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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

Earth with other creatures, and we have a responsibility to provide them places to live and areas to roam.

In serving others, I think you've shown good works don't have to be these huge projects. What may seem like a small act when taken alone can produce tremendous results when combined with the efforts of others.

Thirty young Americans are going to receive an award today. And if you multiply their works by a hundred or a thousand or a million, you've got more than just projects; you've got a movement. When citizens take responsibility for our environment, there's no limit for the good they can do.

The Federal Government has got responsibilities, as well, to protect the environment. America's experience with environmental protection really makes me optimistic about our future. The modern environmental movement was born in America, born right here in our country. And we've made tremendous progress since its birth.

Since 1970, we've reduced emissions of six key air pollutants by 29 percent. That's significant progress, but more significant given the fact that our economy grew by more than 160 percent. We've shown that you can grow your economy so people can work and, at the same time, be better stewards of the environment.

Some problems such as lead emissions from automobiles have been virtually eliminated—1970, that wouldn't have been the case. Kind of hard for some of us to remember back to 1970; some of you weren't even born. The Administrator and I, we were born then—[*laughter*]—well, it might have been a little bit before then. [*Laughter*] So we remember. Not only do we have a better economy, the world's strongest economy, but we have significantly cleaner and healthier air. We've got better water. And our land is better protected and better managed and more accessible to more Americans.

And we can do more, and we will do more. We're promoting the development of cleaner fuels and new technologies. We're supporting conservation efforts in order to use our resources more wisely. We work with Congress to improve our laws so more brownfields will be cleaned up and redeveloped and more communities can be revitalized. Our clean—our Clear Skies Initiative would improve air quality by dramatically cutting power emissions—emissions from power plants. Our Global Climate Change Initiative commits our Nation to significantly reducing greenhouse gas intensity. And last week, I sent to the Senate legislation necessary to implement a global treaty to control the worst environmental pollutants, in order to reduce air, land, and water pollution around the world. I'm confident the Senate will act.

Stewardship is the calling of Government, and it is the calling of every citizen. In my Inaugural Address, I urged Americans to act as citizens, not as spectators, in building communities of service and a nation of character. You each shown us the way by your own example. I hope that in the years ahead you'll never lose the idealism we honor today. Your communities need it, and your country needs it.

And now, I'd like to welcome back Administrator Whitman to highlight this year's winners of the Presidential—of the President's Environmental Youth Awards. Congratulations.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Secretary of State Colin Powell and an Exchange With Reporters
April 18, 2002

Situation in the Middle East

The President. I'm pleased to welcome the Secretary of State back to the Oval Office. Presidents and Secretaries of State have sat here for a long time, trying to figure out how to reduce violence and bring peace to the Middle East. The Secretary went over with a vision on how to do that.

We talked about the two states living at peace with each other. He carried that message of hope and peace, that our Nation is—will work hard to achieve a peace. He also carried the message that people must—must be focused and must work hard to achieve a peace. People in the region have got certain responsibilities.

The short-term responsibilities are these: The Palestinian Authority must act on its condemnation of terror; the Israelis are withdrawing from Jenin and Nabulus, and they must continue their withdrawals; and neighbors in the region must condemn terror, cut off funding for terror, must make it clear that people who suicide bomb are not martyrs, that they kill or are murderers of innocent people.

As well, the Secretary's trip made it clear that our Nation thinks beyond the shortterm, that we're serious when we talk about two states living side by side and that we're laying the foundations for peace, the structures necessary to get to peace. Progress is being made toward our vision. In order for that vision to be achieved, leaders must take responsibility; leaders in the region must be responsible citizens for a peaceful world.

The Secretary delivered that message loud and clear, and I want to thank him for his work.

Mr. Secretary.

Secretary Powell. Thank you, Mr. President. I did try to deliver that message loud and clear that the United States does have a vision, a vision that leads to two states living in peace, side by side—the only solution to this conflict. And I talked about what the sides have to do with respect to restoring a sense of security so the two peoples and—have confidence in one another and begin negotiations once again, essentially put down security element to our strategy. We made clear to the leaders in the region that we want to move forward with negotiations as early as possible, and we're looking at different ways to do that once security has been established—link the negotiations closely to security.

And the third part of our framework was the humanitarian part. There would be a great need for humanitarian relief, for reconstruction efforts, and all that has to be part of an integrated strategy.

And we can begin working quickly on that integrated strategy if the Palestinian Authority, if Chairman Arafat and those Palestinian leaders not only denounce violence, but take action to act against those who continue to encourage violence and perform acts of terrorism and violence. The terrorism, violence has to stop. I made that message very clear.

I'm pleased that the Israeli Government is now continuing withdrawal. I hope it will be accelerated, and we will bring that to an end as quickly as possible, because that is one of the difficulties that we have now in moving forward in the integrated strategy.

And Mr. President, we will be staying in close touch with the situation, by phone and with various members of the administration who are already in the region, such as Ambassador Bill Burns, and with the assets of the Department of State and other departments of Government to make sure that the strategy is understood and shared