

NOTE: Letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. An original was not available for verification of the content of this letter.

Remarks on Arrival in Daytona Beach, Florida

January 30, 2002

The President. Thank you all. I'm glad to be back in the great State of Florida. I love to come to States where they've got a great Governor. As Americans make their travel plans, more of us need to think about coming to Florida.

One of the last times I came was when I went to the racetrack owned by Mr. France, right next door to here, where Teresa's good husband was driving cars. It was such an honor to be with Mr. France and his wife and Teresa Earnhardt. And may God rest Dale's soul, and may God bless her family, too.

I don't know if you all know this, but you sent a good one up to represent you in Congress, John Mica. And I appreciate John being here. In politics, they've got the talkers, and they've got the doers. John is a doer. I worked closely with him on an airport security bill that will make sure that, when Americans get on their airplanes, it is as safe as can possibly be. And I want to thank John for his leadership and his hard work on this vital piece of legislation.

I know we've got some from the statehouse in particular—the Speaker of the House Feeney. I'm so honored that people came down from Tallahassee to say hello to Jeb's "little" big brother. [*Laughter*] I am so thrilled to be here.

I hope I didn't speak too long last night.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. I didn't mean to keep people up too late, but I had something to say. The state of our Union is strong; this is a great nation. We've got some challenges ahead, but this country is going to rise to the challenges.

We've got a big task ahead, and that is to rid the world of terror. I know people say, "What does that mean?" Well, it means that in order to keep America safe, we've got to

make it clear to any person who thinks they want to be a terrorist that this great Nation and its coalition will find you and bring you to justice. It means that if you harbor a terrorist, if you feed a terrorist, if you hide a terrorist, you're just as guilty as a terrorist.

Our mission is more than just Afghanistan, although we've been pretty darn successful there, thanks to the United States military. And for those of you who have a loved one in our military or in the military, I want to thank you from the bottom of our heart. I'm so proud—I'm so proud of the men and women who wear our uniform.

And you need to be proud, too. We've sent them into a tough mission, and they've accomplished that mission exactly the way that I hoped they would. We routed the Taliban, and by the way, there's nothing that makes me more joyous than to know our great military have been liberators, liberators of oppressed women and children, liberating people from the clutches of one of the most barbaric regimes in the history of mankind.

We're still in that theater. We will be in that theater with our military until we bring Al Qaida to justice. This is a dangerous phase of the first theater in the war on terror because there's a lot of caves. And we're trying to find people who, on the one hand, send youngsters to their death and, on the other hand, hide. On the one hand, they say, "It's okay for you to go kill yourself." And on the other hand, they're running and hiding.

But see, what they don't understand about this Nation is we are patient; we are determined; we are steadfast. We're going to keep them running, and one of these days, we'll bring them to justice.

But the mission is more than just Afghanistan and Al Qaida. We need not be focused on one person, because we're fighting for freedom and civilized civilization. We fight to make sure our children and our children's children can grow up in a peaceful world, a world based upon values that respect dignity of life and the individual—values, universal values.

We fight evil people, people who want to murder us, people who hate America and what we stand for. And that's why we'll be relentless and steady. The world looks to us for leadership. If we blink, they may go to

sleep. That's why we're not going to blink. That's why we're going to be after them. That's why we're going to disrupt their finances. That's why we're going to hold people account. That's why we're going to say, "If you develop weapons of mass destruction and you aim and ruin the security of us or our allies, we will hold you accountable." That's why this Nation is going to stand tall and strong and not relent in the face of terror.

My biggest job is to secure our homeland. I walk into that magnificent Oval Office in the morning, and I look at a threat assessment, where the enemy may try to hit us again. And make no mistake about it, they'd like to. My biggest job is to rally the resources of our Government to prevent anything from happening to the innocent life in America. And I take it seriously, and so does our Government. We're doing everything in our power to seek down leads, to alert people if necessary, to gather as much intelligence as we can and share it quickly.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation's major mission now is to keep the homeland safe, is to prevent another attack. So for all the law enforcement officials who are here, I want to thank you very much for your diligence, your hard work, for keeping your eyes and ears alert.

Traveling around the country, talking about a homeland initiative that's going to enhance more spending for—to fight bioterrorism; more money for first-responders, like the fire and the police, to make sure the emergency plans are in place; more money for the health agencies around the country; more money to make sure that we understand who's coming into our country and who leaves our country; more money—[*applause*] No, they've put us on notice, and we're after them. The best way to secure our homeland in the long term, however, is to take this war wherever a terrorist tries to hide and get them. And that's exactly what we're going to do.

I sent a budget—one of the things a President does is put out a budget. I sent a budget up. It starts with this number one priority: If you wear our uniform, you deserve the best training, the best equipment, and another pay raise. The second budget request I put

in there is for a homeland security, and the third is for job security. I know there are some people hurting in this State, and my interest is to make sure we do wise things to increase the job base. We're going to help people with an unemployment check, but what Americans want is a steady paycheck.

Oh, I know there's been a lot of talk about, you know, revenues here and spending here and all that. Let me just tell you something about the tax relief plan that you helped us pass. Thank goodness we passed it. It came at the right time. If you want to fight off a recession, if you're interested in job creation, one of the best ways to do so is to let people keep their own money so they can spend it and therefore create more jobs.

We did exactly the right thing in Washington, DC. We made the exact right decision. I know there are some who have got a different theory about economics; that is, if you take more money out of people's pockets and increase the size of Government, the economy recovers. That's not what we think. That's not—and most economists will tell you if you encourage a tax rise in times of recession, it will make matters worse. That's economics 101. Evidently, some of them up there forgot to pick up the textbook. [*Laughter*] This tax cut says we trust people with their own money, and it also reminds people that we're dealing not with the Government's money but with the people's money.

We need to stimulate more economic growth by encouraging investment in plant and equipment, which means jobs, and by stimulating consumer spending by accelerating the tax relief plan, which means jobs. Jobs is the central core of any stimulus package.

And let me remind you something else about jobs. In order to make sure people can find work and the job base of America expands, folks, we need an energy policy. We need a policy that has reliable energy for America. Imagine an employer wondering whether or not they're going to run out of energy. That person is not likely to hire somebody. Or if we get tight on energy, the price of energy goes up—it means somebody is not going to be able to find work. We need an energy policy. We need to encourage conservation. We need to build infrastructure,

and we need to encourage exploration amongst—in the United States. A good energy policy is job security. But a good energy policy that reduces dependency upon foreign oil is a matter of national security, as well.

Like I said last night, I have been in awe of the American people.

Audience member. We love you! [*Laughter*]

The President. I'm at a loss for words. I'm speechless. [*Laughter*] May be hard to believe, after 49 minutes of talking last night. [*Laughter*] But I do want to tell you that this is a fabulous land, as you know. And we've got a great opportunity. The enemy hit us. As I like to kind of tease the enemy, they must have been watching too much daytime TV. They thought we were soft. They thought we were materialistic. They thought we wouldn't fight for what we believed. They thought we would cower in the face of terror. And my, my, are they wrong. Quite the contrary has happened. This great Nation is unified and steadfast, and this Nation understands that if you want to fight evil, you do so with acts of goodness.

I'm asked all the time, "What can I do to help?" People say, "Well, gosh, I want to be a part of the war against terror." And my answer is: Love somebody; be a good mother or dad. I answered the call last night for—many of you, I know, are spending a lot of time in your communities and helping people in need, worrying about kids in school, helping the schools, teaching in the schools, perhaps. But I'm calling on America—and I did last night, and I will continue to do so—to serve 2 years, or 4,000 hours, for the rest of your life, in service to your community.

And if you don't have a place, we've started what's called the USA Freedom Corps. It's a chance for retired police officers or firemen to help out the local law enforcement authorities to be on alert. I'll give you an interesting idea that took place in Maine. They've got—Maine lobstermen are now patrolling the coast on a volunteer basis to make sure that somebody in a—somebody carrying something they don't want to carry in a boat shows up on the coast.

I mean, there's all kinds of ways to serve the community. We're looking for people to be mentors. We're looking for teachers to

teach in neighborhoods that may need teachers. Tomorrow—I'm here because I want to go by a Senior Corps program where senior citizens are signed up to help lend their talents and their valuable experience in the communities. There's all kinds of ways, all kinds of ways, that Americans can serve their communities and their neighborhoods. And by doing so, we stand square in the face of evil. We tell the enemy, "You can't get us. You think so—you think you can tear down the spirit of America, but quite the contrary. We are stronger than we have ever been as a nation."

Nobody wishes this evil had ever happened, but as a result of evil, there's some amazing things that are taking place in America. People have really begun to challenge the culture of the past that said, "If it feels good, do it," to welcome a new culture that says, "I'm responsible for the decisions I make in life."

This Nation has a chance—this Nation, this great Nation has a chance to help change the culture. We have a chance to stand up for being a mom or dad by just loving your kids more. We have a chance to fight evil by walking across the street to a shut-in, saying, "Somebody cares." We have a chance to say to the thousands of children whose moms or dads and parents, to match them with a mentor—in prison—and match them with a mentor, so these youngsters know there's hope in our society, that they know there's love.

We have a chance to change our culture for the better. We have a chance to turn this evil—to turn the evil deeds and the evil acts into incredible, long-term good for our Nation. I ask you to seize the moment. I ask you to understand that we've got to be patient; we've got to be steadfast in our drive overseas; and we've got to be loving and decent and compassionate at home. And when we do—and when we do, we will have proved to the world once again that every time, good overcomes evil.

It is such an honor to be here, back in Daytona Beach. And it's such an honor to be the President of the greatest Nation on the face of the Earth. May God bless you all, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:35 p.m. in the Daytona Beach Jet Center Corporate Hangar at Daytona Beach International Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; William C. France, chairman and chief executive officer, International Speedway Corp. and NASCAR, and his wife, Betty Jane; Teresa Earnhardt, widow of NASCAR champion Dale Earnhardt; and Speaker Tom Feeney, Florida House of Representatives.

Remarks to Senior Corps Volunteers in Daytona Beach

January 31, 2002

The President. Thank you all very much. Please be seated. Well, it's good to be here with my little brother. [Laughter] Last night when we arrived, I had the honor of saying hello to, it looked like, a couple thousand citizens there. And I said I always like to go to States that have got a really good Governor. [Laughter] And I did.

I want all the moms here to know that any success I've had, any success Jeb has had, is the result of having a strong mother. So my advice to the young in Florida is, always listen to your mother. [Laughter]

Jeb and I know one thing, and that is that America can change, one heart, one soul at a time. We understand that a compassionate tomorrow and a safe tomorrow requires Presidents and Governors and mayors and county officials to rally the true strength of the country, which is our people.

You know, the enemy hit us the other day, a while ago. They didn't understand America. They thought we were weak and materialistic and soft. Instead, they have found a patient, determined, compassionate nation that stands in the way of their efforts to spread evil.

In my State of the Union Address the other night, I chose to spend time talking about the spirit of unity in our country. To me, it is one of the most—as I said, I stand in awe of the American people, individually and collectively. I know—I know how strong we are as a nation. And now our job is to take that spirit and extend it for years to come.

I like to describe it this way: Our culture has said, if it feels good, do it. Our dream

or my dream for the country is that we usher in a culture that says, each of us are responsible for the decisions we make in life. We're responsible for loving our children. We are responsible for serving goals greater than ourself, and that means becoming involved in the communities in which we live.

And so we're here today in Volusia County to herald a Senior Corps program that embodies the spirit that I was defining in my speech, a program that recognizes the power of recruiting volunteers to work side by side with police and fire and emergency rescuers to make sure that this county is more secure in its future.

I want to thank Terry White, who is the Florida secretary of elder affairs. I mention the Florida office because we understand at the Federal Government, since I had been a Governor, that sometimes the Federal Government can help, and sometimes it can get in the way. I want to be—I want to have an administration that helps and doesn't thwart the efforts of local people. So I look forward to working with your Governor, and I look forward to working with the cabinet he's put together, to pass power out of Washington to local governments. The government that's closest to the people is that which works the best, as far as we're concerned.

And somebody who understands that is Congressman John Mica, and I want to thank John for being here, as well. I want to say a word about John. One of the—obviously, right after the attack, we realized the Federal Government had a responsibility to make sure our air travel was more secure. And as a result of his leadership and the leadership of others—but John had a major role to play—I was able to sign a good airline security bill that made traffic as secure as it possibly could be.

And thanks to the result of our efforts, Brother was informing me today that people are beginning to travel more, coming back to this great destination State called Florida. I'm glad they're traveling more. I hope they travel more to Florida. It's good for our economy, and it's good for our Nation when people do that. But John, thank you for your leadership on this important issue.