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no cave dark enough to hide from the justice of America and our friends.

And my speech I'm going to give in Prague to the youngsters there, I'm going to remind them there is a coalition of the willing in place right now, chasing down terror. We've got 90 nations—90 different nations—all teamed up, doing everything we can to bring these people to justice. And we'll prevail. Make no mistake about it. We'll prevail.

Thank you, sir.

Q. Thank you, sir.

The President. Is there any doubt in your mind we'll prevail?

Q. Not anymore. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The interview was recorded at 1:45 p.m. in the Library at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Secretary General Lord Robertson of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization; President Vladimir Putin of Russia; and Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization. A portion of this interview could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks in a Meeting With Nobel Laureates
November 18, 2002

It's my honor to welcome this year's Nobel laureates to the Oval Office. Of course, I welcome somebody who spent a lot of quality time here. President Carter and Mrs. Carter, we're so honored to have you as well as the other distinguished Americans who are here with us.

These Americans are a great honor to their fields and a great honor to our country. And we're proud to have you here. We're proud for what you've done, for not only America but the world. And we're proud for your contributions.

And I want to thank the Ambassadors from Sweden and Norway for coming here as well. Mr. Ambassadors, thank you for being here. All Americans take great pride in the accomplishments of these good folks. We'll be watching the news clips of the ceremonies. We will be with you there in spirit.

And once again, we thank you and your families for your dedication to the greatest country on the face of the Earth. And may God bless your work, and may God bless your further endeavors. Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:17 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ambassadors to the U.S. Jan Eliasson of Sweden and Knut Vollebaek of Norway.

Interview With Czech Television
November 18, 2002

NATO's Role in the 21st Century

Q. Mr. President, this week in Prague, NATO will invite seven countries to join the Alliance. But there are other topics on the agenda, and the future of NATO is one of them. What do you see NATO will be doing in the 21st century? What is its role?

The President. Well, I think—first of all, I'm excited about going to Prague, and I want to thank the citizens of that important city and the great country for their hard work in recovering from the floods and preparing Prague for our arrival.

This is going to be a historic meeting because, as you said, we're expanding NATO. The most important alliance America has is NATO, and the expansion of NATO is something that I think is very important.

The role of NATO is different as we go into the 21st century. NATO used to be a way to defend Europe from the Warsaw Pact. But the Warsaw Pact no longer exists. Russia is not an enemy. And we face new threats, and the new threats are global terror. And so one way to make sure NATO is relevant is to focus on the true threats to freedom, address those threats, and figure out ways that we can work together to accomplish what we want, which is a peaceful world, which means better intelligence-sharing, the capacity to cut off money, and a military operation that reflects the nature of the wars we'll be fighting. And that's going to be one of the most important discussions we face there in Prague.

Cooperation in the War on Terror

Q. Well, there are really big gaps between the war-fighting capabilities of NATO—of the United States, on one hand, and the European countries, on the other hand. And Lord Robertson is saying that the Americans are not always willing to share the technology necessary for NATO. Are you ready to participate on organization of European forces?

The President. Well, I think what has to happen is there first be a strategy that recognizes that the Czech Republic can provide a certain contribution or the French or the British—not the French but the Germans or the British can provide certain kind of capabilities—and that we dovetail each capability to an overall strategy. In which case, of course, America is willing to work with our friends and allies to make sure the NATO Alliance works properly.

In other words, everybody can contribute something. But it all has got to be done within the strategy of the true threats we face in the 21st century, which is global terrorism. That's the biggest threat to freedom right now.

NATO and Iraq

Q. You will certainly talk about Iraq. Will the United States, if it decides to go to war with Iraq, seek the support of NATO as an alliance?

The President. Well, first, I hope we don't have to go to war with Iraq. I mean, my first choice is not to commit our troops to regime change. I hope that Saddam Hussein does what he said he would do, and that is disarm. For the sake of peace, he must disarm. Most nations understand that—most nations in NATO understand that. They want Saddam to disarm. The U.N. Security Council has spoken and says he must disarm. So it's his choice to make.

If he refuses to disarm, then we will lead a coalition of the willing and disarm him. And of course, I hope our NATO friends come with us. I think they will realize it's in the interest of peace and stability that that happen. But we're not close to that decision point yet because we're just beginning the process of allowing Saddam the chance to show the world whether or not he will disarm.

And that's an important distinction the people of the Czech Republic must know. It's not up to me. It's up to him. He said he would disarm, and the inspectors are not the issue. The inspectors are simply a means to determine his willingness. And we'll see. He's had a bad history. He's had 11 years of lying and deceiving, and now it's time to bring him to account, one way or the other.

NATO-U.S. Shared Values

Q. Some critics now see NATO as a toolbox, and the United States just goes and picks whatever it needs when it needs it. Do you agree?

The President. No, of course not. I mean, I think we view this as an alliance of nations with whom we share common values, the common values of freedom and individual rights and democracy. This is an opportunity for us to combine our values with our deep desire to have a peaceful world. And we will work in concert with each other, not in opposition to each other. And by working in concert we can really address those threats.

See, that's the interesting thing that people have got to know. There's threats to your freedom. If you embrace freedom and love freedom and willing to stand strong against global terrorism, you will be threatened. And we can't let that happen. It's just a different type of threat that we face, but it's a true threat.

We face it here in America today. There's still an enemy that wants to hit us. There's still an enemy that wants to hit our friends. And the NATO Charter says, "If you attack one, you attack us all." And that's a very important alliance, a very important statement of commonality to keep the peace.

I think NATO is a good thing, and I look forward to working with our friends in NATO.

Q. Mr. President, thank you very much for the interview.

The President. Thank you. I'm so looking forward to going to Prague. It's going to be an exciting time for Laura and me to go. Thank you. Good job.

NOTE: The interview was videotaped at 1:20 p.m. in the Library at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The interviewer referred to Secretary General Lord Robertson of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization. The transcript of this interview was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 19. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Teleconference Remarks With Senate Republican Leaders
November 19, 2002

Senator Trent Lott. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Well, I appreciate that, Trent. And I want to thank you all for working hard. We're making great progress in the war on terror. Part of that progress will be the ability for us to protect the American people at home. This is a very important piece of legislation. It is landmark in its scope, and it ends a session which has been 2 years' worth of legislative work, which has been very productive for the American people.

Senator Lott. [*Inaudible*]

The President. Well, I want to thank you all. It is an honor to be representing the greatest country on the face of the Earth over in Europe. And we're going to have an historic day on Thursday when we go to expand NATO. The people of Europe appreciate America. They appreciate our strength, and most importantly, they appreciate our compassion and our love for freedom. And I know you all share that side of America with me.

Again, I want to thank all the Senators in the room there for your hard work and look forward to seeing you when I get back.

Senator Lott. [*Inaudible*]

The President. All right, well thank——

Senator Lott. [*Inaudible*]