

have influence around the world. And by his strength of conviction, he has served his country with distinction. And it has been recognized as such: After all, he received the 1976 Nobel Prize for Economics, and in 1988 he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom.

In 1938, Milton Friedman married Rose Director, an outstanding economist in her own right, and the only person known to have ever won an argument with Milton. [Laughter] Half a century later, Milton and Rose Friedman published a joint memoir called “Two Lucky People.” There’s no doubt that Milton and Rose Friedman have been lucky, but not as lucky as America. We’re lucky that their parents chose to emigrate from Europe. We’re lucky they gave them the love and encouragement

they needed to be bold and to succeed. We’re lucky that Milton Friedman flunked some of his qualifying exams to become an actuary—[laughter]—and became an economist, instead. [Laughter] We’re thankful for those tough exams—[laughter]—but not nearly as thankful as we are for the lives and talents and intellect of Milton and Rose Friedman.

May God bless them both, and welcome.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:37 a.m. in Room 450 of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Gary S. Becker, professor of economics and sociology at the University of Chicago, and his wife, Guity; and former Attorney General Edwin Meese.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Congressional Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters May 9, 2002

Nominations to the Federal Judiciary

The President. I want to thank the Senators for being here today; we’re talking about a—judges. We have a vacancy crisis in America. There are too many seats that aren’t filled with judges, and therefore, America hurts, America is not getting the justice it needs.

Ours is a system that relies upon an independent court system, and when there is vacancies, the American people suffer. And I call upon the Senate to approve—at least give hearings to people we’ve sent up to the Senate. There are 30 circuit court vacancies in America, and they’ve approved 7. This is a bad record, and it’s a record that’s bad for the country.

Over a year ago I submitted the names of 11 qualified, well-qualified Americans, and the Senate has only dealt on 3 of them. These Senators here bring stories about circuit courts in their own States, in their

own districts, that because of vacancies, good, honest Americans aren’t getting their hearings. And this isn’t right.

For the good of the country, the Senate needs to act and act expeditiously on the nominees I’ve sent up. It’s important that our judiciary be full.

I’ll be glad to answer a couple of questions.

Arshad [Arshad Mohammed, Reuters].

Q. Mr. President—

The President. You’re second, Sonya [Sonya Ross, Associated Press].

Q. Mr. President, do you think this is just—do you think this is just raw politics on the part of the Democrats?

The President. Well, you can ask the Senators here. But yes, I do. I think it’s bad politics. These are well-qualified—you know, they’ve relied upon the American Bar Association in the past. These nominees have been given well-qualified or

qualified ratings. Yes, I think it's raw politics, and I think it's bad for the country.

Sonya.

Afghan Warlord Gulbuddin Hekmatyar

Q. Mr. President, the CIA——

The President. Is this going to have anything to do about judges?

Q. ——launched a missile attack against an Afghan warlord. Is this now U.S. policy——

The President. What was that, again?

Q. Near Kabul, an Afghan warlord survived a missile attack, and this has been acknowledged today by Government officials. I'm trying to—what my question to you is, is whether this is now the policy to pursue with missiles anyone that's—I mean, why are we firing at this man? Is he suspected to be Taliban or Al Qaida?

The President. I can assure you, when we go after individuals in the theater of war, it's because they intend to do some harm to America.

Federal Deficit

Q. Mr. President, last night your budget director said that he had, in his words, grave doubt whether the deficit can be erased by 2004, as your administration previously said that it would be. Does it give you any concern that you might be facing a reelection campaign at a time when the budget would still be in red ink?

The President. Well, first of all, I'm not thinking that far ahead about my election. I am thinking about how to win a war, how to get this country's economy growing, and how to deal with a national emergency. When I ran for office I said the only way we'd have a deficit, as far as I was concerned—if any of those three happened. All three happened.

And I firmly believe that we need to spend what it takes to protect our freedoms, and we're going to do that. We need to make sure our military has got the best equipment, the best training, the best pay possible to win this war. And it's going

to take a while to win the war. This isn't a war that's going to end tomorrow. It's a war that is going to require a steady, patient, united country going after people who still want to harm America. It's going to require money to make sure our national security, homeland security is intact.

And in terms of the economy, the economy is beginning to come back but certainly not as strong as I would like. And until the economy comes back as strong as it can, revenues aren't going to be as good as they should be.

Reform of the Palestinian Authority

Q. Mr. President, Israeli officials told me yesterday that you weren't against the idea of moving Yasser Arafat out of a position of power in a reformed Palestinian Authority as long as he was neither hurt nor exiled. Is that an accurate reflection of your opinion?

The President. No, it's not. No, it's not an accurate reflection of what went on in the Oval Office, as the Secretary of State has made clear—who was in the meeting as well.

What is an accurate reflection of my opinion is that Mr. Arafat has let the Palestinian people down. He hasn't led. And as a result, the Palestinians suffer, and my heart breaks for the Palestinian moms and dads who wonder whether or not their children are going to be able to get a good education and whether or not there's going to be a job available for their children.

And one of the things that we did talk about was how to put institutions in place so that a potential Palestinian state can be a peaceful neighbor with Israel—reforms such as making sure there is a single command security force that can be held accountable for arresting terrorists; reforms such as having a kind of economic system that would help promote rule of law and defeat corruption; reform so that if there is ever a rebuilding campaign—which we've expressed an interest in doing and the Europeans have—that the money is actually

spent on the projects that we intend them to be spent on. And that's what we did discuss.

Palestinian Authority Arrest of Hamas Terrorists

Q. Do you have any confidence that the Hamas members arrested today, sir, will stay in jail?

The President. We'll have to see. But what I said was—I said I was pleased that Chairman Arafat spoke in Arabic against terrorism. That's good. That's a positive de-

velopment. Now it's up to Chairman Arafat to perform, to keep them in jail—arrest them, and keep them in jail. In order for there to be peace, there must be—we must rout out terror. And the answer to your question, time will tell.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:25 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Terrorist Attack in the Russian Federation's Republic of Dagestan
May 9, 2002

The United States is saddened and angered by the deaths earlier today in an explosion during Victory Day celebrations in the town of Kaspiysk in the Russian Federation's Republic of Dagestan. Of particular concern is that this evil act of terrorism occurred on a holiday when Russia celebrates its World War II victory over fascism and at a time when our nations

are allied once again in a war against global terror. Terrorism and the killing of innocents can never be condoned or justified.

On behalf of the American people, I extend my condolences to the families of the innocent children, veterans, and others killed, and I wish a full and fast recovery for those wounded in the incident.

Remarks at a Reception for Senator Ted Stevens
May 9, 2002

Thank you all very much. I'm honored to be here with the Alaskan of the Century—just wondering which century. [Laughter] It's a high tribute to be called the Alaskan of the Century, and he's well on his way for laying the foundations to becoming the Alaskan of this century.

I really am honored to be here with Ted. I appreciate a lot about him. I appreciate he's a straightforward fellow. [Laughter] There's no question—[laughter]—you know where he stands, in the great Alaskan and,

for that matter, the great Texan tradition. There's no—as we say down home, there's no bull about him. And that's good—and that's good. That's good for the Senate; that's good for the people of Alaska; and more importantly, it's good for the United States of America. It is essential that this man be reelected Senator from the State of Alaska. And if all goes well, he'll be the President pro tem of the United States Senate as well.