

We see the culture of service and responsibility growing around us here in our country. I started what we call the USA Freedom Corps to encourage Americans to extend a compassionate hand to a neighbor in need, and the response has been strong, just like the response has been strong for charities all across our country and just like the response has been strong in our faith-based institutions. Policemen and firefighters and people who wear our Nation's uniform are reminding us what it means to sacrifice for something greater than yourself. Once again, the children of America believe in heroes, because they see them every day.

In these challenging times, the world has seen the resolve and the courage of America. And I have been privileged to see the compassion and the character of the American people. All the tests of the last 2½ years have come to the right nation. We're a strong country, and we use that strength to defend the peace. We're an optimistic country, confident in ourselves and in ideals bigger than ourselves.

Abroad, we seek to lift whole nations by spreading freedom. At home, we seek to lift up lives by spreading opportunity to every corner of America. This is the work that history has set before us. We welcome it. And we know that for our country and for our cause, the best days lie ahead.

May God bless you all. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:05 p.m. at the Riverside Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Governor-elect Arnold Schwarzenegger of California; President Jacques Chirac of France; Ray Haynes and Russ Bogh, California State assemblymen; Brad Freeman, California State finance chairman, Bush-Cheney '04, Inc.; Gerald L. Parsky, chairman, Team California, California Republican Party Board of Directors; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Interview With Asian Print Journalists

October 14, 2003

The President. I'll make an opening statement. We'll go around and see how many times we can make it around.

First, I'm really looking forward to this trip. It is a long trip, and it is an important trip. It is a chance for me to say thanks to a lot of nations for cooperating with America, for being friends with America, for working with America to achieve common objectives. It's a chance to strengthen alliances, long-standing alliances. Alliances are important, an important part of our foreign policy. Together we can accomplish a lot of important objectives—no more important objective than continuing to fight terror.

It's going to be an important part of my discussions with each leader, to renew our efforts to find those who would kill innocent people and bring them to justice, disrupt cells, cut off financing, prevent the catastrophes that have taken place, that have taken innocent life, from happening again. That's really our call. And I go with a strong determination to continue to work with the leaders and to fight terror. And it's very important for them to look at me and listen to me, because my determination is just as strong today as it was on September the 12th, 2001.

Secondly, I'm looking forward to talking about economic matters. I will tell our friends that things are looking up for the U.S. economy but that there's more work to be done. And one of the key components of economic growth in America and job creation here, as well as job creation with our friends, is a trade policy that opens markets and at the same time recognizes that what we call a level playing field is prevalent, that trade must be free and it must, at the same time, be a fair policy, that people on both sides of any trade equation ought to be treated fairly.

I'll bring up the WTO, of course. It's a missed opportunity. I'll talk about free trade

agreements with friends. We've just completed one with Singapore. There will be other trade agreements that we'll discuss. But a key component of—a key part of this trip is going to be the discussion about mutually beneficial economic policy.

And finally, an important part of the trip is for me to talk about the values of freedom and democracy and to herald the moderate Islamic movements in certain countries as their being a very important part of a hopeful society, that those movements are willing to participate in the democratic traditions of their respective countries. And one of the things that we stand for in this country is democracy, and I will remind people about those values. It's those shared values with some of our friends that have caused us to take very decisive action in the world, not only for world security but for freedom. It's an important shared value, and I look forward to speaking to the legislative bodies, the parliaments, and express my deep appreciation as well as our mutual shared goals of freedom and peace and opportunity.

So listen, thanks for coming. I'll be glad to answer some questions. We'll start with Paul John.

Australia-U.S. Relations

Q. Looking at the alliance between Australia and the United States, Mr. President, how important is Australia to America as an ally? And given the war on terrorism, do you think that this alliance, that this relationship is likely to become more important in the future?

The President. I would put—I would say that the alliance between America and Australia is a critical alliance. And the reason I say so is that Australia has got a keen understanding of the relationship between good, strong, decisive action and security and a relationship between freedom and peace.

And it's a very important connection and very important mutual understanding that helps us—"us" being all of us—take the action necessary to make the world more peaceful. So I call it a critical alliance.

I found that John Howard was a visionary person, who was able to see kind of beyond the immediate noise inherent in a democracy, and could see the future and realize

that sometimes difficult decisions will yield short-term issues but long-term success. And I appreciate that vision. And it says to me that many in Australia share that as well. He's got good standing with the people. And therefore, when I go to Australia, I'll be speaking to a country which does understand the consequences of sacrificing for something greater than themselves.

And yes, the alliance in this relationship is going to be critical in the future because the war on terror goes on. See, John Howard understands that. And it's important to have friends and allies who understand that the war on terror is a long-term issue that requires decisive action and close cooperation. And so I go to Australia with a great deal of gratitude and respect. I look forward to speaking at the Parliament. I look forward, of course, having—breaking bread with my friend. He's a good guy. He's a very strong leader.

Australia's Role in the War on Terror

Q. Of course, we've just commemorated the 12-month anniversary of the Bali bombing.

The President. Yes.

Q. How concerned are you about terrorism in Southeast Asia, about the links that have been established there? And what role do you think that Australia should be playing in this? To what extent do you see a leadership role for Australia in combating regional terrorism?

The President. Well, there's no question that Southeast Asia has seen its share of violence from terrorist activities. That's why one of the key agenda items on my trip is to discuss terror and to remind people that we're dealing with coldblooded killers, people who just take innocent life in order to create and instill a sense of fear. They want people to be afraid, and they want governments to take action.

The great thing about the Australians is they're not afraid. Howard knows that—Prime Minister Howard knows that one of the tactics of the terrorists is to create the conditions so that people say, "Well, let's withdraw and let them have their way." And therefore, the relationship in Southeast Asia

is an important relationship because—starting first and foremost with the strength of John Howard and the Australian people. The Australians know firsthand what it means to be attacked without impunity or without care. And I remind our people in our country that, yes, September the 11th was devastating here, but there have been other victims, including the victims in Bali.

And John has played a very important role. And there's a lot of things that we must continue to do together, and that's part of the purpose of my trip. First of all, we've got to identify who these people are, which requires good, smart intelligence-gathering, and the Australians are good at that. Secondly, it means that we've got to work to cut off funding. When we find cells in respective countries that are utilizing the international finance system to move money, we've got to collectively cut off money. John Howard knows that. And then we've got to have the capacity to move and work with other governments to bring these killers to justice. And the Australians are very good at that as well.

And so there's a major role to be played in this war on terror. It starts with the mentality, though, Paul John, it starts with a recognition about what is possible and what is needed. And the Prime Minister has shown that, as has the Parliament. And that's one of the key things I'm going to talk about when I go to Australia.

Yes, sir. Rikard.

Indonesia

Q. Yes. Indonesia is a moderate country, but the campaign against terrorism has invited much controversy between a small minority of militant groups and the more dominant militant groups—moderate groups.

The President. Moderate groups, yes.

Q. The problem is that the militants have big opportunities to voice its interest, ideology, and values, harming the process of—[inaudible]—and democratization in Indonesia. So what should be done?

The President. Well, I think it's very important for Indonesia to understand that—first of all, to herald the nature of its moderate Islamic population, to make it clear to the world that, by far, the vast majority of the Muslims in that country value democracy

and want to have a peaceful life. At the same time, it's very important not to allow a few killers to define Indonesia. And therefore, there needs to be a focused, concerted effort to bring people to justice.

Now, one of the things I will thank the people from Thailand for is we brought Hambali to justice. He's the guy that masterminded the Bali bombing. And by the way, Paul John, I was over in—gosh, I can't even remember where it was. It was recently, where I met a mother and dad whose—oh, this was in Kentucky, Lexington, Kentucky, when I was there to help this fellow running for Governor. And a mom and dad came up to me and said, "We lost a twin daughter in the Bali bombing." This bombing struck a lot. It really hurt Australia. It hurts your own country.

And my point is, I'm going to continue to talk with Madam Megawati about this, that it is—we cannot allow Indonesia to be defined by the hatred of a few, and that it's very important that we combine efforts, not just the United States with Indonesia but all assets, to help Ms. Megawati bring the rest of the cells to justice and prevent this from happening. It's unfortunate that a country have an attack. It should be viewed as an opportunity for people of good will to come together and prevent this from happening.

There is a—Indonesia is a very important country. It's important because of its strategic location. It's important because of the nature of its population. It's important that this country succeed, and we look forward to working with Indonesia.

Reform of the Palestinian Authority

Q. Last September, in the U.N. General Assembly, President Megawati stated that terrorism issues cannot be solved without removing their roots in the Middle East conflict. As long as countries, great countries maintain injustice—unjust and a one-sided policy toward Middle East, the conflict will continue and the campaign against terrorism will suffer.

The President. First of all—I'll be glad to talk about my Middle East policy. I have with Ms. Megawati. And I made it very clear to her that the roadmap to peace still exists.

The problem is, we need people who are willing to uphold their responsibilities. I gave a speech here in the Rose Garden on June 24, 2002, which laid out a vision for a Palestinian state living side by side with Israel. But I also said that the Palestinians must do everything in their power to fight off terror, to prevent the few that want to kill to stop the peace process from going forward from doing so.

And we had an opportunity to move the process forward when Mr. Abu Mazen stepped up and was willing to say publicly and clearly that the Palestinians wanted to dismantle the terrorist groups that were destroying innocent life, and that provided a hopeful moment. It allowed me to continue to articulate the policy that all parties are responsible. Israel is responsible for helping a peaceful Palestinian country emerge and create the conditions necessary for a peace to move forward. The Arab nations are responsible to not support these terrorist groups.

And unfortunately, the Prime Minister, who I stood by—next to in Aqaba, Jordan, no longer is in power because he was shoved aside by the old guard, which has failed the Palestinian people. This old guard has been in power for quite a period of time, and life is worse, not better. And therefore I will continue to remind Prime Minister Megawati that we do have a vision for two states living side by side in peace.

I was the first President, American President ever to articulate that vision. But in order to do so, there are certain prerequisites. And one of the prerequisites is there be a universal condemnation and fighting of terror. And that applies not only to the Middle East; that applies elsewhere, because Indonesia, unfortunately, has seen—as has America and Australia and Thailand and the Philippines—a few people, a few killers—they don't have an ideology except for one, destruction to create fear. They've hijacked a great religion. They kill innocent life in the name of a great religion in order to have their way, in order to create conditions of fear.

And that we must fight them—we must fight them. There's no negotiations with these people. There's no, "We'll sit down at a peace table." You cannot deal with these

killers that way. So I will continue to explain and articulate our Middle East policy but at the same time make it very clear that there's only one way to deal with the few who want to destroy the hopes of the many, and that is to bring them to justice.

And we are. We're making good progress. The world has significantly changed. If you think about what cooperation was like prior to September the 11th, 2001, compared to today, it's a different world. And so part of my trip is to continue to emphasize the mutual need, in order to enhance democracy and to support those peaceful people that live within Indonesia or in any other country to support them, to support their hopes and aspirations by defeating those who would like to—who run absolutely contrary to what moderate, peaceful people believe.

Roger.

Q. Roger.

The President. I'm just trying to be international in my flavor. [*Laughter*]

Upcoming APEC Summit Discussions

Q. Mr. President, are you concerned at the way American jobs are being sucked away to Asia, particularly China, but also Malaysia, Indonesia, Thailand? Are you going to be speaking to your APEC colleagues to try to help you do something about this?

The President. Well, I'm going to say that where there is trade imbalances, countries need to be mindful that we expect there to be fair trade. And I fully understand a competitive world is one that I think is positive, so long as the competition is fair. And we'll talk about currency with the Chinese and with my friend Prime Minister Koizumi. I will remind them that this Nation has a strong dollar policy, and we expect the markets to reflect the true value of currency, that the way that currencies ought to be valued is based upon economic activity, fiscal policy, monetary policy of the respective governments, the potential for growth, the potential for long-term viability of the economies. That's how our respective currencies ought to be valued.

Yes, we'll bring that up. And I am—my main focus here in America is there to be significant job creation. It looks like we're getting some positive results. Part of making

sure that the job creation—momentum of the job creation is viable is to make sure—is to talk to our trading partners about fair trade. And there are some trade imbalances that I will be discussing.

Singapore-U.S. Relations

Q. Singapore supported you in the war in Iraq and in general, and you've signed a free trade agreement with Singapore recently.

The President. I did.

Q. But in the past, there have been tiffs over social and political issues. How do you characterize U.S.-Singapore relations now?

The President. Well, I would say they're very positive. I mean, I've had—first of all, we do free trade agreements with countries with whom we'd like to trade. I guess that's fairly logical. And these are countries we respect. And we respect Singapore people. We respect the Government, and we respect the fact that they want to trade with us. And the cooperation in the war on terror has been excellent with Singapore.

As you know, one of the interesting opportunities is to create a new—the use of technology to better have a handle on what's leaving ports, what's in containers, what's on ships, and have basically a port inspection process prior to a cargo leaving a particular port of exit. And Singapore has been in the lead on this, helping to establish kind of a virtual customs inspection process, so we're able to better track that which is being shipped and have a better handle about that which is coming into our respective countries. It makes eminent sense that we have full transparency from the point a cargo ship leaves until when it arrives in our ports. Singapore has been in the lead on this, and for that, I appreciate Prime Minister Goh's leadership.

On a personal basis, he has got a very good handle about—and a good feel for the neighborhood. And I value his advice. He is, as we say here in America, plugged in to the political currents and is a very savvy man. And I really have enjoyed my relationship with him. I'm looking forward to going to Singapore.

Q. Do you—I'm sorry.

The President. Go ahead.

Q. I was going to say—

The President. This is a followup on a followup. [Laughter]

Q. You stressed the war on terror—

The President. Our press corps does the same thing—if we don't stay with, they—[laughter]. I'm used to it. I'm well trained by them. [Laughter]

Addressing the U.S. Image in Southeast Asia

Q. You stressed dealing with moderate Muslims in Indonesia and other places, but there seems to have been a rising tide of anti-American sentiment in parts of Southeast Asia. Are you going to try and stem it?

The President. Sure, that's part of the purpose, is to make sure that the people who are suspicious of our country understand our motives are pure. We believe in freedom for all people. We believe in peace. We don't believe a few killers ought to determine the fate and the future of a lot of people. We believe in education. We believe in health. One of the things about this Nation is that we're strong militarily, but we're also very compassionate. We're helping lead the fight against international AIDS. Part of the trip is to say as clearly as possible, is that this country is a—is full of decent and caring people who care about the future of the people in these nations.

On the other hand, people have just got to understand that we've got to fight those who are willing to kill. As you can tell from my language, terrorists who take innocent life must be treated as coldblooded killers, because that's what they are.

And we will continue to work with our friends who understand that, to bring people to justice, so we don't go to funerals and lay wreaths, so we don't commemorate anniversaries of the brutal slaughter of innocent people in the name of a religion or in the name of—with any attempt to instill fear. That's all they're trying to do. They want us to crumple and go away, so they can then spread their false ideology based upon hate. And America's ideology is based upon compassion and decency and justice. And I look forward to making that case.

Pichai.

War on Terror in Southeast Asia

Q. Mr. President, you mentioned progress against terror. I just want your assessment. Has the threat of the network in Southeast Asia diminished as a result of the policies so far?

The President. Yes, it has. When Hambali is gone, thanks to the Thai officials, a major operator in the war on terror—one of Khalid Sheik Mohammed's close buddies, the organizer of the attack that killed a lot of people—he has been brought to justice. And that is a major blow for the Al-Qaida-affiliated networks.

There's more to do. This is a—let me just remind everybody that, at least from our perspective, from the perspective of the Government of the United States, the war on terror is going to last a while. I don't know how long it is, but it's—it is very important that free nations understand that this is a long-term effort and that we just can't relent and can't yield.

And I knew one of the hardest tasks I would have is explaining that this is a different kind of war to our own people. Wars—we used to think about flotillas and bombing runs and whatever. And for the war on terror, although there has been some traditional battle moments, military moments—like parts of the battle for Baghdad, which is a part of the war on terror—most of the war on terror will be fought by the use of intelligence, highly trained teams that have got the capacity to move quickly, and the willingness and will of collective governments to stay on the hunt. And in—we're making good progress. But there's more to do.

Trade Negotiations

Q. All right. Could I just have a question on trade?

The President. Sure.

Q. The WTO failed—

The President. Wait, wait, wait. The meetings in Cancun did not go well, but I wouldn't condemn the WTO round to failure yet.

Q. Okay, but there's—there's a theory—

The President. Sometimes I have a bad habit of correcting the interlocutors—[laughter]—because sometimes they're not always correct. [Laughter]

Q. So what's the future, then? You feel that there's still an opportunity—

The President. I do. I do feel we can get the Doha round up and running. Now, the meetings were disbanded in Cancun. The sense I get is a lot of countries feel this was a missed opportunity and that our Ambassador, Zoellick, believes there is a framework to get the process restarted and moved forward, that there was substantial progress made, and that we're interested in getting the process up and running again. In other words, the United States has not quit on the process, is the best way to say it. And I look forward to talking to the Prime Minister about a free trade agreement. As you know, discussions are going on—with a bilateral free trade—

Q. That's right, yes.

The President. —with Thailand. And we'll continue our discussions.

Q. Any announcement expected in—

The President. Well, you know the problem is, if I were to make the announcement now to you in order to help you with your editors, it would take away kind of the—yes, it would take away the excitement. I don't know. We'll see. We'll see. [Laughter]

Yes, Mercedes.

Mindanao/Philippines-U.S. Relations

Q. Thank you, sir. There is this 30-year-old, low-intensity war in Mindanao. And the United States, through your administration, has now a role in the peace process. Would you like to address that?

The President. Have not had a role? Or have had a role?

Q. They have a role now.

The President. Yes, a role in the peace—

Q. Right.

The President. Well, that's right. I made a statement when President Arroyo was here, urging the parties to come together and that we would—as a matter of fact, there was some progress. I'm not exactly sure where we are in the discussions, but shortly after her visit, the parties came to the table, which is a very positive development.

Let me speak to a broader issue, if you don't mind, in the Philippines. First of all, I respect President Arroyo. I respect her will.

I respect her desire to deal with the Abu Sayyaf, for example. She's been very strong, and there's been progress made in dealing with the leaders of this group. There is still more to be done.

She knows, for example, very well that when U.S. citizens, or any citizen for that matter, gets kidnaped, killed, it defines the Philippines in a negative way. It doesn't really talk to the true character and the nature of the Philippines. The Philippines are loving, decent, kind people. And her country—these terrorists, again, want to create a different atmosphere, a different environment. And Gloria Arroyo knows that, and that's why she's been very strong. And that's why we've been in—got a very cooperative relationship. A training mission and now a comprehensive security review is ongoing, which I will discuss with President Arroyo.

So in the larger context, the President's strategy of dealing firmly with those who would kill, kidnap, maim, is a very good strategy, one that we support strongly, and are willing to cooperate to the extent that she asks for help.

In terms of bringing long-simmering disputes to peaceful conclusion, my judgment is the stronger a leader acts against terror, the more likely those people are going to be willing to want to sit down and conclude—make arrangements, make accord. And I believe that's one of the reasons why President Arroyo has been able to make some progress on long-simmering disputes.

Cancun WTO Meeting/Philippines-U.S. Free Trade Agreement

Q. I have a question that relates to the Philippines and the WTO.

The President. Sure.

Q. In Cancun, the Philippines left the U.S. to join the G-21 countries.

The President. Yes.

Q. It appears that it displeased your administration.

The President. It displeased us? Well, I'm not—do I look displeased? I'm a friendly guy.

Q. Well, does that—does that put into a risk—

The President. No, not at all.

Q. —the bilateral and trade agreement?

The President. No, it doesn't. Not at all. I mean, it's very important for me to explain to the leaders that we are interested in moving the process forward, that WTO negotiations are complicated and complex matters, that we believe that it is in the Philippines' interest, in Thailand's interest, or any other country's interest that the Doha round succeed, that we want to work through the difficult issues.

And I think a lot of countries, Mercedes, now believe that this was a missed opportunity, that it was an opportunity to make progress. And the fact that it didn't, that we didn't make progress, may actually serve as an impetus to get people back together. Let's don't miss this opportunity again. Let's move on. So the purpose of my trip is to say that we want Doha to succeed.

I'm also saying as clearly as possible that we will negotiate bilateral agreements with countries. Our strategy is to have a—is to have free trade worldwide, free trade regionally through the Free Trade of the Americas and free trade on a bilateral basis. And when Congress gave me what's called trade promotion authority, I then had the capacity to negotiate—our people to negotiate free trade agreements and then bring that to Congress in an up-or-down vote, which makes it more likely nations will want to negotiate with us. Singapore was one of the first—and Chile—were two countries that said, "Okay, fine, now the President's got it. We can negotiate a treaty. We know it won't be amended on the floor of the Congress, and therefore, we can negotiate in good faith. And the President will submit it for up-or-down votes."

This has given me the opportunity to be—to move forward on trade on a bilateral basis. And so we've got a two—a three-pronged strategy when it comes to trade. And we do hope that the WTO goes forward. But that won't prevent us from doing—negotiating bilaterally with nations.

Yes, sir. Yes, sir. One in English?

Q. Yes.

The President. Okay. My Japanese is a little limited. [Laughter]

Q. If you speak—if you speak Japanese?

The President. No, I don't speak Japanese. [Laughter] Some accuse me of not speaking English. [Laughter]

Japan's Reconstruction Aid to Iraq

Q. So before you come visit to Japan, we Japanese would like to hear your views on a couple things, first of all, your evaluation about Japan's contribution to reconstruction of Iraq.

The President. Yes, well, I talked to my friend Prime Minister Koizumi. And he is my friend, let me emphasize that. We've got a great relationship. And he told me that he would try to work with the leaders to come up with a reconstruction package for Iraq, and I believe he will. And I look forward to talking to him about it. And he's a fellow, when he says something, at least to me, he means it. And that's why I'm optimistic that Japan will be an active participant in the reconstruction of Iraq.

They certainly were an active participant in the reconstruction of Afghanistan. And for that we are grateful. Japan played a key role in the early stages of the postwar in Afghanistan environment—*loya jirga* got started, but also Japan took a lead in terms of the reconstruction effort.

North Korea

Q. One about North Korea.

The President. Yes.

Q. Well, how do you place the—North Korea's abduction of Japanese people in the six-party—

The President. Well, the key notion on the six-party framework is to make sure that the stated objective of the five countries involved with the six-party—with North Korea in the six-party discussions is achieved. The key objective, the most important objective is for there to be a Korean Peninsula that is free of nuclear weapons. That's the primary focus of our discussions, and we're making progress, because now there are five nations other than the United States—or four nations other than the United States sitting down the North Koreans, making the very same point.

And I will talk to the Prime Minister about how to—you know, what we need to do to keep the process alive and strong and to keep the coalition of the peaceful united so that we have one message and one voice.

In terms of the relationship between North Korea and Japan, that is for Prime Minister Koizumi to manage. Obviously, if

you have abductees, it is a very serious issue. And it speaks to the nature of the North Korean Government and hence another reason for us to work for a nuclear-weapons-free Korean Peninsula.

Monetary Policy

Q. Given the recent depreciation of the dollar vis-a-vis the yen, what do you think of the dollar's devaluation?

The President. I think I'm for a strong policy. We have a strong dollar policy in this administration. Currencies ought to be valued based upon the respective strengths of the economies, based upon the policies of the governments. We have had a very pro-growth policy in this administration. I've worked with Congress to enact historic tax relief in order to give our people more of their own money back and let them spend it and drive demand for goods and service. And it's beginning to pay off. The economy is improving. And markets ought to be evaluating our respective currencies.

Q. So what is your view on Japan's—

The President. Well, that's my view, that markets ought to be determining respective to currencies.

North Korea

Q. Well, come back to the North Koreans—

The President. Sure. This is the multiple—

Q. I'm sorry.

The President. No, you're doing a fine job, Toshio, that's good. Short questions, short answers. [Laughter]

Q. I appreciate it.

The President. You're setting a new standard for the followup. Keep that in mind. [Laughter]

Q. Do you think the North Koreans' nuclear problem should be brought to the U.N. Security Council?

The President. No, I think—

Q. If yes, why? When?

The President. I appreciate that. That's part my discussions with Prime Minister Koizumi. First things first is that we've got to make sure our strategy of the five of us moves forward. I'm looking forward to discussing this with Mr. Hu Jintao. He has been

a important part of these discussions, and I will visit the strategy with—about the mutual desire to move forward with Prime Minister Koizumi.

Yes, Mercedes.

Designation of the Philippines as a Major Non-NATO Ally

Q. Anything on the designation of the Philippines as a major NATO—

The President. Yes, we'll be discussing that. Short question, short answers.

Burma

Q. Yes, you mentioned democracy, a take on Burma. How do you see things going there now in recent developments?

The President. It's—pleased about Burma. I think the fact that Burma continues to—that there is an historic figure in Burma that needs to be treated with respect, and the wishes of the people need to be honored. And we will continue to speak out, and I will talk to the Prime Minister about that, as I have in the past.

He is concerned, as you know, about narcotics and the flow of narcotics. I believe free societies and the ability to control narcotics and terrorism go hand in hand. We will continue to press for freedom in Burma. Aung San Suu Kyi is a great figure. She is a heroic woman. And this country honors her, and we'll continue to press for her freedom. I did so at the United Nations. I will continue to do so on a bilateral basis.

The Presidency

Q. How does it feel to be the most powerful man in the world?

The President. Humbling.

Q. Humbling?

The President. Yes. And it also means there's tremendous responsibilities with that. Very interesting question; the fundamental question is what you do with power. And I believe it's very important for the President to work with others to lead for a more peaceful and free world. And part of that use of power now—we must use our power to fight terror.

And at the same time, we must use our power and wealth to help improve the lives of those who suffer. It's humbling to think about that. It is also an awesome responsi-

bility which I take seriously. And part of the trip, I hope you can get from the tenor of these discussions, part of the trip is to say very clearly to our friends and allies, "We want to work together to achieve common objectives." I'm very serious about it.

Indonesia

Q. Yes. Can I just ask, Indonesia is one of the victims of terrorist attack, but, however—

The President. Which the innocent is? Yes, always.

Q. Indonesia also victimized by—[inaudible]—from several countries—

The President. The—

Q. Victimized, yes.

The President. In other words, people come from other countries to your country to create terrorist acts?

Q. Yes.

The President. Yes. That's why it's important that we cooperate closely to watch these terrorists, to track terrorists, to make sure we know who's coming in and out of our countries, to share intelligence, to get inside these networks as best we can, to use all means available to understand them, to watch their movements, and when they move, bring them to justice, arrest them, get them off the streets.

And you're right, countries are—if a country is viewed as a safe haven, terrorists will tend to flock to that country. And that's why the strong action of governments sends a clear sign: Not welcome here. And that's why arrests and strong action are necessary to prevent people from feeling comfortable about migration.

And that's why the decisions by Prime Minister Megawati to arrest people is a very important signal to people. And I continue to talk to her and work with her on this. I appreciate very much the efforts made by the Indonesian Government to bring terrorists to justice.

**Australia's Role in the War on Terror/
Australia-U.S. Free Trade Agreement**

Q. How confident can we be that we will see an Australia-America FTA and with the negotiations finalized by the end of this year, which is the deadline you said you wanted?

And secondly, does the United States actually see Australia as its deputy sheriff in Southeast Asia?

The President. No. We don't see it as a deputy sheriff. We see it as a sheriff. [*Laughter*] There's a difference. I see you're playing off the Crawford visit to the ranch, the sheriff thing. [*Laughter*] Anyway, no, equal partners and friends and allies—there's nothing deputy about this relationship.

I'm optimistic on free trade agreement, and I'll talk to John about that. We did set a deadline. Deadlines are important. Sometimes you get things done, and we'll work toward that deadline. And part of our discussions will be the free trade agreement. It's in our Nation's interest to do so. We've got some heavy lift in certain areas that we're just going to have to work through them. And I know our negotiators and our people are talking in the spirit of trying to complete the agreement.

Okay, looking forward to it. Anybody gets to go with us?

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

NOTE: The interview began at 9:40 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House, and the transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 16. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister John Howard of Australia; Nurjaman Riduan Isamuddin (known as Hambali), Al Qaida's chief operational planner in Southeast Asia; President Sukarnoputri Megawati of Indonesia; former Prime Minister Mahmoud Abbas (Abu Mazen) of the Palestinian Authority; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; Prime Minister Goh Chok Tong of Singapore; Khalid Sheik Mohammed, senior Al Qaida leader responsible for planning the September 11 attack, who was captured in Pakistan on March 1; Prime Minister Thaksin Chinnawat of Thailand; President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines; President Hu Jintao of China; and Aung San Suu Kyi, leader of the National League for Democracy of Burma. Participants in the interview were: Toshio Mizushima, bureau chief of the Americas, Yomiuri Shimbun; Mercedes Tira Andrei, Washington correspondent, BusinessWorld; Pichai Chuensuksawadi, editor-in-chief, Bangkok Post; Roger Mitton, Washington correspondent, The Straits Times; Rikard Bagun, deputy chief editor, Kompas; and Paul John Kelly, editor-at-large, The Australian. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Remarks in San Bernardino, California

October 16, 2003

Thank you all. Please be seated, Colonel. Thanks for coming. Thanks for the warm welcome. It's great to be in the Inland Empire with the 38th Governor of the great State of California.

We did have a good visit, and during that visit I was able to reflect upon how much we have in common. We both married well. [*Laughter*] Some accuse us both of not being able to speak the language. [*Laughter*] We both have big biceps. [*Laughter*] Well, two out of three isn't bad. [*Laughter*] We both love our country. Arnold Schwarzenegger is going to be a fine and strong leader for California. I'm proud to call him friend.

Mark, I want to thank you and the Inland Empire Economic Partnership for hosting this event. I appreciate it very much. And thank you all for coming. I appreciate Teri Ooms as well, as the president and CEO of the partnership.

I want to thank those from the military who are here, particularly James Rubeor, who is the colonel at March Air Force Base. I appreciate you coming, Colonel. I presume you left somebody behind to make sure Air Force One is fueled up. [*Laughter*]

We're leaving—I say we—Laura is coming from Washington this morning. I'm sorry she's not here. You drew the short straw when you got me. [*Laughter*] But she is—we're fixing to go overseas to represent our great country. I'm looking forward to the trip to remind the world about the challenges we face. I'm really here today to talk about the challenges we face at home as well.

I want to thank the local officials who have so kindly come. Most of all, I want to thank our citizens who are here, because I am talking about two of the great priorities for our country. One is to create jobs for America, and to win the war on terror—the two challenges we're faced with.

This country is being tested. We're being tested abroad, and we're being tested here at home. And we're meeting the tests of history. We're defeating the enemies of freedom, and we're confronting the challenges to build prosperity for our country. That's