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Q. Thank you, Mr. President.
The President. Good to see you, sir.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 2:55 p.m. in the Library at the White House for later broadcast. The transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 2. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Ayad al-Alawi and President Ghazi Ujayl al-Yawr of the Iraqi interim government; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Lakhdar Brahimi, Special Adviser to the U.N. Secretary-General. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Commencement Address at the United States Air Force Academy in Colorado Springs, Colorado

June 2, 2004

Secretary Roche and General Jumper, General Rosa, Attorney General Ashcroft, Congresswoman Heather Wilson, Air Force Academy graduate 1982, Academy staff and faculty, distinguished guests, officers, cadets, members of the graduating class, and your families: Thanks for the warm welcome. And thanks—thank you for the honor to visit the United States Air Force Academy on your 50th anniversary.

You've worked hard to get to this moment. You survived "Beast," spent 7 months eating your meals at attention, carried boulders from Cathedral Rock, and endured countless hours in Jacks Valley. In 4 years, you've been transformed from "basics" and "smacks"—[*laughter*]—to proud officers and airmen, worthy of the degree and the commission you receive. Congratulations on a great achievement.

Your superintendent has made a positive difference in a short time. I thank him for helping to restore the Academy's tradition of honor, which applies to every man and woman without exception. I thank the superb faculty for your high standards and dedication to preparing Air Force officers. And I thank the parents here today for standing behind your sons and daughters as they step forward to serve America.

This is a week of remembrance for our country. On Saturday we dedicated the World War II Memorial in Washington, in the company of veterans who fought and flew at places like Midway and Iwo Jima and Normandy. This weekend I will go to France for the ceremonies marking the 60th anniversary of D-day, at a place where the fate of millions turned on the courage of thousands. In these events, we recall a time of peril and national unity and individual courage. We honor a generation of Americans who served this country and saved the liberty of the world.

On this day in 1944, General Eisenhower sat down at his headquarters in the English countryside and wrote out a message to the troops who would soon invade Normandy. "Soldiers, Sailors and Airmen of the Allied Expeditionary Force," he wrote, "the eyes of the world are upon you. The hopes and prayers of liberty-loving people everywhere march with you."

Each of you receiving a commission today in the United States military will also carry the hopes of free people everywhere. As your generation assumes its own duties during a global conflict that will define your careers, you will be called upon to take brave action and serve with honor. In some ways, this struggle we're in is unique. In other ways, it resembles the great clashes of the last century between those who put their trust in tyrants and those who put their trust in liberty. Our goal, the goal of this generation is the same: We will secure our Nation and defend the peace through the forward march of freedom.

Like the Second World War, our present conflict began with a ruthless surprise attack on the United States. We will not forget that treachery, and we will accept nothing less than victory over the enemy.

Like the murderous ideologies of the 20th century, the ideology of terrorism reaches across borders and seeks recruits in every country. So we're fighting these enemies wherever they hide across the Earth.

Like other totalitarian movements, the terrorists seek to impose a grim vision in which dissent is crushed and every man and woman must think and live in colorless conformity. So to the oppressed peoples everywhere, we are offering the great alternative of human liberty.

Like enemies of the past, the terrorists underestimate the strength of free peoples. The

terrorists believe that free societies are essentially corrupt and decadent and with a few hard blows will collapse in weakness and in panic. The enemy has learned that America is strong and determined, because of the steady resolve of our citizens and because of the skill and strength of the Army, Navy, Marines, Coast Guard, and the United States Air Force.

And like the aggressive ideologies that rose up in the early 1900s, our enemies have clearly and proudly stated their intentions: Here are the words of Al Qaida's self-described military spokesman in Europe, on a tape claiming responsibility for the Madrid bombings. He said, "We choose death, while you choose life. If you do not stop your injustices, more and more blood will flow, and these attacks will seem very small compared to what can occur in what you call terrorism."

Here are the words of another Al Qaida spokesman, Suleiman Abu Gheith. Last year in an article published on an Al Qaida web site, he said, quote, "We have the right to kill 4 million Americans—2 million of them children—and to exile twice as many and wound and cripple hundreds of thousands. Furthermore, it is our right to fight them with chemical and biological weapons."

In all these threats, we hear the echoes of other enemies in other times—that same swagger and demented logic of the fanatic. Like their kind in the past, these murderers have left scars and suffering. And like their kind in the past, they will flame and fail and suffer defeat by free men and women.

The enemies of freedom are opposed by a great and growing alliance. Nations that won the cold war, nations once behind an Iron Curtain, and nations on every continent see this threat clearly. We're cooperating at every level of our military, law enforcement, and intelligence to meet the danger. The war on terror is civilization's fight. And as in the struggles of the last century, civilized nations are waging this fight together.

The terrorists of our day are, in some ways, unlike the enemies of the past. The terrorist ideology has not yet taken control of a great power like Germany or the Soviet Union. And so the terrorists have adopted a strategy different from the gathering of vast and standing armies. They seek instead to demoralize free nations with dramatic acts of murder. They seek to wear down our resolve and will by killing the innocent and spreading fear and anarchy. And they seek weapons of mass destruction so they can threaten or attack even the most powerful nations.

Fighting this kind of enemy is a complex mission that will require all your skill and resourcefulness. Our enemies have no capital or nation-state to defend. They share a vision and operate as a network of dozens of violent extremist groups around the world, striking separately and in concert. Al Qaida is the vanguard of these loosely affiliated groups, and we estimate that over the years many thousands of recruits have passed through its training camps. Al Qaida has been wounded by losing nearly two-thirds of its known leadership and most of its important sanctuaries. Yet many of the terrorists it trained are still active in hidden cells or in other groups. Homegrown extremists incited by Al Qaida's example are at work in many nations.

And since September the 11th, we've seen terrorist violence in an arc from Morocco to Spain to Turkey to Russia to Uzbekistan to Pakistan to India to Thailand to Indonesia. Yet the center of the conflict, the platform for their global expansion, the region they seek to remake in their image is the broader Middle East.

Just as events in Europe determined the outcome of the cold war, events in the Middle East will set the course of our current struggle. If that region is abandoned to dictators and terrorists, it will be a constant source of violence and alarm, exporting killers of increasing destructive power to attack America and other free nations. If that region grows in democracy and prosperity and hope, the terrorist movement will lose its sponsors, lose its recruits, and lose the festering grievances that keep terrorists in business. The stakes of this struggle are high. The security and peace of our country are at stake, and success in this struggle is our only option.

This is the great challenge of our time, the storm in which we fly. History is once again witnessing a great clash. This is not a clash of civilizations. The civilization of Islam, with its humane traditions of learning and tolerance, has no place for this violent sect of killers and aspiring tyrants. This is not a clash

of religions. The faith of Islam teaches moral responsibility that ennobles men and women and forbids the shedding of innocent blood. Instead, this is a clash of political visions.

In the terrorists' vision of the world, the Middle East must fall under the rule of radical governments, moderate Arab states must be overthrown, nonbelievers must be expelled from Muslim lands, and the harshest practice of extremist rule must be universally enforced. In this vision, books are burned; terrorists are sheltered; women are whipped; and children are schooled in hatred and murder and suicide.

Our vision is completely different. We believe that every person has a right to think and pray and live in obedience to God and conscience, not in frightened submission to despots. We believe that societies find their greatness by encouraging the creative gifts of their people, not in controlling their lives and feeding their resentments. And we have confidence that people share this vision of dignity and freedom in every culture because liberty is not the invention of Western culture. Liberty is the deepest need and hope of all humanity. The vast majority of men and women in Muslim societies reject the domination of extremists like Usama bin Laden. They're looking to the world's free nations to support them in their struggle against the violent minority who want to impose a future of darkness across the Middle East. We will not abandon them to the designs of evil men. We will stand with the people of that region as they seek their future in freedom.

We bring more than a vision to this conflict. We bring a strategy that will lead to victory. And that strategy has four commitments:

First, we are using every available tool to dismantle, disrupt, and destroy terrorists and their organizations. With all the skill of our law enforcement, all the stealth of our special forces, and all the global reach of our air power, we will strike the terrorists before they can strike our people. The best way to protect America is to stay on the offensive.

Secondly, we are denying terrorists places of sanctuary or support. The power of terrorists is multiplied when they have safe havens to gather and train recruits. Terrorist havens are found within states that have difficulty controlling areas of their own territory. So we're helping Governments like the Philippines and Kenya to enforce anti-terrorist laws, through information sharing and joint training.

Terrorists also find support and safe haven within outlaw regimes. So I have set a clear doctrine that the sponsors of terror will be held equally accountable for the acts of terrorists. Regimes in Iraq and Afghanistan learned that providing support and sanctuary to terrorists carries with it enormous costs, while Libya has discovered that abandoning the pursuit of weapons of mass murder has opened a better path to relations with the free world.

Terrorists find their ultimate support and sanctuary when they gain control of governments and countries. We saw the terrible harm that terrorists did by taking effective control over the Government of Afghanistan, a terrorist victory that led directly to the attacks of September the 11th. And terrorists have similar designs on Iraq, on Pakistan, on Saudi Arabia, and many other regional governments they regard as illegitimate. We can only imagine the scale of terrorist crimes were they to gain control of states with weapons of mass murder or vast oil revenues. So we will not retreat. We will prevent the emergence of terrorist-controlled states.

Third, we are using all the elements of our national power to deny terrorists the chemical, biological, and nuclear weapons they seek. Because this global threat requires a global response, we are working to strengthen international institutions charged with opposing proliferation. We are working with regional powers and international partners to confront the threats of North Korea and Iran. We have joined with 14 other nations in the Proliferation Security Initiative to interdict—on sea, on land, or in the air—shipments of weapons of mass destruction, components to build those weapons, and the means to deliver them. Our country must never allow mass murderers to gain hold of weapons of mass destruction. We will lead the world and keep unrelenting pressure on the enemy.

Fourth and finally, we are denying the terrorists the ideological victories they seek by working for freedom and reform in the

broader Middle East. Fighting terror is not just a matter of killing or capturing terrorists. To stop the flow of recruits into terrorist movement, young people in the region must see a real and hopeful alternative, a society that rewards their talent and turns their energies to constructive purpose. And here the vision of freedom has great advantages. Terrorists incite young men and women to strap bombs on their bodies and dedicate their deaths to the death of others. Free societies inspire young men and women to work and achieve and dedicate their lives to the life of their country. And in the long run, I have great faith that the appeal of freedom and life is stronger than the lure of hatred and death.

Freedom's advance in the Middle East will have another very practical effect. The terrorist movement feeds on the appearance of inevitability. It claims to rise on the currents of history, using past America withdrawals from Somalia and Beirut to sustain this myth and to gain new followers. The success of free and stable governments in Afghanistan and Iraq and elsewhere will shatter the myth and discredit the radicals. And as the entire region sees the promise of freedom in its midst, the terrorist ideology will become more and more irrelevant, until that day when it is viewed with contempt or ignored altogether.

For decades, free nations tolerated oppression in the Middle East for the sake of stability. In practice, this approach brought little stability and much oppression. So I have changed this policy. In the short term, we will work with every government in the Middle East dedicated to destroying the terrorist networks. In the longer term, we will expect a higher standard of reform and democracy from our friends in the region. Democracy and reform will make those nations stronger and more stable and make the world more secure by undermining terrorism at it source. Democratic institutions in the Middle East will not grow overnight. In America, they grew over generations. Yet the nations of the Middle East will find, as we have found, the only path to true progress is the path of freedom and justice and democracy.

America is pursuing our forward strategy for freedom in the broader Middle East in many ways. Voices in that region are increasingly demanding reform and democratic change. So we are working with courageous leaders like President Karzai of Afghanistan, who is ushering in a new era of freedom for the Afghan people. We're taking aside reformers who are standing for human rights and political freedom, often at great personal risk. We're encouraging economic opportunity and the rule of law and government reform and the expansion of liberty throughout the region.

And we're working toward the goal of a Palestinian state living side by side with Israel in peace. Prime Minister Sharon's plan to remove all settlements from Gaza and several from the West Bank is a courageous step toward peace. His decision provides an historic moment of opportunity to begin building a future Palestinian state. This initiative can stimulate progress toward peace by setting the parties back on the roadmap, the most reliable guide to ending the occupation that began in 1967. This success will require reform-minded Palestinians to step forward and lead and meet their roadmap obligations. And the United States of America stands ready to help those dedicated to peace, those willing to fight violence, find a new state so we can realize peace in the greater Middle East.

Some who call themselves realists question whether the spread of democracy in the Middle East should be any concern of ours. But the realists in this case have lost contact with a fundamental reality. America has always been less secure when freedom is in retreat. America is always more secure when freedom is on the march.

All our commitments in the Middle East—all of the four commitments of our strategy—are now being tested in Iraq. We have removed a state sponsor of terror with a history of using weapons of mass destruction. And the whole world is better off with Saddam Hussein sitting in a prison cell. We now face Al Qaida associates like the terrorist Zarqawi, who seek to hijack the future of that nation. We are fighting enemies who want us to retreat and leave Iraq to tyranny so they can claim an ideological victory over America. They would use that victory to gather new strength and take their violence directly to

America and to our friends. Yet our coalition is determined, and the Iraqi people have made clear: Iraq will remain in the camp of free nations.

The Iraqi people are moving forward in clear, steady steps, with our support, to achieve democracy. Iraq now has a designated Prime Minister, Ayad al-Alwai, a respected Iraqi patriot once targeted by Saddam Hussein's assassins. I spoke with the Prime Minister yesterday. He recognized the sacrifice of brave Americans who have given their lives in Iraq, and he pledged that his country would be a friend and ally of America in peace.

Along with a President and two Deputy Presidents, Prime Minister al-Alwai will lead a government of 33 ministers, which take office immediately and begin preparing for the transfer of full sovereignty by June the 30th. America and Great Britain are now working with the United Nations Security Council and Iraq's new leaders on a resolution that will endorse the sovereign government of Iraq and urge other nations to actively support it.

The Iraqi people are looking to us for help, and we will provide it. Many fine civilian professionals are now working in that country, helping Iraqis to rebuild their infrastructure and build the institutions of a free country. Along with the United Nations, we will help Iraq's new government to prepare for national elections by January 2005. This free election is what the terrorists in the country fear most. Free elections are exactly what they are going to see.

Our military is performing with skill and courage, and our Nation is proud of the United States military. Many brave Iraqis have stepped forward to fight for their own freedom, and we are working closely with them to disband and destroy the illegal militia, to defeat the terrorists, and to secure the safe arrival of Iraqi democracy. We're stepping up our efforts to train effective Iraqi security forces that will eventually defend the liberty of their own country.

At every stage of this process, before and after the transition to Iraqi sovereignty, the enemy is likely to be active and brutal. They know the stakes as well as we do. But our coalition is prepared, our will is strong, and neither Iraq's new leadership nor the United States will be intimidated by thugs and assassins.

As we fight the war on terror in Iraq and on other fronts, we must keep in mind the nature of the enemy. No act of America explains terrorist violence, and no concession of America could appease it. The terrorists who attacked our country on September the 11th, 2001, were not protesting our policies. They were protesting our existence. Some say that by fighting the terrorists abroad since September the 11th, we only stir up a hornet's nest, but the terrorists who struck that day were stirred up already. If America were not fighting terrorists in Iraq and Afghanistan and elsewhere, what would these thousands of killers do, suddenly begin leading productive lives of service and charity? [*Laughter*] Would the terrorists who beheaded an American on camera just be quiet, peaceful citizens if America had not liberated Iraq? We are dealing here with killers who have made the death of Americans the calling of their lives. And America has made a decision about these terrorists: Instead of waiting for them to strike again in our midst, we will take this fight to the enemy.

I am confident of our cause in Iraq, but the struggle we have entered will not end with success in Iraq. Overcoming terrorism and bringing greater freedom to the nations of the Middle East is the work of decades. To prevail, America will need the swift and able transformed military you will help to build and lead. America will need a generation of Arab linguists and experts on Middle Eastern history and culture. America will need improved intelligence capabilities to track threats and expose the plans of unseen enemies.

Above all, America will need perseverance. This conflict will take many turns, with setbacks on the course to victory. Through it all, our confidence comes from one unshakable belief: We believe, in Ronald Reagan's words, that "the future belongs to the free." And we've seen the appeal of liberty with our own eyes. We have seen freedom firmly established in former enemies like Japan and Germany. We have seen freedom arrive on waves of unstoppable progress

to nations in Latin America and Asia and Africa and Eastern Europe. Now freedom is stirring in the Middle East, and no one should bet against it.

In the years immediately after World War II ended, our Nation faced more adversity and danger with the rise of imperial communism. In 1947, Communist forces were pressing a civil war in Greece and threatening Turkey. More than 2 years after the Nazi surrender, there was still starvation in Germany. Reconstruction seemed to be faltering, and the Marshall plan had not yet begun. In 1948, Berlin was blockaded on the orders of Josef Stalin. In 1949, the Soviet Union exploded a nuclear weapon, and Communists in China won their revolution.

All of this took place in the first 4 years of the cold war. If that generation of Americans had lost its nerve, there would have been no "long twilight struggle," only a long twilight. But the United States and our allies kept faith with captive people and stayed true to the vision of a democratic Europe, and that perseverance gave all the world a lesson in the power of liberty.

We are now about 3 years into the war against terrorism. We have overcome great challenges. We face many today, and there are more ahead. This is no time for impatience and self-defeating pessimism. These times demand the kind of courage and confidence that Americans have shown before. Our enemy can only succeed if we lose our will and faith in our own values. And ladies and gentlemen, our will is strong. We know our duty. By keeping our word and holding firm to our values, this generation will show the world the power of liberty once again.

For 4 years, you have trained and studied and worked for this moment. And now it has come. You are the ones who will defeat the enemies of freedom. Your country is depending on your courage and your dedication to duty. The eyes of the world are upon you. You leave this place at a historic time, and you enter this struggle ahead with the full confidence of your Commander in Chief. I thank each of you for accepting the hardships and high honor of service in the United States military. And I congratulate every member of the Rickenbacker Class of 2004.

May God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:17 a.m. at Falcon Stadium. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. John P. Jumper, USAF, Air Force Chief of Staff; Lt. Gen. John W. Rosa, Jr., USAF, Superintendent of the U.S. Air Force Academy; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; President Hamid Karzai of Afghanistan; Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; senior Al Qaida associate Abu Musab Al Zarqawi; Prime Minister Ayad al-Alawi, President Ghazi Ujayl al-Yawr, Deputy President Ibrahim al-Jafari, and Deputy President Rowsch Shaways of the Iraqi interim government.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister John Howard of Australia

June 3, 2004

President Bush. Good morning. Thanks for coming. A couple of opening statements and then we'll answer two questions from each side.

It is my honor to welcome back to the White House my friend and our ally, Prime Minister John Howard. He is a close friend of mine. I appreciate the frequent discussions we have. I value his advice. I appreciate his clear vision.

Our two nations were allies in every major conflict of the last century. We've each lost citizens in the first war of the new century. I will never forget standing with the Prime Minister on September the 10th, 2001, the day before the world changed forever.

Americans will never forget the vicious attack in Bali which claimed the lives of dozens of innocent Australians. Today, Australians and Americans are standing together on the frontlines of freedom. As members of the common coalition, our two nations helped to free the people of Afghanistan and Iraq from the grip of tyranny. Today, we're working together to help the Afghan and Iraqi people build free societies and prevent tyranny's return.

Today the Prime Minister and I discussed our coalition's progress in Iraq. That country