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groups. And now, a Republican administration will continue and complete the work of a Democratic administration.

This is the way environmental policy should work. And I want to thank the United States delegation and all who helped negotiate this important treaty. And after our remarks here, we would like to welcome you in the Oval Office so I can thank you personally.

Mr. Secretary.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Secretary of State Colin L. Powell and Environmental Protection Agency Administrator Christine Todd Whitman.

## Remarks on the Observance of the National Days of Remembrance

*April 19, 2001*

Members of Congress, members of my Cabinet, Ambassador Ivry, Elie Wiesel, Benjamin Meed and other survivors, Rabbi Greenberg and Dr. Mandel, ladies and gentlemen: Laura and I thank you for asking us to join you on this Day of Remembrance.

Some days are set aside to recall the great and hopeful moments of human experience. Other days, like today, we turn our minds to painful events. In doing so, we honor the courage and suffering of martyrs and heroes. We also seek the wisdom and courage to prevent future tragedies and future evils.

World War II ended and camps were liberated before many of us were born. The events we recall today have the safe distance of history, and there will come a time when the eyewitnesses are gone. And that is why we are bound by conscience to remember what happened, and to whom it happened.

During the war, a Nazi guard told Simon Wiesenthal that in time no one would believe his account of what he saw. Evil on so grand a scale would seem incredible. Yet, we do not just believe; we know. We know because the evidence has been kept; the record has been preserved.

It is fitting to remember the Holocaust under the dome of our Nation's Capitol, with Members of the United States Congress who are here. Some Members had relatives among the victims. Some of you played a part in the liberation of Europe. One Congressman here today fought in the underground, and he, himself, was put into forced labor by the Nazis. We are honored by the presence of the gentleman from California, Tom Lantos.

We remember at the Capitol because the United States has accepted a special role: We strive to be a refuge for the persecuted; we are called by history and by conscience to defend the oppressed; our country stands on watch for the rise of tyranny, and history's worst tyrants have always reserved a special hatred for the Jewish people. Tyrants and dictators will accept no other gods before them. They require disobedience to the First Commandment. They seek absolute control and are threatened by faith in God. They fear only the power they cannot possess, the power of truth.

So they resent the living example of the devout, especially the devotion of a unique people, chosen by God. Through centuries of struggle, Jews across the world have been witnesses not only against the crimes of men but for faith in God and God alone. Theirs is a story of defiance and oppression and patience and tribulation, reaching back to the Exodus and their exile. That story continued in the founding of the State of Israel. That story continues in the defense of the State of Israel.

When we remember the Holocaust and to whom it happened, we also must remember where it happened. It didn't happen in some remote or unfamiliar place; it happened right in the middle of the Western world. Trains carrying men, women, and children in cattle cars departed from Paris and Vienna, Frankfurt and Warsaw. And the orders came not from crude and uneducated men but from men who regarded themselves as cultured and well-schooled, modern, and even forward-looking. They had all the outward traits of cultured men, except for conscience.

Their crimes show the world that evil can slip in and blend in amid the most civilized of surroundings. In the end, only conscience

can stop it. And moral discernment and decency and tolerance—these can never be assured in any time or in any society. They must always be taught.

Yesterday I had the honor of visiting the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, surrounded by the familiar buildings and symbols of our democratic Government. Outside the museum are expressions of the best of mankind's earthly aspirations; inside are images realized of the worst possibilities of the human mind, the attempted elimination of a people and the millions more targeted for destruction. The pictures, the clothes, the toys, all tell of genocide, our word for 6 million acts of murder.

This Day of Remembrance marks more than a single historic tragedy, but 6 million important lives—all the possibilities, all the dreams, and all the innocence that died with them.

The Holocaust is defined as much by the courage of the lost as by the cruelty of the guilty. As Viktor Frankl observed, man is that being who invented the gas chambers of Auschwitz. However, he's also the being who entered those chambers upright, with the Lord's Prayer or Shema Israel on his lips. When all the crimes are finished, the fears realized, and the cries silenced, that was the hope that remained—to be remembered by the living and raised up by the living God.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. in the Rotunda at the United States Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Israeli Ambassador to the U.S. David Ivry; Nobel Prize winner and author Elie Wiesel, former chair, Rabbi Irving Greenberg, chair, Ruth B. Mandel, vice chair, and Benjamin Meed, member, U.S. Holocaust Memorial Council; and Holocaust survivor, author, and human rights activist Simon Wiesenthal.

## Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Fernando de la Rua of Argentina and an Exchange With Reporters

*April 19, 2001*

***President Bush.*** I want to thank the President from Argentina for coming here. It is my honor to welcome a friend of America. This is a country that has been our friend for a long period of time, and I intend to keep our friendship strong, Mr. President. I appreciate so very much your working hard to work through the economic difficulties that you've had. You're making a very strong effort to recover. I know it's been difficult, but you've been a very strong leader.

I appreciate, also, your willingness at times to commit troops as peacekeepers. Your country has been a very strong supporter of keeping the peace around the world.

I look forward to telling the President that one of the main strategies of our foreign policy is to have strong relations in our hemisphere. It begins with remembering our friends. The President represents a country that is a close friend of the United States.

So welcome, Mr. President. *Bienvenidos a los Estados Unidos.*

***President de la Rua.*** *Muchas gracias, Señor Presidente.* Thank you very much, Mr. President.

[*At this point, President de la Rua spoke in Spanish, and a translation was not provided.*]

***President Bush.*** Thank you, Mr. President.

Well, I have a couple of questions from—the United States will alternate to the Argentinean press, and back and forth for two rounds.

Ron Fournier [Associated Press].

### *U.S. Troop Deployment*

***Q.*** Thank you, sir. Mr. President, as part of your—this is a little off topic—as part of your broader review of troop deployments, are you considering pulling out of the Sinai? And if so, why?

***President Bush.*** We are looking at all troop deployments around the world. Where we can reduce troops without creating instability, we will do so. One of the things I said during the course of the campaign and right after my inauguration is that we would be reviewing and looking at and analyzing our troop deployments.

I've always felt that we're overextended, which creates morale problems within our military. On the other hand, I understand we've made commitments, and we just won't simply walk away from our commitments.