

understand is the character of our Nation. They don't understand what I know, that the great strength of this country really isn't in our airplanes or guns; it's not in our stock market. Those are parts of our country that are strong, but the great strength is in the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens. This is a nation of a lot of character. It's a strong nation because we're strong people. It is a nation that is determined and patient, but it's also a nation that's compassionate and decent.

The evil ones hit us, and they caused a lot of loss of life and a lot of anguish, a lot of fright and a lot of fear. But they also caused folks all across our country to search their soul about life. They caused moms and dads to ask the fundamental question of what was the most important thing for them. The good news is about America, moms and dads all across America are now saying, "My most important job is to love my children with all my heart."

What the evil ones did is they reminded us that there are things important in life, such as loving your neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself. People ask me all the time, what can they do to help fight terror. And one thing you can do is walk across the street and tell a neighbor in need you love them. If you find somebody

who's shut in, just spend a little time. If you want to fight evil, mentor a child who needs to learn how to read, support your teachers, get involved with public education. If you want to fight evil, make a contribution to a local charity, go to your church or synagogue and mosque, and figure out how you can help a community become a better place.

That's what's happening all across America. You know, folks, we're going to win the war, but we're also going to win because the goodness of America will overshadow the evil of those who take innocent life.

It is such honor to be moving around the country, to be with the good folks who make the country strong. I want to thank you so very much for your hospitality; I want to thank you for your prayer. May God bless America. Thank you all. Thank you all very much, and God bless. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1:15 p.m. in the BMP Hangar at the Springfield-Branson Regional Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Jim Talent, candidate for U.S. Senate in Missouri; and Lori Hauser Holden, wife of Gov. Bob Holden of Missouri.

Remarks in Aurora, Missouri January 14, 2002

Thank you all very much.

So there I was, sitting in the Residency at the White House—[laughter]—watching a football game, eating a pretzel. [Laughter] And the next thing I know is, Barney, the Scottish terrier, is wondering what the heck happened. [Laughter] I want you all to know that I learned a good lesson, and that is: I should have listened to my mother. [Laughter] She said, "Never try to swal-

low your pretzel until you chewed it." [Laughter]

Thank you all for coming, and thank you for letting me come. If you see some of the folks who lined the road coming in, tell them thanks. Really, I wish we had a bigger hall so I could thank everybody in person, but there's a lot of people from your communities that are out there to wave, and I'm really grateful. Thank the