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States of America, and had my administration had any information that terrorists were going to attack New York City on September the 11th, we would have acted. We have been chasing down Al Qaida ever since they attacked. We've captured or killed two-thirds of their known leaders. And we're still pursuing them, and we will continue to pursue them so long as I am the President of the United States.

I want to thank the troops involved. We've got a couple of thousand troops involved in Afghanistan that are hunting down Al Qaida in that part of the world. We've got intelligence officers all over the world collecting information so that we can act. We've got a strong network of cooperative governments trying to chase down terrorist money and to prevent that money from being spread around to cause harm.

I was on the phone today to Gerhard Schroeder, reminding them that we need to stay strong in the fight on terror. And I appreciated his strong comments today by phone, that he fully understood the stakes. We're making progress. There is more work to do. And this country will stay on the hunt. The best way to protect our country from further attack is to find the terrorists before they come to our homeland or anywhere else to inflict harm.

Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters].

Hamas Threats/Middle East Peace Process

Q. Yes, sir. Thank you, sir. Are you worried about the threat from Hamas to attack U.S. targets over Israel's killing of Sheik Yassin? And were you troubled by his killing?

The President. Yes, I'm worried about terrorist groups targeting America. And we take every threat seriously in this administration. Nearly every morning that I come to work, I talk to George Tenet, FBI Director Mueller, and others about the threats to the United States. And there's still serious threats because of what we stand for. There are still people who want to harm our country. And so, whether it be an Hamas threat or an Al Qaida threat, we take them very seriously in this administration.

As far as the Middle East, it's a troubled region, and the attacks were troubling. There needs to be a focused, concerted effort by all parties to fight terror. Any country has a right to defend itself from terror. Israel has the right to defend herself from terror. And as she does so, I hope she keeps consequences in mind as to how to make sure we stay on the path to peace. This administration is committed to finding a two-state solution—a two-state solution for the good of Israel, a two-state solution for the good of the Palestinian people. To this end, if the circumstances on the ground allow, I'll be sending a team back out to the Middle East next week to see if we can't keep the process alive, the process toward peace.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:05 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Chancellor Gerhard Schroeder of Germany. Reporters referred to Richard A. Clarke, former National Coordinator for Transnational Threats at the National Security Council; and Sheik Ahmed Yassin, founder of the Hamas terrorist organization, who was killed in an Israeli missile attack in Gaza City on March 22.

Remarks Honoring NCAA Fall Championship Teams

March 23, 2004

Thank you for coming. Behave yourself up on the balcony. [*Laughter*] That would be you. This is champions day here at the White House, and it is my honor to welcome some great champs. We are proud you're here.

I want to thank those who represent the universities. Here present: James Moeser, the chancellor, and Dick Baddour, the athletic director of the University of North Carolina. We appreciate you being here. Mike Garrett, who is the athletic director of the University of Southern California, is with us today. Bill Jenkins, who is the president of LSU, along with Roger Ogden, who is the chairman of the LSU Board of Supervisors, and Skip Bertman, who is the athletic director, we're proud you're here.

As you can probably see, we've got some Members of the United States Congress with us here today, and there seems to be quite a large and vibrant delegation from the great State of Louisiana. Senator John Breaux and

Mary Landrieu are with us today, Mighty Tiger fans. Richard Baker and Jim McCrery and Chris John and Rodney Alexander, thank you all for coming. We're proud you're here. From California, Congressman Chris Cox and Diane Watson are with us today. Thank you all for coming. Congressmen David Price and Mike McIntyre from North Carolina are with us as well. Thank you all for being here.

First, it's my honor to recognize the football cochamps this year, LSU and USC, fantastic group of athletes and teams that battled to the end. Any good team obviously requires good players; these teams have got good players, but it also requires really good coaches. Pete Carroll and Nick Saban are two of the finest coaches in the United States. We're glad you're here. There was quite a lot of discussion about who really was number one. My attitude is, the South Lawn is a pretty good size. [*Laughter*] Never mind. [*Laughter*] I appreciate the class of these two programs and the grace they demonstrated under pressure. Both schools, LSU and USC, are, in fact, national champs. And we're proud to call you national champs.

Obviously, in order to be a national champ, you've got to field fine players at every position. I particularly want to say something about USC tailback Reggie Bush. Where is he? His teammates call him "the President"—[*laughter*]—"President Bush." You must feel pretty comfortable here at the White House, "President Bush." [*Laughter*]

I also want to say one other word about an individual who is not with us today, and that is Jeff Boss, who was the equipment manager for 24 years for LSU. Last October he died from cancer. The Tigers named their locker room in Jeff's honor, and they kept his family in their prayers throughout the season. You all know and I know that Jeff would be incredibly proud of the fact that LSU won its first national championship in 45 years. May God bless Jeff and his family, and may God bless both the USC team and the LSU football team. Thank you all for coming.

Now it's my honor to welcome back the Lady Trojans volleyball team from USC. They did pretty well this year. They were 35–0. [*Laughter*] Last year, I had the honor of welcoming my friend Mick Haley here to the White House. See, Mick used to coach the University of Texas volleyball team, and I used to work out at the gym there, and he used to come over and give me pointers all the time about how to strengthen up and look a little better. My advice is, when you see the Governor of California, he doesn't need many pointers, Mick. [*Laughter*]

Mick's a good man. He coaches a group of great ladies who are, in fact, national champs. I asked how many of them are coming back next year. Of course, one of them asked if I was. [*Laughter*] But he has a lot of returners for next year, and this group of champs is welcome here at the White House any time. Thank you for coming.

Then we honor Coach Anson Dorrance's UNC Tarheel women's soccer team. Anson's got a pretty good record. He's coached for 25 years, and he's won 18 national championships. That's the sign of a good coach who knows good talent and knows how to mold everybody into a good team. This year they were 32–0. When I had my honor of having my picture taken with the team, I asked what was the closest match, closest game. One of the ladies said it was 3–0. That's a heck of a team, 32–0 and the closest game is 3–0. UNC gets a lot of attention for its basketball team, but let me remind you of what the legendary coach Dean Smith said. He said, "UNC is a women's soccer school." And once again, these ladies have proven Coach Dean Smith correct. Welcome back.

Jerry Yeagley is here with the Indian Hoosier men's soccer team. He's been with the Hoosiers for three decades, and in those 30 years they have won 6 national titles. He retired last fall with 544 wins, more than any coach in NCAA Division I history. Coach Yeagley, we're proud of you. We're proud of the team you've brought here. We're proud of your dedication to athletics. I want to thank you for working so hard to teach the young men of your teams the difference between right and wrong and how to play as a team. Today we honor your coaching career at the same time we honor the great Indiana Hoosier soccer team. Welcome.

These are impressive athletes behind me, but I think if you really look beyond the athletics, you'll find some decent and compassionate people as well. These athletes, in the

most part, understand they have a responsibility to uphold to the communities in which they live. They understand it's one thing to be a champ on the field; it's another to be a champ off the field by setting the right example for some youngster who is wondering what it means to be a champ.

By sending good messages about right and wrong behavior and by volunteering in their community, the USC football team makes a trip to the USC Children's Hospital every year to visit patients and to give gifts and to sign autographs. You know what they're doing? They're bringing some sunshine into somebody's life, is what they're doing. The LSU football players visit hospitals, and they teach elementary school children how to read. They're taking their talents off the football field and putting them in the classroom, so some child in Louisiana has a chance to realize a better life. The USC women's volleyball team raised money and participated together in the Race for the Cure for breast cancer research. They took their athleticism and put it into practice to help save somebody's life. The UNC women's soccer team is helping to build a Habitat for Humanity house near the campus. They're using their God-given talents to make sure somebody has a place to live. And finally, the Indiana soccer players volunteer as coaches and mentors for youth soccer teams in Bloomington, Indiana.

All these players have understood it's important to serve something greater than yourself in life. They learned to do so by working together for a team, and they're learning to do so by making the community in which they live a better place for every citizen.

It is my honor to welcome true champs here to the White House. I congratulate you for your hard work. I wish you all the best for the—whatever the future may hold. God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:21 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Pete Carroll, head football coach, University of Southern California; Nick Saban, head football coach, Louisiana State University; Mick Haley, head coach, University of Southern California women's volleyball; Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger of California; Anson Dorrance, head coach, University of North Carolina women's soccer; Dean Smith, former head coach, University of North Carolina men's basketball; and Jerry Yeagley, former head coach, University of Indiana men's soccer.

Remarks on Presenting the Congressional Gold Medal to Dorothy Height

March 24, 2004

Thank you very much. Mr. Speaker and Leader Frist, distinguished Members of Congress, I want to thank the authors of the bill that bestowed this high honor, Senator Clinton and Senator Levin and Congresswoman Watson. Thank you all for being here to honor such a fine American.

Since the American Revolution, Congress has awarded Gold Medals to the heroes of our country. And today we recognize a citizen who has helped to extend the promise of our founding to millions. We recognize a hero.

I'm so pleased to join with the Congress in honoring this good and gracious woman and the great life she has lived. And what a life it's been. If you know—in the presence of Dorothy Height, you kind of—she's such a calming influence. You realize you're in the presence of grace. But you've got to understand what she's done to realize that behind the grace, there's a will of steel and absolute determination.

She's been a leader and a witness to a lot of our great history. We've heard a lot of talk about the "Big Six." As Leader Pelosi said—I think it was Leader Pelosi—"I sure would have liked to have been in the room. I would have liked to have seen Dorothy Height interface with some of the giants of the civil rights movement." The truth of the matter is, she was the giant of the civil rights movement. They were interfacing with her. [*Laughter*]

She was there when they planned the march. She was a few steps away from Dr. King's great speech at the Lincoln Memorial. She helped integrate the YWCA. She was in the South during the sixties setting up freedom schools and voter registration drives. She was in Mississippi bringing white and