

**Dick Cheney Quotes
Vice President of the United States**

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The War On Terror: Self Defense/ Preemption

At the same time, we realize that wars are not won on the defensive. We must take the battle to the enemy – and, where necessary, preempt serious threats to our country before they materialize. The only path to safety is the path of action. The United States of America will act, and we will defeat the enemies of freedom.

This lesson has already been learned in Afghanistan, where coalition forces destroyed the terror camps

and liberated an entire nation from the Taliban regime. Yet Afghanistan is only the beginning of a long and unrelenting effort. Were we to stop now, any sense of security we might have would be false and temporary.¹

But the President knows that wars are never won on the defensive. In the fight against global terror, we must take the battle to the enemy. And where necessary, preempt serious threats before they materialize against our country. The only path to safety is the path of action. And the United States of America will act. We will confront every threat from every source that could possibly bring harm to our country.²

The best defense against a terrorist attack is to go destroy the terrorist.³

But we know that playing defense isn't enough -- we have to seize the offense against terrorists. So we are going after the terrorists, hunting them down, freezing their assets, disrupting their chain of command.⁴

The War on Terror: A Unique, Lengthy, Far-Reaching War

This is going to be the kind of work that will probably take years because the focus has to be not just on any one individual, the problem here is terrorism.⁵

And what we have to do is take down those networks of terrorist organizations, and as say I think this is going to be a struggle that the United States is going to be involved in for the foreseeable future. There's not going to be an end date that we say, "There, it's all over with."⁶

It's also important to remember that we've talked about this not just as a problem related to Afghanistan and al Qaeda and the Taliban, but rather, the problem of terrorism in general targeted against the United States. The al Qaeda network is a global network; they've got cells all over the world. And there's no

¹ [The Vice President Makes Remarks at an event for Representative Saxby Chambliss](#)

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² <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/12/text/20021202-4.html>

For Immediate Release Office of the Vice President December 2, 2002, [Air National Guard Senior Leadership Conference](#), Adams Mark Hotel, Denver, Colorado

³ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/text/vp20011114.html>

Interview of the Vice President by CBS's 60 Minutes II, November 14, 2001

⁴ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/04/text/20030409-4.html>

For Immediate Release Office of the Vice President April 9, 2003, [Vice President Cheney Salutes Troops](#) Remarks by the Vice President to the American Society of News Editors

⁵ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/vp20010916.html>

The Vice President appears on Meet the Press with Tim Russert

⁶ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/vp20010916.html>

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reason for us to believe at this stage that this operation is about to end. A far more appropriate way to look at it is this is a very good beginning to what's likely to be a long struggle.⁷

But for all the progress we've made in the war on terror, one thing is abundantly clear: our nation is still in danger. The threats to America are grave. As the President has said, "our war on terror is well begun, but it is only begun. This campaign may not be finished on our watch, yet it must be and it will be waged on our watch."⁸

Where al Qaeda and its allies are concerned, we're dealing with a network that operates in 50 or more countries around the globe, that has murdered Americans in Bali, in Kuwait, in Yemen, and in Jordan, and that is determined to acquire and use weapons of mass destruction against us and our allies. Against such enemies, America and the civilized world have only one option: Wherever terrorists operate, we will find them; wherever they dwell, we will hunt them down.⁹

War on Terror: Not against Islam

This is a perversion, if you will, of some of these religious beliefs by an extremist group. We have extremists associated with, you know, every imaginable religion in the world. But this is by no means a war against Islam. We've got a great many Arab Americans, for example, who are first class, loyal American citizens. We need to make certain that we don't make the mistake of assuming that everybody who comes from a certain ethnic group or certain religious background is somehow to be blamed for this. Clearly, that's not the case. They are as appalled by it as we are.¹⁰

War on Terror: America must lead the war on terror

America has friends and allies in this cause, but only we can lead it. Only we can rally the world in a task of this complexity, against an enemy so elusive and so resourceful. The United States, and only the United States, can see this effort through to victory.

⁷ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/text/vp20011114-1.html>

Remarks by Vice President Dick Cheney to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce November 14, 2001 Wednesday 12:09 PM

⁸ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/12/text/20021202-4.html>

For Immediate Release Office of the Vice President December 2, 2002, Air National Guard Senior Leadership Conference, Adams Mark Hotel, Denver, Colorado

⁹ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030130-16.html>

For Immediate Release Office of the Vice President January 30, 2003 Vice President's Remarks at 30th Political Action Conference, The Crystal Gateway Marriott, Arlington Ballroom, Arlington, Virginia

¹⁰ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/vp20010916.html>

The Vice President appears on Meet the Press with Tim Russert

This responsibility did not come to us by chance. We are in a unique position because of our unique assets -- because of the character of our people, the strength of our ideals, the might of our military, and the enormous economy that supports it.¹¹

Terrorists will not change the US; We will prevail

MR. RUSSERT: He [Osama bin Laden] has stated unequivocally that he wants the United States out of the Middle East. He no longer wants the United States to be the ally of Israel. Will our relationship with Israel change in any way, shape or form because of this event?

VICE PRES. CHENEY: No. The fact of the matter is that the--we'll not allow him to achieve his aims. We're not about to change our policies or change our basic fundamental beliefs. What we are going to do is aggressively go after Mr. bin Laden, obviously, and all of his associates, and even if it takes a long time, I'm convinced eventually we'll prevail.¹²

...if you provide sanctuary to terrorists, you face the full wrath of the United States of America.¹³

We don't let terrorists prevail in this day and age.¹⁴

Since the hour of the attacks on September 11th, our country has been fighting an unprecedented kind of war. As the President said in Prague recently, "a great evil is stirring in the world -- perils we have not seen or faced before."

In the face of these new threats, Americans will do what we've always done, we'll stand firm against the enemies of freedom. We will organize ourselves to meet history's latest challenge. We will out-think the terrorists, out-plan the terrorists, outfight the terrorists. No matter how long it takes, once again, we will prevail.¹⁵

Bush Doctrine

Those who harbor terrorists, those who provide sanctuary to terrorists, are responsible for their acts. If you're going to provide sanctuary to the likes of Osama bin Laden, you are then going to accept the

¹¹ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/vp20020215.html>

February 15, 2002 Ritz Carlton, Washington, DC Remarks by the Vice President to the Council on Foreign Relations

¹² <http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/vp20010916.html>

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¹³ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/vp20010916.html>

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For Immediate Release Office of the Vice President December 2, 2002, Air National Guard Senior Leadership Conference, Adams Mark Hotel, Denver, Colorado

responsibility in our eyes for any acts he commits against the people of the United States of America. And you will face the full wrath of the people of the United States of America...¹⁶

Attack on Civilized Society

Once again, we are defending both ourselves and the safety and survival of civilization itself.¹⁷

I think the world increasingly will understand what we have here are a group of barbarians, that they threaten all of us, that the U.S. is the target at the moment, but one of the things to remember is if you look at the roster of countries who lost people in the bombing in New York, over 40 countries have had someone killed or have significant numbers missing. The British, for example, have an estimated 100 dead and 500 to 700 still missing. So it's an attack not just upon the United States but upon, you know, civilized society.¹⁸

As the President has said, this is a fight to save the civilized world. This is a struggle against evil, against an enemy that rejoices in the murder of innocent, unsuspecting human beings. That is why people in every part of the world and of all faiths must stand together against this foe.

Today, America leads a coalition of more than 90 nations sharing intelligence, hunting down terrorists, and freezing the assets of terror groups and front organizations. **Against such enemies, America and the civilized world have only one option: wherever terrorists operate, we must find them; wherever they dwell, we must hunt them down.**¹⁹

Terrorists don't obey traditional diplomacy/deterrents/treaties

What's new and different now after 9/11, in addition to our recognized vulnerability, but is the emerging link, if you will, between the terrorists on the one hand and weapons of mass destruction on the other. A nuclear weapon in the hand of a terrorist is a very different proposition than a nuclear weapon in the hand of a state. Now, you can't deter a terrorist. What are you going to hold at risk? What does he care about defending? Arms control agreements?

¹⁶ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/text/vp20011114-1.html>

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¹⁷ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030130-16.html>

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Meaningless to a terrorist. Summitry? Diplomacy? How do you deal with a terrorist with a nuclear weapon, who is prepared to not only slaughter Americans, but to die himself in the act?²⁰

We face an enemy that is determined to kill Americans by any means, on any scale, and on our soil. We're dealing with a terror network that has cells in 60 countries. Such a group cannot be held back by deterrence, nor reasoned with through diplomacy. For this reason, the war against terror will not end in a treaty. There will be no summit meeting, no negotiations with terrorists. This conflict can only end in their complete and utter destruction.²¹

During the Cold War the only grave threat to America came from a rival superpower. We handled the threat with summit meetings, arms control treaties, and a policy of deterrence. In the terrorists, however, we have enemies who have nothing to defend. A group like the al Qaeda cannot be deterred or placated or reasoned with at a conference table. For this reason the war against terror will not end in a treaty. There will be no summit meeting or negotiations with terrorists. The conflict can only end with their complete and utter destruction and a victory for the United States and the cause of freedom. (Applause.)²²

If we are to protect the American people and defend civilization against determined enemies, we cannot always rely on the old Cold War remedies of containment and deterrence. Containment does not work against a rogue state that possesses weapons of mass destruction and chooses to secretly deliver them to its terrorist allies. Deterrence does not work when we are dealing with terrorists who have no country to defend, who revel in violence, and who are willing to sacrifice their own lives in order to kill millions of others. To meet the unprecedented dangers posed by rogue states with weapons of mass destruction, and terrorist networks with global reach, our administration has taken urgent and, at times, unprecedented action.²³

²⁰ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/text/vp20011211.html>

December 11, 2001 Interview of the Vice President by Jim Angle of Fox TV News

²¹ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/vp20020215.html>

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²³ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/04/text/20030409-4.html>

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WMD

From the training manuals and documents that we've seized in the war on terror, and from the interrogations we've conducted, we know the terrorists are determined to acquire weapons of mass destruction, and to use them against us. With September 11th as a fresh memory, no rational person can doubt that terrorists would use such weapons of mass murder the moment they are able to do so.

The government of the United States has a moral duty to confront those threats, and to do whatever it takes to defeat them. And as the leading power, we have a further responsibility to help keep the peace of the world and to prevent terrorists and their sponsors from plunging the world into horrific violence.²⁴

It is this alliance between terrorist networks seeking weapons of mass destruction and rogue states developing or already possessing these weapons that constitutes the gravest current threat to America's national security.

Therefore, a vital element of our strategy against terror must be to break the alliance between terrorist organizations and terrorist-sponsoring states.²⁵

Iraq

MR. RUSSERT: Saddam Hussein, your old friend, his government had this to say: "The American cowboy is rearing the fruits of crime against humanity." If we determine that Saddam Hussein is also harboring terrorists, and there's a track record there, would we have any reluctance of going after Saddam Hussein?

VICE PRES. CHENEY: No.

MR. RUSSERT: Do we have evidence that he's harboring terrorists?

VICE PRES. CHENEY: There is--in the past, there have been some activities related to terrorism by Saddam Hussein. But at this stage, you know, the focus is over here on al-Qaida and the most recent events in New York. Saddam Hussein's bottled up, at this point, but clearly, we continue to have a fairly tough policy where the Iraqis are concerned.

MR. RUSSERT: Do we have any evidence linking Saddam Hussein or Iraqis to this operation?

VICE PRES. CHENEY: No.²⁶

There is also a grave danger that al Qaeda or other terrorists will join with outlaw regimes that have

²⁴ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/04/text/20030409-4.html>

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²⁵ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/04/text/20030409-4.html>

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²⁶ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/vp20010916.html>

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these weapons to attack their common enemy, the United States of America. That is why confronting the threat posed by Iraq is not a distraction from the war on terror. It is absolutely crucial to winning the war on terror. Saddam Hussein is harboring terrorists and the instruments of terror. He is pressing forward with weapons of mass destruction -- weapons he's already used in his war against Iran and against his own people. His regime has had high-level contacts with al Qaeda going back a decade and has provided training to al Qaeda terrorists. And as the President has said, "Iraq could decide on any given day to provide biological or chemical weapons to a terrorist group or to individual terrorists" -- which is why the war on terror will not be won till Iraq is completely and verifiably deprived of weapons of mass destruction. (Applause.)

The government of the United States understands that just as World War II was waged in both Europe and the Pacific, the war on terror must be waged on many fronts at once. As we destroy the terrorist networks and hunt down the killers, we must simultaneously confront the regime that is developing weapons for the sole purpose of inflicting death on a massive scale.²⁷

Two nights ago, I was very proud as the President delivered his State of the Union address and set forth a full agenda for the nation for 2003 and beyond. This is going to be a consequential year in the history of our nation and in the history of freedom. We have many responsibilities, but we don't have the luxury of taking them one at a time. We must meet them all at once.²⁸

That is why confronting the threat posed by Iraq is not a distraction from the war on terror, it is absolutely crucial to winning the war on terror. (Applause.) America seeks a world of peace, but we will not accept a serious threat to our country, to our friends, and to our allies. Next Wednesday, Secretary of State Powell will present information and intelligence to the U.N. Security Council about Iraq's ongoing defiance. Our purpose is not simply to follow a process, it is to end the terrible threats to the civilized world. And as the President said the other night, the course of this nation does not depend upon the decisions of others. (Applause.)²⁹

In downtown Baghdad this morning, we are seeing evidence of the collapse of any central regime authority. The streets are full of people celebrating. While pockets of regime security forces may remain, they appear to be far less effective at putting up any resistance.³⁰

²⁷ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/12/text/20021202-4.html>

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²⁸ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/01/20030130-16.html>

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There may well be hard fighting yet ahead. Regime forces are still in control in northern Iraq -- in Mosul and Kirkuk and Tikrit. Yet the conclusion of the war will mark one of the most extraordinary military campaigns ever conducted. It's proceeded according to a carefully drawn plan with fixed objectives and flexibility in meeting them. In the early days of the war, the plan was criticized by some retired military officers embedded in TV studios. (Laughter.) But with every day and every advance by our coalition forces, the wisdom of that plan becomes more apparent. Secretary Rumsfeld, General Franks, General Myers and General Pace at Pentagon -- and their subordinates -- have done a superb job. It's been a most impressive performance. And coming on the heels of the Afghanistan operation last year, it's proof positive of the success of our efforts to transform our military to meet the challenges of the 21st century.³¹

In dealing with such an enemy, we must expect vicious tactics until the regime's final breath. The hardest combat could still be ahead of us. Only the outcome can be predicted with certainty: Iraq will be disarmed of its weapons of mass destruction; the regime will end; and the Iraqi people will be free.

In removing the terror regime from Iraq, we send a very clear message to all groups that operate by means of terror and violence against the innocent. The United States and our coalition partners are showing that we have the capacity and the will to wage war on terror -- and to win decisively.³²

The end of Saddam's regime will remove a source of violence and instability in a vital part of the world. A new regime in Iraq will also serve as a dramatic and inspiring example of freedom to other nations in the Middle East. As President Bush has said: "The United States, with other countries, will work to advance liberty and peace in that region. Our goal will not be achieved overnight, but it can come over time. The power and the appeal of human liberty is felt in every life and every land. And the greatest power of freedom is to overcome hatred and violence and turn the creative gifts of men and women to the pursuits of peace."³³

The citizens of Iraq, like so many oppressed peoples before them, are coming to know the kind of men and women that America sends forth to meet danger and to defend freedom.³⁴

³¹ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/04/text/20030409-4.html>

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Shooting Down Commercial Planes

MR. RUSSERT: So if the United States government became aware that a hijacked commercial airline was destined for the White House or the Capitol, we would take the plane down?

VICE PRES. CHENEY: Yes. The president made the decision, on my recommendation as well, wholeheartedly conquered in the decision he made, that if the plane would not divert, if they wouldn't pay any attention to instructions to move away from the city, as a last resort, our pilots were authorized to take them out. Now, people say, you know, that's a horrendous decision to make. Well, it is. You've got an airplane full of American citizens, civilians, captured by hostages, captured by terrorists, headed and are you going to, in fact, shoot it down, obviously, and kill all those Americans on board? And you have to ask yourself, "If we had had combat air patrol up over New York and we'd had the opportunity to take out the two aircraft that hit the World Trade Center, would we have been justified in doing that?" I think absolutely we would have. Now, it turned out we did not have to execute on that authorization. But there were some--a few moments when we thought we might, when planes were incoming and we didn't know whether or not they were a problem aircraft until they'd diverted and gone elsewhere and been able to resolve it.³⁵

Open Society

But if we go after the terrorists, if we deny them sanctuary, if we take out their bases and their locations where they operate, that's probably the most effective way to deal with this threat. But we have to recognize, no matter how good we are, no matter how aggressively we pursue this, we're likely to be subject to that partly by the very nature of our society. We're an open society, we love it that way, that's very important to preserve that, and not to let the terrorists win by turning ourselves into some kind of police state.³⁶

Military Tribunals

The basic proposition here is that somebody who comes into the United States of America illegally, who conducts a terrorist operation killing thousands of innocent Americans, men, women, and children, is not a lawful combatant. They don't deserve to be treated as a prisoner of war. They don't deserve the same guarantees and safeguards that would be used for an American citizen going through the normal judicial process. This -- they will have a fair trial, but it'll be under the procedures of a military tribunal and rules and regulations to be established in connection with that. We think it's the appropriate way to go. We think it's -- guarantees that we'll have the kind of treatment of these individuals that we believe they deserve.³⁷

³⁵ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/vp20010916.html>

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³⁶ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/vp20010916.html>

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³⁷ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/text/vp20011114-1.html>

Remarks by Vice President Dick Cheney to the U.S. Chamber of Commerce November 14, 2001 Wednesday 12:09 PM

Gloria Borger: Mr. Vice President, the president has approved special military tribunals for foreigners accused of terrorism.

Vice President Cheney: Yes.

Gloria Borger: Are we now going to have secret trials?

Vice President Cheney: The question of tribunals, the precedent for it is there. It was used by FBI in World War II with respect to German saboteurs who were sent into the United States to commit acts of sabotage. We set up a military tribunal. These individuals were tried, found guilty and executed.

The same kind of arrangement was used for Abraham Lincoln's assassins during the Civil War. So, it's been done before. The Supreme Court has upheld the president's ability to establish this kind of process. And that's what we've done.

These people are not American citizens. They come into the United States or they conspire to support **attacks designed to kill thousands, perhaps hundreds of thousands, of Americans, innocent people - men, women and children. They should not be entitled to the same kind of treatment that an American citizen would, going through the normal law enforcement process.**

They will get a fair trial. But when the President designates certain individuals who we believe are members of Al Qaeda or another kind of terrorist network who have committed terrorist acts against the United States or who have provided sanctuary for terrorists, he'll have the authority under this procedure to designate those individuals to be tried, prosecuted if you will, through this military tribunal system. And that's as it should be. It's the right thing to do.³⁸

Threat Levels

Gloria Borger: Has the likelihood of a new terror attack in this country increased or decreased, would you say, in the last couple of weeks?

Vice President Cheney: The threat level has clearly gone up in recent weeks because of reporting we've received that led us to believe that in fact there was the likelihood of an additional attack. You never can be certain. If nothing then happens after the threat level's gone up, it may be that your original reporting was inaccurate. It may also be that as you raise the threat level and everybody went up on sort of all-alert kind of status that we discouraged the attack or that we did something to disrupt it or to throw off the timing and they had to back off and regroup. That happens sometimes, too. But there's no question that the threat level is still pretty significant, especially if we come to the end of the road here for bin Laden and Afghanistan and we're successful in wrapping him up.

That, in and of itself, could be a signal that would trigger some kind of a revenge attack, if you will, by people loyal to bin Laden. So it doesn't end, necessarily with him. In the end, we can't wrap it up unless we do get him. **The best defense against a terrorist attack is to go destroy the terrorist.** And then we're doing that.

But there's still going to be some period of time here, even after we complete operations in Afghanistan. And the terrorist threat is worldwide. He's got cells all over the world. And even if we sort of chop off

³⁸ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/text/vp20011114.html>

Interview of the Vice President by CBS's 60 Minutes II, November 14, 2001

the head, if you will, we may still find that the al Qaeda organization is there. It's in place. Somebody else rises to lead it and that we continue to have to deal with that threat.³⁹

The US Military is Professional

The precision of our weapons can spare the lives of innocent civilians.⁴⁰

The conduct of our military does more than bring credit to the country; it reflects the basic character of the American people. This is a good, decent, generous country. We fight not for revenge against our enemies, but for the freedom and security of our own people ... and for the peace of the world.⁴¹

As a former Secretary of Defense, I know the conduct of our military does more than bring credit to the country, it reflects the basic fundamental character of the American people. This is a good, a decent, and a generous land. We fight not for revenge against our enemies, but for the freedom and security of own people and for the peace of the world.⁴²

For all the challenges we face, the United States of America has never been stronger than we are today. We are using our great strength not to dominate others, but to lift the dark threat of terrorism from our country and from our world.⁴³

Since the war, our forces have conducted themselves with all of the skill and integrity that President Bush and the American people expected of them.⁴⁴

By their skill and courage, the American armed forces joined by the finest of allies are making this

³⁹ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/text/vp20011114.html>

Interview of the Vice President by CBS's 60 Minutes II, November 14, 2001

⁴⁰ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/vicepresident/news-speeches/speeches/vp20020215.html>

February 15, 2002 Ritz Carlton, Washington, DC [Remarks by the Vice President to the Council on Foreign Relations](#)

⁴¹ [The Vice President Makes Remarks at an event for Representative Saxby Chambliss](#)

AS PREPARED July 19, 2002

⁴² <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/12/text/20021202-4.html>

For Immediate Release Office of the Vice President December 2, 2002, [Air National Guard Senior Leadership Conference](#), Adams Mark Hotel, Denver, Colorado

⁴³ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2002/12/text/20021202-4.html>

For Immediate Release Office of the Vice President December 2, 2002, [Air National Guard Senior Leadership Conference](#), Adams Mark Hotel, Denver, Colorado

⁴⁴ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/04/text/20030409-4.html>

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nation and the world more secure. They are bringing freedom where there is tyranny, relief where there is suffering. As a former Secretary of Defense, I've never been more proud of those who wear the uniform of the United States military.⁴⁵

⁴⁵ <http://www.whitehouse.gov/news/releases/2003/04/text/20030409-4.html>

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