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George W. Bush

The White House,
January 29, 2003.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 30.

**Remarks on the Anniversary of the
USA Freedom Corps**

January 30, 2003

Thank you all for coming. The most compassionate thing Darrell Green has done is to retire—[laughter]—particularly if you're a Dallas Cowboys fan. [Laughter] The most compassionate thing Darrell Green has done is decided to lend his heart to help America be a more welcoming society for every citizen. I appreciate his leadership. I appreciate his friendship, and I appreciate the other members of the President's Council on Service and Civic Participation.

Darrell will lead this distinguished group of citizens. We have plucked two really fine Americans to be Vice Chairmen. That's, of course, Senators Glenn and Dole, distinguished Americans who have served their country in many ways. Along with those, there's a lot of other well-known Americans who have heard a call to be responsible citizens for the future of this country by using their positions of influence and stature to rally the true strength of the country, which is the compassion of our fellow citizens. And I want to thank them for their participation in this commission.

It's a commission not only to convince our fellow citizens to love one another just like we like to be loved; it's a commission also to devise practical ways to encourage others to serve. And one practical way is for the development of an award that Americans from all walks of life all around our country will be able to post boldly on their wall, that says, "I served this great country by loving somebody." And I want to thank you all for joining us. It is an important program.

I want to thank members of my administration who are here who will be involved in the implementation of some of the initia-

tives that I've outlined to the United States Congress. The Secretary of Education is here, Rod Paige, behind me. John Ashcroft is here, the Attorney General. Rich Carmona, who is the U.S. Surgeon General, is with us today. Stephen Goldsmith, who is the Chair of the Corporation for National and Community Service, is with us. Les Lenkowsky is with us, who is the CEO of that Corporation. Gaddi Vasquez, who is the head of the Peace Corps, is with us.

And most importantly, Alma Powell, Secretary of Colin Powell, is with us. Where are you? There she is. She's kind of like my mother in many ways. She's always telling me what to do—[laughter]—and I'm always listening.

I want to thank Congressman Tom Osborne for coming today. Congressman, I'm honored that you're here. I appreciate your compassion and your care for our fellow citizens. They tell me Tim Roemer is here, who just retired from the United States Congress. I appreciate Tim's participation.

I know the Mayor is here. Mayor Anthony Williams, who is a—I like to tease the Mayor, remind him that—to keep fixing those potholes in front of the White House—[laughter]—keep that garbage collected. [Laughter] But he's doing a fine job, and I'm proud to call him friend, just like many of the citizens here are proud to call him Mayor. I want to thank members of the city council who are here as well. Mayors and city council members must play an active role at rallying the compassion of this country.

I want to thank the Boys & Girls Clubs across the country but particularly here in Washington, DC—Pat Shannon and Tim Sheahan—for opening up this facility. The Boys & Girls Club have got a grand history of helping children understand the future is bright for them as well as any other child in America. Boys & Girls Clubs have been safe havens. They're little beacons of light for children who might not see light. And I want to thank them for their service to the country. Part of the vision for America is that we have a mosaic of all kinds of people providing love and comfort for people who need help. And Boys & Girls Club is a part of that majestic mosaic of America.

One of the great strengths of our country is the fact that the social entrepreneurial spirit is strong. We got people all across this land who don't wait for some law passed out of the United States Congress to say, "What can I do to help a neighbor in need?" There are thousands all across this country who have—who are making a singular difference in the lives of one citizen or one neighborhood or one community. And the impact of all that care and love allowed me to say point-blank to the American people after the tragedy that out of the evil done to America is going to come some incredible good.

I do think there is an important role for Government. One of the roles of Government is to ask people to serve today. Once again, I'm asking our fellow citizens to serve your community and to serve your country by finding a program that will make a difference in somebody's lives. It doesn't matter how big or small the program may sound. What matters is your love and your energy and your participation. Help somebody who is lonely. Mentor somebody who needs care and concern. Feed the hungry. Find shelter for the homeless. Answer the call of this country.

A year ago we started what's called the USA Freedom Corps. I thought it was important for the Federal Government to lend a structure to the thousands who may want to help, to provide an outlet for those who heard the call to provide 4,000 hours, 2 years of service. And people are responding. There are over 60,000 opportunities that the USA Freedom Corps can steer people to, opportunities to volunteer all across the country. And thousands and thousands and thousands of our fellow citizens have inquired as to how to help, have said, "I want to help. Let me be a part of an optimistic future for America." And I want to thank those thousands who have signed up.

Corporate America has a responsibility. It's fine to sell product, and that's important. There's a lot of responsibilities that come with running a company. Telling the truth is a responsibility that comes with running a country, by the way; treating your—being honest with your shareholder, if you're a public company; being thoughtful to your employee. But I also believe there's a corporate

responsibility to encourage and provide incentive for employees to go help in the community in which the company exists. One hundred-sixty companies have signed up. I know Rich Parsons is here, of AOL/Time Warner, Gene Case; and this company has been one of the—on the forefront, among others—Nardelli, of Home Depot, as well—have encouraged their employees to not only provide good product but provide love and compassion in their communities.

And I want to thank corporate America for hearing the call. I encourage more companies and more corporations to participate in this quest to make sure the American Dream extends itself in every neighborhood and in every corner of this country.

AmeriCorps has got tens of thousands of people helping to inoculate children against disease or tutoring children. I'm a supporter of AmeriCorps. I urge the Congress to pass the Citizens Service Act to make sure that—*[applause]*.

Part of being a compassionate country also means we need to be compassionate abroad. That's one of the reasons I laid out a powerful AIDS initiative for the citizens in Africa who suffer from AIDS. It's an initiative that I believe will lend the great heart of the American people to the salvation of life after life after life on that continent.

And I want to tell the folks that Peace Corps applications are up by 30 percent. And what I find—and even more interesting, 38 more countries have asked for Peace Corps volunteers to come into their land to help their country and to help their citizens realize their full potential. See, in this country, we say, "Every life matters. Everybody is precious. Everybody counts."

Senior Corps is vibrant and strong these days in America. There's over a half a million members of Senior Corps. *[Applause]* Sounds like it's vibrant and strong right here in this room. *[Laughter]*

We've got 300 Citizen Corps Councils around America to help every community prepare in case of emergency. It's a useful way to—for many of our citizens to volunteer, to help lend their talents to make sure America is buttoned up and prepared if the worst were to happen again.

I think we ought to take our initiatives and make sure that they're focused and pointed as well—particularly at the Federal level. What I'm about to say doesn't preclude other good things happening in America, but I do think it makes sense to take some of our resources and lend them to help those who are vulnerable citizens, those who have got great potential but need a little extra help.

I strongly believe in mentoring. I know we can change America one heart and one soul at a time. There's just no doubt in my mind we can. So I want to rally the compassion of the country to focus on junior high students who may need a mentor. And I particularly—I want to help the boys and girls whose mom or dad may be incarcerated. There are programs all across our country that already do that. I fully recognize that. This isn't anything new. This is a way to build upon the good works that already exist.

I was in Philadelphia. I saw the program that has been existing way before I was thinking about writing my speech, about how that community—out of a church—began to call upon other members of churches throughout Philadelphia to love a child who has to hug a mom or dad through a prison bar. And it's making a difference in the lives of those children.

We need to have that type of program all across the country. I'm asking for the Congress to provide \$450 million. The money will go to encourage recruitment, provide structure, to cover the overhead necessary to rally the mentors, to find the folks that are willing to hear the call. I believe we can change lives through mentoring.

You know why I say that? I say it because I've seen mentor and mentoree and heard their testimony, just like I did today, earlier. I heard about the Best Friends Program here in Washington, DC, changing lives. I met a young lady, a junior in college from Atlanta, Georgia. She goes to school up here. And her college—they said, "We need people to help. We got what we call a U.S. Dream Academy." And she heard the call—a junior in college. So I said, "Can you help?" And she said, "You bet I can help." Erica is now mentoring, and I want to thank her for her mentorship. She's changing one life. Her love and her compassion and her dedication to

something greater than herself will give her the great satisfaction of knowing that she has made one life better. She may make a lot of other lives better, too. But right now, she can say, "I'm making one life better." It's that cumulative effect of people in America being able to say, "I have made one life better," that will make the whole country better.

I asked my fellow citizens to think about how you can be a person making somebody's life better. I talked to Cecil from St. John's Baptist in Columbus, Maryland. Cecil said his preacher called him into action and his wife said, "You keep talking about the need for mentors, but you haven't done a darn thing about it." Cecil and I married well. The same thing happens to me, Cecil. [Laughter] But Cecil decided to become a mentor. He brought his young mentoree with him today. I decided I'd trick the guy and say, "You got any goals?" He looked me right in the eye and said, "I'm going to be an architect. I'm going to be an architect." Congratulations to a great future architect of America, but congratulation as well to his mentor who helped set the example. Cecil, thank you for coming, and thank your church.

I met Mark Harris. Mark wears the uniform of the United States of America. He's in our military. Mark is here to continue his education, and he met Antonio. See, he's a big brother, a part of the Big Brothers and Big Sisters program, which is one of our Nation's strongest mentoring programs. He realized service to the country was more than just putting on the uniform. Service to the country was serving our country by loving somebody, by being a mentor. He understands what I know, that when you change a life, you change the country for the better. Mark and I share a deep passion. We not only want a secure country, we want a hopeful country as well, an optimistic country.

I met Karin Walser. She's what I call a social entrepreneur. I think I'm looking at a lot of social entrepreneurs here. These are people who are, as we say in the vernacular, "thinking outside the box" to make America a better place. She started a program called Horton's Kids, which is a mentoring program on Capitol Hill—use the facilities there to help children understand structure and focus and love in their lives. No, mentoring is a

fabulous, fabulous part of the American society.

Larry Compton knows. He's a 23-year-old student who is with us today. He was mentored as a kid coming up in Pontiac, Michigan. He found direction in his life, and guess what? He now mentors. He has been mentored, and he now mentors.

My point is, it's the beginning of a process that feeds upon itself. Mentoring will change the country. I ask the Congress to pass this initiative. I ask my fellow citizens to join many, many fellow citizens in loving somebody who needs help.

And as we structure response to society's needs, we must never forget the power of faith in our society. There's a—some of the greatest programs, initiatives, come out of our faith-based programs or faith-based churches or synagogues or mosques. You know why? There is a universal call to love somebody like you'd like to be loved yourself. The handbook is pretty clear about the role of—[*applause*]. There are fabulous programs that aren't related to faith-based initiatives. That's fine, and that's good. But the corollary to that is, Government should not discriminate against faith-based programs. They ought to welcome faith-based programs in our society.

There are fantastic programs that helped drug addicts kick their habit, and I think we ought to focus resources and time and efforts to help those who are addicted to drugs. But there are also some wonderful programs based upon faith, on the understanding that if you change a person's heart, you can change that person's behavior. Our Government should welcome faith-based programs into our society.

So I'll continue to work with Congress to get this, the full aspects of the Faith-Based Initiative out of the Halls of Congress. We ought not to be stuck on process. We ought to be focused on results. We ought to ask the question, does it work? And if it works, we ought to welcome anything that works to save American lives.

I'm a confident man. I'm a confident man about the future of this country. I truly

believe that we can achieve peace. I believe we can achieve peace at home, and I believe we can achieve peace abroad. Likewise, I believe we can achieve a hopeful, hopeful future.

Listen, there are pockets of despair in America. In spite our plenty, in spite of the fact we've got great wealth compared to many societies, there are people who hurt, people who wonder about their future, people who are lost, people who are addicted, people who need help. And there is no question in my mind, however, that because of the great strength of our country, the compassion of our people, we can help those people realize a better tomorrow.

The goal of this country is for everyone—not just a few—everyone in every community in every State in every part of our country to understand the greatness and potential of this country. Everybody counts in life. Everybody matters. Everybody is precious in the sight of the Almighty. Everybody has worth. That would be a philosophy that drives this Government as we work to strive to make the American experience strong and hopeful for every single citizen.

I want to thank my fellow citizens for your love. I want to thank my fellow citizens for your time. I want to thank your fellow citizens—my fellow citizens for serving something greater than yourself, the greatest country on the face of this Earth. God bless you all, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. at the Jelleff Branch, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington. In his remarks, he referred to former Washington Redskins player Darrell Green; Alma Powell, wife of Secretary of State Colin Powell; Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; Patricia G. Shannon, president and chief executive officer, and Tim Sheahan, executive vice president, Boys & Girls Clubs of Greater Washington; Rich Parsons, chief executive officer, and Steve Case, chairman, AOL/Time Warner; and Bob Nardelli, chairman, president, and chief executive officer, Home Depot. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of these remarks.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi of Italy and an Exchange With Reporters

January 30, 2003

President Bush. I will make an opening statement; Silvio will make an opening statement; we'll have one question from the Americans, one question from the Italians. We're running a little late. We'd like to spend hours answering your questions, but the problem is we've got other matters to work on.

First, it's my honor to welcome Silvio Berlusconi back. He is a personal friend. Italy is a great friend of America; America is a great friend of Italy. The Prime Minister and I will of course be talking about a lot of matters, the most significant matter will be how to keep the peace, how to make the world a peaceful place.

I am most grateful that the Prime Minister signed a letter, along with other leaders of European countries, which clarified the issue that we're dealing with, and that is that Saddam Hussein is a clear threat to peace. It was a strong statement. It also was a statement of solidarity with the United States, and I appreciated that very much.

Prime Minister Berlusconi. Thank you.

President Bush. I appreciate your friendship. I welcome you back to the Oval Office and look forward to having a long and fruitful discussion.

Prime Minister Berlusconi. We are here for good work, for a just cause, and for everybody, I think. And I am here with a friend, with a country, that is the best friend of my country.

President Bush. Well, thank you. And your English is very good.

Prime Minister Berlusconi. No, no. I have never the time. We have so much to do in Italy, I have not the time to—

President Bush. Not the time to practice?

Prime Minister Berlusconi. —to learn better English.

President Bush. Well, thank you for that kind comment. Ron [Ron Fournier, Associated Press].

President Saddam Hussein of Iraq

Q. Sir, are you open to giving Saddam a final deadline, and are you willing to let him slip into exile—this, a man who recently said he wants to break the neck of our country?

President Bush. First, let me echo the comments of my National Security Adviser, who the other day in commenting about this process said this is a matter of weeks, not months. In other words, for the sake of peace, this issue must be resolved. Hopefully, it can be done peacefully. Hopefully, the pressure of the free world will convince Mr. Saddam Hussein to relinquish power, and should he choose to leave the country, along with a lot of the other henchmen who have tortured the Iraqi people, we would welcome that, of course.

I will tell my friend Silvio that the use of military troops is my last choice, not my first. The commitment of young men and Americans into battle is a difficult decision, because I understand the cost of war. But I also understand the cost of inaction. There is a high price to be paid for the civilized world by not enforcing the opinion of the world, which was for Saddam Hussein to disarm.

There's a reason why leaders around the world believe he ought to disarm. There's a reason why the Security Council of the United Nations voted 15-0 to say to Saddam, disarm—and that's because he's dangerous.

Would you care to call on somebody from the Italian press?

Prime Minister Berlusconi. In Italy, I already said it. I had the opportunity to say that we have always been the faithful ally country of United States; we are close friends of the United States, also in this case.

I believe that the moment has arrived to find out where all the weapons of mass destruction that Saddam Hussein said he had, where they ended up. We really fear that after the series of terrorist attacks, which culminated with the attacks on September 11th, there is the intention of the terrorists is to really come to a terrible disaster. And to do so, they have to avail themselves of the biological, chemical weapons that we know were available as Saddam Hussein.

Therefore, on the basis of the United Nations Security Council Resolution 1441, Saddam Hussein has to reveal and account for