

United States of America, the world will be more free. I'm confident that if we remain strong like I know we will, the world will be more secure. And I'm confident, thanks to the strength and the compassion of our country, the world will be more peaceful. And the reason I'm so confident is I realize that I'm the President of the greatest nation on the face of the world.

Thank you all for coming. God bless, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. in the Pepsi Coliseum at the Indiana State Fairgrounds. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Frank O'Bannon and State Attorney General Steve Carter of Indiana; Mayor Bart Peterson of Indianapolis; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

### Remarks in Pierce City, Missouri May 13, 2003

Thank you all very much. It is my honor to be here. Can you hear me back there? It is my honor to be here with some of our country's finest citizens. I am sorry I'm here under such circumstances.

I first want to thank the mayor for his hospitality and helping to arrange my visit. I want to thank the good father for opening up this place of worship, this house of God, to help those who suffer. I find it—and I hope you do—uplifting that in the midst of tragedy, amongst people who have lost their homes, in some cases their loved one, or their businesses, lost their possessions, that we gather to comfort each other and to find help in the house of the Lord, because it's with His strength and His prayer that you'll find the sustenance to go on.

One of the things that struck me as I worked through the crowd here, shaking as many hands as I could, was that the people here who have been affected by the storm are ready to move on, are ready to pick up their lives, and are ready to do everything they can to convert this tragedy into good. Folks want to rebuild their—the feed man told me, he said, “I got wiped out, but I'm starting tomorrow to rebuild my company.” And there's no doubt you will, because there's a lot of people that want to help you.

And for the volunteers who are here, the people who have taken time out of your lives—the Red Cross or the Salvation Army or the church groups or the USA Freedom Corps people—I want to thank you very much for helping your neighbor in need.

I'm asking the FEMA people and the Governor and the mayor and everybody—I said, “Is the Government moving fast enough?” That's the question that I need to know. And some of you said, “Yes,” and some of you said, “No.” And for the ones who said, “No,” we will do everything we can to get you the—what you're owed. We'll process the paperwork as fast as possible, and if you qualify for help, they'll get you the help. That's what we're supposed to be doing.

So one of my visits—one of the reasons I'm visiting here is to ask the question, you know, to people. Because if there's—moving too slow or people are saying one thing and the other thing is not happening, now is the time to find out.

But the other real reason is to let you know there's a lot of Americans who are praying for you. A lot of people around this country saw the devastation—they didn't see what I've seen, because they—you can't tell how bad it is until you actually come here to Pierce City and see it

yourself. You can't realize what it's like to see a tornado go right down the main street of a town and just wipe it out. It's hard to envision. But a lot of people know you're suffering, and a lot of people are praying for you, and a lot of people care for you. And a lot of people wish you all the best.

May God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:05 p.m. in the parish hall at St. Mary's Catholic Church. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Mark Peters of Pierce City; and Rev. Peter J. Morciniec, pastor, St. Mary's Catholic Church. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Remarks on the Tornado Damage and an Exchange With Reporters in Pierce City May 13, 2003

*The President.* This is this man's business. They built their business last year. They had a family restaurant. They had a family restaurant. The children worked in it. And their lives got turned upside-down in one minute. This whole town, this whole street got wiped out. The tornado just came straight down the street.

And the only thing I can tell a man who has lost it all and a lady who has lost it all in one moment is, is that a lot of people are praying for them, and our Government is going to try to do our best. But if you look in his eyes, you can see that—the devastation that took place, when you lose something—all you own overnight. The good news is his family is still standing, and he's strong. God bless you. God bless you.

*Q.* What's your name?

*Scott Rector.* Scott Rector. This is my wife, Lynette.

*The President.* Rector—2002 is when he realized his dream.

*Mr. Rector.* It's going to say “again in 2003” here in about 5, 6 months. [*Laughter*]

*The President.* Yes. Oh, Mike [Mike Allen, Washington Post], okay. We'll get you in a minute. Any questions or anything?

### *Terrorist Attack in Saudi Arabia*

*Q.* Sir, do you think that the bombing in Saudi Arabia was the fault of Al Qaida?

*The President.* Well, there's a lot of suspicion it is Al Qaida. Al Qaida is a group of people that they don't care about taking innocent life. And obviously, these killers didn't care about innocent life. And we'll find out. We'll find out. We're going to find out.

*Q.* Sir, are you satisfied with the cooperation the Saudis have given you? And do you believe they did all they could to prevent this?

*The President.* Well, we'll let the facts—we'll sort the facts out and find out what the facts are. Colin Powell is over there now, and I'm confident, when I get back to Washington tomorrow, that George Tenet of the CIA will give me a full briefing of what we know. And we'll just find out. Let me get back to Washington and sort through the facts.

*Q.* Are you going to pull more Americans out of Saudi Arabia?

*The President.* Let me get back to Washington, find out the facts. We'll assess all the threats. We'll take the necessary precautions. But one thing is for certain: The people that killed the Americans and other innocent life will be tracked down, and they will be brought to justice. It doesn't matter how long it takes. The war on terror goes