesterday the Vice President was going to be my running mate, I was going to—*[laughter]*—I was thinking about you, anyway. *[Laughter]*

I appreciate Dave Lewis, Scotty's replacement, being here. And I wish you all the best, Dave, for coming. It's an honor as well to be with the—obviously, one of the true leaders of any sport, the team captain of the—of the Detroit team, captain for 17 years, which is pretty remarkable that Steve could keep the respect of a group of highly skilled professionals for that long a period of time.