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a great calling. You'll serve your country and our values. You'll protect your fellow citizens. And by your effort and example, you will advance the cause of freedom around the world. And so I'm here to thank you for your commitment and congratulate you on the high honor you have received.

May God bless you all, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. in Cameron Hall as part of the George C. Marshall ROTC Award Seminar. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Richard B. Myers, USAF, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Maj. Gen. (Virginia militia) Josiah Bunting III, superintendent, Virginia Military Institute; Maj. Gen. John T.D. Casey, USA, commanding general, U.S. Army Cadet Command; former Secretary of the Army John O. Marsh, Jr.; Albert J. Beveridge III, president and chief executive officer, George C. Marshall Foundation; and Abu Zubaydah, a leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization who was captured March 28.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Andres Pastrana of Colombia and an Exchange With Reporters

April 18, 2002

President Bush. Before the President and I will answer a couple of questions from both the U.S. side and the Colombian side, I do want to welcome my friend Andres Pastrana back to the White House.

President Pastrana is a—has taken on a huge task in his country. One is to defend democracy and the institutions of democracy, and he's done a great job at that. Secondly, is to fight—is to fight narcotrafficking. He has led a valiant effort at eradicating coca fields, standing strong against the narcotraffickers.

And as well, he fights terrorism in his country. He fights well-organized, well-funded groups that are out to destroy democracy in Colombia. And he has been strong in his support for democracy not only in his own country but in the region. We had a good discussion about a variety of issues about how to change the focus of our strategy from counternarcotics to include counter-terrorism. I explained to him that a supplemental I sent up to the United States Congress would do just that.

As well, we talked about the need to get the Andean Trade Preference Act passed out of United States Senate, reconciled if there's any differences with the House of Representatives, and to my desk as quickly as possible. I am a strong supporter of trade with the Andean—with our Andean friends. The President knows first hand how important that trade is, not only for commercial reasons but also as a way to help fight against narcotrafficking, provide opportunities for people in his country.

This is a good friend, and it's my honor to welcome him back to the White House.

Mr. President.

President Pastrana. Thank you very much, President Bush. Once again, thank you for having us here in the Oval Office. I think you've said everything.

The only thing that I wanted to say is, first of all, thank you for your help, for your leadership in helping Colombia and helping the world. At the end, we are fighting a common enemy that is narcotrafficking and narcoterrorism. We have full support of President Bush and the Government, first in trying to, as you said, Mr. President, in change of authorities—the use of the military equipment sent by the United States to Colombia to

be used against also narcoterrorism, not only against narcotrafficking.

Secondly, as you said, you have been a big supporter of ATPA. The Andean preference act is fundamental for us. It's commerce. As we said, we don't want aid; we want commerce. And that's what we need in Colombia, also, as one of the big components of the social side of Plan Colombia; that is, social investment. And social investment is jobs, better jobs and well-paid jobs.

So I think that with the help of the Government, but the most important, with the help of the U.S. Congress, we will have ATPA before the end of May. And that's going to be fundamental to continue our fight on drugs.

So thank you very much, Mr. President, for all your help.

President Bush. De la AP, Senor Fournier [Ron Fournier, Associated Press].

Q. I think that's you, Ron. [*Laughter*]

Venezuela

Q. Mr. President, if I could ask you about another Latin American issue. Your administration was slow to condemn the Venezuelan coup. How does that square with your war on terrorism rhetoric, that America will always stand up for democratic values?

President Bush. My administration was very clear, when there were troubles on the streets in Venezuela, that we support democracy and did not support any extraconstitutional action. My administration spoke with a very clear voice about our strong support of democracy.

It is very important for President Chavez to do what he said he was going to do, to address the reasons why there was so much turmoil on the streets. And it's very important for him to embrace those institutions which are fundamental to democracy, including freedom of press and freedom for—the ability for the opposition to speak out.

And if there's lessons to be learned, it's important that he learn them.

Mr. President, care to comment on that?

President Pastrana. Yes. First of all, I think there's no doubt in Latin America of the support and promotion of President Bush on democracy in the region. I think that's something that nobody could put in doubt of your support in promotion of democracy in the whole region.

As you said, what we're expecting is that President Chavez said in his speech that he's going to be a—try to look for a reconciliation inside Venezuela, that he is going to correct many mistakes. And we hope that what he's going to correct is toward strengthening democracy, respect, as you said Mr. President, civil laws, give guarantees to the opposition, the freedom of the press, respect of human rights. And that's what all Latin America are supporting and what we want in the case of President Chavez.

In our case, for example, I think one of the mistakes was regarding the presence of the guerrilla groups in Venezuela. Yesterday, unfortunately, Mr. President, the media, national and international, we had information that Mexico closed the office of the narcoterrorist group in Mexico. And the first information is that they could be in Venezuela.

So that's why today, Mr. President, I'm sending a letter through my Minister of Foreign Affairs to the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Venezuela, asking if there is the FARC—these members of the FARC are present in Venezuela or not; that we need that information. We approved a very clear resolution in the Group Rio meeting in Costa Rica last week, supporting what you promote in the Security Council, ban any presence of terrorists in any countries. And that's what we want to do in Latin America.

Northern Command

Q. Mr. President, how do you respond to the reaction of Canada and Mexico to participate with troops in the Northern Command that was announced yesterday by Secretary of Defense Rumsfeld? Do you

think Mexico and Canada will, in the future, participate with troops in the Northern Command?

President Bush. Well, I think that the restructuring of our command structure really represents that we're in a new world and that we face new threats. Our relationships with Canada and Mexico will not change as a result of restructuring. It's a better way for us to organize against an enemy that is willing to strike at America and our neighborhood. And that's what this reflects. It reflects the ability to coordinate a possible response against an enemy that's fearless.

And these are killers. They're cold-blooded killers. And they've hit us before, and they want to hit us again. And so the unified command structure now is going to reflect the true threats that we face.

We used to not face these threats in the past. We thought two oceans would keep us safe. We thought there's no way that an enemy could possibly strike America again after Pearl Harbor. And were we wrong. We were really wrong.

And so that——

Q. Mr. President——

President Bush. Excuse me for a second, please. And so therefore, it is very important for us to make sure that we prepare our military, as well as our respective homeland securities, against attacks. So not only are we looking at how—for a new command structure for military, we're also working very closely with Canada, *y tambien Mexico*—on making sure that our border is more secure, on making sure that we've got better intelligence sharing, on making sure that cooperation at all levels is as good as it can possibly be.

And it is as good as it can possibly be. I'm real pleased with the efforts we're making with our neighbors.

Venezuela/War on Terrorism

Q. Mr. President, do you believe, as President Pastrana said, that Colombian guerrillas are operating from Venezuelan territory? Is there anything that the United States can do to help him fight that?

And you mentioned freedom of the press when you were talking about things President Chavez should do. What other specific things do you think he should do following this coup?

President Bush. Well, first, the reason I mentioned freedom of the press is because when things got hot in Venezuela, he shut the press down. I want you all—I've never thought about doing that, no matter how—what kind of questions these guys ask here. [*Laughter*]

Mr. President, I've always believed in a free press. I don't care how tough the questions are, or as significantly, how they editorialize in their news stories, but nevertheless—because I respect the press, and so should President Chavez. It's essential he do that.

And so there's a good example of what I'm talking about. When the pressure gets on, leaders should not compromise those institutions that are so important for democracy. The right for opponents to speak out is essential. There is—one of the things that is essential is that people be given the liberty of expressing their opinion without fear of reprisal.

The first part of your question was whether or not FARC is utilizing Venezuela to strike our friend. I'll let our friend speak to that. He's a man who has to live with this problem. We discussed this very issue. I am—and by the way, it's not just FARC basing in Venezuela to strike Colombia; it's as well FARC striking Venezuelan ranchers that aren't protected by the Venezuelan Government.

But why don't you speak to that, Mr. President?

President Pastrana. Thank you, Mr. President. I think that, as you remember some weeks ago, there was—announced that FARC was using the Venezuelan territory to attack the Colombian militaries. And these were, as you remember, 2 or 3 days before all the crises in Venezuela. The chief

commander of the army, General Vasquez, personally said to President Chavez that FARC was using Venezuelan territory to attack Colombia.

So that's why we had a meeting last week, the 10th of April, between the Foreign Minister of Colombia and the Foreign Minister of Venezuela, because we are asking questions and we want answers of what was happening. And we proposed the creation of a binational commission between Colombia and Venezuela to study all these reports that were putting on the press and on the media by journalists of Colombia and Venezuela, of the presence of the FARC on Venezuelan territory.

That's why we sent the letter yesterday, asking the Venezuelan Government if it's true that members of the FARC that were turned away from Mexico—the office of the FARC was closed in Mexico—we were asking, and we want answers, if these guys are or not in Venezuela. That's what we're expecting of the answer of the Foreign Minister of Venezuela.

Q. Mr. President, what will be your message, then, for countries—in this case, Venezuela—or other countries that might open their doors to so-called terrorists?

President Bush. Well, we've spent a lot of time talking about—these aren't "so-called" terrorists; these are terrorists in Colombia. And the reason they're terrorists is because they're using murder to try to achieve political ends. They tried to blow up the recent—recently tried to blow up the man running for President. They've captured people. They're after Andres.

And so my message is that we will work with you to rout out terror. We've put FARC, AUC, on our terrorist list. We've called them for what they are. These are killers who use killing and intimidation to foster political means. And we want to join, with Plan Colombia's billions of dollars, to not only fight the—and by fighting narcotrafficking, by the way, we're fighting the funding source for these political terrorists. And sometimes they're interchangeable.

And we've got to be strong in the fight against terror. And the United States—listen, my biggest job now is to defend our security and to help our friends defend their security against terror. That's what I spend a lot of my time doing. And each area of the world requires a different response—that in some parts of the world, we'll do it militarily; in some parts of the world, we'll help our friends to deal militarily; in some parts of the world, perhaps, we can rout out terror through just simply cutting off money; in other parts of the world, diplomacy seems to have an effect. We're working with our friends in Europe to use their law enforcement officials to arrest known Al Qaida killers hiding in their country, or plotters.

We've been at this now for 7 months. Colombia has been at this for a lot longer period of time. And we're beginning to make a lot of progress. They key to success is not to grow tired in the fight against terror. And I can assure you I won't. I know this good President is dedicated to fighting terror.

And it's essential for Colombia to succeed in this war against terror in order for her people to realize the vast potential of a great, democratic country. Colombia is an essential part of a peaceful South America. Colombia has got a fantastic tradition, a noble tradition of democracy. It's led the way. And I'm confident that with the right leadership and the right help from America, the kind of leadership Andres is providing now, that Colombia can succeed. And it's in everybody's interests that she does succeed.

Listen, thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:50 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Hugo Chavez of Venezuela; FARC, the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia; and AUC, the

United Self-Defense Forces/Group of Colombia. President Pastrana referred to Foreign Minister Guillermo Fernandez of Colombia and Foreign Minister Luis Alfonso Davila of Venezuela.

Remarks at the President's Environmental Youth Awards Ceremony
April 18, 2002

Welcome to the Rose Garden, and thanks for coming. Congratulations on what you've done for our country. I know you're proud to be here, and I know your moms and dads are proud that you're here too. And I want to thank your teachers that are here with you as well. Teaching is a noble profession, and we appreciate your care for the country and the future of our country. So, welcome. The Rose Garden really is a fitting place to honor people who care about our environment. As you can see, it's a really beautiful place.

I want to thank so much the award winners for turning idealism into action, for taking a great spirit and love for our country and doing something about that spirit and love for our country. Communities are better as a result, but as importantly, you're providing a really good example of service. You're showing other people that people can make a difference in people's lives, and that's really important.

I want to thank Christie Todd Whitman for being such a great Administrator of the EPA. You know, she and I were Governors together. She was the Governor of New Jersey, and I was the Governor of Texas. And I got to know her well as a great Governor. I knew that when I picked her, she'd be really good at this job, and I want to thank her for her service.

I want to thank the Members of the Congress who are here. We've got a Senator here today; Senator Specter is here. We're pleased. Zach Wamp and Rob Simmons and Jeff Flake from Tennessee, Connecticut, and Arizona, I want to thank you all for coming as well. I want to thank the regional administrators of the EPA for being here. I want to thank you for your hard work and appreciate your dedication to the country.

You know, America has learned a lot about ourself in the last 7 months—we really have. We've seen the unity and public spirit of our country. We've seen a great good that can come out of a terrible, terrible evil. And we've rediscovered the importance of taking a stand, of serving something greater than ourself. It's a really important lesson of September the 11th, that in order to fight evil, you can do so by doing some good.

I've asked Americans to dedicate 4,000 hours, the equivalent of 2 years of your lives, to serving your neighbors and your Nation. As part of joining the war against terror, dedicate 4,000 hours to help somebody or some cause or some community.

Our winners today have gone a long way toward meeting that goal already. I may have to assign you another 4,000 hours here pretty soon. [*Laughter*] You've developed the good habits of service, and you're making a big difference in a very important area, and that's our Nation's environment.

Good stewardship begins with the simplest of things. That's what's interesting about the environmental movement. What may appear to be a small act is really important, cleaning up a park or recycling or encouraging people and showing people how to conserve energy. Good stewardship means understanding the consequences of our actions and convincing others to not needlessly destroy our environment. A good steward also understands that we share this