

And it's clear he's not disarming. I'm convinced that this still can be done peacefully. I certainly hope so. The idea of committing troops is my last option, not my first. I understand the terrible price of war. I understand what it means to put somebody into combat. I know what it means to hug mothers and wives. But I've got to tell you something. I've thought long and hard about this. The risks of doing nothing, the risk of assuming the best from Saddam Hussein, it's just not a risk worth taking.

So I call upon the world to come together and insist that this dangerous man disarm. But should they choose not to continue to pressure Saddam and should he continue to defy the world, for the sake of our peace, for the sake of the security, this country will lead a coalition of other willing nations, and we will disarm Saddam Hussein. If need be, if war is brought upon us like I said last night, I want to assure you, particularly those who wear the uniform and those who have a loved one in the military, we will commit the full force and might of the United States military, and for the name of peace, we will prevail.

And when we do, we will free people. This great, powerful Nation is motivated not by power for power's sake but because of our values. If everybody matters, if every life counts, then we should hope everybody has the great God's gift of freedom. We go into Iraq to disarm the country. We

will also go in to make sure that those who are hungry are fed, those who need health care will have health care, those youngsters who need education will get education. But most of all, we will uphold our values. And the biggest value we hold dear is the value of freedom. As I said last night, freedom and liberty, they are not America's gifts to the world. They are God's gift to humanity. We hold that thought dear to our hearts.

This is a great nation. America is a strong nation. America is a nation full of people who are compassionate. America is a nation that is willing to serve causes greater than ourselves. There's no question we face challenges ahead of us, challenges at home, challenges abroad. But as I said last night, history has called the right nation into action. History has called the United States into action, and we will not let history down.

Thank you all for coming. May God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:40 p.m. at the DeVos Performance Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jennifer M. Granholm, State Attorney General Mike Cox, and Secretary of State Terri Lynn Land of Michigan; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Statement on the Reelection of Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel *January 29, 2003*

I congratulate Prime Minister Ariel Sharon on his victory in Israel's elections yesterday. The friendship between the United States and Israel, and our commitment to Israel's security, remain firm. I

look forward to continuing to work with Prime Minister Sharon and his new government in the search for peace and security for all Israelis and all Palestinians.