

Dream means. There's no doubt in my mind we can make the world more peaceful.

Today's initiative is one—it's a step toward showing the world the great compassion of a great country.

Thanks for coming, and God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:31 a.m. in Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Odeen Ishmael, Guyana's Ambassador to the U.S.; Edith Grace Ssempala, Uganda's Ambassador to the U.S.; Anthony S. Fauci, Director, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Disease, National Institutes of Health; and Father Edward Phillips, chairperson, Eastern Deanery CBHC and AIDS Relief Program.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom

January 31, 2003

President Bush. It's my honor to welcome Tony Blair back to the White House. We just had a wide-ranging discussion on a lot of issues. I appreciate my friend's commitment to peace and security. I appreciate his vision. I appreciate his willingness to lead. Most importantly, I appreciate his understanding that after September the 11th, 2001, the world changed, that we face a common enemy, terrorists willing to kill innocent lives, that we now recognize that threats which gather in remote regions of the world must be dealt with before others lose their lives.

Tony Blair is a friend. He's a friend of the American people. He's a friend of mine. I trust his judgment, and I appreciate his wisdom.

Welcome.

Prime Minister Blair. First of all, can I say how delighted I am to be back in the White House and to see President Bush. And as he's just described to you, we had an excellent discussion, covering all the key issues of the day. And I would like to praise his leadership in the world since September the 11th, particularly, on what I think are the two key issues that face our world today, which are issues of international terrorism and weapons of mass destruction. And I think both of

those issues come together because they threaten the peace and the order and the stability of the world.

And what is essential is that in every respect, in every way that we can, we mobilize international support and the international community in order to make sure that these twin threats that the world faces are dealt with. And I have no doubt at all that we can deal with them. But we should realize those two threats, terrorism, weapons of mass destruction, are not different; they're linked. And dealing with both of them is essential for the future peace and security and prosperity of the world.

Thank you.

President Bush. Fournier [Ron Fournier, Associated Press]. Here's what we're going to do. I will call upon a reporter. The Prime Minister will call upon a reporter. And we'll do this three different times. Start with you.

Timetable for Action/ U.N. Resolution 1441

Q. Thank you, sir. First, quickly to the Prime Minister, did you ask President Bush to secure a second U.N. resolution and to give the inspectors more time? And President Bush, the U.N. says—the U.N. inspectors say Saddam is not complying; you say Saddam is not complying. Why wait a matter of weeks? What's—why hold up on the decision?

President Bush. First of all, you violated the two-question rule—as usual. He's had a bad habit of this. I'll start.

Saddam Hussein is not disarming. He is a danger to the world. He must disarm. And that's why I have constantly said and the Prime Minister has constantly said this issue will come to a head in a matter of weeks, not months.

Prime Minister Blair. The whole point about the present situation is that when President Bush made his speech to the United Nations, when we went down the United Nations route, we passed Resolution 1441. And I think it really repays reading that, because we said very clearly that Saddam had what we said was a final opportunity to disarm and that he had to cooperate fully

in every respect with the U.N. weapons inspectors.

As Dr. Blix said in his report to the Security Council earlier this week, he's not doing that. And therefore, what is important is that the international community comes together again and makes it absolutely clear that this is unacceptable. And the reason why I believe that it will do that is precisely because in the original Resolution 1441, we made it clear that failure to disarm would lead to serious consequences.

So this is a test for the international community. It's not just a test for the United States or for Britain. It's a test for the international community, too. And the judgment has to be, at the present time, that Saddam Hussein is not cooperating with the inspectors and, therefore, is in breach of the U.N. resolution. And that's why time is running out.

Andy.

Q. Andrew Marr, from the BBC. A question for the President, if I may. What is the status, in your view, of any second resolution? Is it something that you think it's worth spending time and energy trying to assemble and, if so, why?

President Bush. First, let me reiterate what I just said. This is a matter of weeks, not months. Any attempt to drag the process on for months will be resisted by the United States. And as I understand the Prime Minister—I'm loath to put words in his mouth—but he's also said weeks, not months.

Secondly, I want to remind you, I was the guy that went to the United Nations in the first place. I said, "Why don't we come together as a world to resolve this issue, once and for all? Why doesn't the United Nations stand up as a body and show the world that it has got the capacity to keep the peace?"

So, first of all, in answer to one part of your question, is this needs to be resolved quickly. Should the United Nations decide to pass a second resolution, it would be welcomed if it is yet another signal that we're intent upon disarming Saddam Hussein. But 1441 gives us the authority to move without any second resolution. And Saddam Hussein must understand that if he does not disarm, for the sake of peace, we, along with others, will go disarm Saddam Hussein.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Secretary Powell's Upcoming U.N. Visit

Q. Thank you, sir. Mr. President, is Secretary Powell going to provide the undeniable proof of Iraq's guilt that so many critics are calling for?

President Bush. Well, all due in modesty, I thought I did a pretty good job myself of making it clear that he's not disarming and why he should disarm. Secretary Powell will make a strong case about the danger of an armed Saddam Hussein. He will make it clear that Saddam Hussein is fooling the world or trying to fool the world. He will make it clear that Saddam is a menace to peace in his own neighborhood. He will also talk about Al Qaida links, links that really do portend a danger for America and for Great Britain, anybody else who loves freedom.

As the Prime Minister says, the war on terror is not confined to just a shadowy terrorist network. The war on terror includes people who are willing to train and to equip organizations such as Al Qaida.

See, the strategic view of America changed after September the 11th. We must deal with threats before they hurt the American people again. And as I have said repeatedly, Saddam Hussein would like nothing more than to use a terrorist network to attack and to kill and leave no fingerprints behind. Colin Powell will continue making that case to the American people and the world at the United Nations.

Prime Minister Blair. Adam.

Iraq and Terrorists

Q. Adam Boulton, Sky News. One question for you both. Do you believe that there is a link between Saddam Hussein, a direct link, and the men who attacked on September the 11th?

President Bush. I can't make that claim.

Prime Minister Blair. That answers your question. The one thing I would say, however, is I've absolutely no doubt at all that unless we deal with both of these threats, they will come together in a deadly form. Because, you know, what do we know after September the 11th? We know that these terrorist networks would use any means they

can to cause maximum death and destruction. And we know also that they will do whatever they can to acquire the most deadly weaponry they can. And that's why it's important to deal with these issues together.

President Bush. Jim [Jim Angle, FOX News].

Role of U.N. Inspectors

Q. Mr. President and Prime Minister, if I could, sir, the arms inspectors made their report on Monday this week. You've both made clear that it's a question of weeks, not months. And here we are at the end of the week and the Iraqis are suddenly inviting the arms inspectors back to Baghdad for further consultations. Could I ask both of you what you make of that?

President Bush. Let's see if I can be polite. Saddam Hussein has had 12 years to learn how to deceive, and I would view this as more deception on his part. He expects to be able to convince 108 inspectors that he is openminded. The only way that he can show that he is truly a peaceful man is to not negotiate with inspectors, is not to string the inspectors along, but to disarm in front of inspectors. We know what a disarmed regime looks like. We know what it means to disarm. There's no negotiations. The idea of calling inspectors in to negotiate is a charade. If he is going to disarm, he must start disarming. That's the only thing he needs to talk to the inspectors about, is, "Here. I'm disarming."

Prime Minister Blair. That's absolutely right. If you look back at the history of this, for 12 years, he's played these games. And that's why it's so important to realize what the U.N. inspectors were put back in to do. The U.N. inspectors—and this is the crucial point, because it's on this basis that the whole issue of the U.N. authority rests—the U.N. inspectors did not go back into Iraq to play a game of hide-and-seek with Saddam. They didn't go back in as a detective agency. They went back in under an authority that said that they had to cooperate fully, in every respect: The interview of witnesses, not just access to sites; honest, transparent declarations in the material they had. They're not doing that.

Now, why are they calling back the inspectors? I think it's fairly obvious. It's because

as the pressure grows, they want to play the same games as they've been playing all the way through. That's why it's important we hold to the path that we've set out. They have to disarm. They have to cooperate with the inspectors. They're not doing it. If they don't do it through the U.N. route, then they will have to be disarmed by force.

Nick.

Impact of September 11

Q. Nick Robinson, ITV News. Mr. President, an account of the White House after 9/11 says that you ordered invasion plans for Iraq 6 days after September the 11th—Bob Woodward's account. Isn't it the case that you have always intended war on Iraq, and that international diplomacy is a charade in this case?

President Bush. Actually, prior to September the 11th, we were discussing smart sanctions. We were trying to fashion a sanction regime that would make it more likely to be able to contain somebody like Saddam Hussein. After September the 11th, the doctrine of containment just doesn't hold any water, as far as I'm concerned.

I've told you the strategic vision of our country shifted dramatically, and it shifted dramatically because we now recognize that oceans no longer protect us, that we're vulnerable to attack. And the worst form of attack could come from somebody acquiring weapons of mass destruction and using them on the American people, or the worst kind of attack could come when somebody uses weapons of mass destruction on our friends in Great Britain.

Recently, Tony Blair's government routed out a poison plot. It should say to the people of Great Britain: There is a present danger, that weapons of mass destruction are a danger to people who love freedom.

I want to congratulate you on your fabulous job of using your intelligence and your law enforcement to protect the people of Great Britain.

Today Italy rounded up yet another cell of people who are willing to use weapons of mass destruction on those of us who love freedom.

And so, no, quite the contrary. My vision shifted dramatically after September the

11th, because I now realize the stakes. I realize the world has changed. My most important obligation is to protect the American people from further harm. And I will do that.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 4:12 p.m. in the Cross Hall at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. Prime Minister Blair referred to Hans Blix, Executive Chairman, United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission. A reporter referred to journalist Bob Woodward.

Statement on the Return of Governors Island to the People of New York

January 31, 2003

I am pleased to announce the return of Governors Island to the people of New York. Last April, I informed the Governor and the mayor of my intention to make this transfer, and today, the transfer is complete. Also, I am reaffirming our support for the Governors Island National Monument, which now will encompass approximately 22 of the Island's 172 acres, including historic Castle Williams and Fort Jay.

Governor Pataki and Mayor Bloomberg have shared with me their vision of a Governors Island dedicated to public and civic purposes. New York's stewardship of the island combined with the National Park Service's management of the monument will lead to the development of an outstanding resource for the people of New York and all who visit.

I commend the parties that worked together to make this historic transfer a reality, including the National Park Service, the General Services Administration, the United States Coast Guard, the National Trust for Historic Preservation, and especially the State and City of New York.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Achieving Militarily Significant Benchmarks for a Sustainable Peace in Kosovo

January 31, 2003

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 1212 of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 2001, Public Law 106-398, I hereby submit a report, prepared by my Administration, on the progress made in achieving the militarily significant benchmarks for conditions that would achieve a sustainable peace in Kosovo and ultimately allow for the withdrawal of the United States military presence in Kosovo.

The term "militarily significant" relates to tasks and objectives significant from a military standpoint that once accomplished, would allow for withdrawal of military forces from Kosovo. In the establishment of the Kosovo benchmarks, four critical tasks for NATO forces were identified: military stability; public security; border/boundary issues; and war crimes/support to the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia. Objectives for these tasks were drawn from United Nations Security Council Resolution 1244, the NATO Operations Plan, the Military Technical Agreement, and the Kosovo Liberation Army Undertaking.

I anticipate that Kosovo Force—and U.S. participation in it—will gradually reduce in size as public security conditions improve and Kosovars assume increasing responsibility for their own self-government.

George W. Bush

The White House,
January 31, 2003.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this message.