

Remarks at a Veterans Day Prayer Breakfast in New York City
November 11, 2001

The President. Thank you very much. At ease.

Audience member. Let's roll!

The President. Let's roll.

Thank you so much, Commissioner. I'm so pleased to be back in New York City to pay honor to our veterans, those from the New York State and New York City area and those all around America. It's such an honor to say on behalf of the American people, thanks for your service.

It's such an honor to be in the presence of Cardinal Egan, a man who brings such comfort and solace to those who mourn and hope to those of us who live. So, Cardinal Egan, thank you so much for your leadership and your strength.

And also, I am so pleased and thrilled to be with my friend the Governor, who is doing a fabulous job for the people of New York.

And you know something, I'm going down to Crawford next Wednesday—that's Crawford, Texas, that is. There you go. [Laughter] And there's a new household name down there: Rudy. What a great job Rudy has done. He's done a fabulous job. And I agree with Rudy; he's being replaced by a really good man, Michael Bloomberg. Michael, good luck. Congratulations, and we appreciate you running.

Leo, thank you for being here. You represent the best of those who came from the private sector to serve our Government. I want to thank you for your leadership at the VA.

I also want to recognize a person who I became friends with in a very difficult moment, and that's Ms. Arlene Howard. Arlene, would you stand up for a second, please? [Applause] Good to see you, Arlene. Arlene is a veteran. She served in the United States Navy, as did her late husband, Robert. And she's a veteran of September the 11th in a sad way. Her son

George was at the World Trade Center. She gave me something that I showed the Nation a while ago, the badge of George. It's a reminder of the wrong done to our country, Arlene. Thank you for that reminder. It is also a reminder of the great purpose of our great land, and that is to rid this world of evil and terror.

The evil ones have roused a mighty nation, a mighty land. And for however long it takes, I am determined that we will prevail. And prevail we must, because we fight for one thing, and that is the freedom of our people and the freedom of people everywhere.

And I want to thank the commissioner, who is a veteran as well—a veteran in the military and a veteran of a new kind of war, one fought here on the homefront. He represents the fabulous men and women who wear the uniform of the police and fire and rescue units, the Port Authority here in New York City, people who serve with such distinction and such courage that whenever an American hears the word "police" or "fire," we think differently. We think differently about the job. We think differently about the character of those who serve on a daily basis. We think differently about those who go to work every single day to protect us and save us and comfort us. What a noble profession the commissioner represents, and what a great job he's done for New York City.

And in a time of war, we look a little differently at our veterans, too. We pay tributes on Veterans Day, today, and they're made with a little greater feeling, because Americans have seen the terrible harm that an enemy can inflict. And it has left us deeply grateful for the men and women who rise strongly in the defense of our Nation. We appreciate the sacrifices

that our military is making today. We appreciate the sacrifices that their families make with them.

When the call comes to defend our country, our military is ready and is making us proud. Al Qaida and the Taliban have made a serious mistake. And because our military is brave and prepared and courageous, they will pay a serious price.

America has always needed such bravery and such people, and we have always found them amongst us. Generations of our service men and women have not only fought for our country in the past; they have upheld our honorable traditions and represented our country with courage and honor. And wherever our military has gone, they have brought pride to our own people and hope to millions of others.

One veteran of World War II recalled the spirit of the American military and the relief it brought to suffering peoples. "America," he said, "has sent the best of her young men around the world, not to conquer but to liberate, not to terrorize but to help."

And this is true in Afghanistan today. And this has always been true of the men and women who have served our Nation. This Nation is freedom's home and freedom's defender. And we owe so much—so much—to the men and women, our veterans, who step forward to protect those freedoms.

Our veterans gave America some of the best years of their lives and stood ready to give life itself. For all that, America's 25 million veterans have the deep respect of their fellow citizens and the enduring gratitude of a nation they so nobly served.

May God bless our veterans, and may God continue to bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:50 a.m. at the Park Avenue Seventh Regiment Armory. In his remarks, he referred to Commissioner Bernard B. Kerik, New York Police Department; Edward Cardinal Egan, Archbishop of New York; Gov. George E. Pataki of New York; Mayor Rudolph W. Giuliani and Mayor-elect Michael Bloomberg of New York City; and Deputy Secretary of Veterans Affairs Leo S. Mackay, Jr.

Statement on the Ministerial Decision To Admit the People's Republic of China and Taiwan Into the World Trade Organization *November 11, 2001*

I welcome the unanimous decisions made this week by trade ministers meeting in Doha, Qatar, to admit the People's Republic of China and Taiwan into the World Trade Organization (WTO). I believe that the entry of China and Taiwan into the WTO will strengthen the global trading system and expand world economic growth.

China, with more than 1.2 billion people and a one trillion dollar annual gross domestic product, is one of the fastest growing economies in the world. Taiwan is the world's 16th largest economy. The decision in Doha—reached following many years of

negotiations—marks a formal agreement by the 142 members of the WTO on the steps that China and Taiwan must take to open their markets as WTO members. Taking these steps will introduce greater competition into both economies and mean that both follow the same trade rules as the United States and other trading partners. This, in turn, will generate greater trade and investment that will bring benefits to businesses, consumers, and workers in all of our economies.

I am confident that China's entry into the WTO will bring other benefits to China