

of the Press Secretary on February 7 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq and his son, Qusay; and Vice President Taha Yasin Ramadan and presidential adviser Lt. Gen. Amir Al-Saadi of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Statement on the Terrorist Attack in Colombia

February 8, 2003

Last night, terrorists attacked a nightclub in Bogota, Colombia. The latest reports are that 25 innocent men and women were killed and more than 150 wounded.

On behalf of the United States, I condemn this barbaric act of terrorism. I offer our deepest condolences to the Colombian families and friends of all who were murdered. We also hope and pray for the quick recovery of those that were injured.

I extend to President Uribe and the people of Colombia our deepest sympathy for this horrible tragedy.

We stand with the Colombian people in their fight against narcoterrorists who threaten their democratic way of life.

We will offer all appropriate assistance to the Colombian Government in bringing to justice the murderers responsible for this act.

Remarks at the “Congress of Tomorrow” Republican Retreat Reception in White Sulphur Springs, West Virginia

February 9, 2003

Thank you. Please be seated. Nothing like about an hour’s speech for a Sunday lunch—[laughter]—trying to loosen up my vocal cords for the week.

Thanks for having me. And thanks for serving our country. First, I want to tell the family members who are here, I appreciate your sacrifice. I know it’s hard to leave a district and a State that you love. I know your spouse is working incredibly long hours, and I want you to know that I feel that you’re just as an important part of your spouse’s mission.

So on behalf of a grateful nation, thank you all very much for the sacrifices you make.

I want to thank the Speaker and I want to thank Senator Frist for their leadership. I’m confident in their abilities. I know we can work together. And I’m proud to call them friends. I want to thank DeLay for serving in the capacity he does. He brings a lot of Texas wisdom into the House of Representatives. [Laughter] Texas tough, and I’m proud to call him friend as well. I’ve known Tom a long time, and I’m confident by working together we can get a lot done.

I want to thank Santorum—Rick Santorum, that is—and I want to thank Deborah for putting on this event. Where are you, Santorum? There you are. I know it’s not easy to herd cats. It’s a lot easier when you do it in a beautiful place like the Greenbrier though. [Laughter]

I want to thank Roy Blunt for being a good vote counter, and we’re counting on you to count. And I appreciate—and Jon Kyl. Thank you, Jon, I’m honored you’re up here with us today.

So we’ve got some big challenges facing us. I don’t exaggerate when I say this is a significant year for our country. I truly believe that. My attitude, it doesn’t matter how high the hurdle is; we’ll cross it. It doesn’t matter how big the obstacle is; we’ll deal with it, because we represent the greatest country on the face of the Earth.

I know there’s a lot of people paying attention to what’s happening overseas, and so am I. But I want to begin by reminding us that we’ve got a domestic agenda that is positive and strong and hopeful and optimistic.

We believe strongly that if somebody is looking for work and can’t find a job, then we’ve got to do everything we can to grow our economy. Our whole philosophy is based upon growth of the economy. We equate jobs and growth. And we know the role of Government is not to create wealth but an environment in which the entrepreneurial spirit flourishes, in which small businesses can grow to be big businesses.

And that is why I am passionate about my plan to give people more money. The more money they have in their pockets, the more likely it is that somebody will find work. It is also important for us never to forget that

we represent the entrepreneurs of America and that when you reduce the individual income-tax rates, you're putting money into the pockets of the sole proprietorship or the limited partnership or the subchapter S. The tax reduction plan that I want you to pass and I want to sign will put more money into the pockets of the entrepreneurs of America, which is good for those who are looking for work.

We've already passed it once. We had a pretty good battle. I see some of the soldiers in the tax cut fight of 2001 sitting out there. I repeat what I said earlier: If the tax relief is good 2 or 4 or 5 years from now, with an economy that is not as strong as we want it to be, it is good enough today. Let us get the tax relief plan passed.

And while we're doing it, it makes sense to help our seniors and to make the Tax Code more fair. The double taxation of dividends is unfair. It is unfair to tax profits and the distribution of those profits. And therefore, for the sake of capital formation and for the sake of the lifestyle of the 10 million seniors who receive dividend income, let us end the double taxation of dividends.

I want to appreciate those who are involved with appropriations for working hard to get an appropriations bill to my desk as soon as possible. It would be nice to get the 2003 issue out of the way, as we start to deal with the 2004 budget and appropriations process. I am serious about holding the line on Federal spending. I submitted a budget to you which sets clear priorities, meets those priorities, and will enable us to say to the American taxpayer, "We are wise with your money." And therefore, I look forward to working with you to pass a budget which is realistic and a budget which is responsible.

We will address the Medicare issue in a way which enables us to say as a country, "We've fulfilled our promise to senior citizens." Medicine is becoming modern. Medicare isn't, and we have an obligation to the future of this country to modernize the Medicare system, to fulfill the promise to thousands of seniors, a system which includes more choice, more options, and prescription drugs for the senior citizens of this country.

We need an energy bill in America, a bill which encourages conservation and explo-

ration. We need a Clear Skies legislation so that we can say our party has led to reasonable, sane environmental policy. And we need a forest policy in America, a Healthy Forest Initiative which enables us to maintain the vast treasures, particularly of forest land in the West, and at the same time be wise about how we clear underbrush so that we don't encourage forest fires that—some of the devastating forest fires that took place in the West this year.

I look forward to working with the Senate to get my judges confirmed. I have named some really honorable people to the bench. I want to thank Senator Hatch and other members of the Senate Judiciary Committee for kind of putting aside all that political—the politics that so dominated the discourse.

The first test, of course, is Miguel Estrada. Fabulous story. He's a great, great jurist—a lawyer who will be a great jurist. And I expect that he be given a fair hearing on the floor of the Senate. I expect the people of the Senate not to hold him up, not to try to talk his nomination into the ground, because Miguel Estrada not only represents the American Dream but will do us proud on the bench. I want to thank the Senators for standing strong for this good nominee. And when the vote comes up, this guy is going to be confirmed, and America—the bench and America will be better for it.

I look forward to working with you on a compassion agenda, one that recognizes that in our plenty there are people who hurt, there are people who need love and compassion, there are people who wonder whether or not the American experience is meant for them. I look forward to working to get the Faith-Based Initiative out of the House and the Senate. I look forward to getting the "Citizen Service Act"—a reformed "Citizen Service Act" passed as well.

I'm going to Nashville tomorrow to talk about the compassion agenda. We've got a role in Washington, but the biggest role, of course, takes place in the neighborhoods of our country, when people hear the call to love somebody like they'd like to be loved themselves, when people fully understand that one person can make a significant difference in the life of somebody who hurts. I'm going to reiterate my call for a mentoring

initiative, aimed particularly at junior high students as well as children whose mom or dad may be in a prison. I'm going to call for a focus on those who are addicted to drugs. Listen, we will work hard to continue to drive the demand for drugs down and interdict supply, but there are sad souls in our society who are hooked on drugs. And I look forward to working with the Congress to empower programs which work, particularly faith-based programs which work, to help save Americans one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time.

And as we show our compassion here at home, I feel strongly about our need to show our compassion abroad as well. Some of you have been to Africa and have seen the suffering. Some of you know firsthand the stories about thousands of abandoned children who are in orphanages, crowded orphanages, because their mom or dad—and dad—and/or dad have died because of AIDS. Some of you know the startling statistics that the people of the continent face. It's a pandemic. It is destruction of human life, the likes of which the modern world hasn't seen, and we need to do something about it.

In my strong judgment, this Nation needs to stand up and show our compassion when a fellow human being suffers. See, if we say every life matters, if we believe that every life has worth, that the Almighty God believes in the worth of every individual, if we believe that, then it makes sense for us to help save lives when we can.

I want to work with you to get the AIDS initiative passed out of the Senate and the House as quickly as possible. It is a plan that is a plan of mercy. It's an important initiative. It's a vital initiative, because we're talking about saving human life. We're talking about showing the world the great strength and compassion of the United States of America. There is no doubt that when you pass this initiative, when our time in Washington, DC, is past and we go home and—sitting around the ranch in Crawford or the front porch in Plano or in Woodlands, that we'll say we heard the call, the cry of people who suffer, and we responded, and the world is a better place because of the actions we took.

And I believe the world will be a better place because of the actions we take when

it comes to fighting terror. First, I thank you all for your hard work to get us a homeland security bill late last year. We'll work with the Congress to implement that so that we can all say that we're doing everything we can to protect the homeland. We've got other initiatives. The BioShield initiative is an important initiative, and we look forward to working with the respective committees and, of course, the House and the Senate to get that passed.

The best way to secure the homeland is to continue to hunt the killers down one at a time. The best way to deal with the threat we face is to find them and bring them to justice, which is precisely what our military is doing right now. We are sharing intelligence the likes of which we've never done before. We're cutting off money. We've got some of our best units chasing these people down, and one by one, we are dismantling their network.

The other day the Italians hauled some in. The Brits hauled some in. Anytime one of these people is arrested, whether we do it or not, we're making progress against the shadowy killer network of Al Qaida. Slowly but surely, we're bringing them to justice, and we're not quitting until the American people are secure and safe.

The issue facing our Nation and the world is the extension of the war on terror to places like Iraq. Prior to September the 11th, there was apparently no connection between a place like Iraq and terror. Oh, sure, he had run some terrorist networks out of his country, and that was of concern to us. But it was very difficult to link a terrorist network and Saddam Hussein to the American soil. As a matter of fact, it was very difficult to link any attack on the American soil, because prior to September the 11th, we were confident that two oceans could protect us from harm.

The world changed on September the 11th. Obviously, it changed for thousands of people's lives for whom we still mourn. But it changed for America, and it's very important that the American people understand the change. We are now a battleground. We are vulnerable. Therefore, we cannot ignore gathering threats across the ocean. It used to be that we could pick or choose whether

or not we would become involved. If we saw a threat, it may be a threat to a friend, in which case we would be involved, but never did we realize the threat could be directed at the American people.

And that changed. And therefore, when we hear of stories about weapons of mass destruction in the hands of a brutal dictator who hates America, we need to take that seriously, and we are. And when we find out there's links between Baghdad and a killer who actually ordered the killing of one of our fellow citizens, we've got to realize the—what that means to our future.

And that's why this administration and this country is holding the U.N. Security Council and the world to its demands that Saddam Hussein disarm. It is important for the country to realize that Saddam Hussein has fooled the world for 12 years, is used to fooling the world, is confident he can fool the world. He is—wants the world to think that hide-and-seek is a game that we should play. And it's over.

You see, our country recognizes, and a lot of other countries now recognize as well, the role of the inspector is to show up and verify whether Saddam Hussein is disarming. That's the role of the inspector. The role of inspectors—there's 104 of them—the role of the inspector is not to go into a state the size of—a country the size of California and try to figure out where this guy has hid things over a 12-year period of time.

And the inspectors have gone to Iraq, and it is clear that not only is Saddam Hussein deceiving, it is clear he's not disarming. And so you'll see us, over the next short period of time, working with friends and allies and the United Nations to bring that body along. And it's a moment of truth for the United Nations. The United Nations gets to decide shortly whether or not it is going to be relevant in terms of keeping the peace, whether or not its words mean anything.

But one thing is certain: For the sake of peace and for the sake of security, the United States and our friends and allies, we will disarm Saddam Hussein if he will not disarm himself.

And so we've got a lot to do—we've got a lot to do to leave behind a safer country and a better country and a safer and better

world. But I'm glad history has called this country into action at this point in time, because there's no doubt in my mind, when we make our mind up, we can achieve a lot.

And there's no doubt in my mind, when the United States acts abroad and home, we do so based upon values, particularly the value that we hold dear to our hearts, and that is, everybody ought to be free. I want to repeat what I said during my State of the Union to you: Liberty is not America's gift to the world. What we believe strongly and what we hold dear is, liberty is God's gift to mankind. And we hold that value precious, and we believe it is true.

And as we work to make the world a safer place, we'll also work to make the world a freer place. And as we work to make America a freer place, we'll work to make it a more compassionate place. Big obstacles have been placed in our way. Working together, we will achieve what we need to achieve to cross those obstacles.

Thank you all for your interest. May God bless you, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:23 a.m. at the Greenbrier. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Deborah Pryce of Ohio; Miguel A. Estrada, nominee to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the District of Columbia Circuit; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks at the National Religious Broadcasters Convention in Nashville, Tennessee

February 10, 2003

Thank you so much for that warm welcome. I'm honored to be here. I want to thank Glenn Plummer for his kind introduction. I want to thank those who put on the convention for letting some of my fellow Texans in the hall. [*Laughter*] I see Evans. I see Gramm. It's good to see friendly faces. It's good to see people with whom I've spent a lot of quality time. Thanks for letting me come. And I'm honored to be with so many of you all who have dedicated your lives to sharing the good news.