

Those words, written a long time ago, apply with equal power today. The dream of a free and independent Cuba has been deferred, but it can never be destroyed, and it will not be denied.

For those listening on Radio Marti, it's important for you to know the United States stands with the Cuban people, not just on Independence Day but on every day—every day. Every day we stand with those who reject tyranny and torture and embrace liberty and life. Every day we stand with the *plantados* in prison confronting illegitimate power with righteous truth. Every day we stand with the Cuban families everywhere seeking a better future. Every day we cultivate “*una rosa blanca*” for Cuba's freedom.

Thank you all for coming. *Viva Cuba libre!*

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:10 p.m. at the James L. Knight Center. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida and his wife, Columba; entertainers Gloria Estefan and Jon Secada; Gloria Estefan's husband, producer Emilio Estefan, Jr.; Under Secretary of Agriculture for Food Safety Elsa A. Murano; National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice; and President Fidel Castro of Cuba. He also referred to Operation Pedro Pan, a 1960s immigration program in which thousands of Cuban children were sent to the United States by their parents. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Interview With Claus Kleber of ARD German Television May 21, 2002

President's Upcoming Visit to Germany

Mr. Kleber. Mr. President, “George Bush” is probably the best name a man can carry to Berlin—

The President. Oh, well, thank you.

Mr. Kleber. —given the achievements of your father, especially. But still, the city, right now, even as we speak, is bracing, expecting huge demonstrations. And the largest police force in the history of the city has been mobilized to protect you.

The President. Thank you.

Mr. Kleber. Not only against terrorism—yes, I guess. It is not only about the terror threat, which of course is on everybody's mind.

The President. Sure.

Mr. Kleber. But also, thousands of demonstrators of all colors, more than ever before. Have you been made aware of that?

The President. No. I—but that's good. That's democracy. See, I love to visit a place that is confident in her freedom, a

place where people feel free to express themselves, because that's what I believe in.

And so I'm looking forward to my visit. I'm going to have a great visit with the Chancellor. I'll be at the Bundestag, and I look forward to a speech there that talks about the importance of our relationship; that is, the relationship between Germany and America and what we can do together.

I'm anxious—I've never been to Germany, so I'm anxious to go, and I'm looking forward to it.

Mr. Kleber. It's too bad that the President never gets to really see a city like Berlin.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Kleber. There's always this security around.

The President. The bubble.

Mr. Kleber. Yes.

The President. That's true. And that's part of my life; that's part of the—that's

one of the drawbacks of being the President. You really are encapsulated into a bubble, whether it be in Germany or in America, for that matter.

Mr. Kleber. There is, beyond the demonstrations and beyond the people who show up everywhere just to cause havoc, there is a mood in Germany right now, pervasive among decent people, who are concerned about an America that more and more seems to stand in many important questions outside the global consensus, from the Kyoto agreement to the International Criminal Court to Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty, military options versus Iraq, all these questions. My question to you: Is your Government really still part of that global family? Or is it more, America looks for coalitions of the willing, meaning if you go with us, fine; if you don't, we find somebody else or we go it alone?

The President. Well, that's a very complicated question. Let me just tell you this: I'm coming to Germany to say that together we can work to achieve peace, and we must work together to achieve peace.

I'm going to talk about a NATO—the idea of expanding NATO to help achieve peace. I'm going to reaffirm those institutions that are important, where we can cooperate.

I am—listen, I believe in alliances. I know America can't win the war on terror alone. I understand there's some reluctance about some of the positions I take. But one of the things that the German people at least ought to respect is, I speak my mind. There's no doubt where I stand. And I remember, when Ronald Reagan came to Germany, he said: Mr. Gorbachev, tear down the whole wall. He didn't say, tear down a couple of bricks. He said, tear the whole thing down. And I guess I tend to speak that way too.

But the German people will know, if they listen to my speech, that I care deeply for the alliance and friendship we have with the German people. And I believe together we can do a lot of good in the world.

President Saddam Hussein of Iraq

Mr. Kleber. Iraq is an issue very much on everybody's mind in this context. Your Government seems to be determined to end the regime of Saddam Hussein by any means necessary. This seems to include military options. Is there any way that this man, this dictator, can address your concerns and stay in power? Or are we drifting towards a war?

The President. Well, first, let me say this, that Iraq ought to be on the minds of the German people, and they ought to be on the minds of the American people, because the Iraq Government is a dangerous Government. Iraq ought to be centerpiece in our thinking.

This is a Government that's gassed its own people. This is a Government that is not transparent, and this is a Government we know wants to develop weapons of mass destruction. They may have weapons of mass destruction; we just don't know. This is a dangerous regime. And for the good of freedom and for the good of our future, we've got to deal with it.

Mr. Kleber. One way or the other?

The President. One way or the other, absolutely.

Now, I'm not going to—I have no military plans on my desk that calls for—that plots out a military operation. I'm looking at all options. And of course, I'll consult closely with our allies and friends. I look forward to talking this subject with the Chancellor of Germany. I will be very blunt in my assessment of his—"his" being Saddam Hussein's—threat to the freedom of the world.

But this is a threat that we better take seriously, and we better take it seriously now.

September 11 Attacks

Mr. Kleber. One question about September 11th.

The President. Sure.

Mr. Kleber. I don't care about this Washington second-guessing game; this is really

not what I'm getting to. We have pictures of your travel pool on Air Force One looking in horror at this little flat screen which was back in the plane, seeing the second tower collapse.

The President. Yes.

Mr. Kleber. I wondered what was going on at about that time in the front of the plane?

The President. Well, thanks for asking. First of all, I learned about the attack—the second attack; I knew about the first attack when I walked into a schoolroom. I thought it was an accident. And I'm listening to an education briefing, and Andy Card, my Chief of Staff, whispered in my ear. He said, "America's under attack. There's been a second plane crash. America is under attack." I made up my mind right then and there that if somebody was attacking us, we would respond with the full might of America.

Mr. Kleber. But there was little you could do at that moment, in that plane.

The President. At that moment, no, there wasn't. You're right. I mean, I was trying to get out of harm's way. We were concerned about threats on the President. We were worried about future attacks, and there's a lot of belief that Flight 93 was headed to the White House.

I was concerned about things like, is my wife safe? You know, I was worried about that. I was worried about things such as my parents. I was worried about my girls.

And that's what I was concerned—I was worried about Americans who were grieving.

But at the same time, you need to know about me that I was also thinking clearly about how to respond. If America is under attack, my job as the President is to protect the homeland, to find out the facts, and to deal with it in a firm way.

I want to thank the German people and the German Government, not only for their sympathy but for understanding the new war of the 21st century. And we have a new war, and we'd better deal with it, because this is an evil group of people that are interested in destroying civilization. And so long as I'm the President, I'm going to do everything I can to prevent that from happening.

Mr. Kleber. Your people give me the signal to stop. I would love to keep going.

The President. Well, I'm sorry we can't, but maybe some other time.

Mr. Kleber. Have a safe trip.

The President. Thank you.

Mr. Kleber. Take care. Bless you.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 1:12 p.m. in the Map Room at the White House for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Interview With Giulio Borrelli of RAI Italian Television May 21, 2002

Terrorist Alerts

Mr. Borrelli. Mr. President, raising the alarm about the possibility of new terrorist attack without being specific is a way of crying wolf, which can frighten people. Can Americans stop the suicide bombers?

The President. Yes, it's a very interesting question. Well, first of all, the Vice President and the Director of the FBI was expressing a general threat—they're basically saying—with which I agree—that the Al Qaida still exists; they still hate America and any other country which loves freedom;