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NOTE: The address was recorded at 10 a.m. on February 21 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on February 22. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 21 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

The President's News Conference With President Jose Maria Aznar of Spain in Crawford, Texas

February 22, 2003

President Bush. I welcome my good friend President Jose Maria Aznar to Crawford. We're especially pleased that Ana is with him as well. I visited his ranch on my first visit to Europe as the President. I'm very pleased to return the hospitality.

Spain is a strong and trusted ally. Our two nations have drawn closer than ever before in fighting terrorism across Europe and beyond. Spain has apprehended members of Al Qaida and continues to share vital information, intelligence information. President Aznar is a strong fighter in the war against terror, and I value his advice.

I respect and appreciate his leadership in the U.N., the EU, and NATO, to meet the new threats of this new century. For the Spanish people and for their leader, the cause of liberty is more than a phrase; it is a fundamental commitment expressed in resolute action.

President Aznar and I agree that the future of peace depends on the disarmament of Iraq. We agree that Saddam Hussein continues to be in violation of U.N. Security Council Resolution 1441. We agree that the terms of that resolution must be fully respected. By Resolution 1441, the Security Council has taken a clear stand, and it now faces a clear choice. With all the world watching, the Council will now show whether it means what it says.

Early next week, working with our friends and allies, we will introduce an additional Security Council resolution that will set out in clear and simple terms that Iraq is not complying with Resolution 1441. For the record, this would not be a second resolution on Iraq's weapons of mass destruction; it would only be the latest in a long series of resolutions going back 12 years.

We will discuss this resolution with members of the Security Council, and we will hear again from Chief Inspector Blix. During these final deliberations, there is but one question for the Council to address: Is Saddam Hussein complying with Resolution 1441? That resolution did not ask for hints of progress or minor concessions. It demanded full and immediate disarmament. That and that alone is the issue before the Council. We will not allow the Iraqi dictator, with a history of aggression and close ties to terrorist groups, to continue to possess or produce weapons of mass destruction.

Our coalition draws its strength from the courage and moral clarities of leaders like President Aznar. In times of testing, we discover who is willing to stand up for the security of free peoples and the rights of mankind. Mr. President, you are clearly a man willing to take this stand. I thank you for your leadership. I thank you for your friendship.

President Aznar. Well, good morning, good day to everyone. I would firstly like to thank, on behalf of my wife and for myself, I would like to thank Laura Bush and George Bush for their invitation to visit the ranch. And this is a time to work, to rest, to talk in truly marvelous surroundings.

Spain is an EU member and a nonpermanent member of the U.N. Security Council. Spain is very clearly in favor of the strength of the transatlantic link. In these three extremely important dimensions, Spain is committed with an active role in contributing to an appropriate response to the threat that Saddam Hussein's regime entails for international peace and security. We've worked very hard and with good results to forge consensus within the European Union that it is necessary to maintain. We share the efforts and the needs within the Security Council that the international community has to maintain to guarantee peace and security in the world.

Precisely, it is in the Security Council that the international community has laid the responsibility of maintaining world peace and security. Our responsibility is precisely to work so that the Security Council can exercise its responsibilities, working in order to

achieve in agreement the firm compliance of international legality.

I cannot but underline the importance of that relationship in our struggle against terrorism. We free societies are the targets of terrorists, and they must be fought unconditionally, with no reservations and not being allowed to be blackmailed by them. And we cannot be kidnapped by this fear that—we cannot be the hostages of the terrorists, and we will not be.

And allow me to say two things in this regard. Cooperation between the United States and Spain against terrorism is total. And I would like to thank President Bush for his resolve and his commitment in this regard. And secondly, I would like to express how satisfied I am in the—again having arrested important terrorists today in Spain, people who only think of murdering and committing crimes.

Spain is a democratic and European voice, and we know that there cannot be peace without law, and that peace cannot be separate from security. And in these international law and—the disarmament obligations that Saddam Hussein has been subject to for the last 12 years must be implemented. And this has to be based on the will and everyone's commitment and our capacity to do so.

We have expressly reaffirmed Resolution 1441 and the usefulness of the military capabilities deployed in order to achieve Saddam's disarmament. We are committed to peace, and peace is our horizon. But if we are unable to combat aggressive dictators, tyrannic regimes, this is something that endangers the very existence of international peace and harmony. And if we are incapable of guaranteeing this peace, international peace would become senseless rhetoric. And we honestly do not want to get into rhetoric when we're speaking of international order, weapons of mass destruction, terrorist groups, lives in danger, or threats that we have to confront.

Thus, my position in my talks with President Bush can be summarized as follows. Expressly, we are ready to fight together against weapons of mass destruction and terrorism; that is, for a world in peace and for a safe world. And we are working in order that the U.N. Security Council, in its role based on the U.N. Charter, may work towards peace and security in the world through a new resolution that has the greatest support and majority support.

Our aim is for Iraq to disarm and for Saddam to comply with his obligations. And international legality has to be credible, and we have to strengthen our efforts. We have to continue with our pressure on Saddam Hussein and do all this in unity and in agreement within the framework of the Security Council. Of course, time is not indefinite. We don't have much time.

And lastly, as I already talked about with President Bush, we have to work towards peace and security in the region. And this requires quick action on our part to solve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict. In that scenario, we are also ready and willing to work jointly.

President Bush. Thank you.

We'll answer two questions a side, starting with Tom [Tom Raum, Associated Press].

New U.N. Security Council Resolution/ Coalition Action

Q. Mr. President, you need nine votes in the Security Council and no vetoes. And yet, as of this point, only four countries have spoken out in favor of moving forward and no minds seem to have been changed. Are you ready to move ahead now with this new resolution, even if you don't have the votes to pass it?

And to the Prime Minister—President Aznar—you've been making many calls yourself to world leaders and members of the Security Council. Have you been able to change anyone's mind? And if not, why not?

President Bush. There's not even a resolution put on the table yet. There will be one soon. And so the people will be able to see what they're asked to vote on. We just got off a phone call with Tony Blair and Silvio Berlusconi. It was a four-way conversation to talk about the resolution and the strategy.

This discussion sounds vaguely familiar. I think I remember getting asked the same questions prior to the last resolution, the Resolution 1441 that passed 15–0, where the Security Council said with a unanimous voice, Saddam must disarm. He hasn't disarmed. And so the clarity of vision that took place 4 months ago I'm confident will be in place

after the Security Council takes a good look at the facts. And so we're just beginning, is my point.

President Aznar. I hear many messages on unilateral actions. But what I must say is that President Bush, the U.S. Government, and all the allies are all working together in the framework of the United Nations. And that's how Resolution 1441 came out. And that's how the new resolution we're working on has to come out.

It's difficult to ask for an agreement on something that doesn't exist yet. We'll ask for people's agreement when it does exist. We hope it's soon. We hope it's good. And we hope it assembles the greatest possible supporters, because what we cannot forget is that our aim is disarmament and to avoid the threat that weapons of mass destruction, a possible use by Saddam Hussein, the threat that this poses to the world.

Spain's Role in New U.N. Resolution

Q. My question is for the Spanish President of the Government. Regarding this new proposal for a new resolution, we know it will bear the seal of the United States and of Great Britain. But will it also bear the Spanish seal? Will Spain be considered or will it be a co-author of that resolution?

President Aznar. Well, we're working on it, and we devoted some time last night and this morning to precisely that. And we want to be as clear as possible in that it has as many possible supporters in the Security Council. And as I said, our commitment is a very active commitment, and it's also very active in supporting this resolution. We know very much and very well what we're handling here and what's at stake. And what we want for the world is peace and security, and that's what we're working for with our best will, in order not to be submitted to blackmail of any kind. We're not thinking of our comfort but of our responsibility. We want peace, freedom, and prosperity for all.

President Bush. Patsy [Patricia Wilson, Reuters].

Timeline for New U.N. Resolution/ Relevance of U.N. Security Council

Q. It took almost 2 months to get Resolution 1441 out of the Security Council. Are you willing to wait that long this time, and is this the really last chance for the United Nations to prove its relevancy?

President Bush. Yes. *Si.* Last chance.

Q. Are you going to wait that long?

President Bush. No. As the President said, time is short. *Tiempo es corte.* And this is a chance for the Security Council to show its relevance. And I believe the Security Council will show its relevance, because Saddam Hussein has not disarmed.

President Aznar. What I want to say is that if Resolution 1441 states that it's Saddam's last opportunity, that means that time cannot be long, because the last opportunity has already been given to him. What we have to verify now is whether he has disarmed or not. If we now said that time was infinite, it would be a laugh. It would be very difficult for anyone to take us seriously, beginning with the United Nations. That would be the worst possible message we could send for peace.

Nature of the U.N. Resolution

Q. My question is addressed to both Presidents. I would like to know whether in your proposed resolution you are going to be talking about the al-Samoud long-range missiles and whether you are going to be—because Iraq has today mentioned that it was ready to start destroying them—and whether in your resolution you're going to be speaking about an ultimatum, a deadline, or a threat for the use of force. What do you think this is going to be—what are you going to contain?

President Bush. We're in the process of discussing the language. If Iraq decides to destroy the weapons that were long-range weapons, that's just the tip of the iceberg. My question is, why don't they destroy every weapon—illegal weapon?

Saddam Hussein wants time. And after all, he thinks he will get time, because he has done so—he has deceived the world for 12 years. He'll play like he's going to disarm. He has no intention of disarming. Otherwise, he would have done so. He'll say words that encourage—that sound encouraging. He's done so for 12 years. And so the idea of destroying a rocket or two rockets or however many he's going to destroy says to me that

he's got a lot more weapons to destroy, and why hasn't he destroyed them yet?

In terms of language, that's exactly why we've—that's exactly why Jose Maria and I are talking. And we'll let you know what's in the resolution when we put it down.

President Aznar. Well, what I want to say is that we cannot designate Saddam Hussein as the manager of international peace and security. We've been with this item on the agenda for 12 years. And what we cannot do is play this game in which you have inspectors are handed over something, everything is going well, but if it isn't, well, that means they're hiding weapons.

So the world can make these mistakes, but the mistake we cannot make is to let Saddam Hussein being the one managing peace and a threat. And that's why we're working so intensely towards a new resolution. And that's why I'm convinced, and that's why we're all working towards these common aspirations of peace, security, and freedom for the world.

President Bush. Good job. Thank you very much. Very good job. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President's news conference began at 11:44 a.m. at the Bush Ranch. President Aznar spoke in Spanish, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. In his remarks, President Bush referred to Ana Botella, wife of President Aznar; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Hans Blix, Executive Chairman, United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy.

Remarks at a Dinner for the Nation's Governors

February 23, 2003

Good evening. Laura and I really look forward to these yearly dinners with our Nation's Governors and spouses, and we welcome you all back to the White House.

For those of you who are first-timers here as Governors, we welcome you as well. I'm particularly pleased that Lyle Lovett, from the great State of Texas, is here with us. We look forward to hearing you tonight, Lyle.

I also welcome former Governors who serve in my Cabinet. Tommy Thompson and Christie Todd Whitman, John Ashcroft are here. Tom Ridge is now a member of my Cabinet. He's not here. He'll still be invited to the Cabinet Room. [*Laughter*]

Governors are strong leaders with a practical point of view, and I'm really grateful for my former fellow Governors for serving their country. There are 25 new Governors who are here. I know it's an exciting experience for you to set an agenda and to put together a great team to solve problems for your State or your territory.

I loved being the Governor of Texas. In my 6 years, I placed great value on the advice of fellow Governors and made many friendships which continue to this day. I've grown especially close to the Governor of Florida. [*Laughter*] The man is like a brother to me. [*Laughter*]

We each have a shared experience, and we have shared responsibilities. We share the responsibility for protecting the homeland. We share the responsibility for encouraging economic growth and jobs. We share the responsibility for making sure every child learns and no child is left behind. We share the responsibility for expanding access to high-quality, affordable health care and for helping our fellow citizens in need. And we'll meet these responsibilities together.

I'm honored to have you all here. I now ask you to join me in a toast to the Governors of the United States. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:03 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to country and western entertainer Lyle Lovett. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Gov. Paul E. Patton of Kentucky, chair, National Governors Association. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks to the National Governors Association Conference

February 24, 2003

Thank you very much. Thanks for coming back. I hope you enjoyed our dinner last