

Remarks in Knoxville on the Middle East Situation April 8, 2002

Let me say one thing before I leave. First of all, I meant what I said to the Prime Minister of Israel. I expect there to be withdrawal without delay. And I also meant what I said to the Arab world, that in order for there to be peace, nations must stand up, leaders must stand up and condemn terrorism, terrorist activity.

There is a mutual responsibility to achieve peace, and it's going to require leadership on both sides. And the United States is firmly committed to achieving peace and is firmly committed—I am firmly

committed to what I expect from both parties.

I repeat, I meant what I said about withdrawal without delay, and I mean what I say when I call upon the Arab world to strongly condemn and act against terrorist activity.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:06 p.m. at the Knoxville Police Department Training Facility following a tour of the Citizens Police Academy. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel.

Remarks on the Citizens Corps in Knoxville April 8, 2002

The President. Thank you all so very much. I'm sure glad to be back in Knoxville, Tennessee. I want to thank you for your warm welcome. I want to thank you for your hospitality. And I want to thank you all for coming today to give me a chance to talk about some—to talk about the future of this great country and why I'm optimistic about the future of this great country and why I'm so proud to be an American, to be the President of this great country.

It makes sense to come to the Volunteer State to talk about the need for our citizens to help each other. I can understand why the foes of the University of Tennessee dread hearing “Rocky Top.” [*Laughter*] I mean, it kind of fired me up, standing behind the—[*applause*]. It reminds me of that great volunteer spirit. Of course, in Texas, we really appreciate those Tennessee volunteers coming down to help us out.

And I appreciate the Citizens Police Academy I went to today. It shows the best of your city. You have a great mayor

working with a really fine police chief, who are pooling the resources, who are providing an avenue, an outlet for people who care about your community, a place for them to come and learn the skills necessary to help protect the good people of Knoxville, should an emergency arise.

I've come to highlight what works, so others around the country, if they're interested—

[*At this point, there was a disturbance in the audience.*]

The President. —if you're interested in doing what is right—to encourage your citizens to become involved. And so I want to thank the city of Knoxville, Tennessee, for showing Americans—for showing Americans how best to help their communities. [*Applause*] Thank you all.

I also want to thank the mayors and county officials from cities from around our country. I had the honor of flying over from Washington today with the fine Mayor of Washington, DC, my friend Tony Williams. I also was with Mayor Jim Hahn

from Los Angeles and others here, all of whom are utilizing their positions to encourage our citizens to become more involved in our communities. And I want to thank you all so very much for coming. We've got some mayors from Texas, small towns, large towns, Republicans, Democrats, all of whom care deeply about our country.

I want to thank so very much the members of the Tennessee congressional delegation for being here as well. You've sent a fine group of folks to Washington. I enjoy working with them. I appreciate their service to the country, and I want to thank you all for coming.

I want to remind our fellow citizens that we have a volunteer military, that we've asked our citizens to volunteer to protect our country. And my attitude is, so long as we have a soldier in harm's way, they deserve the best pay, the best support, the best equipment possible. I have submitted a budget to the United States Congress that reflects the nature of the conflict with which we're faced. I've asked for the largest increase in defense spending in 20 years, not only because it will fulfill our commitment to support our troops but because it recognizes that this country is in our war for the long pull, that we're interested in defending freedom no matter what the cost.

You know, I can't imagine what went through the minds of those who felt like they could attack America. I can't imagine. They must have thought we were so materialistic and so self-absorbed and so weak that all we would do was file a lawsuit. [Laughter] They found out we're a different type of nation than they thought. They found out this Nation will do what it takes to defend that which we hold dear, and what we hold dear is freedom.

And it's important for the young, in particular, but all Americans to understand that we seek—we don't seek revenge; we seek justice. It's hard for some to believe, but there are people in this world who

hate what America stands for. They hate the fact that we believe people should worship freely. They hate the fact that we believe there ought to be honest political discourse. They hate the fact that we believe in human rights and the dignity and worth of each individual. These people hate America. They are coldblooded killers, and the United States will hunt them down one by one and bring them to justice.

And thanks to our United States military and thanks to a coalition we put together—and thanks to the coalition we have put together, we have freed the people of Afghanistan from one of the most repressive regimes in the history of mankind. Not only are we steadfast in our desire to defend that which we believe; we also are willing to commit resources to free a nation. Several weeks ago, young girls went to school for the first time in Afghanistan.

I'm proud of the United States of America. I'm proud of our people. I'm proud of our resolve. I'm proud of the unity. I'm proud of the patience of the American people. The American people know what I know, that we have been called into action, that history has given us a chance to lead, that history understands—that we now understand that history's call is to lead our vast coalition against terrorists and to defend freedom, no matter what the cost. And my fellow Americans, I can assure you so long as I'm the President, I will lead this world's coalition to defend our freedoms, no matter what the cost.

I've heard talk about the budget and people saying, "Well, the budget is too big for defense." Listen, the price of freedom is high. I understand that. But it's not too high, as far as I'm concerned. This Nation can show the world what we stand for, and we can show future generations what we're made out of.

Now, it's important for us to remain strong, and it's important for us to do what we say we're going to do in the world. I said loud and clear, "Either you are with us, or you're against us." And I also said,

“If you’re going to harbor a terrorist or feed a terrorist or think you can hide a terrorist, you’re just as guilty as the ones who came and murdered innocent Americans, and we’re going to hold you accountable.”

And we’re making good progress. We’re making good progress. We’re hunting them down, and that’s what has to happen. And we’re doing it in a way that sometimes doesn’t make it in the newspapers. I understand that. You know—and sometimes it doesn’t have all the sensationalism that some on the TVs would like to see. But you’ve just got to know that your Government is steady and deliberate and patient. There is no cave deep enough to hide from the arm of justice of the United States of America.

And while I recognize that the best way to secure our homeland is to find the enemy wherever they hide, there’s some stuff we need to do at home too. And we’re doing it. And that is to have a homeland security strategy that recognizes the importance of first-responders. I want to thank the police and fire officers and EMS teams not only in Knoxville but around the country for your sacrifice on behalf of the citizens of your community.

We’ve got a strategy that makes sure our border security works better, a strategy that responds to any bioterrorism-type attack. We’re doing a good job of buttoning up our country. We’re doing a much better job of communicating between law enforcement agencies. You see, you’ve got to know that anytime we get a hint, a scintilla of evidence that somebody might be thinking about doing something to America, we’re responding. We’re sharing information. We’re on alert, and we’re working overtime. And we’re working diligently to make sure the enemy doesn’t hit us again.

But there’s some things that citizens can do as well. People oftentimes ask me, “What can I do to help?” Well, let me give you some suggestions today. One way to help is to volunteer. And I said to the

fellow citizens, give 4,000 hours of volunteer service for the rest of your life. If you want to help America, step up and serve your community. And there are ways to do that. There are ways to do so on the forefront of the war—on the strategy to make sure America is better prepared.

I have created what’s called USA Freedom Corps. It’s a chance for citizens from all walks of life to serve, to serve by serving in AmeriCorps, where you can help teach—where you can help people realize that the American experience is meant for us all. Or you can teach. Or Senior Corps—senior citizens can serve in the Senior Corps programs. Or the Peace Corps—we’ve had thousands of people now call in to say they want to serve America’s interest in the Peace Corps by helping to spread America’s values. There are ways to serve.

Today I’m talking about the Citizens Corps. It’s an opportunity to work with local officials to make the homeland security more prepared. Interestingly enough, when I made the call for people to serve, we had over a million hits on the web site for the Citizens Corps, and 25,000 Americans stepped up and said, “We want to help. We want to apply for Citizens Corps applications.”

And here—there are ways to help. We need volunteers who are trained in emergency preparedness and response to participate in what we call Community Emergency Response Team programs. They first started in Los Angeles, Mayor Hahn was telling me. All the cities represented here on this stage have now got CERT programs. It gives people a chance to be a part of an emergency-response mechanism, both urban and rural, in America. If you’re interested in helping, dial up the phone and the web site I’m about to give you, so that you can be a part of emergency preparedness in your communities.

We need volunteers on the Neighborhood Watch programs. Neighborhood Watch—I hope you’re familiar with it—is a way for communities to be—citizens to

become involved with making each neighborhood more secure. Neighborhood Watch is a structure which already exists. We want to expand it in America. We want more folks to be a part of the Neighborhood Watch program, to make our communities more prepared.

Operation—what’s called—we call it terrorism information program; it’s a tip program. This is a program where truckers can report anything that might be suspicious to local authorities. One of the most innovative tip programs in the country took place in Maine. Governor King, in working with the local FBI, signed up a lot of lobstermen, so when they’re out there pulling their pots to get the lobsters, if they see something suspicious taking place along the Maine coast, that they share information with the local jurisdictions, local law enforcement jurisdictions. If people see anything suspicious, utility workers, you ought to report it. This is a way to organize that which already happens in our communities on a daily basis and a way to make the homeland more secure and more prepared.

We’ve got what’s called the VIP program, VIPS, and that’s Volunteers in Police. And that’s what we’ve talked about today here in Knoxville. I don’t know if you know this or not, but I would say the vast majority of police departments need volunteer labor to help make their departments function. The chief here in Knoxville was telling me that he could not live without the fact that we’ve got a lot of volunteers right from your community, probably your neighbors, that go down there on a daily basis, to help make the police department function more smoothly. This is a good way to help in your community, if you’re interested in helping.

And then we have what’s called the Medical Reserve Corps. This is a chance for active and retired doctors and nurses to lend a hand in preparing any community for an emergency. It makes a lot of sense to say to a retired doc or a retired nurse,

“You know, you’ve still got your skills. You still care about people. Here’s a good way for you to serve the community.” We need this participation from our citizenry. It’s not only good for each community; it’s good for the citizens to know that they’re helping to serve a great nation by serving their community.

And so for those of you out there who are interested in participating, I want you to call up this number, 1-877-USA-CORPS*, or to dial up on the Internet, www.citizencorps.gov. This is a way where you can help America. The Government will help as well. I put in my budget \$203 million to help on the Citizen Corps programs, 50 of which will be immediate, through the supplemental.

In other words, we’re willing to fund. But what we can’t do is, we can’t hire people. You’ve got to step up in the Citizen Corps. The money is meant to enable. You’re meant to provide the manpower. So when a fellow American says, “What can I do to help? What can I do to help America be prepared better,” here’s a way you can help and make a huge difference in the communities in which you live.

And there’s another way to help too. It’s by loving a neighbor like you’d like to be loved yourself. You’ve probably got a sense of my strong feelings about the enemy. I believe they’re evil. The best way to fight evil is to do some good. Let me qualify that—the best way to fight evil at home is to do some good. The best way to fight them abroad is to unleash the military.

It is so important for citizens in this country to put a face on America for the world to see, the true face. And that’s by loving somebody, and that’s by caring for somebody who needs a hand. You know, it doesn’t take much to help define the true face of America; it really doesn’t. It can mean just walking across the street to a shut-in, and saying, “I care for you. Is there anything I can do to make your day

* White House correction.

brighter?" It certainly means mentoring a child, putting your arm around a child, and say, "You know, America is meant for you, and I love you." It means organizing a program in your church or your synagogue or your mosque, to help hear the universal call of loving somebody just like you'd like to be loved yourself.

There are pockets of despair in America, and we need people of love to go into those pockets, people of faith to go into those pockets of despair, to help this country realize its potential. If you want to join in the war against terror, you can join the Citizen Corps, or you can act out of compassion and concern to help make somebody's life brighter. It is the gathering momentum of millions of acts of kindness and decency and compassion which show the world the true face of America. Not only are we strong militarily, but we've got great hearts and great compassion about our fellow human—men and women.

And therefore, my fellow Americans, if you want to join us, if you want to make the country stronger, participate; help somebody in need. You know, I truly believe that out of this evil is going to come incredible good. I believe that by remaining strong in the face of terror, that we can lead the world to peace. I believe there's going to be some problems in the world that can be solved with American strength and American leadership and a coalition that refuses to bend when it comes to the defense of terror. And out of evil will come some incredible good in America, some incredible good.

Many of you know what I'm talking about when I say that families have taken a good look at what's important in their life. Moms and dads have now said that they're going to love their children with

all their heart and all their soul. They're going to focus their love and attention on being the best parent they can possibly be, as we've taken a good look at the value systems that are important for our future.

You know, Flight 93 told me a lot about America. Here we were in the midst of this beginning of the new war of the 21st century, and some men and women on a flight decided that they needed to save others. They were on cell phones with their loved ones. They told them they loved them. They said a prayer. They said, "Let's roll," and they saved lives on the ground. It is that spirit that is alive and well in America, and it's that spirit that makes me so optimistic about the future of this great country.

I want to thank you all so very much for coming. I want to thank you for your strong support for our country. I want to thank you for your patience. I want to thank you for your understanding about what lies ahead for the country. But most of all, I want to thank you for working hard to make your neighborhood and your community the best place it can possibly be for each one of us who's lucky enough to call themselves an American.

And I want you to know, I can't tell you what an honor it is to be the President of the greatest land on the face of the Earth. God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:30 p.m. at the Knoxville Civic Coliseum. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Victor H. Ashe of Knoxville; Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; Mayor James K. Hahn of Los Angeles, CA; Governor Angus S. King, Jr., of Maine; and Phil E. Keith, chief of police, Knoxville Police Department.

Remarks on Terrorism Risk Insurance Legislation April 8, 2002

Thank you very much. Ed, thank you very much. I didn't realize you were so eloquent. [Laughter] But I know you're a good leader, and I know you care deeply about the people you represent, and so does Jimmy Hoffa and Joe Hunt, and so do the people—the employers here. I want to thank you all for coming to help me talk about this important issue facing the country, and that is how to make sure people stay working. That's what we're talking about.

You know, the enemy hit us pretty hard on September the 11th. I just came in from Tennessee, where I was talking about one way to respond to the attacks is for people to volunteer in their communities and help make their neighborhoods a better place. I told them, I said, they must have not—they miscalculated. They hit us and thought we were so weak that all we would do is probably file a lawsuit. [Laughter]

But they found out that we're thinking a little differently in America and that, when it comes to our freedom, we will do what it takes to defend freedom. And I want to remind you all that this is a long struggle that's going to take a while, that there are Al Qaida killers still on the loose. There are people who hate America. They hate what we stand for. They hate the fact that Democrats and Republicans both love our country equally. They hate the idea that we worship freely. They hate the concept that we debate issues in open. They hate freedom. They just hate it, and they are going to try to hurt us—they are.

And the best way to secure the homeland is to find them, one by one, and we are. That's exactly what we're going to do. And the—we've unleashed the proud United States military, and the men and women who wear our uniform are really doing us proud.

I also want you to know that—it's just important to know that we don't seek revenge; we seek justice. That's what we're doing. And we're not conquerors, but we're liberators. I am really proud of our Nation. I'm proud of the fact that young girls went to school for the first time in Afghanistan. That really makes me feel really good about what we're doing. I'm proud about the fact that we're not leaving the country behind, that not only have we liberated people from the clutches of this barbaric regime but we're staying around to help them with their security and help them to develop into a nation that can protect herself and a nation that will be a good neighbor in an important part of the world.

We have made some pretty good progress in a quick period of time. But you've got to remember we live in a world in which sometimes, in all due respect, the media expects things to end quickly. This isn't going to end quickly. So long as there is terrorists, we need to find them. So long as there is nations which develop weapons of mass destruction and therefore try to hold the U.S. or our friends and allies hostage through blackmail, we're going to have to deal with it—just going to have to deal with it. History has called us into action, and I'm not going to let our children and grandchildren down. And I know you're not, either.

In terms of our economy, no question that the attacks of September the 11th hurt our economy. I mean, it affected employment in big ways. Many of you know that. I see Bill Marriott; his business was affected, deeply affected. And thanks to some focused efforts, things are improving. But as far as I'm concerned, the notion about where we stand in terms of our economy really depends upon whether or not people are able to find work and whether or not