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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 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 Iraqi police force. And that's important because the ultimate solution to the security issues in Iraq is for the Iraqi citizens to manage their own affairs.

Bernie went there and made a big difference. And for that our Nation is very grateful. We appreciate it a lot.

Mr. Kerik. Thank you.

The President. We're going to start training police officers in Jordan soon. As well, tomorrow, 750 new Iraqi army soldiers will graduate from training. Part of our strategy is to enable the Iraqis to protect themselves. Mr. Kerik can speak to this, but in a very short period of time, we're making great progress. Iraq is becoming more secure, and that is good. It is good for our overall mission because a free and peaceful Iraq will mean that America is more secure.

I'll make one other comment, then Bernie will say a few words.

Mr. David Kay reported to the Nation. I want to thank him for his good work. He is a thoughtful man. He and his team have worked under very difficult circumstances. They have done a lot of work in 3 months, and he reported on an interim basis.

The report states that Saddam Hussein's regime had a clandestine network of biological laboratories, a live strain of deadly agent botulinum, sophisticated concealment efforts, and advanced design work on prohibited longer range missiles. The report summarized the regime's efforts in this way, and I quote from the report:

"Iraq's WMD programs spanned more than two decades, involved thousands of people, billions of dollars, and was elaborately shielded by security and deception operations that continued even beyond the end of Operation Iraqi Freedom."

That is what the report said. Specifically, Dr. Kay's team discovered what the report calls, and I quote, "dozens of WMD-related program activities and significant amounts of equipment that Iraq concealed from the

United Nations during the inspections that began in late 2002.''

In addition to these extensive concealment efforts, Dr. Kay found systematic destruction of evidence of these illegal activities. This interim progress report is not final. Extensive work remains to be done on his biological, chemical, and nuclear weapons programs. But these findings already make clear that Saddam Hussein actively deceived the international community, that Saddam Hussein was in clear violation of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441, and that Saddam Hussein was a danger to the world.

The Commissioner will say a few words.

Mr. Kerik. Thank you. I just—first, I want to take this opportunity to thank the President for giving me the honor and allowing me to go to Iraq—to go to Iraq and help the Iraqi people, give the Iraq people back their country.

And we did so—and we did so quite quickly, and that continues on a daily basis. Four months ago—4½ months ago, when I arrived in Iraq, there were no police—very few, if any. There were no police stations. There were no cars. There was no electricity. They didn't have telephones, communications, radios. They basically had nothing. They had no equipment. They had no weapons, except for those they had ordered kept on the side. In the last 4 months, we brought back more than 40,000 police, 450 cars in Baghdad, stood up 35 police stations in Baghdad.

And I know I constantly hear as I come back—I listen to the press, and I listen to some of the public, some of the criticism. And they talk about, ''It's taking too long.'' Well, try to stand up 35 police stations in New York City. It would take you about 11 years, depending on who is in the city council. It takes a while. You only have 24 hours in a day. But they have made tremendous progress. The police are working; they're working in conjunction with the military. They are arresting the Fedayeen Saddam and the Ba'athists.

And I read some of the articles about this, about Dr. Kay's report today. In my opinion, there was one weapon of mass destruction in Iraq, and it was Saddam Hussein. I visited the mass graves. I watched the videos of the Mukhabarat, the intelligence services, interrogate, torture, abuse, and execute people day after day. I watched them tie grenades to the necks of people or stuff grenades in the pockets of people as they interviewed them and then detonate those grenades and watch the people disappear. I watched a video of Saddam sitting in an office and allowing two Doberman Pinschers to eat alive a general, a military general because he did not trust his loyalty. There was one weapon of mass destruction. He's no longer in power, and I think that's what counts today.

I understand, probably more than anyone, what a threat Iraq was and the people that threatened Iraq was. I was beneath the towers on September 11th when they fell. And I—again, I just—I want to thank the President for the honor in allowing me to go there, because I lost 23 people. I wear this memorial band for the 23 I lost. They were defending the freedom of our country. I got to go on their behalf to Iraq, to bring freedom to Iraq and take one less threat away from us in this country. So, Mr. President, thank you.

The President. Good job, Bernie.

Mr. Kerik. Thank you, sir.

The President. I'll answer a couple of questions.

Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction

Q. Mr. President, are you still confident that you'll—that weapons of mass destruction will be found in Iraq? And how long do you think that that search will go on? Is that an open-ended search until something is found?

The President. That's a question you need to ask David Kay. He'll be interviewing with the press today—his opinion. I can only report to what his interim report says.

Q. Well——

The President. Let me—let me finish, please.

Q. Yes.

The President. His interim report said that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program spanned more than two decades. That's what he said. See, he's over there under difficult circumstances and reports back. He says that the WMD program involved thousands of people, billions of dollars, and was elaborately shielded by security and deception operations that continued even beyond the end of Operation Iraqi Freedom. In

other words, he's saying Saddam Hussein was a threat, a serious danger.

Decision on War in Iraq

Q. There's a poll out in which a lot of people today are wondering whether the war was really worth the cost.

The President. Yes.

Q. How do you respond to that, sir?

The President. Yes, I don't make decisions based upon polls. I make decisions based upon what I think is important for the security of the American people. And I'm not going to forget the lessons of 9/11, September 2001. I'm not going to forget what Mr. Kerik described, the bombing that killed innocent life. This administration will deal with gathering dangers where we find them. The interim report of Mr. Kay showed that Saddam defied 1441 and was a danger. We gave him ample time to deal with his weapons of mass destruction. He refused. So he's no longer in power, and the world is better off for it.

I can't think of any people who think that the world would be a safe place with Saddam Hussein in power. Sometimes the American people like the decisions I make; sometimes they don't. But they need to know I'll make tough decisions based upon what I think is right, given the intelligence that I know, in order to do my job, which is secure this country and to bring peace.

Thank you all.

Q. But isn't the issue that you overstated the threat in the view of critics——

The President. Bernie, you're a good man.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:44 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to David Kay, CIA Special Advisor for Strategy Regarding Iraqi Weapons of Mass Destruction Programs; and former President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks at the Midwest Airlines Center in Milwaukee, Wisconsin

October 3, 2003

Thanks for coming. Thanks for the warm welcome. It's nice to be back in Milwaukee. Today I'm going to talk about some of the challenges which face our country and why I believe our country can overcome any challenge we face.

One of the reasons I'm optimistic about the future of our economy is because of the entrepreneurial spirit of America, the entrepreneurial spirit that is strong in Milwaukee and in the great State of Wisconsin, the fact that there are people who are risktakers and job creators and people who, like me, see a better future for those who are looking for work. I'm here to herald the small businesses which are the strength of the economy of the United States of America.

I want to thank Tim for inviting a few of his friends here today. [*Laughter*] Thanks for coming out. Thanks for your leadership, Tim. I appreciate your willingness to give me a chance to talk about our country.

I traveled today with a man who you trained well, a person who serves in my Cabinet in one of the most difficult jobs of all, Secretary of Health and Human Services. He represents our country with class and distinction, and that is Tommy Thompson. Where's Tommy? There you go. [*Applause*] Let us not get carried away. [*Laughter*] You know him well. He's a good guy.

Today I also had the privilege of flying from Washington to Milwaukee with three members of the congressional delegation from the great State of Wisconsin, Jim Sensenbrenner, Tom Petri, and Paul Ryan. These are fine—[*applause*]. We had a great visit on the plane. There is no air raids on Air Force One, by the way. [*Laughter*] And it's a chance for us to talk about issues of concern. And one thing is clear: The three love the State of Wisconsin, and they represent you well. And I'm proud to call them friends, and I enjoy working with them. I enjoy working with them to try to change the tone in Washington, to elevate the discourse, to get rid of needless politics and partisan bickering and focus on the people's business. They understand what I'm talking about, and they're good, strong leaders.

I want to thank the members of the statehouse who have come today: Jack Voight, who is the State treasurer; Mary Panzer, who is the State senate majority leader; Steve Foti is the State assembly majority leader. I want to thank you all for coming as well. A lot