

Ford's"; Mary Jane Wick, gala chairman; Frankie Hewitt and Bill McSweeney, *Ford's Theatre* executive producer and chairman of the board; Lodwrick M. Cook, chairman and chief executive officer of ARCO; Vice President Dan Quayle and his wife, Marilyn; Secretary of Defense Dick Cheney; Gen. Colin

L. Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; country music performers Ricky Skaggs and Randy Travis; songwriters Don Schlitz and Tom Schuyler; and actor Morgan Freeman, who delivered a tribute to Abraham Lincoln.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Michel Rocard of France

March 11, 1991

Q. Mr. Rocard, are the French still pressing for a Middle East conference?

The Prime Minister. We are pressing for a solution. And we think in the Middle East, as I think the American authorities inferred—the President, President Bush, who said that last week—the Israelis and Palestinians have to find an issue. And if the international community can contribute to create the conditions for their direct meeting, any type of institution of conference would be useful—the heart of the matter, the substance, more than the procedure. It was proposed once—one. We do hope there will be a solution anyway, and I'm sure the United States and France will act in a converging way to permit a solution.

The President. That I'm certain of. You know, one of the great things about this recent effort was that we were just solidly together. And I think that sent a very strong signal to others around the world. And I hope you will convey to the President my thanks and my sentiments of deep appreciation on behalf of the American people. Because France is a key, terribly important country with special knowledge and interest in that part of the world. And we just came together at the U.N. and elsewhere, and it was a wonderful thing.

So, carry my thanks back to everybody that was involved, please, sir, including yourself.

The Prime Minister. Mr. President, thank you very much for those words. We were happy to be, again, very close together, as we have been in many difficult periods of history. But there again, we are very close

in acting together and having victory together.

The President. That's right. That's right. I mentioned your distinguished General, my French is terrible, but Roquejeoffre.

The Prime Minister. Roquejeoffre. Marvelous.

The President. Pretty close, pretty close. But General Schwarzkopf was very high in his praise of him and the way he conducted the French forces, led the French forces.

So, all of that worked out. You remember in the very beginning there were all these predictions with these different countries, that it would be very hard to sort out a proper structure for coordinating them. And it came fine.

The Prime Minister. Quite well.

The President. Probably better coordinated than the politicians.

The Prime Minister. And the idea to—soldiers of both countries under the same command——

The President. Now, we've got some business to do, so with all appreciation for this interest and concern, thank you very much.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International], you didn't say a word today.

Q. Thanks for not answering any questions.

The President. That's all right. You're welcome. [Laughter]

Note: The exchange began at 10 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, President Bush referred to President Francois Mitterrand of France; Gen. Michel Roquejeoffre, commander of the French

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forces in the Persian Gulf; and Gen. H. Norman Schwarzkopf, commander of the U.S. forces.

Remarks Announcing Proposed Crime Control Legislation *March 11, 1991*

Thank you all very much for that warm welcome. Mr. Vice President and Mr. Attorney General; and then the State attorneys general with whom I just met, so many here today; distinguished Members of the United States Congress; other law enforcement officials; and community leaders: Really, it is an honor on this occasion to welcome you all back to the White House.

Last week before Congress I saluted a group of hometown heroes, the finest combat force that this nation has ever assembled: the brave men and women of the United States military. We honored them with our cheers, with our prayers, and come this summer, I'm looking forward to it, because then I think the whole country will honor them again with the biggest Fourth of July since the Liberty Bell first rang.

But as I said last week, the real way to honor them is to welcome them back to an America that is worthy of their sacrifice by joining together with Congress to move forward on the domestic front.

Last month we launched an innovative package designed to assure real opportunity for all Americans. And our veterans deserve to come home to an America of improved schools, better jobs, stronger laws against discrimination, increased homeownership, and families that are healthy and together. And most of all, our veterans deserve to come home to an America where it is safe to walk the streets. Well, we can't do that before they come home, but we can have that on our minds as something we are determined to do.

Economic opportunity is impossible for citizens who cannot be safe and feel safe in their homes, in their schools, in their jobs, and yes, their churches. And that's what I mean when I say a most basic civil right is quite simply the right to be free from fear.

Some of you may remember that shortly

after I took office we met with the 50 AG's at the White House. It was 2 years ago almost to the day. And I told you how a few days earlier I had gone to New York to meet the family and friends of Everett Hatcher, a brave DEA agent who was gunned down in the street. And they told me that it used to be unthinkable to shoot a cop. But now the culture has changed. And when the bad guys hear the word "police," they just turn around and start shooting. I'll never forget that conversation.

Two months later, on that rainy day on Capitol Hill, we launched an effort to pass our crime legislation, legislation designed to help protect our cops by giving them the tools they need to get their job done. We proposed stiff new penalties for criminals using semiautomatic weapons, an improved exclusionary rule designed to protect the truth and punish the guilty, an habeas corpus reform that would stop frivolous appeals and ensure that punishment was not only just but also swift and certain, and most of all, it would have finally given us a Federal law to uphold a simple rule of justice: Those who kill must be prepared to pay with their own life.

And today, 2 years later, the Congress has still failed to act on these critical core provisions. And today, 2 years later, another 294 police men and women are dead—294, almost 3 times the number of precious American lives lost during this entire Gulf war. The killings must stop. And it must stop now.

Today, it's time to stand up and be counted. It's time to stand up for what's right. We stood by our troops. And today it's time to stand up for America's prosecutors and police.

Last week, many of you joined together with the Attorney General and me in an unprecedented crime summit, America's