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feels good, do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else." People in the country are beginning to understand that there is a—you're responsible for loving your children. If you're fortunate enough to be a mom or a dad, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart. If you're worried about the quality of the education in which you—in the community in which you live, you're responsible for doing something about it. Just don't hope for some magic response from a faraway Government. If you're a CEO in corporate America, you're responsible for telling the truth to your shareholders and your employees. And in this new responsibility society, each of us is responsible for loving our neighbor just like we'd like to be loved ourselves.

We've got a fabulous country. There's nothing we can't overcome. Thank you for coming today. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:35 a.m. at the Fox Cities Performing Arts Center. In his remarks, he referred to Bill Welch, president, Fox Cities Chamber of Commerce & Industry, who introduced the President; Mayor Tim Hanna of Appleton, WI; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Junichiro Koizumi of Japan; and Chairman Kim Chong-il of North Korea.

Remarks to Wisconsin First-Responders in Appleton

March 30, 2004

Thank you very much. I was just looking for a salad. [*Laughter*] Thank you all for your welcome. Thanks for letting me barge in. Please sit down.

Ed, thanks for letting me come in to say something to our first-responders here in this State. First, I want to thank you for your service to our country. We're at war, and we better be ready on all fronts. And so the first-responder effort and the strategy with the local, State, and Federal government is really an important part of making sure that we do everything we can to do our solemn duty, which is to protect our fellow citizens from harm.

We've got a big and vast country, which makes the task particularly tough. So the best way to protect our citizens from harm is to find the enemy, bring them to justice, to get them before they try to get us. And that's exactly what the country is trying to—[*applause*].

We're on the hunt. There's a lot of really fine folks wearing this Nation's uniform that are making the world and America more safe and secure. If you happen to have a relative in the military, you thank them on behalf of the Commander in Chief for this job they're doing and for the sacrifice that they're making. This military of ours is fantastic. It's really got unbelievably capable people. My job is to make sure they get the best—the best equipment, the best training. Any time you put anybody in harm's way, we have a solemn duty to make sure that they're well-equipped. And there are a lot of good folks out there running them down right now, and that's exactly what this Government must do and will continue to do.

I am—I just came from giving a speech on the economy, but part of the challenges we face is—my job as the Commander in Chief is to provide people as direct assessment I can about the future of this country. And the problem we face right now is, we love freedom, and we're not going to change, and the people that we fight hate freedom. That's just the way it is.

I've always felt that September the 11th was going to be—the type of war that started that day was going to be the type of war that I constantly have to explain to the American people. It's going to be different. I suspect there's some old vets here. It's easy to find infantry and airplanes and a flotilla of ships. It's hard to find people that are so cold-blooded in their murder that they hide in caves and the dark corners of cities. But that's what we're going to do. We're going to find them.

The other thing is, is that you've just got to know that any time you see a threat, after September the 11th, you've got to take it seriously. It used to be that oceans would protect us, that we could say, "Well, there's a threat over here. We can deal with it if we feel like it, but we're protected by oceans." September the 11th taught us another lesson, that this Nation must always deal with threats before they fully materialize, that we've got

to—in order to do our duty, in order for me to do mine as the Commander in Chief, if we see a threat, we'll take action of some kind. Obviously, the military option is the last option, not the first.

But I want to remind you that I saw a threat. I looked at the intelligence and saw a threat in Iraq. The United States Congress looked at the very same intelligence, and it saw a threat. The United Nations Security Council looked at the intelligence, and it saw a threat as well. We went back to the United Nations and said, "Look, this guy is a problem. He's a threat. He used gas on his own people. He used weapons of mass destruction on his own people. He's a—we've got to take it seriously. September the 11th taught us a lesson." So we came together and said, "Look, get rid of your weapons, Mr. Saddam Hussein." He said, "No." So I was faced with a choice: Do I trust the word of a madman, or do I do my duty to defend America? And given that choice, I will defend our country every time.

We're living in historic times. It's a different kind of war, and all of us are called to do our part. And I want to thank you. I came by to thank—they said there's some people who are on the frontlines of helping us secure the country. I said, "I want to come by." I don't care about your politics. What I do care about is the fact that you're serving, and I wanted to come by and thank you for that. I want to thank you for doing everything you can to help somebody, to prepare our country. I just want you to know, I'm going to do my part too.

It's a fantastic country we have. It's a—it's been such an amazing experience to see the character of this Nation, a nation which refuses to buckle under to the threat of terrorism, a nation which showed incredible resolve, a nation in which firefighters were willing to rush into burning buildings to save their fellow citizens, a nation also which has got an incredible amount of compassion. You know what I'm talking about when I talk about people who are willing to love their neighbor just like they love themselves in the community in which you live. To me, that's the courage of the country which defines us, but it's also the heart of the country which defines us as well.

So thanks for letting me come by to say hi. I'm keeping office hours now, so I've got to head back—[*laughter*]—head back over yonder, as they say in Texas. [*Laughter*] But I, again, want to thank you for your service.

May God bless your work. May God bless your families, and may God continue to bless our great country. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:39 p.m. at the Radisson Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Ed Gleason, administrator, Wisconsin Emergency Management; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks Announcing That National Security Adviser Condoleezza Rice Will Provide Public Testimony to the National Commission on Terrorist Attacks Upon the United States

March 30, 2004

Today I have informed the Commission on Terrorist Attacks Against the United States that my National Security Adviser, Dr. Condoleezza Rice, will provide public testimony. I've also advised Chairman Kean and Vice Chairman Hamilton that Vice President Cheney and I will jointly meet with all members of the Commission in a private session.

This Commission has been charged with a crucial task. To prevent future attacks, we must understand the methods of our enemies. The terrorist threat being examined by the Commission is still present, still urgent, and still demands our full attention.

From the day the panel was created, I have directed executive branch agencies and members of my staff to cooperate with the Commission. Recognizing the exceptional nature of this inquiry, we have given Commission members access to relevant Presidential daily briefings, to my communications with foreign leaders, and to internal White House communications.

More than 800 members of the administration have been interviewed. More than 20 White House officials have met with the Commission or soon will do so. Dr. Rice herself has already met privately with the Commission for 4 hours. I've ordered this level of cooperation, because I consider it necessary to gaining a complete picture of the