

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Richard B. Cheney, President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 14.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland and an Exchange With Reporters

January 14, 2003

President Bush. What we're going to do here is have a couple of opening statements, two questions from the American press, two questions from the Polish press.

Let me first start by saying how much I'm honored that my friend the President of Poland is back in Washington. We're thrilled you're here. My only regret is that you didn't bring your beautiful wife with you, the First Lady of Poland.

But we're here to have a substantive talk on a lot of issues, issues ranging from the war on terror to the recent decision by the Polish Government on the purchase of U.S.-made aircraft, how best to implement that decision, to let the Polish people benefit so the decision is not only good for the defense ministry of Poland, but it's good for the people of Poland.

And the President cares deeply about the people of Poland, and we'll have a good discussion along those lines. I've got no better friend in Europe today than Poland. One of the reasons why is because this man has made a commitment to work together, as equal partners, in the war on terror, on the desire to lift the—find freedom for people who live in misery.

And so Mr. President, we're so glad you're back, and welcome back to the Oval Office.

President Kwasniewski. Thank you.

President Bush. I appreciate you.

President Kwasniewski. Mr. President, dear friends, so after very short time—because I paid official visit to the United States July last year—I am again in Oval Office, in White House in Washington, and I think this is a good sign that our cooperation, our relations are very active and very friendly.

Now we'll have consultations. We will discuss all the problems concerning war against

terror, at the national situation. And I think today is the best time to discuss, because before action, before last decisions, it's necessary to exchange opinions, of experiences, of some ideas. And that is very substantial element of my trip to Washington now.

Second, what President Bush mentioned, Poland decided to have your fighter F-16. It was very transparent, very open, and very well prepared tender, and I think we have a chance not only to have good place for Polish army, not only to have a good contribution to our NATO membership, but we have a chance to open new chapter in the economic relations between Poland and United States, and this is the next reason of my visit and of our discussion.

America has unique chance to accelerate economic activities, investment activities in Poland. We are open, we are prepared, we have good practice, we have specialists. And what is my satisfaction, America wants to do it. That's what is good news, good message for all of us here in the United States and Poland as well.

President Bush. Fournier [Ron Fournier, Associated Press].

North Korea

Q. Thank you, sir. Jack Kelly has very publicly promised North Korea energy aid in exchange for Pyongyang giving up its nuclear program. Isn't that rewarding North Korea for bad behavior, something you promised never to do?

President Bush. First of all, there's a big concern here in our country about North Korea, and I'm absolutely convinced this issue will be solved in a peaceful way. I want to remind the American people that prior to North Korea making the decision it made, that I had instructed our Secretary of State to approach North Korea about a bold initiative, an initiative which would talk about energy and food, because we care deeply about the suffering of the North Korean people.

And then the North Koreans made a decision. And the decision they made was to ignore international norm, ignore treaties that they had—agreements that they had reached and start building potential nuclear weapons,

enriching uranium. And now they have expelled—are in the process of kicking out IAEA* people.

I view this as an opportunity to bind together nations in the neighborhood and around the world to make it clear to the North Koreans that we expect this issue to be resolved peacefully, and we expect them to disarm. We expect them not to develop nuclear weapons. And if they so choose to do so—their choice—then I will reconsider whether or not we will start the bold initiative that I talked to Secretary Powell about.

People say, “Well, are you willing to talk to North Korea?” Of course we are. But what this Nation won’t do is be blackmailed. And what this Nation will do is use this as an opportunity to bring the Chinese and the Russians and South Koreans and the Japanese to the table to solve this problem peacefully.

President Kwasniewski. I agree. I think in the Korean case absolutely not to compare with Iraq’s case. And we have a chance to discuss about North Korea with very serious partners which are thinking the same way. I mean Japan, Russia, China, South Korea. We have a chance to propose something very positive to North Korea, maybe not for regime—because when I read some information about this regime, it’s not so easy to propose something—something special. But absolutely. I am sure that we have enough possibilities to propose positive solution for this case, but with all international partners.

President Bush. Would you care to call on somebody from Poland, Polish press?

War on Terror

Q. Can the war of terror be decisively won? This is a question for both Presidents. And what would be Poland’s role in the war of terror—on terror?

President Bush. Let me start. You bet the war on terror can be won. And not only can it be won; we’re going to win it. And the way you win it is you work together. You share intelligence. You complement each other’s efforts. If we find somebody thinking about doing something to our friends in Poland, we’ll share the information with this Government and vice versa. We will work

together to cut off money. And we will hunt the killers down, one at a time. And that’s exactly what we are doing and exactly what we are going to do.

We’re going to find them. They think they can hide in a cave in the outer reaches of Afghanistan. We will go in the cave and find them. And one by one, we are dismantling this terrorist network. It requires a lot of communication. It requires a lot of cooperation. And it requires a lot of patience. And this Government has got all three.

Polish American Community

Q. Mr. President, there are 10 million of the Polish Americans in the United States. What is your perception about the Polish Americans?

President Bush. I think that one of the greatest contributions to Poland to our country is Polish Americans, people who are enterprising, hard-working, God-fearing, family-loving people. One of the great strengths of our country is our diversity, and part of our diversity is the fact that a lot of our citizens were born in Poland and/or their fathers and mothers were born in Poland or their grandparents were born in Poland. Truly, one of the great blessings and gifts from Poland to this country is the Polish heritage.

Scott.

Q. Sir, Mr. President, the U.N. weapons inspectors say they need until—

President Bush. I mean Steve [Steve Holland, Reuters]. Is your name Steve or Scott?

U.N. Weapons Inspectors

Q. The weapons inspectors say they need until March, maybe 6 months, maybe a year. Is this what you had in mind when you went to the U.N. back in September?

President Bush. What I have in mind for Saddam Hussein is to disarm. The United Nations spoke with one voice. We said, “We expect Saddam Hussein, for the sake of peace, to disarm.” That’s the question: Is Saddam Hussein disarming? He’s been given 11 years to disarm. And so the world came together, and we have given him one last chance to disarm. So far, I haven’t seen any evidence that he is disarming.

Time is running out on Saddam Hussein. He must disarm. I’m sick and tired of games

* White House correction.

and deception. And that's my view of time-tables.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:28 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. A reporter referred to Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs James A. Kelly.

Remarks to Welfare-to-Work Graduates

January 14, 2003

The President. Thank you all for coming. Please be seated. Thanks for coming, and welcome to the White House. I'm especially pleased to welcome the—our fine fellow citizens who have lifted themselves out of poverty. I welcome you all here. You're fantastic examples of what is possible in America, what we hope happens in America.

I particularly want to thank Lorey Wilson and Pamela Hedrick. Each of them have incredible success stories, and Pam has agreed to share her story with us. I want to thank her family for being here as well. Both women show us the dignity that comes with work and the great hopes that have been realized through the welfare reform.

The welfare law of 1996 has enabled millions of Americans to build better lives—better lives for themselves and better lives for their families and, hence, better lives for our country. The time has come to strengthen that law, and that's what I want to talk about today.

Leading the charge will be Department of Health and Human Services leader Tommy Thompson. And I appreciate Tommy. Tommy, when he was the Governor of Wisconsin, was on the leading edge of welfare change. He was an innovative Governor. He's an innovative Cabinet officer as well.

And I appreciate Elaine Chao for being here as well. She's Secretary of the Department of Labor. When we're interested in jobs, we think about the Department of Labor. So, thank you for coming, Elaine. [Laughter] I appreciate your work.

I appreciate Bob Woodson for being here—Woody. Thanks for coming. He's the director of the National Center for Neighbor-

hood Enterprise. He's one of these innovative thinkers about how to best help people help themselves in America, make sure that hope extends to all neighborhoods, not just some neighborhoods but every neighborhood in our country.

I appreciate Rodney Carroll, who is the president and CEO of the Welfare-To-Work Partnership. His job has been to gather up people who are willing to help people go from welfare to work. And he's done a magnificent job. I remember well our meeting in Chicago with the "Big Brown," UPS, which is one of the leading companies in America to—helping people find the dignity of work. And we sat there on the stage and heard the stories of those who have gone from welfare to work. It must have made you feel good, Rodney, because you had a lot to do with helping these individuals. So thanks for coming.

John Gregory is the president of TEACH, The Enrichment Association of Community Healing. I appreciate John being here and all the rest of you for coming. Welcome. Glad you're here.

The reforms of the 1990s recognized that people on welfare are not charges of the state; they're citizens of this country, with abilities and aspirations. Both parties in Congress realize that welfare system as we knew it sapped the soul and drained the spirit from our citizens. They came together, the people of both parties, to put an end to the culture of dependency that welfare had created.

The obligation of Government did not end with just mailing of a check, and that's important for our citizens to realize. Men and women deserved a chance to learn new skills. That was an obligation of Government, to help people learn, to use their talent so that they could realize dreams, to gain the fulfillment of sense of purpose that comes with striving and working and providing for their own families.

In the 7 years since welfare was reformed, millions of Americans have shared in this experience. Their lives and our country are better off. Today, more than 2 million fewer families are on welfare—2 million fewer than in 1996. It's a reduction of 54 percent. That's a number, but behind each number is a life.