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NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:20 a.m. on April 5 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 6. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 5 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom in Crawford, Texas
April 6, 2002

President Bush. Good morning. Laura and I are very honored to have our friends Tony and Cherie Blair and their family visit us here in Crawford. We appreciate the rain that the Prime Minister brought with him—[*laughter*]—and so do the other farmers and ranchers in the area. Mr. Prime Minister, thanks for bringing it.

Prime Minister Blair. My pleasure, George. [*Laughter*]

President Bush. It is always a pleasure for any American President to welcome the Prime Minister of Great Britain, because ours is a special and unique relationship. And our relationship is strong because of my respect for the Prime Minister. I appreciate his advice. I appreciate his counsel, and I appreciate his friendship.

This morning I conveyed to the Prime Minister the condolences of the American people for the recent passing of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother. This remarkable woman is warmly remembered on both sides of the Atlantic for her grace and her strength and particularly for her inspiration she provided during the darkest days of World War II.

Today, the bond between our peoples that she symbolized is stronger than ever. Our nations share more than just a common language and a common history. We also share common interests and a common perspective on the important challenges of our times.

No nation has been stronger in fighting global terrorism than Great Britain. I'm extremely grateful for the Prime Minister's courageous leadership since September the 11th. And the world is grateful for all that Great Britain has contributed in the war against terror, everything from special forces to ground forces to naval forces to peacekeepers.

The Prime Minister and I both understand that defeating global terror requires a broad based, long-term strategy. We understand the importance of denying terrorists weapons of mass destruction. And we understand the importance of adapting NATO to meet new threats, even as NATO prepares to take on new members and forges a new relationship with Russia.

The Prime Minister and I also agree that, even as we work to make the world safer, we must also work to make the world better. Our countries will continue to work closely to bring greater hope and opportunity to developing nations.

We also had extensive conversations about the situation in the Middle East. Both our nations are strongly committed to finding a just settlement. Both of us agree on the fundamental elements that a just settlement must include. We share a vision of two states, Israel and Palestine, living side by side in peace and in security.

We agree that this vision will never be realized through terrorism and that it can only be realized through a political process. We agree that the Palestinian leadership must order an immediate and effective

cease-fire and crackdown on terrorist networks. And we agree that Israel should halt incursions in the Palestinian-controlled areas and begin to withdraw without delay from those cities it has recently occupied.

The Prime Minister and I agree to work closely in the weeks and months ahead on these difficult issues. We have a common reading of history. We understand that each of our nations stands taller when we stand together. And that's why our nations will continue to stand together against freedom's enemies. And that's why we'll continue to work together, for not only the good of our own people but for good of peace in the world.

Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Blair. Thank you, Mr. President. First of all, if I could begin by thanking you and the First Lady for their very kind and gracious welcome that you have given to myself and my family, and also thank the people of Crawford and McClellan County for their kind welcome, too. And it's a real pleasure to be with you here.

And as you might expect, we've had very detailed discussions covering all the issues, from the topics of the moment through to issues like trade and bilateral issues between us. Of course, much of our discussion has focused on the situation in the Middle East. And I agree entirely with what the President said just a moment or two ago, not just in relation to what must happen in the immediate term but also as to the only basis upon which there will be and can be a viable and lasting peace there, that is a state of Israel, secure in its own borders, recognized by the entirety of the Arab world, and also a viable Palestinian state where people can live side by side with each other.

We discussed, of course, the issues of international terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. I would like to pay a particular tribute to the President for his courage and for his leadership in the aftermath of the 11th of September. And I think that it is worth reflecting that over these past few months, although very much still remains to be done, we have accomplished, nonetheless, a very great deal in Afghanistan and in the pursuit of those responsible for that terrible event on the 11th of September. And we will continue to work in any way we can in order to make sure that this scourge of international terrorism is defeated.

We also agreed and made it very clear, as well, that the issue of weapons of mass destruction cannot be ducked. It is a threat. It is a danger to our world, and we must heed that threat and act to prevent it being realized.

In addition, I was grateful for the President's kind words about the contribution Britain has made in Afghanistan. We made that willingly, because we believe it is important not just that we root out the last remnants of the Al Qaida terrorist network in Afghanistan but also that we help that country to go from being a failed state, failing its region and its people, to a state that offers some hope of stability and prosperity for the future.

And finally, I would like to say a special thank you to the President for his words on Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother—that will be deeply appreciated by people of Britain. And as you may know, there have been many Americans as well as British people paying their respects to the Queen Mother as she lies in state. Ours is, indeed, a very special and unique relationship between Britain and the United States of America. And I have no doubt at all that under the leadership of President Bush, that relationship will strengthen still further. And for that, Britain is glad—I know that the United States is—but I believe it is good for the wider world, too.

President Bush. We have now agreed to take three questions apiece. We'll start with Ron Fournier [Associated Press], a fine man who works for AP—got a couple of kids, cares deeply about the future. [*Laughter*]

Prime Minister Blair. I'm just thinking of how I introduce mine, now. [*Laughter*]

Q. Flattery will get you nowhere, sir.

President Bush. I've noticed. [*Laughter*]

Israeli Incursions Into Palestinian Territories

Q. Israel is moving deeper into Palestinian territories, and there are reports today that she has launched attacks on southern Lebanon. Have you failed, Mr. President, to convince Prime Minister Sharon to pull back his troops? And why did you wait so long to demand the withdrawal and only today adding the caveat, "without delay"?

President Bush. My administration's—my words to Israel are the same today as they were a couple of days ago: Withdraw without delay. I made the decision to give the speech when I did because I was concerned about the ability for those of us who were interested in a long-term solution to take hold. I was worried about the balance being tipped to the point where we weren't able to achieve a long-lasting peace.

I gave the speech at the right time. And I expect Israel to heed my advice, and I expect for the Palestinians to reject terror in the Arab world. As Israel steps back, we expect the Arab world to step up and lead—to lead against terror, to get into an immediate cease-fire, begin the implementation of U.N. Resolution 1042.

Q. Can I follow up, please?

President Bush. No. Nice try.

Prime Minister Blair. Andy Meyer, who works for the BBC, and really nothing else need be said. [*Laughter*] He's got three children.

Q. Can I just follow up from that and ask the President and the Prime Minister, what happens now if the Israelis continue to ignore what you've been asking them to do?

President Bush. I don't expect them to ignore. I expect them to heed the call, heed the call from their friends the United States, and heed the call from their friends the Great—the people of Great Britain and the leadership of Great Britain.

Q. But if they don't?

President Bush. Well, that's—as I told you, I think they will heed the call.

Prime Minister Blair. I think that most people in Israel will realize that they don't have two greater friends in the world than the United States of America or Britain. And we both understand, as well, the appalling nature of the acts of terrorism that they have been subject to. We understand that. But we are also trying to help secure a way out of the present impasse, so that we can get into a political process where some of these underlying issues can be resolved satisfactory for the long term, because the bloodshed and the carnage and innocent people dying, in the end, is not a solution to this issue. So I believe that Israel will heed the words of President Bush and will do so knowing that he speaks as a friend to Israel.

Regime Change in Iraq

Q. Mr. President.

President Bush. I don't know you well enough, Adam [Adam Entous, Reuters] to be able to sing your praises. [*Laughter*]

Q. Thank you. Mr. President, you have yet to build an international coalition for military action against Iraq. Has the violence in the Middle East thwarted your efforts? And Prime Minister Blair, has Bush convinced you on the need for a military action against Iraq?

President Bush. Adam, the Prime Minister and I, of course, talked about Iraq. We both recognize the danger of a man who's willing to kill his own people harboring and developing weapons of mass destruction. This guy, Saddam Hussein, is a leader who gasses his own people, goes after people in his own neighborhood with weapons of—chemical weapons. He's a man who obviously has something to hide.

He told the world that he would show us that he would not develop weapons of mass destruction, and yet, over the past

decade, he has refused to do so. And the Prime Minister and I both agree that he needs to prove that he isn't developing weapons of mass destruction.

I explained to the Prime Minister that the policy of my Government is the removal of Saddam and that all options are on the table.

Prime Minister Blair. I can say that any sensible person looking at the position of Saddam Hussein and asking the question, would the region, the world, and not least the ordinary Iraqi people be better off without the regime of Saddam Hussein, the only answer anyone could give to that question would be, yes.

Now, how we approach this, this is a matter for discussion. This is a matter for considering all the options. But a situation where he continues to be in breach of all the United Nations resolutions, refusing to allow us to assess, as the international community have demanded, whether and how he is developing these weapons of mass destruction—doing nothing in those circumstances is not an option, so we consider all the options available.

But the President is right to draw attention to the threat of weapons of mass destruction. That threat is real. How we deal with it; that's a matter we discuss. But that the threat exists and we have to deal with it, that seems, to me, a matter of plain common sense.

Q. Prime Minister, we've heard the President say what his policy is directly about Saddam Hussein, which is to remove him. That is the policy of the American administration. Can I ask you whether that is now the policy of the British Government? And can I ask you both, if it is now your policy to target Saddam Hussein, what has happened to the doctrine of not targeting heads of states and leaving countries to decide who their leaders should be, which is one of the principles which applied during the Gulf war?

Prime Minister Blair. Well, you know it has always been our policy that Iraq would be a better place without Saddam Hussein. I don't think anyone can be in any doubt about that, for all the reasons I gave earlier, and—you know, reasons to do with weapons of mass destruction, also to do with the appalling brutality and repression of his own people. But how we now proceed in this situation, how we make sure that this threat that is posed by weapons of mass destruction is dealt with, that is a matter that is open. And when the time comes for taking those decisions, we will tell people about those decisions.

But you cannot have a situation in which he carries on being in breach of the U.N. resolutions and refusing to allow us the capability of assessing how that weapons-of-mass-destruction capability is being advanced, even though the international community has made it absolutely clear that he should do so. Now, as I say, how we then proceed from there, that is a matter that is open for us.

President Bush. Maybe I should be a little less direct and be a little more nuanced, and say we support regime change.

Q. That's a change though, isn't it, a change in policy?

President Bush. No, it's really not. Regime change was the policy of my predecessor as well.

Q. And your father?

President Bush. You know, I can't remember that far back. [*Laughter*] It's certainly the policy of my administration. I think "regime change" sounds a lot more civil, doesn't it? The world would be better off without him—let me put it that way, though—and so will the future.

See, the worst thing that can happen is to allow this man to abrogate his promise and hook up with a terrorist network. And then all of a sudden you've got one of these shadowy terrorist networks that have got an arsenal at their disposal, which could create a situation in which nations down the road get blackmailed. We can't let it happen; we just can't let it happen. And obviously, the Prime Minister is somebody

who understands this clearly, and that's why I appreciate dealing with him on the issue. And we've got close consultations going on, and we talk about it all the time. And he's got very good advice on the subject, and I appreciate that.

Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. You say that in the war against terrorism, people are either with us or against us. Whose side is Chairman Arafat on, and do you think the world would be a better place without him?

President Bush. I think Chairman Arafat—I was asked on British TV the other day, have I lost trust in Chairman Arafat? And I said, "Well, he never earned my trust, because he hasn't performed."

Somebody told me there's a story floating around that somehow I am blaming the Clinton administration for what's going on in the Middle East right now. Let's make this very clear, that in my speech I said that Mr. Arafat has not lived up to the promises he made at Oslo and elsewhere to fight off terror. He hasn't performed. I appreciate what President Clinton tried to do. He tried to bring peace to the Middle East. I am going to try to bring peace to the Middle East.

But in order to earn my trust, somebody must keep their word. And Chairman Arafat has not kept his word. He said he would fight off terror. He hasn't. He needs to speak clearly, in Arabic, to the people of that region and condemn terrorist activities. At the very minimum, he ought to at least say something.

And you know, there's all kinds of excuses. But in order to achieve lasting peace, both sides must make constructive steps, and we're prepared to help and will help. That's why the Secretary of State is going to the region. But Chairman Arafat has failed in his leadership, and he has let the people down. He had opportunity after opportunity to be a leader, and he hasn't led. And I'm disappointed.

President Saddam Hussein of Iraq

Q. Present company doubtless excepted, one could think of quite a lot of world leaders the world might be better off without.

President Bush. Thank you for the exception.

Q. And I'm not sure necessarily whether the Prime Minister would agree with you on Yasser Arafat. But can I ask you, I think what Europeans have a problem with, about expanding any war on terror to Iraq, is linkage. They can see a linkage between Al Qaida and Afghanistan. They can't see a direct linkage to Saddam Hussein.

Would you accept that there isn't a direct linkage and how, therefore——

President Bush. First of all, I wouldn't accept that. But can't they see linkage between somebody who's willing to murder his own people and the danger of him possessing weapons of mass destruction, which he said he would not develop? I see the linkage between somebody who is willing to go into his own neighborhood and use chemical weapons in order to keep himself in power and at the same time develop a weapon that could be aimed at Europe, aimed at Israel, aimed anywhere, in order to affect foreign policy through his—you know, I can't imagine people not seeing the threat and not holding Saddam Hussein accountable for what he said he would do, and we're going to do that.

History has called us into action. The thing I admire about this Prime Minister is, he doesn't need a poll or a focus group to convince him the difference between right and wrong. And it's refreshing to see leaders speak with moral clarity when it comes to the defense of freedom.

I intend to speak with clarity when it comes to freedom, and I know Prime Minister Tony Blair does as well. And we will hold Saddam Hussein accountable for broken promises. And that's what a lot of our

discussion over there on Prairie Chapel Ranch has been about. And other than eating lunch, which we're fixing to go do, we're going to continue our discussions.

Prime Minister Blair. You talked about no linkage there. There is a reason why United Nations resolutions were passed, nine of them, calling upon him to stop developing weapons of mass destruction. I mean, there is a reason why weapons inspectors went in there, and that is because we know he has been developing these weapons.

We know that those weapons constitute a threat. Three days after the 11th of September when I made my first statement to the House of Commons in Britain, I specifically said then this issue of weapons of mass destruction has got to be dealt with. And the reason for that is that what happened on the 11th of September was a call to us to make sure that we didn't repeat the mistake of allowing groups to develop destructive capability and hope that, at some point in time, they weren't going to use it. They develop that destructive capability for a reason.

Now, we've made it very clear to you how we then proceed and how we deal with this—all the options are open. And I think after the 11th of September, this President showed that he proceeds in a calm and a measured and a sensible but in a firm way. Now, that is precisely what we need in this situation too.

And as I say to you, never forget he knows perfectly well what the international community has demanded of him over these past years, and he's never done it.

President Bush. Thank you all.

Prime Minister Blair. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11 a.m. in the gymnasium at Crawford High School. In his remarks, he referred to Cherie Blair, wife of Prime Minister Blair, their daughter Kathryn, and Mrs. Blair's mother, Gale Booth. A reporter referred to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel.

Remarks During a Tour of the Citizens Police Academy in Knoxville, Tennessee

April 8, 2002

Thanks, I'm honored to be here. I'm here to explain to the Nation the importance of citizens becoming involved with preparedness in their communities. And I want to thank the chief and the mayor, and thank you, Captain, for providing an outlet for good citizens who love their country, and who generally have asked the question, "What can I do to make my community a better place?"

The reason we've come to Knoxville is because this is a model program. And I want other people to see what is possible. I also want them to see the good citizens in action, like yourselves. I want to thank you—I'm a grateful President, for a grateful nation, for helping your community.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:43 a.m. in Training Room A of the Knoxville Police Department Training Facility. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Victor H. Ashe of Knoxville; and Chief of Police Phil E. Keith and Captain Don Green of the Knoxville Police Department. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.