

hell freezes over unless you let the inspections go forward.”

Now, I have not ruled out—or in—any further action of any kind because there are still all kinds of unresolved questions about the integrity of the inspection process, and we’re working on that. But keep in mind, Iraq’s capacity to do damage to its neighbors has been dramatically eroded because of the sanctions process. There are a lot of countries that would like to relax it because they would benefit from that relaxation. But we have an obligation to try to limit the vulnerability not only of Americans but of the rest of the world to chemical and biological warfare.

This is not about refighting the Gulf war. It’s not about Kuwait or anybody else. It’s about—there’s a reason those U.N. resolutions passed and a reason the world is rightfully concerned about trying to contain the damage of chemical and biological warfare.

So we’re going to stay firm, and I’m not ruling in or out anything, but we’re being vigilant. But keep in mind, what he tried to do didn’t work. What he wanted was a relaxation of the sanctions in return for just going back to business as usual, and that strategy failed. And therefore, his capacity to do more harm is not materializing.

Federal Funding for Medical Research

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Well, let me basically say, I think you will see a significant increase in medical research coming out of this Congress. It’s one thing we have bipartisan agreement on. It is something we know we have to do to try to offset the cutbacks to our health institutions that have come not only from the HMO’s but from our attempts to save money in the Medicare and Medicaid programs which indirectly, at least, funded a lot of the teaching and research hospitals of the country. And I think you will see a big step forward there.

Support for the Arts

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. She asked if we saw any future in national support for the arts. I think that we have defeated the effort coming from the Republican right to destroy the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. I don’t think that will be revived; I don’t think it will. I think the real

question is—since in some cases it’s life or death; in other cases it’s largely symbolic support. It says that we think this is important, an important national purpose.

What I have looked at is whether or not there was some way we could institutionalize and make permanent more of a genuine endowment on the arts—and we’re batting that around and asking for ideas around the country—in a way that would take it out of the annual political debate, which would be helpful to some of our Republican friends who really do want to help, want to be supportive. I personally think it’s very important, and I think that there will not be the onslaught there has been in the past to kill it. The question is whether we can institutionalize it maybe even at a higher level and make it permanent.

Go ahead.

Cuba-U.S. Relations

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Well, I hope so. But that’s up to Cuba. You know, we were making real progress in our relations with Cuba, and even in the Cuban-American community there was ample evidence of changing attitudes and an attempt to change within Cuba, reciprocated by change in the United States. That was the concept of the Cuba Democracy Act, which passed before I became President. The Democratic Congress passed it; President Bush signed it; I supported it strongly, and I used it. And it was a series of carrots and sticks designed to say, as Cuba opens, we will open to Cuba, like two flowers coming to bloom at the same time.

And then they murdered those people. They shot those people out of the sky, in international waters. And it would not have been legal for them to shoot them down if they had been in the territorial waters of Cuba or flying right over Havana, for that reason, under the Chicago Convention to which Cuba was a signatory.

So innocent people were killed. That put a deep chill on our relationship. It led to a new and more rigorous act being passed, which would prevent me from lifting the embargo without the support of Congress, among other things.

But my position, however, is the same as it has always been: I think there ought to be a reciprocal relationship here where, as Cuba shows more support for human rights and democracy, we should open up. We should try