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Remarks to First-Responders in Greenville March 27, 2002

Thank you very much. It is great to be back in South Carolina. I didn't realize I was going to be giving an address on my old jogging path. *[Laughter]*

Mr. Mayor, I have fond memories of your beautiful city. And thank you very much for your leadership and your hospitality, and thank you all for coming.

One of the things that I'm not surprised about was how the good folks of South Carolina responded on September the 11th, in the aftermath. The good people here hurt for the people of New York, because they realized an attack on one part of America was an attack on all of America. And I want to thank you all for donating a brand new firetruck to New York City. I want to thank you for sending men and women to New York City in response to the emergency. I know that firefighters and casualty experts, emergency management director headed up north to provide help, and I'm here to thank you for that. And I'm here also to thank you for what you do every single day.

You know, the evil ones hit us, but out of that evil has come some good. I'm going to talk to you about some of that good. And one of the good things that's come is a sincere appreciation and respect for the men and women who wear the uniform, the police and the fire and the emergency medical units all across the country. And I'm here to thank you as well for your dedication and your service to the people of your communities here in South Carolina.

I appreciate so very much Tom Ridge's service. You know, he was a Governor there in Pennsylvania, just kind of cruising along.

Life was pretty good. And then the President called him and said, "I've got an assignment for you, to come and set a national strategy for our homeland security. The enemy's hit us, and we'd better be ready in case the enemy hits us again. And we need a strategy." And I'm telling you, he's come to Washington, DC, with a vision and a capacity. And we're developing and have got a strategy, some of which I will share with you today. And Tom, I want to thank you for your service.

And I want to thank the other fellow on the stage here, Jim DeMint. He is a strong Congressman. He cares deeply about the people of this State. He is—he is an ally of mine in the House, because he is a man of integrity. He cares deeply about national issues and issues that affect the people here in his district. He understands the need for us to be tough and diligent and forceful when it comes to fighting terrorists. He understands the need for us to be strong at home as well. And that's why he has led a discussion on a strategy to make sure that the textile industry here in South Carolina gets not only the attention of the administration but a strategy to help people who work in the textile industry. This man is a leader, and he needs to go back to Washington, DC.

And we've got some other people from the fine South Carolina delegation. Lindsey Graham is here, and a little later on, I'm going to try to give Lindsey a little boost. And I appreciate Hank Brown for being here as well. Thank you for coming.

And I want to thank members of the statehouse who have come. You've got a

fine Lieutenant Governor and attorney general. Thank you both for coming and, of course, your speaker, homegrown boy, David Wilkins. I'm honored that you all have been here today.

I drove in and went by the BMW plant for about the hundredth time, and it was good that I was traveling by it with Carroll Campbell, who made sure that the BMW plant came here the first time around. Governor, it's good to see you. Thank you for coming.

I want to thank the high sheriff of Greenville County, Sam Simmons—I don't know if you call him the high sheriff around here or not, but play like you do, if you don't. [Laughter] But I want to thank the sheriff. I want to thank Willie Johnson, the chief. I want to thank Tom McDowell, chief of the fire department; John Zaragoza as well. And again, I want to thank you all for coming.

The interesting thing about September the 11th is that even though the attacks were on two major cities, it reminded us—and in the aftermath reminded us that we're all vulnerable as well. I mean, after all, you might remember that some of the initial discussions after September the 11th, about potential threat, was about crop dusters. Now, they don't have a lot of crop dusters, you know, in Manhattan. They've got a lot of crop dusters in South Carolina or Texas. In other words, some of the intelligence we were getting was that not only were the enemy willing to use airplanes, obviously, as weapons, but what we were concerned about was that they would use other methods, like using a crop duster to spray a weapon of mass destruction, if possible. It's an indication that we had to be on alert to defend all sites and all locations in our country.

We knew they were evil, and we're beginning to learn how really evil their intentions were, after September the 11th. And that's why Tom and I and many of you all and others around the country have got plans in place to defend power-generating

plants, dams and reservoirs, livestock and crops, all kinds of areas. I mean, the truth of the matter is, homeland security in the heartland is just as important as homeland security in the big cities.

And that's what we're here to talk about today, to make sure that America is safe. See, that's my most important job. My most important job is to work with Federal, State, and local officials to prevent the enemy from hitting us again and taking innocent life. I think about it every day. And even though they're still under threat—and we are under threat—we're getting better prepared every day.

I sent a budget up to Congress that reflects my priority. The first-responders of America, all across America, must have the resources necessary to respond to emergencies and save lives. In the budget we sent up, there is a 1,000 percent increase for first-responders—requests \$3.5 billion to make your jobs easier. I've requested \$327 million right away, right off the bat, to provide critical training and equipment to first-responders; 327 will come this year, hopefully; 3.5 is for next budget cycle.

In places like Pickens, South Carolina, and Union and Greer—and by the way, I've been to all three and enjoyed every minute of it. One of the bedrock principles of smalltown life is, you help a neighbor in need. A volunteer firefighter in Fort Mills, South Carolina, put it this way: "We may not be a big department like New York City, but we have the same goal, to help our neighbors in time of trouble." That's how you all feel too. That's how the Crawford, Texas, volunteer fire department feels as well. I'm a proud booster.

And one of the things we've got to do is to understand that we've got to strengthen security in smalltown America as well by helping smaller communities and smaller counties develop what we call mutual aid agreements. And in the budget that I've submitted to Congress, there's \$140 million to do just that. If one town has got them a good hospital facility, another may be

able to lend fire trucks; a third may be a home to hazardous material experts. But we've got to develop these mutual pacts so that we can coordinate efforts, pool resources—all aimed at helping a neighbor in need, if we need to.

So one of the things we're doing is focusing on the big cities, medium-sized cities like Greenville. But we understand we've got to have a strategy for rural South Carolina and rural America as well. And I'm here to assure the good folks of South Carolina that the strategies that we're putting out, the strategies that we're going to outline and work with the States and local authorities on, will also include rural South Carolina, to make sure that assets are pooled, personnel is coordinated—all aimed at buttoning up the homeland of the United States and preparing our country.

But I want you to know that the best homeland security, the best way to secure the homeland and protect innocent life, is to find the enemy wherever they hide and bring them to justice. And that's exactly what we're going to do. We will hunt them down one by one.

And after September the 11th, we started. And I said as plainly as I could speak, mustering up as much Midland, Texas, as I could find—I said, "Either you are with us, or you're against us." And I made it clear that if anybody harbored a terrorist or they fed a terrorist or they hid a terrorist, they're just as guilty as the murderers who took innocent life on September the 11th. And thanks to a mighty United States military, the Taliban found out exactly what I meant.

I'm proud of our military. And for those of you who have got a relative in the military, I want you to thank them on behalf of a grateful nation. But we've got to do more than thank them. We've got to make sure that they've got the best training, the best equipment, the best pay possible. And that's why the budget I submitted to the United States Congress not only includes a significant increase for first-responders

and homeland security issues, but it is the largest increase in military spending in two decades. Because I understand that the price of freedom is high, but as far as I'm concerned, it is never too high when it comes to the defense of freedom.

And that's what we're defending. We don't seek revenge; we seek justice. But it's more than just justice. This Nation will defend freedom. We defend the freedom to worship; we defend the freedom to speak; we defend the freedom for all Americans, regardless of their background, to enjoy a country that says, if you work hard, you can realize your dreams. That's what we defend.

And this enemy of ours hates what we stand for. They can't stand us. They're ruthless murderers. And they must not have understood America when they attacked us. They thought we were weak. They thought we were so self-absorbed in our materialism that all we would probably do is just sue them. [*Laughter*] Man, were they wrong.

We've thrown the Taliban out. And this past weekend, for the first time, many young women went to school. We went into Afghanistan not as conquerors but as liberators, as people who are willing to sacrifice to defend our freedoms.

The first phase of the war is over—holding people accountable for harboring a terrorist—that message is now loud and clear. I think other governments have heard that message. And the next message is this: We're going to keep you on the run. If you're a killer, we're going to treat you for what you are, an international criminal with no place to hide, no place to sleep.

Oh, I know some of them think there's a cave deep enough. We're patient; we're determined; we're united. As proud and patriotic Americans, I can assure you that distance between September the 11th is not going to cause me to weaken in my determination to defend our country and to fight for freedom.

I also want to explain right quickly what I meant when I was talking about the axis

of evil. Let me put it to you this way: We cannot allow nations that have got a history of totalitarianism and dictatorship—a nation, for example, like Iraq, that poisoned her own people—to develop a weapon of mass destruction and mate up with terrorist organizations who hate freedom-loving countries. We can't afford to do that, for the sake of our children and our children's children. History has called this Nation into action, and we're not going to let the world's worst leaders develop and maintain and deploy and aim, at us or our friends, the world's worst weapons.

My fellow Americans, we've got a lot at stake. We've got a lot at stake at home and a lot at stake around the world. We've been called, and I'm here to assure you this great country is prepared and willing and will answer the call to freedom.

And I believe there's another calling at home as well. I believe that we have an opportunity to fight evil at home in a different kind of way than people would have imagined. I'm asked all the time by people, "What can I do in a war against terror?" You all are answering that call. But there's something else I'd like for you and others in South Carolina and around America to do. You see, in order to fight evil, we can stand strongly in the face of evil with acts of kindness and compassion. We can better love our neighbor like we'd like to be loved ourself.

You see, the great strength of America is not necessarily our military might, and it's certainly not our Government, even though the system is great and the military is strong. The great strength of America are the hearts and soul—the great strength is the heart and soul of our country; that's the strength. The strength of the country comes when somebody walks across the street to a neighbor in need and says, "What can I do to help you"; when somebody walks in to a shut-in and says, "I care about you"; or somebody mentors a child, teaching that child how to read; or

a church or a synagogue or a mosque comes up with a program based upon faith of the Almighty to help a person whip alcohol or drugs. That's the great strength of America.

And I believe out of this evil will come incredible goodness. I know this country can stand squarely in the face of evil by loving a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. And today we've got a high school student, Gus Samuel. Please stand up, Gus. Gus is here because he is a living example of what I'm talking about. This guy goes to high school, and yet he is active in the Salvation Army, and he finds time to work with youngsters in the Girls and Boys Club.

Our society can be changed one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time. And it's the gathering momentum of millions of acts of kindness, because of guys like Gus, that we will show the world the true heart of America, and we will stand squarely in the face of the evil ones who did not understand who they were attacking.

Out of the evil will come a more lasting peace, if we're tough and firm. And out of the evil will come a new renewal of heart in the greatest land on the face of the Earth.

May God bless you all, and may God bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the Wyche Pavilion at the Peace Center for the Performing Arts. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Knox H. White, Police Department Chief Willie L. Johnson, and Emergency Medical Services Director John Zaragoza of Greenville; Lt. Gov. Bob Peeler, Attorney General Charlie Condon, and former Gov. Carroll A. Campbell, Jr., of South Carolina; and David H. Wilkins, speaker, South Carolina House of Representatives.

Remarks at a Fundraiser for Senatorial Candidate Lindsey Graham in Greenville

March 27, 2002

Thank you all very much. Thank you all. It is nice to be back in South Carolina. Please be seated. Thank you.

My only regret is I didn't bring Laura with me. I can't tell you how proud I am of her. She is—she is a fabulous wife and a great lady. She's flying Barney and Spot and the cat down to Crawford, Texas, as I speak. America is getting to see why I married her. A lot of people are wondering why she said yes. [Laughter] But Lindsey, thanks for mentioning Laura. She is—I love her dearly, and she's a great First Lady for the country.

And you're going to be a great Senator for South Carolina. I'm here with one message: I want Lindsey Graham elected to the United States Senate. It is in South Carolina's interest that he get elected to the United States Senate, and it's in our Nation's interest that he get elected to the United States Senate. And frankly, it's in my interest that he get elected to the United States Senate, because I've got a lot I want to do. And I look forward to working with him to get it done. So I'm proud to be here on Lindsey's behalf, and I want to thank you all—the organizers of the event and you all for coming to support this good man for this important cause.

I also want to thank Jim DeMint. It's important that he win as well. Jim is the kind of fellow that I like to work with in Washington. First of all, he understands his district well. And he loves the people of his district. We've got the kind of relationship where I welcome him into the Oval Office to sit down and discuss important issues. And we can have frank discussions and come to agreement.

Now, I know there are some of them here picking on him because of textiles. Because of Jim DeMint's leadership, my administration has got a plan to strengthen

the textile industry. And I want to thank him for his leadership on this issue, and so should the people of this district.

And I want to thank Congressman Henry Brown for coming all the way up from the coast. It's nice of you all to let him in. [Laughter] And he's doing a fine job as well.

As you know, I'm fortunate enough to make a lot of friends in your great State, and I want to thank you all for giving me a chance to be your President. But I also want to thank some of those that I spent a lot of time with in South Carolina for coming over today: Carroll Campbell and Iris, thank you all for being here. They tell me Beasley is around here somewhere. Beasley, how are you? Good to see you. I appreciate your coming. And the speaker—I've got no better friend than the speaker. Election day, he took me to the Ham House. [Laughter] I'm still running off the pancakes. [Laughter] And Lieutenant Governor Peeler and Attorney General Condon, two fine friends of mine, and I was proud to call them friends back in 2000, and I'm still proud to call them friends. And it's great to see you guys, and thank you all for being here as well. And I want to thank my friend Barry Wynn as well. Barry and I have been friends for awhile, and he helped me get to where I am, and so did many of you all.

I've got a lot to do in Washington. And we need somebody who can help get that done in the United States Senate from South Carolina. Listen, you've had a fine, fine man in Strom Thurmond representing you all, and what you need is a young visionary leader to take his place. He understands how Washington works. I want the voters of South Carolina to remember, he was for a strong military prior to September the 11th. He understood we need a strong