

Week Ending Friday, February 15, 2002

**Remarks at a State of Utah Olympic Reception in Salt Lake City, Utah**

February 8, 2002

Thank you. Well, Mike, thank you very much. That's a powerful introduction. It must have been the choir. *[Laughter]* It's such an honor to be here. Laura and I have really been looking forward to this spectacular day. I want to thank Mike for your efforts, your hard work to show really the very best of America to the whole world. I want to thank Jackie, as well. Mike and I both married above ourselves. *[Laughter]*

It's an honor to be here with many distinguished citizens of our country, the Utah congressional delegation. Senator Hatch and Senator Bennett, thank you both for being here. We had the opportunity of flying down on Air Force One together. These two men love Utah a lot. I want to thank members of the congressional delegation. Congressmen Matheson, Hansen, and Cannon, thank you all for being here, as well.

I appreciate the mayor. I also appreciate members of my Cabinet, Secretary of State Colin Powell—members of one of the finest teams a President has ever assembled have joined us. Thank you all for coming.

I want to thank Mitt Romney for being such a strong leader, for really kind of willing these games to go forward. I appreciate Jacques Rogge for being here, as well. Thank you, sir. It's my honor to have welcomed you to the—one of the greatest offices on the face of the Earth, the Oval Office. I loved our visit then. Thank you for coming. Thank you, Sandy, as well.

Kofi, it's great to see you, sir, the Secretary-General of the United Nations who does such a fine job of promoting peace and the world interests.

I've put together an official delegation to the Olympics, really fine people—a few reprobrates with them. *[Laughter]* Thank you all for coming. I'm honored that my sister has

joined the delegation, as well. As you know, I love my family a lot, and I love my little sister. She's my favorite one, even though she's my only one. *[Laughter]*

I want to thank all the citizens who have worked so hard to put these games on. You know, as I flew into Salt Lake City, I saw such a majestic part of our country, such a beautiful part of the American landscape. The State of Utah is the perfect site for these games. It's the perfect site because of her beauty. It's the perfect site because of her people. It's the perfect site because of the rich history of this State, from the early Native Americans who gave Utah its name to the mountain men and later settlers who carved cities and towns into this rugged landscape. It was here in Utah that America was connected from east to west by the completion of the Transcontinental Railroad in 1869. It is here today that the world is united, in Utah.

It's such an honor to host the Olympics in any year, but it is even more significant in this year. Following the attacks of September the 11th, people from around the world expressed their sympathy and their strong support for our country, and for that we are grateful. They understand that America stands for a great cause, and that is freedom. We love, we cherish, and we will defend freedom at any cost.

This commitment to freedom is inscribed in our Nation's founding documents. The first of those documents, the Declaration of Independence, is right here in Utah in the State Capitol and will be available for viewing throughout the games. The Declaration is here thanks to a program created by Norman Lear. Norman and I don't always agree on politics, but we agree that the Declaration of Independence is fundamental to our Nation. And I want to thank Norman Lear for his vision of providing this document for not only the people of the world to see but for

our fellow Americans to review when they come to these great games.

I hope people do come and read the document because they'll understand why we're so insistent upon defending our values. We defend liberty and freedom for everyone, not just a few, not just people in Utah, but everybody who lives in this country and everybody who lives around the world. These are rights we hold self-evident. These are timeless ideals.

People may wonder, if they don't understand America, "Well, why have we reacted with such determination and patience and resolve?" It's because we believe so strongly in these ideals, liberty and freedom, and we know it is what will make the world live in peace, if we embrace those ideals without falter.

And the Olympics give the world a chance, in the midst of a difficult struggle, to celebrate international peace and cooperation. America's athletes will compete hard and, I know, will make us proud. But at the end of every event, the competitors will join to honor the winners, no matter their nationality. And they will stand at attention to honor the flags of many nations, which will be flying in pride and flying in peace.

For centuries, the Olympics have reinforced an important lesson. It's an important lesson for today. No matter how wide our political or cultural differences may be, some things are valued and enjoyed the world over. All people appreciate the discipline that produces excellence, the courage that overcomes difficult odds, the character that creates champions. The feelings and emotions that drive the Olympics are not expressed in any one language; they're expressed with tears and smiles of joy and of pride.

The world has shed many tears, tears of sorrow, over the past 5 months. It now gives the people of the United States and the State of Utah great pride to host these games, which will provide lasting memories of laughter and triumph for people of every nation.

I want to thank you all. Thank you so very much on behalf of our Nation for bringing western hospitality to this global tradition.

May God bless you all, and may God bless the United States of America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:56 p.m. in the Rotunda at the Utah State Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Michael O. Leavitt of Utah and his wife, Jacalyn S.; Mayor Ross C. Anderson of Salt Lake City; Mitt Romney, president and chief executive officer, Salt Lake Organizing Committee for the 2002 winter Olympic games; Jacques Rogge, president, International Olympic Committee; Sandy Baldwin, president, U.S. Olympic Committee; Secretary-General Kofi Annan of the United Nations; the President's sister, Dorothy Koch; and Norman Lear, founder, People for the American Way. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

### **Remarks Following a Meeting With President Gordon B. Hinckley of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints and an Exchange With Reporters in Salt Lake City**

*February 8, 2002*

**Mr. Hinckley.** We're honored to have you here. We very much appreciate that you've come. We're all here, excited about the Olympics, and we think this is going to be a great thing for this area and for the United States of America.

**The President.** I agree. Thank you, sir.

**Mr. Hinckley.** Thank you very much.

**The President.** I'm looking forward to it. I want to congratulate the great State of Utah for putting on the games. It's going to be a—I know it's been a lot of hard work, and now we're here, and I think the world is going to see why we love the West so much here in the United States. People can get things done.

**Mr. Hinckley.** We're happy that they're here. We hope that all will go well, with confidence that all will go well and that it will be a great season for all of us.

**The President.** I might answer a few questions. You got anything, Ron [Ron Fournier, Associated Press] or Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters]?

### **Security at the Winter Olympic Games**

**Q.** Mr. President, are you confident about the security situation at the games?