

I'll keep us that way. But our wealth isn't really found in our military or our pocket-books. The true strength of America is found in the character of the American people, in the courage of the people, the creativity of our people, and in the compassion of our people.

As Governor, and now as President, I've seen the character of America and the character of millions of Hispanic Americans who make our Nation a better place. The warmth and the vitality of the Hispanic culture, the energy and faith of Hispanic men and women are great gifts to America.

I want to thank you all for coming to celebrate those gifts. *Que Dios los bendiga a todos, y que Dios bendiga a los Estados Unidos.* Thank you for coming.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:35 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary Murilo Gabrielli, head of the Cultural and Public Affairs section, Brazilian Embassy in Washington, DC; Lisa Guerrero, FOX Sports broadcast journalist; Carlos Ponce, actor and television personality; Father Alberto Cutie, Telemundo network talk show host; Latin music group *Bacilos*; Brazilian musician Alexandre Pires; Lynne Palmeiro, wife of baseball player Rafael Palmeiro; Edward Villella, founding artistic director and chief executive officer, Miami City Ballet; and entertainer Gloria Estefan. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

## Statement on House of Representatives Passage of Legislation Banning Partial-Birth Abortion October 2, 2003

I applaud the House for passing the ban on partial-birth abortion so soon after the congressional conferees completed their work. Today's action is an important step

that will help us continue to build a culture of life in America. I look forward to the Senate passing this legislation so that I can sign this very important bill into law.

## Remarks Following a Meeting With Former New York City Police Commissioner Bernard B. Kerik and an Exchange With Reporters October 3, 2003

*The President.* Thank you all for coming. I'll make a couple of statements. I'm going to ask Bernie Kerik to make a statement, and I'll answer two questions before I go to Milwaukee.

First, I want to welcome Bernie Kerik to the South Lawn and to the Oval Office. We just had a fascinating discussion about what he did in Iraq, what he saw in Iraq. He can speak for himself. But let me characterize it this way, that he went to help

the Iraqis organize a police force. He showed up at times of chaos and confusion. Because of his leadership, his knowledge, and his experience, he was able to stand up a police force in Baghdad in a very quick period of time. I think he told me he opened up 37 different precinct stations—

*Mr. Kerik.* Thirty-five.

*The President.* —35 different precinct stations. They activated and trained 35,000