

First of all, I understand what it means to be in a country that grieves over the senseless death of innocent life. And the Australians suffered a mighty blow. And the—matter of fact, the other day I was in Kentucky, you know, politics for a guy running for Governor. And a mother—a fine looking couple walked up, a mom and dad, said, “You’ve got to know, our daughter died in Bali,” and tears in his eyes. And I gave him a big hug. And he said, “Mr. President, whatever you do, don’t stop, so it doesn’t happen again.”

The best way to deal with terror is to be on the offensive and to find these people and bring them to justice. That’s why Australia is such an important partner, equal partner, in the war on terror. John Howard gets it. He understands. The Prime Minister knows that we’ve got to be tough and at the same time create the conditions where there’s an alternative to terrorism, and that’s freedom and peace.

*Mr. Oakes.* One final question.

*The President.* Sure.

*Australian, British, and U.S. Leaders’  
Popularity*

*Mr. Oakes.* You’re in trouble politically, if you believe the polls.

*The President.* Why do you say that?

*Mr. Oakes.* The polls show you dropping in popularity.

*The President.* Well, actually, there’s a poll that showed me going up yesterday. Not to be on the defensive, but go ahead. [Laughter]

*Mr. Oakes.* Well, I was going to ask why you think you and Tony Blair seem to have lost support, but John Howard hasn’t?

*The President.* Well, it must be his charisma. [Laughter] I don’t know. Actually, I’m in pretty good shape politically. I really am. I didn’t mean to sound defensive.

*Mr. Oakes.* No, sir.

*The President.* I am. Politicians, by the way, who pay attention to the polls are doomed to be kind of chasing—trying to chase opinion. What you need to do is lead, set the tone. And I’ve taken some tough decisions. And I will look forward to making the case that the decisions I have taken will make America more secure, make the world more peaceful, and make this country more prosperous. And so I’m upbeat about it. And as to why Howard is maintaining his popularity and—he married well, and he’s smart.

*Mr. Oakes.* Sir, thank you. And I look forward to seeing you in Australia.

*The President.* Yes, sir. Looking forward to it. Thanks.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 3:44 p.m. in the Library at the White House, and the transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 18. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister John Howard of Australia; former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Secretary of Commerce Donald L. Evans; Nurjaman Riduan Isamuddin (known as Hambali), Al Qaida’s chief operational planner in Southeast Asia; and Kentucky gubernatorial candidate Ernie Fletcher. Mr. Oakes referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

*The President’s Radio Address  
October 18, 2003*

Good morning. During the decades of Saddam Hussein’s oppression and misrule,

all Iraqis suffered, including children.

While Saddam built palaces and monuments to himself, Iraqi schools crumbled. While Saddam supported a massive war machine, Iraqi schoolchildren went without textbooks, and sometimes teachers went unpaid. Saddam used schools for his own purposes: to indoctrinate the youth of Iraq and to teach hatred.

Under Saddam, adult illiteracy was 61 percent, and for women it was a staggering 77 percent. Iraq is a nation with a proud tradition of learning, and that tradition was betrayed by Saddam Hussein.

As part of our coalition's efforts to build a stable and secure Iraq, we are working to rebuild Iraq's schools, to get the teachers back to work, and to make sure Iraqi children have the supplies they need.

Six months ago, nearly all of Iraq's schools were closed, and many primary schools lacked electrical wiring and plumbing and windows. Today, all 22 universities and 43 technical institutes and colleges are open, as are nearly all primary and secondary schools in the country. Earlier this year, we said we would rehabilitate 1,000 schools by the time school started. This month, just days before the first day of class, our coalition and our Iraqi partners had refurbished over 1,500 schools.

Under Saddam, textbooks were so rare, six students had to share each one. So we're working with UNESCO to print 5 million revised and modern textbooks free of Ba'athist propaganda and to distribute them to Iraqi students. By the end of the school year, there will be enough textbooks for each Iraqi student. And for the first time in years, they will get to read the work of great Iraqi writers and poets—much of it banned by Saddam's regime.

We have assembled more than a million school supply kits, including pencils and calculators and note pads for Iraqi schoolchildren. We have distributed tens of thousands of student desks and teacher chairs and chalkboards. And to assure the health of students, we have delivered over 22 million vaccinations for Iraqi children.

In many cases, American soldiers have intervened personally to make sure Iraqi schools get the supplies they need. Army First Lieutenant Kyle Barden of Charlotte, North Carolina, wanted supplies for the 11 schools in Laylan, Iraq. In response to Kyle's request for help, North Carolina schoolchildren, doctors, businesses, and others have donated thousands of dollars to buy notebooks and pencils and colored pens.

Army Major Gregg Softy of the First Armored Division sent an e-mail to friends about Iraq schools. The response was overwhelming. Hundreds of packages were shipped, and a web site was established to encourage other Americans to contribute.

All of our efforts to improve Iraqi education ultimately serve the cause of security and peace. We want young Iraqis to learn skills and to grow and hope, instead of being fed a steady diet of propaganda and hatred. We're making progress, but there is still much work to do. The request I made to Congress for Iraqi reconstruction includes funds for additional health and training projects. I urge Congress to pass my budget request soon, so this vital work can proceed.

Our efforts will help Iraq reclaim its proud heritage of learning and bring it into the family of nations. An elderly man in Umm Qasr recently tried an Internet connection for the first time. He was stunned by the speed with which he could read newspapers from across the world. He said, "Our society has been cut off from the world, and now we are reconnected." As Iraq rejoins the world, it will demonstrate the power of freedom and hope to overcome hatred and resentment. And this transformation will make our Nation more secure.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 8:25 a.m. on October 16 in Riverside, CA, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on October 18. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on October 17 but was

embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

## Remarks Following Discussions With President Gloria Macapagal-Arroyo of the Philippines and an Exchange With Reporters in Manila, Philippines *October 18, 2003*

*President Macapagal-Arroyo.* I'd like to thank President Bush for coming to the Philippines on this state visit. It affirms the warm and deep relations between our two countries. It's another building block in the revitalized and maturing alliance, rooted in shared histories and shared values, a common interest in global peace and prosperity, as well as a real commitment of combating terrorism and advancing freedom.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank the United States for its support for the Philippines as a nonpermanent member of the Security Council for the term 2004 to 2005 and also for designating the Philippines as a major non-NATO ally.

I also welcome the Joint Defense Assessment named by our respective defense agencies. It recognizes that the world today requires a new perspective on political and economic security. The assessment recognizes the determination of the Philippines to take greater responsibility for its own political and economic security, even as it acknowledges that strong relations with the U.S. will contribute greatly to peace and prosperity, stability and security, especially from terrorism. Indeed, we must close ranks and stand firm against terrorist threats, however grave, however armed, and from whatever quarter.

When those violence happened in May 2001, the Philippines chose to fight terrorism, compensating for such modest means that it commands with an

unshakable resolve to defeat it once and for all.

I thank President Bush for continued security assistance which enhances the means to defeat terrorism. I also appreciate the help of President Bush for increased economic assistance to alleviate poverty and other socio-economic ills from which terrorism draws its strength. I take pride in the robust economic ties that bind the Philippines and the United States.

This past week, in preparation for this visit, we witnessed the launching in the Philippines of Convergys, the largest customer care service company in the world, which is hiring 3,000 workers in its first year of operation. We also witnessed the launching of a new \$50 million investment of Ford to launch the Philippines as an export hub for the world. We received \$33 million of new USAID money for educational assistance in the conflict-affected areas, and we celebrated the electrification of 1,650 barangays with a contribution of one million pesos per barangay from Mirant, CalEnergy, and San Roque, all in preparation for your visit, Mr. President.

I look forward to the rest of my talks with President Bush and the officials of his administration. Once again, thank you, Mr. President, and thanks to Mrs. Bush for making this state visit to the Philippines.

*President Bush.* Madam President, thanks. It's been a—this is going to be a