

Convention on the Physical Protection of Nuclear Material, which establishes international standards of physical protection for the storage and transport of nuclear material.

I have considered the views and recommendations of the interested agencies in reviewing the proposed Protocol and have determined that its performance will promote, and will not constitute an unreasonable risk to, the common defense and security. Accordingly, I have approved the Protocol and authorized its execution and urge that the Congress give it favorable consideration.

This transmission shall constitute a submittal for purposes of both sections 123

b. and 123 d. of the Atomic Energy Act. My Administration is prepared to begin immediately the consultations with the Senate Foreign Relations Committee and House International Relations Committee as provided in section 123 b. Upon completion of the 30-day continuous session period provided for in section 123 b., the 60-day continuous session period provided for in section 123 d. shall commence.

GEORGE W. BUSH

The White House,
October 24, 2001.

NOTE: This message was released on the White House web site on October 25.

Remarks at the Thurgood Marshall Extended Elementary School *October 25, 2001*

The President. Thank you all very much. Americans believe in patriotism. We don't believe in prejudice. We're determined to fight terror. That's what we're going to do. And we're equally determined to build ties of trust and friendship with people all around the world, particularly with children and people in the Islamic world.

As you all know, our Nation is at war right now. We're going to defend America and defend the values that we all hold dear. And our Nation is united in the defense of our country. We are not at war with Muslims. We don't have a beef with Muslims. We want to be friends with Muslims and Muslim children.

We're fighting evil people. It's important for the boys and girls of Thurgood Marshall to know that we're fighting evil with good. And one way to fight evil with good is, you can help by writing letters to boys and girls your age. You can let boys and girls know what you think are important. You can let boys and girls know what your dreams are and ask them about theirs, too.

I want to thank very much the Secretary of Education for being here with me. He's a fellow Texan who is doing a great job of running the Education Department. He helps herald our number one domestic agenda item, and that is making sure every boy and girl in America gets a good education.

And he's right. We hope Congress gets the business done and gets us a good education bill. They're close; all they've got to do is work a little harder to get us a bill, one that I can sign. I'm confident they will do so with a little extra work.

I want to thank very much the principal of this fine school. Ms. Wilson, thank you so much for your hospitality. And I want to thank all the teachers who are here, as well. It's really important for all of us to thank our teachers. And I wish the First Lady were here with me, because she could thank you, too. One of the things she's trying to do is go around the country reminding people what a noble profession teaching is, and we need more people to

become teachers. But thank you all for being such good role models for your children here.

I want to thank Paul Vance, as well. Gosh, it seems like I see Paul every other week. I appreciate your hard work. I want to thank the boys and girls of this school for letting me come by to say hello. It's been my honor to be able to come to Thurgood Marshall and to see all the future leaders of the country. I guess I don't need to ask; I'm sure all of you are going to be going to college, aren't you?

Students. Yes.

The President. Yes, that's good. I hope you read more than you watch TV, too. It's really important to be a good reader. But thanks for letting me come by.

We're here talking about how we can best conduct a war against evil. And you can play a part. You can be an integral part of that by establishing friendship. And I want to thank some of the adults who have helped set up programs that enable boys and girls all across America to reach out to boys and girls all across the world.

And one such person is Mary Eisenhower, who is the chief executive officer of a program called People to People. Thank you very much, Mary, for being here. She had a relative named Eisenhower, and he and I share something in common: We're both Presidents. And I appreciate you, Mary, for working here.

And I also want to thank Ed Gragert, as well, the executive director of iEARN. iEARN is the umbrella organization that's encouraging organizations to help fund and organize the effort for our schoolchildren to reach out to children, particularly in the Muslim world. Thank you for coming, as well, Ed.

And we've got Issa Al-Nashit from the country of Bahrain. Issa, thank you for coming so much. The reason he is here is that he represents a country to which you're sending letters. We were in the fourth grade class, and we had four letters read by fourth graders to fourth graders

in Bahrain. And it's part of our effort to outreach to boys and girls all across the world. So I want to thank you for coming, Issa.

I'm looking forward to meeting with the Crown Prince of Bahrain this afternoon. It is a perfect opportunity for me to remind him that, one, we appreciate the alliances we're forming around the world with Muslim nations and non-Muslim nations. And we also remind him that we've all got to work hard to make sure we establish trust at the most basic level, and that's people to people.

And so today I'm here to announce a new initiative called Friendship Through Education. And we're going to ask schools all across the country to join with schools in other countries to spread the message that we care for each other, that we want to understand each other better.

I think the best way to attack—to handle the attacks of September the 11th is to fight fear with friendship, is to fight fear with hope, is to remind people all around the world we have much more in common than people might think, that we share basic values—the importance of family and the importance of faith and the importance of friendship.

And do you know something? Boys and girls all across America can do that job pretty darn well. And so I'm asking schools all across the country to join up. And I want to thank you for actively recruiting schools. We've got St. Patrick Elementary School in Arlington, Virginia, is helping. Mott Hall School in New York City has joined up, as has, of course, Thurgood Marshall here in Washington, DC.

The students here and students all across our country witnessed a terrible tragedy. It is a terrible moment in our country, and it's got to have affected a lot of our students in a way where they ask the question, "Why would this have happened to America? Why would somebody do this to our country?" And I want to assure the boys and girls, these attacks didn't come from

a nation or a religion. These attacks are from some people who just are so evil it's hard for me to describe why. It's hard for us to comprehend why somebody would think the way they think and devalue life the way they devalue and to harm innocent people the way they harmed innocent people. It's just hard for all of us adults to explain.

But what we can do is, we can find common ground with others who wonder about America. We can prove them wrong by acting in a way that's good. We can show the world what a great, compassionate, and decent nation America is. I can do that through diplomacy. I can do that through our actions, through the alliances we form. But children all across America can do it, as well—can do it through letters and e-mails and pictures and drawings, and reaching out to boys and girls.

I thought it was really interesting, the letters that I heard today. Every letter said, "Would you write me back? Would you share with me your experiences so I can understand you better?" And that's exactly the spirit of the program and the initiative we're announcing, and it makes a lot of sense.

It is very important for us to combat evil with understanding. It's very important for us to reinforce our message in all ways possible to the people in the Islamic world that we don't hold you accountable for what took place. As a matter of fact, we want to be friends. The average citizen in America harbors no ill will toward you. As a matter of fact, the average citizen in America would like to do everything we can to explain what our country is about, to explain what our future is about. And this is a great way to do this, in my judgment.

And so we're going to work hard to encourage other schools, other principals to

sign up, other boys and girls to write letters. And one way that people who are interested in participating can do, they can call up on a web site to find out how to participate. And I'd like to give the address of the web site: It is www.friendshipthrougheducation.org; it is www.friendshipthrougheducation.org. And that's a way for other principals and parents and concerned citizens to participate in this outreach.

Rod Paige mentioned the fact that we've got a—we've asked boys and girls all across America to contribute a dollar to help feed and provide medicine for Afghan children who are suffering. The response has been great, and I can't thank the boys and girls of America enough. That's one initiative. The initiative we're announcing today is a second initiative, all to send a message about the goodness and decency of our great country.

I want the boys and girls to know that the action that we're taking in our Government is all aimed to make sure that you can grow up in a free country. The military action, the diplomatic action, the intelligence gathering, what you read and hear on the TV and newspapers has got one goal, and that's to make sure you can live in freedom in our great land.

And so thank you for giving me a chance to come by to thank you for your hard work. May God bless you all, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:12 a.m. in the school auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Eugene Pair and Eileen Wilson, principals, Thurgood Marshal Extended Elementary School; Paul L. Vance, superintendent, District of Columbia Public Schools; and Issa Al-Nashit, cultural attache, and Crown Prince Shaikh Salman bin Hamad Al-Khalifa of Bahrain.