

And so, therefore, I ask Americans to dig a little deeper in their pocket. In the aftermath of the tragedy that so deeply affected our Nation, I ask the American people to understand that in order to make America whole, that programs such as SOME make an enormous difference in people's lives; that we are a blessed nation, and as we go into Thanksgiving we ought to thank God for our blessings—for our families, for our fantastic country, for the greatest country on the face of the Earth—we ought to thank Him for the protection that we've received since the attack, thank Him for our blessings, but at the same time seek ways to help, seek ways to help

our fellow human, seek ways to save a heart, seek ways to save a soul.

I am so honored to be able to come to this program and highlight the great successes that can take place in neighborhoods when loving Americans come together with the singular purpose of helping a neighbor in need.

May God bless SOME. May God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:23 a.m. in the dining room at the 71 O St. NW location of So Others Might Eat (SOME). In his remarks, he referred to Father John Adams, executive director, SOME.

Remarks Following Discussions With President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines and an Exchange With Reporters *November 20, 2001*

President Bush. It's my honor to welcome the President of the Philippines here to the Oval Office. I had the honor of not only meeting the President but having a great discussion with her in Shanghai, China. She is a highly intelligent, dedicated public servant, to not only better the Philippines but to work with us to make the world more peaceful.

I could tell the first time I talked to her that we had a great ally and friend in our cause. And I look forward to having a good, long discussion today about how we can work together—how to work together more. We've been working together a lot. We've been sharing intelligence; we've been talking strategies.

The United States has got a very close relationship with the Philippines, and I intend to keep it that way. The Philippines have been great allies and friends for a long period of time, and it's in our national interests that we maintain a very close and strong relationship. And so I've really been looking forward to this visit.

I'm so honored for your strong support and for your able leadership. I want to welcome you to the Oval Office.

President Macapagal-Arroyo. Thank you. Thank you.

President Bush. You're welcome to say a few words, if you'd like.

President Macapagal-Arroyo. It's my honor to be here, and the occasion is the 50th anniversary of our mutual defense treaty between our two countries. And this treaty just demonstrates how we've been allies for so long: allies in the Second World War, allies in the cold war, allies in the Korean war, allies in the Vietnam war, and now allies in the war against terrorism.

We're allies, too, in the economic front. The U.S. is our number one trading partner; cumulatively, our number one source of investments. And the Filipinos who live in America are number one in income earning and also number one in education. They are 3 million, and 1.5 of them are

voters—1.5 million. So I know that they are very happy about this partnership.

President Bush. Thank you, Madam President.

I'll be glad to answer a couple of questions.

White House Tours

Q. Mr. President, why is it okay for the American public to return to normal and fly and travel in this country, but it is not okay for public tours to enter the White House?

President Bush. Well, Laura and I regret that the public tours aren't going on. It's—particularly during the Christmas holiday season, I know a lot of Americans look forward to touring the White House during this period of time. But we're in extraordinary times, and as I said yesterday, evil knows no holiday; evil knows no—it doesn't welcome a Thanksgiving or Christmas season. And in these extraordinary times, we're taking extraordinary measures.

It is a further reason why we must continue to wage a diligent and consistent fight against terror and to rid the world of terror, to make our country safe so that we can have tours at the White House.

Abu Sayyaf Terrorist Group

Q. Mr. President, we have advisers on the ground helping the Filipino Army in tracking down and getting rid of Abu Sayyaf. Are you prepared to go the next step, sir? Are you willing to put American combat troops on the ground there?

And President Arroyo, would your Constitution allow that?

President Bush. Well, first of all, I'm willing to listen to President Arroyo; I'm willing to work with her in any way that she wants to. We've had a discussion about Abu Sayyaf. She's got a clear vision about how to fight Abu Sayyaf, and I'll let her speak for herself. But the Philippines are a great ally. They're close friends, and we will cooperate in any way she suggests in getting rid of Abu Sayyaf.

Q. Including combat troops, sir?

President Bush. That's going to be up to the President. It's up to the President to make those decisions. I have asked her pointblank, what help does she need. She says she's got a great military, a competent military; she's confident that her military can deal with Abu Sayyaf. And for that I applaud her and will wish her all the best. And we want to help her military deal with them.

Q. My question was, would your Constitution allow U.S. ground troops to join in an active engagement against Abu Sayyaf?

President Macapagal-Arroyo. We would have to check that. But in any case, as President Bush said, we have a framework on how to fight the Abu Sayyaf, how to fight terrorism in the southwestern part of the Philippines. And the framework covers what we need in terms of diplomatic assistance, technical assistance, assistance in winning hearts and minds, and military assistance. We have advisers from the U.S.; we have equipment from the U.S. All of these are part of our mutual defense treaty.

It just so happens that now the mutual defense treaty facilities are being used in the fight against terrorism. But we've had this pattern for many years now, and I think the pattern is going very well as it is.

President Bush. Let me say something just in general. Your question points up what I have been saying, that the front against terror is not just in Afghanistan, that we're going to fight terror wherever it exists. And we will work with our allies and friends to use whatever resources we have to win the war against terror.

President Arroyo understands now is the time to make a stand against terrorist activity, whether it be in Afghanistan or in the Philippines or anywhere else Al Qaida exists. Because if we don't make a stand now, our children and grandchildren will not be able to grow up in a free world.

And so we are looking for opportunities to help friends and allies strike Al Qaida wherever they exist. There's a lot of focus, of course, on Afghanistan these days, and I can understand why. But I want people in America to understand that, first of all, the theater in Afghanistan is entering a difficult period of time. We could be there for quite a while, which is fine because we've got an objective in mind, and we'll stay there until we get our objective. But there's going to be other fronts in this theater; there will be other places where we need to work to rout out Al Qaida and other terrorist organizations. And the President and I are going to have a good discussion, a continued discussion, about how we can help the Philippines.

*Robert F. Kennedy Building Dedication/
Education Legislation*

Q. Sir, later today you're going to the Justice Department for a ceremony renaming it for Mr. Kennedy.

President Bush. Yes.

Q. Why now? And do you hope that you get some help with the education bill out of this? [*Laughter*]

President Bush. Well, I'm not quite that devious. I made the decision to name the Justice Department building after Robert Kennedy because he is deserving—his memory is—and his family are such a great part of American history. He was a wonderful Attorney General, and I think it's fitting to do such. I'll get an education bill based on its merits, not based upon renaming a building for a great American.

Today, interestingly enough, is Robert Kennedy's birthday. And you said, why today? I think it's fitting that we name the building for him on his birthday.

I look forward to the event. Mrs. Kennedy will be there, as are a lot of the Kennedy family. Senator Kennedy will be there; I presume that's who you were referring to about the education bill. I think Senator Kennedy wants to get a bill to my

desk, and I feel good that we'll get a bill to the desk here pretty soon.

One from the Philippine press. Excuse me.

Philippines-U.S. Relations

Q. Mrs. President, are you signing any agreement with President Bush regarding our security?

President Macapagal-Arroyo. No, no, we're not. What we're going to talk about is how we can make our partnership against terrorism—both terrorism in the world and terrorism in southern Philippines—more useful, more efficient.

Q. Could you, sir, give more—elaborate on the assistance that will be given to the Philippines?

President Bush. I think the Philippine Government will make that announcement when the President feels comfortable making the announcement. There's been a lot of discussions about military items, discussions about trade, discussions about enhanced commerce, and we look forward to listening to our close friend and ally in ways that we can help. We've got no better friend in that part of the world than the Philippines.

And as the President has said, there are a lot of proud Filipinos living in America. And one of the things that's going to happen after this meeting, she has graciously agreed to have her picture taken with Filipino Americans working here in the White House. And I've got a confession to make—they're looking forward to having—they're more looking forward to having their picture taken with her than with me. [*Laughter*]

Filipino Veterans Equity Legislation

Q. Did you ask the U.S. President to support the veterans equity bill?

President Bush. The what bill?

Q. The Filipino veterans equity bill.

President Bush. Oh, the veterans security. She did bring up the issue. And she

strongly brought it up, and she was an advocate for the Filipino veterans bill, which has been an issue around here for a long period of time.

Q. [Inaudible]

President Bush. Good question. I hope by December 1st.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:25 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the Abu Sayyaf terrorist group, Muslim separatists operating in the southern Philippines.

Joint Statement Between President George W. Bush and President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines on the 50th Anniversary of the U.S.-Philippine Alliance
November 20, 2001

The United States and the Republic of the Philippines today commemorated the 50th anniversary of the signing of the U.S.-Philippine Mutual Defense Treaty, during the visit of President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo to Washington, D.C.

On this historic occasion, the two Presidents reaffirmed that U.S.-Philippine relations are based on shared history, common values, a commitment to freedom and democracy, and vigorous economic ties. They observed that our alliance is an alliance between two peoples, with 120,000 Americans resident in the Philippines and over two million Americans of Filipino descent living in the United States. Presidents Bush and Macapagal-Arroyo asserted that the strong historical, cultural and personal links between the Philippine and American people will continue to keep our alliance strong and vital in a changing world.

In commemorating the anniversary, President Bush acknowledged the brave contribution that Filipino Veterans of World War II have made to freedom and democracy, and stated that he will carefully consider all legislative proposals to ensure the sacrifices of these veterans are recognized.

President Bush and President Macapagal-Arroyo agreed that the Mutual Defense Treaty has been vital in advancing peace and stability in the Asia Pacific for the past

half a century. They noted that the alliance remains a pillar of the U.S. security presence in Asia, which helps preserve a strategic balance that favors freedom and promotes prosperity throughout the region. The two leaders further agreed that the September 11 terrorist attacks on the United States, and the terrorist activities of the Abu Sayyaf Group or ASG (which now hold both Filipino and American hostages in the southern Philippines), underscore the urgency of ensuring that the two countries maintain a robust defense partnership into the 21st century.

To further this goal, the two leaders underscored their determination to strengthen their military alliance on a sustained basis, through increased training, exercises, and other joint activities. President Bush thanked President Macapagal-Arroyo for her uncompromising leadership in the global campaign against terror and expressed deep appreciation for the moral support and assistance her government has provided the United States in its time of need. The two Presidents declared that the American and Filipino people stand together in the global campaign against terrorism. Noting that the future peace and prosperity of the world are at stake in the current conflict, both leaders renewed their commitment to the U.S.-Philippine alliance and expressed confidence that the international coalition