

good in the world history. We value the lives and rights of all people. Our compassion and concern do not stop at our border. They reach across the world.

Americans are determined to fight for our security, no question about it. And we're all equally determined to live up to our principles. And I hope, I hope all Americans will help us show those principles to the entire world.

Thank you for what you do, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:58 a.m. in the Regency Ballroom at the Omni Shoreham Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gary Forsee, chairman, Jennifer L. Howse, president, and Justin Washington, national ambassador, March of Dimes.

## Remarks at a Hispanic Heritage Month Reception

October 12, 2001

Thank you all. Thank you very much. Please be seated. *Bienvenidos*. Here's the way I like to put it: *Mi Casa Blanca es su Casa Blanca*. [Laughter]

We're gathered here to celebrate the contributions of Hispanic Americans to our life. In a few moments, I will sign a Executive order creating a Commission on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans, to open new doors of opportunity for Hispanic boys and girls all across America.

Before I do, I have some thanks. First, I want to thank *mi abogado y tambien mi amigo*. I want to thank Judge Gonzales for his sound advice. I love him dearly.

I want to thank the boys and girls for leading us in the pledge. Thank you all for being here. I don't know whether you know this or not, but 52 million other children joined us at 2 o'clock today, saying the Pledge of Allegiance, all across America. The past weeks have given new meaning to those old words and have only deepened our allegiance to our Nation and to our flag.

I want to thank Jaci and Arturo for lending their voice and horn to this room. We've had some great music here throughout the years, and it's going to be hard to top what we heard today. I want to thank them both for coming. I want to thank all *los voces Americanos* that sang

today. I am honored that you all are here. I love your music. I love your passion. I love your love for America. And we're glad you're here. And I'm glad America got to see some of our country's finest artists perform here in the East Room on a song that talks about the solidarity and love for our country, a love that knows no bounds, a love that knows no culture, a love that everybody can share who's lucky enough to live in America. And you all are welcome. Thank you for coming.

I want to thank Emilio, especially, for lending your talents. The last time you were here was Cinco de Mayo. I said, "The next time you come, make sure you bring Gloria." [Laughter] It just goes to show the power of the Presidency. [Laughter]

I want to thank Luis Palau as well, for your prayer. And I want to thank Don Francisco as well. It's good to see you again, sir. Thank you for coming.

I'm proud that there's *dos Embajadores aqui, uno de Mexico*—good to see you, Ambassador—Juan Jose Bremer from Mexico *y tambien el Embajador de España esta aqui, Javier—bienvenidos, Javier*. I should have said there was three Ambassadors. I meant, two Ambassadors to America, but one of—a friend of mine I named the Ambassador to the Dominican Republic has

joined us, Hans Hertell. Hans, good to see you, Hans.

I named a person who participated in Operation Pedro Pan. For those of you who don't know Operation Pedro Pan, years ago, Cuban moms and dads put their sons or daughters on a boat to America in order that they could live freely. They were uncertain about their own fate, but they knew they wanted their children to grow up in America, one of whom is now here. He's in my Cabinet, Mel Martinez.

I named a good man to be on the U.S. Court of Appeals, the DC Circuit, a man named Miguel Estrada. Miguel, where are you? Thank you for coming, Miguel. You know, there's a lot of talk in Washington about making sure we have diversity on our courts, and there should be. I ask the Senate to move this man's nomination through. He's smart. He's capable. He needs that job. America needs to have him on the bench. Get him moving, before it's too late.

Ambassador to the OAS representing America, Roger Noriega. Roger—there he is. Roger, how are you, buddy? The next time, we'll try to get you a better seat. [Laughter] Either that, or show up on time. [Laughter]

Al Rascon, who is the National Director of the U.S. Selective Service and, more importantly, a recipient of the Medal of Honor, is with us today. Thank you, Al, for being here.

A man whose service has been called upon a lot, particularly for the businesses that were severely affected during the attack, Hector Barreto, the SBA Director. Leslie Sanchez, who is the Executive Director to the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans. Where are you, Leslie? Leslie, right in front of me. The Treasurer of the United States, Rosario Marin—Rosario. Cristina Saralegui—where is she? Cristina.

As you know, I used to be associated with the baseball world, and we're honored to have some Major Leaguers here with

us today. And we've got a great White Sox outfielder. *Donde esta Senor Ordonez* from the White Sox? There he is. *Como esta*, Magglio? Welcome. Glad you're here. Another Ordonez, Rey Ordonez. Good to see you, Rey. Thank you for coming. Maybe next year. [Laughter] Nelson Figueroa *de la Phillies*. Good to see you, Nelson. Thank you for coming. I'll get you afterwards. And from the San Francisco Giants, Russ Ortiz. Russ, thank you for coming.

I'm honored you all are here. Thanks for coming. Thanks for setting a good example. Thanks for understanding that people look at you off the field of play as well as on the field of play. It's important that there be—young boys and girls look up to our baseball players and see a good example, and you're setting that. We're honored that you're here with us.

We also have three with us today who represent the thousands of Hispanic Americans who serve in law enforcement and public safety. It's been a particularly trying time in New York City for the firefighters and police officers. Fortunately, we have three gentlemen today who represent those fine men and women: Anthony Miranda of the New York City Latino Officers Association—Anthony, thank you for coming—[applause]—let me try this a different way. [Laughter] We have two others to introduce. [Laughter] From the Hispanic Society of the New York City Police Department, we've got Louis Hernandez, and—[laughter]—from the Hispanic Society of the New York City Fire Department, Miguel Ramos. Now, thank you all for coming. Good job. Thanks for coming. [Applause] It is clear America is pulling for you all. And please pass on the word to the men and women who wear the uniform how proud we are and how much we mourn with you and how heroic you have been. The Nation appreciates it very much.

You know, obviously this is a time of great national unity. The evil ones struck, but they forgot who they were striking, evidently. They thought they were going to

weaken us, but they didn't. We're strong and united. I've been amazed by the incredible acts of kindness that I've heard about, and obviously we've all been impressed by the acts of heroism. This is the good news that has come during this tragedy. We've all come to realize how much we need each other.

Today there's been another reported case of anthrax, in New York City at NBC News. And it has got to cause concern for our Nation. But I want everybody in the country to know we're responding rapidly. First of all, the person is feeling fine. She's doing well. She obviously didn't ingest enough to cause death, thank God. But we've got teams on the ground—the CDC, Center for Disease Control, the FBI, working closely with local agencies to respond quickly.

Our Nation is still in danger. But the Government is doing everything in our power to protect our citizenry. We need each other more than ever, and we're responding as quickly and as forcefully as we can.

The American people need to go about their lives. We cannot let the terrorists lock our country down. We can't let terrorists, a few evildoers, hold us hostage. Our Government will fight terrorism across the seas, and we'll fight it here at home. And the American people need to fight terrorism as well, by going to work, going to ball games, getting on airplanes, singing with joy and strength, like you all did today. They will not take this country down.

We will not be cowed, and we're certainly not going to be divided. The evil ones, as well as the rest of the world, are learning that we're a nation made up of many cultures, many races, and many religions, but we are one strong nation. We've suffered loss together; we have entered a mighty struggle together; and we will prevail together. The diversity of America has always been—always been—a great strength of this country. Here, you can be proud of your cultural heritage, proud of

your ancestry, proud of your native language, and still be a proud American.

We see the spirit of pride today, most vividly in the ties between our country and *los que viven en Latin America—y tambien el sur de America*. A lifetime in Texas has given me many things to be thankful for; one of them, for certain, is my appreciation for the Hispanic culture. I realize how much the Hispanic culture has enriched my State. And I realize how much the Hispanic culture enriches my Nation, as well.

This month, our country recognizes just how much we owe to the Hispanic culture and, more important, to the Hispanic Americans we're proud to call our fellow citizens. And we do so—as we do so, we recognize as well our obligation to ensure that every American has an equal place in our society from the earliest years in life.

This Nation of immigrant heritage believes that all children, whatever their circumstances, deserve a chance to learn and rise and succeed. This principle has guided my education reforms as we work to raise the standards of public schools across America and bring hope to every classroom for every child—I mean every child, not just a few, not just those whose parents may speak English. We want educational excellence *para todos que viven en este pais*.

So today I am creating a commission to help chart the path to greater achievement amongst Hispanic American students in every part of our country. I am pleased to sign this order in front of such distinguished company. And I'm proud—I'm proud—to be the President of such a great nation.

Thank you for coming. And God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Albert R. Gonzales, White House Counsel; Jaci Vasquez, who sang the National Anthem; trumpet player Arturo Sandoval; music producer Emilio Estefan, Jr., and his wife, entertainer Gloria

Estefan; Dr. Luis Palau, president, Luis Palau Evangelistic Association, who gave the invocation; Mario “Don Francisco” Kreutzberger, host of the television program “Sabado Gigante”; Spanish Ambassador to the U.S. Francisco Javier Ruperez; Cristina Saralegui, host of “El Show de Cristina”; Rey Ordonez, shortstop, New York Mets; Anthony Miranda, president, Latino Officers

Association—City of New York; Louis Hernandez, president, NYPD Hispanic Society; Miguel Ramos, president, NYFD Hispanic Society; and NBC News employee Erin O’Connor. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks. The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

### Statement on Senate Action on Legislation To Combat Terrorism *October 12, 2001*

I commend the Senate for acting quickly and in a bipartisan way to give law enforcement these essential, additional tools to combat terrorism and safeguard America against future terrorist attacks. This important legislation respects our Constitution while allowing us to treat terrorist acts the

same as serious drug crimes and organized crime, and strengthens our ability to share information to disrupt, weaken, and eliminate global terrorist networks. We need these tools now. I am hopeful that I will be able to sign this legislation into law soon.

### Statement on House of Representatives Action on Legislation To Combat Terrorism *October 12, 2001*

I commend the House for passing antiterrorism legislation just one day after the Senate took action. The House and Senate bills are virtually identical. I urge the Congress to quickly get the bill to my

desk. We must strengthen the hand of law enforcement to help safeguard America and prevent future attacks—and we must do it now.

### The President’s Radio Address *October 13, 2001*

Good morning. This week we opened some important new fronts in the war on terror. We’re taking the war to the enemy, and we are strengthening our defenses here at home.

In last week’s radio address, I warned that time was running out for the Taliban to turn over the terrorists they shelter.

They did not listen, and they are paying a price.

On Sunday American and British forces launched strikes at terrorist camps and Taliban military targets in Afghanistan. Our men and women in uniform are performing as they always do, with skill and courage, and they have achieved the goals of the