

power to save these young lives. Conscience demands we do so.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:04 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Anthony S. Fauci, Director, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health.

### Remarks to the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America Legislative Conference

June 19, 2002

**The President.** Well, Doug, I appreciate those kind remarks. I thought you were on Air Force One because you wanted a free ride. [Laughter] But I had a good visit with Doug. I believe I'm a pretty good judge of character, and I appreciate this man's character. I'll tell you why. First, he said, "We don't agree 100 percent of the time." I remember my friend Bullock, who was the Lieutenant Governor of Texas, Democrat Lieutenant Governor, when I was the Governor of Texas. He said, "You know, if we agreed 100 percent of the time, one of us wouldn't be necessary." [Laughter] He's necessary. He's necessary in Washington, DC, on behalf of the working people.

He—you know, in this town, sometimes people don't shoot straight with you. They kind of come in and tell you something, and then they leave, and you're wondering what they said, or if they said something, whether they mean it. And Doug's a straight shooter. That's high on my list of the kind of people I like to talk to and deal with.

The other thing I like about Doug is, his vision for a better union means more skills for those who are members of the union. You see, Doug understands that through education and training, you can enhance a man's or a woman's skills. And that enables that person to more better realize their dreams. He understands the vision of a union is not only to work for jobs but to enhance the ability of members within the union to improve their lives. And I appreciate that vision of putting union members first. Doug, you're a good leader. You're a good leader.

And I want to congratulate you on opening up your new building last night, right there on Capitol Hill. I bet it was pretty well built. [Laughter]

**Audience member.** It's union.

**The President.** Yes. And I appreciate the fact that you had Ted Kennedy and Elaine Chao, the fine Secretary of Labor, there to open it up. It is a good sign of—it's a good sign as to how to—how Washington ought to deal with problems.

I'll be the first to admit there's too much politics in this town. [Laughter] There's too much putting the party ahead of the country. And I'm a proud Republican. Many of you are probably proud Democrats, but first and foremost, we're all proud Americans.

I also appreciate my friend Congressman Rob Portman for coming by this morning. I appreciate Rob's energy and enthusiasm and his drive.

I want to talk about the challenges America faces. I worry about our security. I'm worried about our homeland security. I'm worried about our national security, and I'm worried about economic security. And that's what I want to talk to you about.

First, let me talk about the homeland. I remind people that every morning I go into the Oval Office—and by the way, it is a huge honor to walk in the Oval Office. I'm never going to get tired of walking into this beautiful office that we have built for our Presidents. It's an honor that—it's hard for me to describe how—what an honor it is. But I walk in there. That's, by the way, after I get the First Lady some coffee every morning. [Laughter] I don't want to put any pressure on you guys, but—[laughter]—the President does get to set the example. [Laughter] Then take the dogs out, Spot and Barney. Spot was born in the White House in 1989 when my dad and mother were up here, so she's quite comfortable with the surroundings. Barney's new, kind of a young fellow, so he doesn't get to go in the Oval Office, though, in the mornings. We just put a new rug in there. [Laughter]

At any rate, I read threat assessments on the country. I sit at this magnificent desk—a desk, by the way, that Theodore Roosevelt used and Franklin Roosevelt used and John Kennedy used and Ronald Reagan used—

and I read threat assessments. The Sun's coming up, and the first thing I do is open up a book that says, here's what the potential threats are to our country. It reminds me on a daily basis, my most important job is to defend the homeland, to protect innocent Americans from the deaths of the killers.

People say—a lot of young people say, “Well, why America? Why would anybody want to come after us? Why would anybody want to fight a war with this Nation?” And the answer is, because we love freedom. That's why. And they hate freedom. We love the idea of people being able to worship freely in America. We love the idea of people being able to come to our country and realize dreams. We love the idea of people having free—being able to freely debate issues. We love freedom, and these coldblooded killers hate freedom. And that's why they want to come and hurt America, and we are not going to let them.

I say we're not going to let them—we're going to do everything in our power. And one of my points I want to make to you today is that we are focused, and we are buttoning up this homeland as securely as we can make it.

I proposed a new Cabinet department. I want to explain quickly why I did so. There are over 100 agencies involved with homeland defense, and they're scattered all throughout Washington. It makes it difficult to do a job if you're trying to chase down 100 different agencies, because they're in different departments.

The Coast Guard is in the Transportation Department, and that's fine, except for the fact that there's a new world in America where our number one priority is to protect the homeland, and the job of the Transportation Department is not homeland security. Or take the Customs Department. Customs is an important agency to protect the homeland. It's part of understanding what's coming into our country and whether we want it in our country or not. And yet, it's a part of the Treasury Department. The Treasury Department is not responsible for homeland security.

What we need to do is to bring these agencies under one Cabinet Secretary, organize it so that information flows freely, organize

it so there's responsibility and authority so we can have accountability, and help change cultures in agencies to the primary responsibility of the day, which is to protect the American homeland. And so I've asked Congress to do this.

Now, I understand it's going to be a difficult task. First, I appreciate the response of both Republicans and Democrats, and that's good. It's going to be a little difficult, because there is a tendency on Capitol Hill for people to what they call protect their turf. In other words, if you've got responsibility over funding one agency and that agency is going to be moved away from you, you might be somewhat resistant. And what I'd like to do is to call upon Congress—and I hope you do as well—to think first and foremost about how best to protect the homeland, not how best to protect their political turf. And I think it's going to happen. I do. And I think it's going to be able to make us—enable us to do our job in better fashion.

Along those same lines, the FBI and CIA are thinking differently. And as we have seen, they needed to think differently about how to better coordinate information, about how to understand the new threats that face us in the 21st century.

You see, a lot of Washington was all geared up for the old days of war where, you know, tanks would be moving across battlefields or army platoons would be going here. And now we're facing a new kind of enemy. These guys are killers. I mean, they're international killers. They're—these are the kind of people that are secretive, and they're plenty smart. It doesn't require a lot of money for them to operate. They send youngsters to their death, and they hide in a cave. That's how they think. And we've got to match those threats with a new way of thinking, which means we've got to do a better job of collecting and sharing intelligence.

When I first—the man I named, Mueller, Bob Mueller, who's the head of the FBI, came to work one week before September the 11th. And I told him in one of my first meetings right after September 11th, “We've got a new world, and while the job of the FBI is to chase down criminals and arrest them—you still have that job—your most important job now is to prevent, is to run down

every possible lead. If you get a hint that somebody's fixing to do something to America, you and your agents need to run them down. We need to know. We need to know who's coming into the country and why they're coming in. We need to know if they're leaving the country when they're supposed to be leaving the country. We need you running down every single hint."

And we want you, the CIA, to continue to gather information outside of the country, but make sure, if you've got a relevant piece of information, to share it with the FBI. The number one priority of this Government is to button up our homeland so that the American people can go about their lives without fearful—without fear of another attack from one of these killers. And we're making progress.

And I want to appreciate those on the frontline, the police and fire on the frontline, for working hard.

But the best way to secure the homeland—you need to know just how I think—the best way to secure our homeland is to run these killers down one by one and bring them to justice, which is precisely what we will do, so long as I am the President of the United States.

It is not an easy task because, as I just described, the nature of the enemy is different than we're used to. You know, I can't imagine what was going through their minds when they attacked America. I guess and assume that they thought we were so weak, so feeble, so self-absorbed, so materialistic, that after September the 11th we might file a lawsuit or two. [*Laughter*] But they found out America thinks differently, and they're finding out we've got a fabulous military.

Now, the budget I submitted, the defense budget I submitted—you've probably heard about this defense budget, and it is big; there's no question about it. And I'll tell you why. First of all, my attitude is, anytime we commit one of our youngsters into battle or into harm's way, they deserve the best training, the best equipment, the best pay possible. And for those of you with relatives in the military, I want you to thank them on behalf of their Commander in Chief and a grateful country and need to know they're

going to be strongly supported here in Washington, DC.

And the second reason why the defense increase is large and significant is because this is—this war is going to take a while to win. This is—just because we've routed the Taliban in Afghanistan doesn't mean the war has ended. We have got a long way to go to secure the homeland, to defend freedom, and to defeat this enemy. And it's important for the American people to understand that.

You know, sometimes there's kind of a sense that, well, so-and-so was captured, and therefore, this deal is over. That's just not the way it is. The war on terror is going to take a while. The good news for us and the bad news for the enemy is, the American people are united, are patient, are resolved to win this war. They understand the stakes, and so do I.

It's important for our country to send a very clear signal that we're in this for the long run, and that's what the budget does. It says there's no time—there's not a calendar on my desk that I flip and say, okay, it's over, you know, it's time to quit. No, it's time to quit when the homeland is secure.

And we're making progress. We really are. I mentioned the fact that we routed out the Taliban. These people were barbaric people who wouldn't even let young girls go to school. And so I can safely say to the youngsters here that your country went into Afghanistan not to conquer people but to liberate people, to give them freedom, to give people a chance to express their will, to give young girls a chance to go to school, to give women a chance to participate in government. No, we're tough when we need to be tough, but we also uphold values as we fight this war on terror, values that will not be compromised.

The war on terror is bigger than just a person or a network. The war on terror is to address the threats that will face our children in the future. And there's a major threat, and that is the threat of weapons of mass destruction in the hands of regimes that are run by leaders that hate freedom. There's a major threat that an Al-Qaida-type organization could mate up with one of those countries that I labeled "axis of evil" and, therefore, have the capacity to have a ballistic missile

threat that could conceivably allow them to blackmail freedom-loving countries into inaction. And we've got to deal with that threat.

I'm a patient man. We use all tools at our disposal. But for the good of our children and for the good of freedom, we must not allow the world's worst regimes to threaten us and our friends and allies with the world's worst weapons.

And so I spend time making sure this coalition of freedom-loving countries is strong. And they're kind of looking at the United States, and if I blink, it's likely they'll go to sleep. So we've got to stay strong and determined to lead—to lead the world to defend our freedoms, and I'll do just that. I can assure you of that. I feel it.

And I also believe it's important for the President of the United States to speak plainly, to speak his heart, and I believe this is a struggle of good versus evil. And I don't mind calling evil by its name. And you know what's going to happen? Good will overcome evil with the leadership of the United States, and we're going to provide that leadership.

I'm also worried about the economic security of our country. This is a town where they like to talk statistics, and that's all right—you know, good employment for some of the numbers crunchers. But behind every number, there's a story. And my attitude is, so long as somebody who wants to work can't find work, we've got a problem, and we need to deal with it. And we need to figure out how to expand jobs.

Doug and I spent a lot of time talking about job expansion. What can the Federal Government do to create more paying jobs for people? How do we make sure the economy is vibrant so people can find work? That's my concern. And we've talked about a lot of issues. I happen to believe letting people keep more of their hard-earned dollars is a good way to create economic activity. I believe that there is a proper role for the Federal Government, but there's also a recognition that when you put more money in a woman's or man's pockets, they spend it. And when they spend it, they demand something. And when they demand something, somebody builds it for them.

And so this tax cut that we passed came at the right time in American history. It

needs to be a permanent part of the Tax Code so people can plan. You see, I believe the more money a person has—has in his or her pockets, the more likely it is they're going to be able to realize their dreams. Tax relief was the right thing to do.

And so is passing this terrorist insurance bill. And I want to thank you all and your leadership for working with us to get Congress to act, to provide terrorism insurance so that some of these big building projects can go forward in America. It's an incredibly important piece of legislation. And Doug has been on the frontlines of working with both Republicans and Democrats.

And it's a problem, and let me give you some examples. This guy Dave Creamer, who is the chairman and CEO of GMAC Commercial Mortgage—they're the lenders. People have got to borrow money to build these big projects. He's turned down more than a billion dollars of new loans this year because projects were not insured against acts of terror. To me, that's a problem we've got to address. If the concern is more jobs, and people aren't lending money because there is no insurance against acts of terror, Congress needs to deal with it. He also reports that loans are not limited to projects in New York or Los Angeles or Chicago, the big cities; they're nationwide. And you know that as well as I know that.

There's a guy who's trying to build an apartment complex. He's not going to get—he's not going to get funding for an apartment complex in the Washington/Baltimore area, a \$50-million complex that would require—that would allow for 250 construction jobs for 3 years, because he can't get a loan, because he can't get the insurance.

And so they're working on a bill. The House passed one. The Senate passed one. They need to get it to conference, and they need to get it to my desk as quickly as possible. And the bill has got to make sure that insurance companies remain engaged in covering terrorism losses—that the Government will help but not help all the way. And they've got to make sure that this bill doesn't open up all kinds of lawsuits. What we're interested in is job creation, not lawsuit creation.

We've got plenty of lawsuits all around America as it is. And so it's a—I spend time thinking about jobs, and Doug and I talk about it.

We talked about an energy bill. He supported the energy bill. I support the energy bill for two reasons: One, it will help jobs—the more infrastructure we build in America, the more jobs there will be—two, I don't particularly care for the fact that we get a lot of our energy from overseas. Over 50 percent of our energy comes from overseas, and some of the suppliers aren't real friendly to America. For the good of economic security and for the good of national security, we need a sound energy policy here in America.

I was impressed by—Doug mentioned Ground Zero. It was an honor to go there that day. And I know that you all join me, if you're not from New York, in expressing our appreciation to the Union Local 79 for their hard work in cleaning up Ground Zero. It was an unbelievable feat of dedication and hard work and focus. Jeff Zelli said, "We can rebuild now. We're on our feet already, and we're going to build something beautiful." That was his comment, the head of Union Local 79. That's how I feel. You know, we're on our feet, and we can rebuild something beautiful.

You see, I believe out of the evil done to America can come incredible good. I believe, if we're strong, we can achieve peace, and that's what I want. We fight for peace. We not only fight to defend our country and defend liberty and the values that we love, we yearn for peace. That's what—we want our kids to grow up in a peaceful world.

But I also believe here at home that there's going to be some good that comes out of the evil, starting with the fact that more of us understand the need to love a neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves, that if you're interested in fighting evil, you can do so by doing some good, by mentoring a child, by going to a shut-in's house and say, "What can I do to help you?" You see, it's those small acts of kindness that really end up defining the true character of this country.

I also believe that the culture is changing in America from one that has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it, and if you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a

culture in which each of us understands we're responsible for decisions we make in life. If you're a mom or a dad, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're a good citizen in this country, you're responsible for helping a neighbor in need, mentoring a child, extending a hand of kindness and compassion to somebody. If you run a corporation in America, you're responsible for telling the truth on the assets and liabilities on your balance sheet.

I see it in the country where this is taking place. It's a change for the better. I went to Ohio State University and gave the graduation speech last Friday; 70 percent of the graduating class at one time during their career at Ohio State had volunteered to help somebody in need. There's an ethic which I hope is coming into the hearts and souls of the country that says, we're responsible for this great Nation.

And perhaps that example was best shown us all on Flight 93. I want you to think about that moment. People flying across the country. They realized the plane they were on was going to be used as a weapon. They told their loved ones they loved them. They said a prayer. They said, "Let's roll," and served something greater than themselves in life.

I believe that out of the evil done to America will come incredible good. The world is going to be more peaceful. America will be more secure. And millions of Americans understand that serving something greater than yourself in life is an important part of having a full life.

It is my honor to come and visit with you all. You're citizens, as you know, of the greatest country on the face of the Earth. And I'm sure proud to be the President of the greatest country on the face of the Earth.

And now it is my special privilege to declare that this conference of the United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners is officially adjourned.

God bless you all, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:13 a.m. in the Hall of Battles at the Hyatt Regency Capitol Hill. In his remarks, he referred to Douglas J. McCarron, general president, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America; and Jeff Zelli, member, Laborers Union Local 79.

**Remarks at the White House  
Conference on Character and  
Community**

*June 19, 2002*

Thank you all. Well, thanks for that warm welcome. Welcome to your house. [*Laughter*] We're glad you're here, and I really appreciate the theme of this conference and the importance of the conference.

I know you've heard from some really impressive people, and I want to thank all the speakers and students who are here. You even heard from a member of my family, and I want to thank the First Lady for doing such a great job and being so patient with the President.

The thing I appreciate is that you understand education should prepare children for jobs, and it also should prepare our children for life. I join you in wanting our children to be not only rich in skills but rich in ideals. Teaching character and citizenship to our children is a high calling. It's a really high calling. And I'm grateful for your work.

I appreciate Secretary of Education Rod Paige. Mr. Secretary, thanks—thanks for joining on this important cause. You know, here in Washington there's a lot of people who are good on theory and not so good on action, so when I picked a man to be the head of the—Secretary of Education, I wanted somebody who had been on the frontlines. Rod had been the superintendent of the Houston Independent School District, and I figured that's a pretty good definition of frontlines. [*Laughter*] And he had done a great job—Mr. Secretary, and I appreciate your concern and care.

I understand Colin Powell spoke here earlier. I'm—right after this brief speech, he and I have a meeting. He is doing a fabulous job for our country too. I'm proud to call him a member of our team.

I appreciate Michelle Engler and Hope Taft for being here. Thank you both for coming. I know you all are very much involved in your State of Michigan and Ohio for not only making sure every child can read but teaching children the difference between right and wrong.

I appreciate the Members of Congress who are here, Wamp, Lucas, Edwards,

McIntyre, and Moore. Thank you all for coming. My Congressman—as you know, I'm a voting resident of Crawford, Texas. My Congressman, Chet Edwards, is here. I appreciate you answering my mail, Mr. Congressman. [*Laughter*] I won't write you if you don't write me. [*Laughter*]

I believe that public schools are the most important institutions in democracy, and a good education is the birthright of every American child. Every public school must be the pathway to a better life. And because public schools are America's great hope, making them work for every child is our Nation's greatest duty.

We passed good education reform here in Washington, DC. This wasn't a Republican bill. It wasn't a Democrat bill. It was an American bill. It really was. We worked together to get a good piece of legislation out. Here are the principles. It says, every child can learn. In other words, we believe in high standards. I'm one of these fellows that believes if you lower the bar, you get lousy results. If you believe in the best and raise the bar, you can get high standards.

It also says that if you receive money from the Federal Government, you must show us whether or not children are learning to read and write and add and subtract. For the first time, the Federal Government is asking the question, is every child learning? I don't mean a few children. I don't mean a group of children. I mean, is every child learning to read and write and add and subtract? And if we aren't, we must correct problems early, before it's too late.

In other words, we've had high standards. We demand excellence. We're willing to challenge failure to make sure that not one single child is left behind. And I firmly believe the reforms we put in place, when fully enacted, will make sure that no child is left behind in America.

It is more than—we've got to do more than just teach our children skills and knowledge. That's one part of education, and it's an important part—no question about it. We also want to make sure they're kind and decent, compassionate and responsible, honest and self-disciplined. Our children must learn to make a living, but even more, they must learn how to live. And that's a big responsibility.