

Exchange With Reporters at the D.C. Central Kitchen December 22, 1999

Terrorist Activities

Q. Mr. President, how concerned should Americans be about terrorist attacks in the U.S. as we approach the new year?

The President. Well, because of the incident which has been widely reported, we, the authorities, are on a higher level of alert. For the citizens, I would say they ought to go about their holidays and enjoy themselves and make the most of it. But I would ask them to just be aware of their circumstances, and if they see anything suspicious to report it immediately, and meanwhile, to know that we are doing everything we possibly can. We're taking extraordinary efforts in the Government to act, based

on the incident out in the Pacific Northwest and what we know, and we're going forward.

I don't think the American people should stop their holiday activities. I think they ought to go on and enjoy the season. But because we, the Government, are taking extra steps and we're on alert, I think it would be good for them and good for us if they would just be careful and—not suspicious but aware—aware of their circumstances, and if they see anything that doesn't look right, to report it to us. And if they do that, I think we'll have a good holiday, and I think we'll maximize our safety.

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:40 p.m. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks at the D.C. Central Kitchen December 22, 1999

Thank you so much. Well, let me begin by thanking Robert Egger and all the students, the graduates, the staff, the volunteers who have made D.C. Central Kitchen one of the greatest sources of community strength in our entire Nation. I want to thank Representative Eleanor Holmes Norton, your Member of Congress; and Representative Tim Roemer from Indiana, for joining us today. I want to thank my longtime friend, your DC Council Chair, Charlene Drew Jarvis. And I think we have four other city council members here; thank you all for coming. And I want to thank Harris Wofford, the gentleman who runs our national service effort, and the AmeriCorps members who are here today. And Harris, thanks for the jacket. We now have over 150,000 young Americans who have served in AmeriCorps since we established it in 1994. That's a pretty good record, and I'm very proud of them.

I just wanted to also say, most importantly, thank you to Donna Simon. I am very proud of her. And she did a good job today, didn't she—and her daughter. Now, last year we made lasagna. Today I had to put the filling in the

bell peppers. And I did it with Steve, Melody, and Michele; they're all better than I am. But I love working again this year. I had a good time, and I learned about three other people.

I want to say three things about D.C. Central Kitchen and its recipes. First of all, this place offers a recipe for opportunity. It's an empowerment classroom. You heard Donna's story, and one of the things I learned a long time ago in life is that everybody's got a story. Everybody's got a story. And most of them are pretty interesting. And they're all still being written. And the nice thing about your life story is you get to get up and write a page every day, and you have to decide; no matter how bad things are, no matter what bad has happened to you, no matter what mistakes you've made, you still get to get up and write a new page every day. And this place helps people write good pages in that story.

I want to tell you, last year, in addition to Donna, I met a lot of other interesting people here last year. I met a man last year named Francis Hill; stand up here. I want to tell you about this guy. He had been living on the streets