

Remarks Following a Meeting With President Gordon B. Hinckley of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and an Exchange With Reporters in Salt Lake City, Utah
February 8, 2002

The President. Mr. President, Laura and I are honored to be back. Thank you all very much for your hospitality.

Mr. Hinckley. We're honored to have you here. We very much appreciate that you've come. We're all here excited about the Olympics, and we think this is going to be a great thing for this area and for the United States of America.

The President. I agree. Thank you, sir.

Mr. Hinckley. Thank you very much.

The President. I'm looking forward to it. I want to congratulate the great State of Utah for putting on the games. It's going to be a—I know it's been a lot of hard work, and now we're here, and I think the world is going to see why we love the West so much here in the United States. People can get things done.

Mr. Hinckley. We're happy that they're here. We hope that all will go well; we're confident that all will go well and that it will be a great season for all of us.

The President. I might answer a few questions. You got anything, Ron [Ron Fournier, Associated Press] or Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters]?

Winter Olympic Games

Q. Mr. President, are you confident about the security situation at the games?

The President. I'm so confident about the security condition, I've come. [Laughter] Fournier, you got anything?

Genealogy

Q. What did you talk about in there?

The President. Well, we just—interestingly enough, we talked about our family heritage, our lineage. The president kindly gave us our family histories, genealogies that have been researched here, and it's a wonderful gift.

And I said, "Before you tell me, are there any horse thieves in there?" [Laughter]

Mr. Hinckley. I want to tell you that he comes of good stock. [Laughter]

The President. That's right. [Laughter]

Mr. Hinckley. And so does she.

Winter Olympic Games

Q. Mr. President, did you give any advice to the American athletes on carrying the flag from New York, the World Trade Center flag?

The President. No, I didn't.

Q. And is there a danger that an event like this takes on some political overtones, especially with the United States engaged in a war on terrorism?

The President. Well, I think the event is going the—the events are going to strike a proper balance between the patriotism that we all feel here and the international flavor of the games. As I understand it, they've reached what appears to be a reasonable compromise about the flag that flew over the World Trade Center.

And I think it's important for all Americans, obviously, to root hard for our athletes and recognize, however, this is an international event. And one of the things that is important is that there be world unity. And this is a nice place to have world unity, during the competition. You know, an athlete wins, people salute their flag and their anthem. And unfortunately, it's not going to be the American flag every single event. It'll be somebody else's country, but it gives us a chance to cheer for others and celebrate with others, as well.

So it appears to me that the proper balance has been struck. No question that tonight is going to be an emotional moment, though. I mean, we're the host country,

and we're a nation that has been under attack. And this proud country is unified and strong, and when they play the national anthem, I'm sure there's going to be millions of Americans who are proud to hear the anthem played in a unique setting and in an historic moment.

Q. Were you disappointed, sir, when you first heard that the flag was not going to be allowed in the ceremonies?

The President. I knew that there would be an accommodation reached. I talked to some friends about it. So I'm happy with the outcome of the accommodation. I think it's a nice balance.

Q. Did you weigh in at all on it?

The President. No, I didn't.

Meeting With President Hinckley

Q. Mr. President, why was it important for you to meet with President Hinckley today?

The President. Well, first of all, this isn't my first meeting. I was—it's kind of—

Mr. Hinckley. Reunion.

The President. Reunion, right. Thank you. I was searching for the word. [*Laughter*]

I was here in the summer of '99. And first of all, President Hinckley represents a great religion. He is a strong part of the American scene, and I wanted to come by and say hello and pay my respects, and I'm glad I did.

Also, by the way, looking forward to hearing the choir tonight. It is going to be a magnificent moment, an incredibly touching experience for all of us, particularly those of us who will be there live.

So thank you for tuning them up. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Hinckley. They're all ready to go.

The President. Thanks.

Mr. Hinckley. Thank you very much.

The President. Good to see you, sir.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1:20 p.m. at President Hinckley's office in the Church Administration Building.

Remarks at a State of Utah Olympic Reception in Salt Lake City February 8, 2002

Thank you. Well, Mike, thank you very much. That's a powerful introduction. It must have been the choir. [*Laughter*]

It's such an honor to be here. Laura and I have really been looking forward to this spectacular day. I want to thank Mike for your efforts, your hard work to show really the very best of America to the whole world. I want to thank Jackie as well. Mike and I both married above ourselves. [*Laughter*]

It's an honor to be here with many distinguished citizens of our country, the Utah congressional delegation. Senator Hatch and Senator Bennett, thank you both for being here. We had the opportunity of flying down on Air Force One together.

These two men love Utah a lot. I want to thank members of the congressional delegation. Congressmen Matheson, Hansen, and Cannon, thank you all for being here as well.

I appreciate the mayor. I also appreciate members of my Cabinet, Secretary of State Colin Powell—members of one of the finest teams a President has ever assembled have joined us. Thank you all for coming.

I want to thank Mitt Romney for being such a strong leader, for really kind of willing these games to go forward. I appreciate Jacques Rogge for being here, as well. Thank you, sir. It's my honor to have welcomed you to the—one of the greatest offices on the face of the Earth, the Oval