

Remarks Honoring the United States Winter Olympic and Paralympic Teams

April 23, 2002

Thank you all. Please be seated. Welcome to the south grounds of the White House. It's an honor to have you all here. Before I get started, I was wondering if anybody had their cell phone so I could speak to their mother. [*Laughter*]

It is a great honor to host our Nation's Olympic and Paralympic athletes here at the White House. I've really been looking forward to this day. In February you showed the entire world the best of the American spirit. You competed with honor; you won with humility; and you made America proud. On behalf of all Americans, congratulate—I congratulate you and thank you for inspiring our country.

It's good to welcome Mitt Romney back to the White House. Mitt, you did a fabulous job. I appreciate Lloyd Ward, the CEO of the U.S. Olympic Committee, for being here. Thank you, Lloyd. And Sandy Baldwin, the president of the U.S. Olympic Committee—it's good to see both of you again. I want to thank Mel Martinez, who is a member of my Cabinet, for coming today. Mel, thank you for being here.

And I'm glad to see Congressman Jim Ryun, who knows a little something about Olympics, a silver medalist who participated in the '64, '68, and '72 Olympics. Thank you for coming. I appreciate Tristan and Manuel being up here with me.

Americans will remember the 2002 games because we had the honor of hosting them, because the level of competition was so high, and because we had the thrill of seeing our fellow Americans perform at the highest level and achieve unprecedented success.

We watched a lot of our stars, a lot of our fellow citizens. Sarah Hughes—I was pleased to see her go from shock to joy as she learned she had won her first gold medal at the age of 16 years old. We

cheered for Jim Shea, who just weeks after his grandfather's death followed in his victorious footsteps by winning a gold medal. We shared in the pride of Vonetta Flowers, whose gold medal in bobsledding made her the first African American to win a gold medal in an Olympic winter games. A lot of us had Ohno fever. [*Laughter*]

And then America's Paralympics overcame great odds to excel in their sports. Sarah Will took home four gold medals in skiing, despite the fact that she's paralyzed from the waist down. Sarah Billmeier lost her left leg at 5 years old and this year skied away with a gold and two silvers. And Manuel Guerra contacted polio as an infant. This disease left him disabled in his left leg, but he pursued his love of hockey, and this year he and his teammates won the gold in sledge hockey.

All of your victories required hard work and skill and the determination to meet your goals. They also required great support. The honors you won are a tribute to devoted coaches and trainers, to loving parents who sacrificed to help you realize your dreams, to friends and supporters, and to more than 30,000 volunteers who helped make the Salt Lake games possible.

We've always supported our athletes here in America. But this year we looked at them with even greater pride and even more hope. You served as symbols of unity and strength and determination and of a peaceful competition and cooperation with people from all around the world. It was an important time for America, and you didn't let us down.

Our 2002 Olympians and Paralympians showed tremendous character. These teams were uniquely American. After all, we had firefighters on our team; we had members of the Armed Services; we've got community volunteers. And your commitment to

your communities will serve you well as champions. You see, you're now more than athletes; you're role models—role models to children who dream of winning a gold medal themselves, role models to young people who need someone to look up to, someone to set a positive example for how they should live their lives and how they should treat others.

This is a big responsibility, but the good news is you've all proven that you're up to the challenge. I want to thank you for representing the highest ideals of our Nation and for making America so proud.

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

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:36 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Mitt Romney, president and chief executive officer, Salt Lake Organizing Committee for the 2002 winter Olympic games; Olympic gold medalists Tristan Gale, women's skeleton, Sarah Hughes, women's figure skating, Jim Shea, men's skeleton, Vonetta Flowers, women's bobsledding, and Apolo Anton Ohno, men's short track speedskating; and Paralympic gold medalists Manuel Guerra, Jr., goalie for the ice sledge hockey team, and Sarah Will and Sarah Billmeier, women's skiing. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Significant Narcotics Traffickers Centered in Colombia

April 23, 2002

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c) and 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report that my Administration has prepared on the national emergency with respect to

significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia that was declared in Executive Order 12978 of October 21, 1995.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
April 23, 2002.

Remarks at the National Teacher of the Year Award Ceremony

April 24, 2002

The President. Well, thank you, Rod. Thanks very much. I want to welcome you all to the White House and the spectacular Rose Garden. I'm a part of a proud tradition: For 25 years, American Presidents—for 50 years, American Presidents have been privileged to present the National Teacher of the Year Awards.

This ceremony not only honors a single individual; this ceremony honors an entire profession. Teachers make extraordinary contributions to the communities in which they live and, therefore, make extraordinary contributions to our entire country. We give our teachers a great responsibility, to shape the minds and hopes of our children.