

A President can't possibly be President without a good team. It starts with having a great wife, by the way.

And so, I got on the phone from Air Force One, asking to find out the facts. You've got to understand, Jordan, during this period of time, there were all kinds of rumors floating around. Some of them were erroneous. Obviously—for example, there was a news report saying that the State Department had been attacked. I needed to know what the facts were. But I knew I needed to act. I knew that if the Nation's under attack, the role of the Commander in Chief is to respond forcefully to prevent other attacks from happening. And so, I've talked to the Secretary of Defense; one of the first acts I did was to put our military on alert.

An interesting thing happened shortly thereafter. Condoleezza Rice, who was not with me but was with the Vice President because they were in the White House compound, called me on Air Force One after that and said that she had gotten a call from Russia, from Vladimir Putin, who understood why we were putting our troops on alert and therefore wasn't going to respond. That was an important phone call, because when I was coming up, and a lot of other older-looking people here who were coming up with me—[laughter]—that would never have happened in the past. An alert by the United States would have caused Russia to go on alert, which would have created a complicated situation. But that wasn't the case.

By the way, we're heading into a new era. One of the positive things that comes out of the evil was, we're reassessing relationships in order to make the world more peaceful. I believe it's important for us to have positive relations with our former enemy and to rethink the defenses of the United States of America.

At any rate, I knew I had a job to do. And I was quoted in the press the other day as saying I haven't regretted one thing I've decided. And that's the truth. Every decision I made, I stand by. And I'm proud of the decisions I've made.

Support for the Muslim Community

Q. Mr. President, peace and blessings be unto you. I'm representing the Muslim com-

munity of Orlando. And I would really like to thank you for being such a great role model, practicing what this country believes in, the higher ideals that this country believes in, your support to the Muslim community in combating racism. I am an educator; I'm a mother, and I have a strong faith. Thank you so much for holding these values high and trying to wipe the stereotypes that the Taliban has been represented of Muslim women. I am an educator, educating Muslim children in this Orlando city. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The President. God bless. Thank you.

Listen, I've got a job to do. [Laughter] I've got to get back to my temporary home. By the way, my address is in Washington; my home is going to be back in Texas one of these days. But I am—I have got to go back. I wish I could stay and answer questions all night, but I've got—I'll be right there, ma'am. He's fine. I've got to get back and go to work.

I can't tell you what an honor it is to have been here. I want to thank you all for your great questions and for your incredibly warm reception. It's a huge honor to be the greatest—to be the President of the greatest country in the world.

God bless you all, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:20 p.m. in the Orange County Convention Center. In his remarks, the President referred to President Fidel Castro of Cuba; Mayor Glenda E. Hood of Orlando; Governor Jeb Bush of Florida; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; James P. Hoffa, Jr., general president, International Brotherhood of Teamsters; and President Vladimir Putin of Russia.

Statement on the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Awards

December 4, 2001

I am honored to bestow the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Baldrige Award on businesses and schools which have

set a standard for quality. These winners remind us that excellence in all organizations strengthens our Nation.

I am especially pleased that this year's awards include the first Baldrige education winners. They illustrate that the quality of education for children can be improved with innovative programs. These organizations demonstrate that improving the quality of education for all children is everyone's business.

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Report on the
National Emergency With Respect to
the Proliferation of Weapons of Mass
Destruction**

December 4, 2001

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), and section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction that was declared in Executive Order 12938 of November 14, 1994.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 4, 2001.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 5.

**Message to the Congress on the
National Emergencies With Respect
to the Federal Republic of
Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)
and Kosovo**

December 4, 2001

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act, 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), I transmit herewith a combined 6-month periodic report on the national emergencies declared with respect to the Federal

Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) in Executive Order 12808 on May 30, 1992, and Kosovo in Executive Order 13088 on June 9, 1998.

George W. Bush

The White House,
December 4, 2001.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 5.

**Remarks Following a Meeting With
Republican National Committee
Chairman Marc Racicot**

December 5, 2001

The President. I had the honor of, first, thanking Jim Gilmore for his service to the Republican Party. I asked Jim to take on an assignment. He did it, and he did it well. And for that, I'm grateful. We talked about a week ago, and he said he wanted to spend more time with his family, and he wanted to prepare for his transition out of public service as Governor of Virginia. The people of the Commonwealth of Virginia know what I know, that he's an honorable public servant who served our State and our party well.

And to take Jim's place, I've asked my friend Marc Racicot, the former Governor of Montana, to become the chairman of the RNC. He's agreed, for which I'm grateful. Marc has got a history of success. He knows how to build grassroots organizations. He's going to reach out to members of the labor unions and the minorities, just like Jim Gilmore did, to continue to take our positive, optimistic message to people that—in all kinds of neighborhoods around the country. He has got a fine history of winning races, and he'll translate that into practice come next fall, in the 2002 races. And I'm really, really pleased Marc has agreed to take on this assignment.

I also want to welcome Ann Wagner here, the vice chairman of the party, to the Oval Office.

I wish you all the best, Marc. Thanks for taking on the job, and I look forward to working with you.

Q. You haven't changed your mind?

The President. I'll talk to you later.