

June 11 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2002

This great country will show the world that we fight for what we believe, as we seek justice. And this great country will show the world the true compassion and decency of a great nation.

Thanks for coming. May God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:50 p.m. in the school's gymnasium. In his remarks, he referred to John Krueger, principal, Oak Park High School.

Statement on Senate Action on Legislation To Increase the Public Debt Limit

June 11, 2002

I commend the Senate for passing an extension of the debt limit. We must ensure that we have the resources to wage the war against terror, to protect retirees,

and to meet our Government's other obligations. Today's strong bipartisan vote is important progress toward achieving this goal.

Remarks at a Dinner for Senatorial Candidate James M. Talent in Kansas City

June 11, 2002

Thank you all. Thank you very much. Well, thanks for that most generous welcome. It's an honor to be here, back to the great State of Missouri. I'm here tonight for one reason: I urge the good folks of Missouri to send this good man to the United States Senate.

I want to thank all of you all for making this evening, I'm told, an historic evening. It's incredibly successful. I want to thank the good folks at the head table, who worked hard to send a clear message to others in the State of Missouri that Jim Talent's got great support all across the State. I particularly want to thank those who man the phones and stuff the envelopes, the grassroots workers that make an incredible difference on every election day.

I understand this is the height of barbecue season. *[Laughter]* I know a little something about barbecue. *[Laughter]* We kind of think Texas barbecue is pretty good. *[Laughter]* But we had a barbecue recently

on the lawn there at the White House. It was a magnificent event. We were able to invite Republicans and Democrats from the United States Congress, but one person was missing. So the next time I give a barbecue, we might just decide to have barbecue from this part of the world, as we eat barbecue with the next United States Senator, Jim Talent.

I want to thank Brenda Talent for joining her husband in this great journey to serve the people of Missouri. I know what it's like to marry somebody above myself. *[Laughter]* I regret that Laura is not here today. She is out in the western part of our country. She was in Idaho and then Utah, going to go out to California later on today. And then she and I are going to team up or meet back up in Crawford, Texas, for the weekend. I've got to get some culture here one of these days, so I'm going back to Crawford. *[Laughter]*

But you know, when I asked Laura to marry me, she was a public school librarian, and the truth of the matter is, she didn't particularly care for politics or politicians. [Laughter] But the people of this country are beginning to understand why I asked her to marry me. She's a class act. A lot of people are still scratching their heads wondering why she said yes. [Laughter] But we're doing great. A lot of you out there have prayed for my family. I want to thank you for the precious gift of the prayers of the people, and we feel strong and confident.

I traveled here today with some fine folks in my administration: Governor Tom Ridge, who is Director of the Homeland Security; former Governor of the State of New Jersey, who's now the Administrator of the EPA, Christie Todd Whitman, is with us.

Christie made a really good suggestion for our family right before the end of the campaign in 2000. She suggested that I buy Laura a birthday present. It's a pretty good suggestion, actually. [Laughter] I had forgotten. [Laughter] And it turned out that the gift was Barney, the Scottish terrier. Little Barney is a fabulous little guy. He's the son I never had. [Laughter] In that he's only 1½, he really doesn't spend much time in the Oval Office. After all, we've got a new rug in there. [Laughter] But it's the chance for me publicly to thank Governor Whitman for her fine suggestion and a great addition to our family.

Our family is also complete when we talk about Spot the dog. Spot was born at the White House when Mother and Dad were there, and Spot gets to come in the Oval Office on a regular basis.

It is such an honor to walk into the Oval Office, dog or no dog. [Laughter] And I want to thank you all for giving me the chance to serve this great country.

I particularly want to thank Ann Wagner for her good work for the Republican Party in Missouri as well as the national committee.

I want to thank you all for raising a man who is doing a fantastic job for the country, and that is the Attorney General of the United States, John Ashcroft. I appreciate so very much your senior Senator, Kit Bond, who is traveling with me today. I want to thank you, Senator, for your leadership. Sam Graves, and Kenny Hulshof of the State of Missouri is with us as well, and I thank you all for being here. If you see them leaving after my speech, it's because they want a free ride. [Laughter] It's not a bad way to travel, I might add. [Laughter]

We've also got a Congressman from the great State of California with us. He's the chairman of the Rules Committee, a close friend. He's doing a fine job for America, David Dreier. Thank you for coming, David.

And then, of course, there's the Governor of Kansas. I'm surprised you all let him across the State line. [Laughter] But he's a good friend. He's done a fabulous job. He's brought a lot of dignity to the Governor's office in the State of Kansas. And that's Bill Graves.

And finally, I'm proud of your secretary of state of Missouri, Matt Blunt. Matt was a Naval Reserve officer who just returned from Operation Enduring Freedom. And I want to thank you for your service, Matt.

Jim Talent's an easy man to support. I like his values. I like the fact that he makes his family a priority. I like the fact that he loves his country more than himself. I like the fact that he's an experienced man. He served in the United States Congress, and when he served in the Congress, he served with distinction. You all may remember he was on the House Armed Services Committee. He believed we needed a strong military prior to September the 11th.

I also appreciate the fact that he understands the significant role small business plays in our society. It's really important that our small-business sector be vibrant and strong, that there be less regulations

on the small-business person, there be less taxation on the small business-person, and that we think aggressively about how to make sure small businesses can take care of their own, can help their employees. That's why his support of the association health plans makes so much sense. It's so logical. We need a logical mind, a can-do fellow in the United States Senate representing that junior seat.

I want to thank Jim as well for understanding the role of Government is not to create wealth. The role of Government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneur and small-business owner can flourish. And that is why it was vitally important that we cut the taxes on the working people in America.

Occasionally you hear the voices up there in Washington saying, "Oh, the tax cut didn't mean anything." The tax cut meant a lot. When you let people keep more of their own money, it increases demand. And when you increase demand for goods and services, somebody is going to provide the goods and services. And when somebody provides the goods and services, it means somebody can find work. This tax cut came at the right time for America, and we need to make it permanent. And Jim Talent will be a vote I can count on when it comes to cutting the taxes on the American people.

He understands that if you're good at something, you ought to promote it. We're good at agriculture in America. We're good at high tech in America. And we ought to be selling our products not only at home but overseas. I need trade promotion authority, and I need a vote in the United States Congress that will give me trade promotion authority, for the good of American workers.

One of the debates we're going to have in Washington right now, and it may spill over when he's the Senator, is welfare reform. The 1996 law that Jim was integrally a part of has made a significant difference in the lives of millions of Americans. It

has freed people from dependency upon Government. It has encouraged people to find dignity in their lives through work. And whatever we do, for the good of the American people, we must not—we must not—water down any welfare reform reauthorization. We must insist upon work and family, for the good of the American people.

The next logical step for welfare reform is to unleash the great compassion of America, is to encourage faith-based and community programs to be an integral part of helping people help themselves. Jim Talent understands that Government should not discriminate against programs based in religious institutions. We ought to welcome those programs, for the good of people whose lives we're trying to save and whose lives need additional hope.

So I look forward to having him in the United States Congress, and I look forward to working with him to help us do our most important job, which is to secure our homeland, which is to do everything we can to protect the American people.

I was telling you, I took Spot there in the Oval Office. I sit at the desk, by the way, where the Roosevelts sat. Since I'm a President, I can—Ted and Franklin—*[laughter]*—Kennedy sat, Reagan sat. I go in this magnificent office, which is really a shrine to the great democratic traditions of our country, and I read an assessment from our intelligence services about the plans of the enemy. And it reminds me every day of two things: One, that we face nothing but a bunch of coldblooded killers, is the best way I can describe them; and that all of us must work together to protect the innocent people of America.

And that's why last week I proposed a reorganization of agencies all throughout our Government into one Cabinet, called the Department of Homeland Security. My intention, of course, is not to create more Government. As a matter of fact, I ran—I said, "Give me a chance. I won't create

more Government.” My intention is to make Government work.

There are over 100 different agencies involved with protecting our homeland, agencies scattered throughout the Federal bureaucracy, which means it’s kind of hard to determine who’s responsible, who is accountable for the protection of the American people. And so, for the good of our country, I’ve called upon Congress to reorganize Government in a way that allows us all to more effectively deal with the true threats that face America.

This agency will be charged with enforcing our border. Listen, we need to know who’s coming into the country. We need to know how long they intend to stay. We need to know whether or not they’ve left like they said they were going to do.

We need to make sure that we can respond to any bioterrorist attack. We need to be wise about what can happen and, if it does happen, what to do about it. We need to reorganize so that we’ve got the capacity to deal effectively with local governments, particularly our first-responders, the brave police and fire and EMS crews that serve the public with such distinction.

And we need to make sure that any intelligence gathered is analyzed properly so that we can anticipate threats, so we get a better feel for what may be happening in America and then devise a plan to deal with it.

People say, “Well, gosh, that sounds pretty simple to get done.” The problem is, we’re dealing with some in Congress who guard what they call “turf.” They don’t like the thought of losing jurisdiction over one of the 100 groups. They don’t like the idea of perhaps the appropriations process being taken away from them. But for the good of the country, the United States Congress needs to put political partisanship aside. They need to put turf battles aside and do what’s right to secure the homeland.

Let me share a couple of examples about what I’m talking about. The Coast Guard

is an incredibly important part of our—of securing our border. The Coast Guard is—and they do a great job, by the way, and they’ve got a lot of tasks. But there’s nothing more important than border security. And yet the Coast Guard reports to the Transportation Department. The Transportation Department’s primary function is railroads and airplanes and highways, not the security of the United States. The Customs Department needs to be an integral part of enforcing our border, and yet the Customs Department reports to the Secretary of Treasury. His job isn’t homeland security; his job is fiscal policy in the United States.

For the good of the American people, we need to align the responsibilities, align authority and responsibility so that I can hold somebody to account, because I can assure you, the American people are going to hold me to account.

I know you hear about all these threats, but you need to know we’re doing everything we can possibly do to prevent the enemy from hitting us. Prior to September the 11th, the FBI, for example, was focused on law enforcement, and that’s good. We want them to be focused on law enforcement. But the culture is changed. We’ve made—a lady came before it the other day and brought some pretty good evidence, evidence that we needed to look at to make sure that if there’s any gaps, we deal with them.

And now Director Mueller, who was on the job one week prior to September the 11th, by the way, comes to my office every morning, reporting in to me about what the FBI is doing to prevent attack. The culture is shifting in Washington, DC, and that’s incredibly positive for the American people. We’ve got a lot of work to do—we’ve got a lot of work to do, but we’re making good progress.

But you need to know how I think. The best way to secure the homeland of our country is to hunt the killers down one by one and bring them to justice. And

that's precisely what the United States is going to do.

I submitted a budget that prioritizes our national defense. It's the largest increase in defense spending since Ronald Reagan was the President of the United States. I did so for two reasons: One, anytime we put our young into harm's way, they deserve the best training, the best equipment, the best pay possible; and two, it's a signal to the American people, our allies, and as importantly, to the enemy, that the United States of America is in this war for the long pull. There is not a calendar on my desk that says, by such-and-such a moment, you're going to quit. That's not what somebody does when it comes to defending that which we hold dear, and this country loves freedom.

I can't imagine what was going through the minds of the enemy when they attacked us. They must have said, "Well, you know, these people in America are soft; they're so materialistic and so self-absorbed and so basically weak that all the great country might do is file a couple of lawsuits." [Laughter] They were wrong. If anybody attacks our freedom, if anybody thinks the United States of America will blink in the face of terrorist activity, they have significantly, significantly underestimated the will of the American people.

This is a war unlike any we've ever had. There's not great columns of equipment moving across a country. There's not vast industrial complexes manufacturing weapons to be used in these armies. We fight a shadowy group of killers who like to hide in caves and send youngsters to their suicide. They think they can hide from our country and our coalition, but because we're patient and steadfast and brave and determined, there is no cave deep enough for people who want to harm America and take away our freedoms.

The enemy has suffered a significant defeat in the first battle in the first war of the 21st century, and that was in Afghanistan. It is important for you all to tell the

young ones in America, when you have a chance, that this great country of ours does not seek revenge. America seeks justice. And I ask you to point out to the young ones that when we went into Afghanistan, we arrived not as conquerors but as liberators. As a result of the United States and our friends and allies, young girls go to school for the first time in Afghanistan. By freeing the Afghan people from the clutches of the most barbaric regime in modern history, we have liberated people, for the good of the people of Afghanistan.

Sometimes the American people will see progress on their TV screens, and sometimes you won't. In my speech the other night, I informed the American people that we've—we and our friends have arrested and detained over 2,400 terrorists. As you read in the newspaper, we now need to make that 2,401.

We're upholding the doctrine that says, "Either you are with us, or you are with the terrorists. Either you love freedom, or you stand against the United States of America." No matter where these killers light, the United States and our friends and allies will bring them to justice, no matter how long it takes, because history has called us into action. History has given us the opportunity to defend freedom, and that's precisely what we're going to do.

And freedom is not only at risk as a result of one terrorist network; freedom's at risk because of terrorist networks around the world. And freedom is at risk with the thought that Al Qaida or an Al-Qaida-type organization could mate up or team up with one of these nations which develops weapons of mass destruction.

That's a nightmare scenario to think about. Think about the fact that people hate our freedoms, hate the fact that we are tolerant of religion, hate the fact that we speak our minds freely, and they develop the capacity to deliver a horrible weapon via ballistic missiles that could change the dynamic of the ability for us to keep peace. It could cause people to

blanch, to blink in the face of such a threat. I'm a patient man. I'll use all the tools at our disposal. But we will not let the world's worst leaders hold America and our friends and allies hostage with the world's worst weapons.

Ann mentioned I'm an optimistic fellow, and I am. I believe that out of the evil done to America will come some incredible good. You also need to tell people that we fight for peace. That's what we fight for. I long for a peaceful world. And I believe that if America continues to lead with steadfast purpose and strong resolve, that we not only can achieve peace for the American people, but we can achieve peace in places around the world that have seemingly no hope for peace. It's important for us to keep peace in mind.

And at home, I believe that we're a better country as a result of the evil done to us, because I believe Americans have heard the call that if you want to join the fight against evil, do some good; love your neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. I'm asked all the time, "What can I do to help?" My answer is, mentor a child. If you want to fight evil, tell somebody you love them. Show somebody your compassion. Join your church or synagogue and mosque's programs to feed the hungry.

It is important in this Nation for us to recognize there are pockets of despair and hopelessness. And I believe that through compassion and love, we can save those people and show them America is meant for them. I recognize one person can't do everything, but I want you to know, one person can do something. One person can be a part of saving America, one soul, one conscience, one heart at a time. The American people are responding, because our people are deeply kind and compassionate people. People all across the country are taking responsibility for their lives.

I believe out of the evil done to America, there's a good chance we'll change our culture from one which has said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," and "If

you've got a problem, blame somebody else," to a new culture which says, "Each of us are responsible for the decisions we make in life." If you're a mom and a dad, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and with all your soul. If you're a responsible citizen of Kansas City, you have the responsibility to help somebody in need. If you run a company in corporate America, you have a responsibility to disclose all your assets and all your liabilities. You have a responsibility to your employees, and you have a responsibility to your shareholders.

And the reason I believe this is happening, because I believe Americans realize serving something greater than yourself in life helps complete life. Serving something greater than your own self-interests is part of what a full life is all about. And it's happening across America; it is.

I think perhaps the most significant moment after 9/11, or during 9/11, was Flight 93. We had people on an airplane, flying across our country. They thought they were on a business trip, or traveling—thought it was a normal day. They were told on their cell phones that the enemy was using airplanes as a weapon. They realized that the hijacked plane they were on was going to be used to kill, and they decided to serve something greater than themselves. In this case, they served their country. They said a prayer, they told their loved ones they loved them, and they drove a plane into the ground. It is a sign to me that the great courage and heart of America is alive and strong.

And all of us must use that example of serving something greater than themselves as we join this war against evil. And by so doing, out of the evil will come incredible good for America. People will realize the greatness of our country. People will realize there's hope where there is no hope, light where there seems to be darkness. And it's going to happen in this country, no doubt in my mind, because this is the greatest nation on the face of the Earth.

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And it is a huge honor to be the President of the greatest nation on the face of the Earth.

Thank you for coming. May God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:30 p.m. in the Imperial Ballroom at the Marriott Kansas City Downtown. In his remarks, he referred to Ann Wagner, chairman, Missouri Republican Party, and cochairman, Republican National Committee; and Gov. Bill Graves of Kansas.

Remarks on Signing the Public Health Security and Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Act of 2002

June 12, 2002

The President. Good afternoon, and thank you all for coming.

On September the 11th, the world learned how evil men can use airplanes as weapons of terror. Shortly thereafter, we learned how evil people can use microscopic spores as weapons of terror. Bioterrorism is a real threat to our country. It's a threat to every nation that loves freedom. Terrorist groups seek biological weapons. We know some rogue states already have them.

It's important that we confront these real threats to our country and prepare for future emergencies. Protecting our citizens against bioterrorism is an urgent duty of American—American governments. We must develop the learning, the technology, and the health care delivery systems that will allow us to respond to attacks with state-of-the-art medical care throughout our entire country.

I want to thank the Members of the United States Congress who are here today, members of both parties who have worked together on this bill. I appreciate Governor Tom Ridge's hard work, Tommy Thompson and your staff's hard work on this bill. I want to thank Tony Principi and Christie Todd Whitman from the Veterans Department as well as the EPA for being here and working on this bill.

I appreciate very much Senator Ted Kennedy, the Chairman of the Senate

Health and Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, for working with Bill Frist. I want to thank the other cosponsors from the committee who are here. I appreciate Members of the House Billy Tauzin and John Dingell for combining their talents and experience and energy to get the bill done. I want to thank Mike Bilirakis, Judd Gregg, who isn't here, and all the other Members of the Congress, to show the American people that when people of both parties work together they can do good work on behalf of our country.

I want to thank Elias Zerhouni, who is the Director of the National Institution of Health, who is here with us today—I appreciate you being here, Elias; Dr. Les Crawford, who is the Acting Commissioner of the Food and Drug Administration; as well as Dr. David Fleming, who is the Acting Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. I want to thank you all for being here as well.

Biological weapons are potentially the most dangerous weapons in the world. Last fall's anthrax attacks were an incredible tragedy to a lot of people in America, and it sent a warning that we needed and have heeded. We must be better prepared to prevent, identify, and respond. And this bill I'm signing today will help a lot in this essential effort.

First, the bill will enhance our ability to prevent and detect bioterrorist attacks.