

**A NEW VISION OF THE MIDDLE EAST**  
**GEORGE H.W. BUSH, 41<sup>st</sup> President of the United States**  
*February 26, 2003*

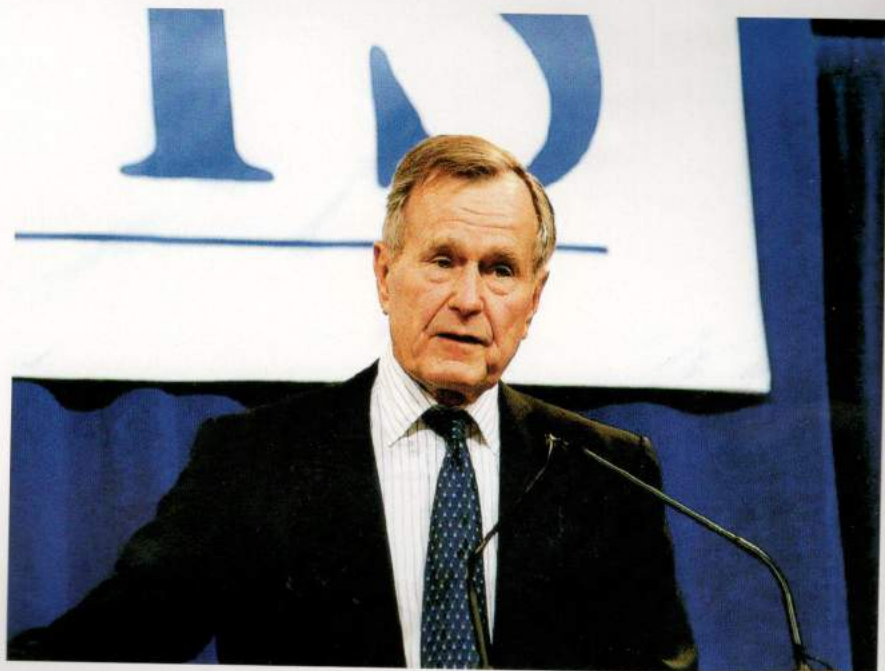


The 2003 Issam M. Fares Lecture

George H. W. Bush  
41st President of  
the United States  
February 26, 2003



**TUFTS**



## **GEORGE H.W. BUSH**

George H.W. Bush was elected President of the United States on November 8, 1988, sworn in on January 20, 1989, and served until January 20, 1993. During his term in office, the Cold War ended; the threat of nuclear war was drastically reduced; the Soviet Union ceased to exist, replaced by a democratic Russia; the Berlin Wall fell and Germany was reunified; Eastern Europe and the Baltic States all became free; and President Bush put together an unprecedented coalition of 32 nations to liberate Kuwait, thus paving the way for Israel and her Arab neighbors at the Madrid Peace Conference to begin anew their difficult quest for peace in the Middle East.

President Bush signed into law, among other things, the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Clean Air Act – landmark civil rights and environmental legislation. He also successfully fought for and negotiated the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which was later signed into law.

Since leaving office, President Bush has written two books – «A World Transformed,» coauthored with General Brent Scowcroft, and «All the Best,» a collection of letters. On November 6, 1997, the George Bush Presidential Library and Museum opened to the public. Along with the George Bush School of Government and Public Service, the library is located on the campus of Texas A & M University in College Station, Texas. It is the tenth presidential library in existence.



## Issam Fares

It is a great honor for me to welcome President Bush to the Issam Fares Lecture Series at Tufts University.

In 1994 President Bush opened this Lecture Series and set the tone at the highest levels of critical analysis and moral responsibility. He brought forth to this forum the wealth of experience and wisdom he has garnered in a lifetime of public service.

From his perspective as the leader of the sole superpower, he reviewed the role of the American President as he dealt with international affairs, and particularly with the endemic problems of the Middle East. The President had by then formed a broad international coalition that liberated Kuwait, and had initiated an intensive political process to resolve the Palestinian-Israeli conflict.

Under his leadership, Washington and Moscow chaired a peace conference in Madrid, Spain in October 1991. The Conference brought together for the first time Arabs and Israelis in direct negotiations. The process that started in Madrid gradually gained momentum and promised lasting peace in the Middle East. Unfortunately, new and unpredicted events halted this process and brought us to the violence and chaos that now prevail in our region.

Mr. President, Ladies, and Gentlemen,

Successive world Leaders: President Giscard D'Estaing, President Bill Clinton, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, Secretary James Baker, General Colin Powell and Senator and Majority Leader George Mitchell spoke all from this Forum and addressed the Middle East Crisis from their perspectives and from the facts of their times.

Today, United States President George W. Bush is addressing the Middle East Crisis from a perspective never experienced before. This is the perspective of September 11, 2001. That one single act has changed the rules of the game and has re-shuffled all of the cards.

Deeply, and understandably, angered for being attacked in the mainland for the first time, America reacted by declaring war on terrorism worldwide. This act has received strong international support. But, in the heat of war, issues, especially those relating to the Middle East, got clouded. Though those who committed the crime were Arab Muslims, but neither the Arabs nor the Muslims can be held responsible for that evil act. Lebanon, along with almost all Arab and Islamic countries, condemned strongly this act of violence against the United States. The misguided few, should thus never be regarded as representatives of Arabs and / or Islam.



We are delighted that President George W. Bush makes this differentiation clear at every opportunity. He regularly speaks highly of Islam and Muslims and of the Arab civilization and the Arab peoples. However, the danger of mixing the good with bad persists. There is also the danger of mistaking the symptom for the cause. The symptom is easy to identify and to attack. The cause is often hidden, and not always easy to address.

There is no justification whatsoever for what happened on September 11. We must admit, however, that angry and violent individuals and groups are by-product of frustration boiling below the surface across the Arab and Islamic worlds. We thus need to go below the surface and attempt seriously to resolve conflicts and misunderstandings before they explode further. Resolving the endemic Middle East conflicts will never stop completely all types of terrorist acts, but it will definitely bring the region closer to a lasting peace.

Thus, while conducting the war on global terrorism, it is important for the United States and the countries of the Middle East to address and tackle honestly and courageously the issues that are contributing to the growth of terrorism around the globe. I would like today to stress three major issues, which I consider to be pre-requisites for a successful war on terrorism:

- The Palestinian-Israeli conflict has become by virtue of religious and political associations, an Arab-Israeli problem. And by virtue of American interests in the region, the United States has become substantially involved. It is thus the responsibility of the United States and all the countries of the region to reach quickly a just and lasting peace that would stop all violence emanating from this prolonged conflict.
- The fundamentals of American foreign policy namely: concerns for democracy, for human rights, for national aspirations, and for the norms of justice are almost non-existent in our region. The realization of these objectives ought to be faithfully pursued across the Middle East.
- Historically, the Western media has formed a simplistic cartoon-like image of Arabs and Islam. The events of 9/11 re-enforced these stereotype images. The Arab-Islamic civilization is certainly of no lesser importance in world history than the Western-Christian civilization. And as such, it deserves a greater, deeper, and more serious treatment that is presently received in the western world.

The main reason for this Tufts University Lecture Series is to enrich the cultural exchange between America and the Arab world. Here, I would like to challenge the American and Arab business communities with interests in



both parts of the world, to do a lot more to improve the understanding among our peoples. I modestly suggest that such events focus on issues that would help bring about the historic conciliation amongst the three religions that emanated from the Middle East: Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and of the civilization that arose from them.

Again, I welcome you to this Forum and I consider your return to Tufts as the beginning of a new phase in this Lecture Series. I thank you for your readiness to share always with us your views on international issues emerging and affecting the Middle East.

President Bush: Ahlan wa Sahlan, welcome Sir to this Tufts University Forum!



## George H.W. Bush

### The Fares Center

I am a little annoyed about one thing: if one more of you guys comes up to me and says: «Where is Barbara?» I used to be President of the United States of America, you know what I mean? And now I am either the father of the President or Barbara's husband. So thank you for your warm introduction and all of you for that warm reception. Leila (Fawaz), you should be giving this speech with your fairness, your objectivity, your professionalism, and thank you for welcoming me back to your campus. And as for my friend Issam Fares, I told a bunch of kids that I was privileged to meet with earlier, students of this wonderful school, that at this stage in my life, 78 going on 79, looking forward to my final parachute jump on June 12<sup>th</sup>, 2004, which is my 80<sup>th</sup> birthday - at this stage of my exciting life, I've concluded that these policy matters are very important but the thing that really matters to me now and to Barbara too is friendship and family. And with Issam here - I should be more respectful - the Deputy Prime Minister of our great friend Lebanon - and with Issam Fares here, I feel blessed by being with a very good close friend. And Issam thank you for your role in all of this. Let me... (Applause) And I'm glad to see some of the students here. The moral of that story is they will go to any excuse to avoid going to class and come listen to me. Not a very good judgment, but you're not in class. Look at it that way.

Now, I was very pleased really, to receive and accept this invitation. I have a great respect for the Fares Center located at this great institution of higher learning. And being here today provides yet another reminder of how time does fly by, for it's been noted it was nine years ago that I was last invited to come here and deliver this Fares lecture. Maybe it's 'cause we're getting older but time seems to go much faster now. Some of you old guys out there - and I spot one or two of my generation - not you, sir, but some others over here - maybe you know what I'm talking about. Time goes flying by.

Today, of course, the original concept that led to the creation of the Fares Lecture Series is expanded now almost to also encompass a wonderful Center, complete by its own faculty, curriculum, broad range of academic programs. And I share the great hopes that you have for what you hope to accomplish at the Fares Center. And I want to salute Issam again and all in the Tufts community, many of the leaders of whom are represented here today, for your collective efforts to make this vibrant Center an effective reality.

I've a certain appreciation for that, for what you've been going through, to get a center like this, a meaningful center like this, rolling. We went through a similar exercise down in Texas for my library, which is located at Texas



A&M University, when we created the Bush School of Government & Public Service. I'm not here to recruit but if any of you guys want to go to Texas for a good Master's program in either public service or international affairs, think about us. We're a few steps behind the Fares Center, but we're good. And you'd be welcome, I tell you.

Launching a forward-looking enterprise like this takes a lot of hard work and a lot of people who share a commitment to certain ideals. And my experience at Texas A&M has taught me, and returning here to Tufts reinforces this: few things in life are more meaningful. I've been blessed in life by doing many different things. And this concept of teaching a handful of young kids that public service is a noble calling - in spite of all the flack out there from the press and controversy that swirls around. I love the challenge and I love seeing these kids understand that serving others is what a lot of life ought to be about. In our case, we started our school to help inculcate in the future generations the idea that, despite the controversy that sometimes erupts, public service remains a noble calling. And good people of all political persuasions can - and should - get involved in the process. And, Mr. President, I was impressed by your remarks, your assessment of the Fares Center and of what Tufts is trying to do in this regard. It's outstanding.

At the heart of our school is the idea that society is best served when informed citizens participate in the debate to help tackle the big issues of their time. And only through fair and open competition in a market place of ideas can true, lasting, enlightened progress be established and then harnessed to spread the hope of peace with prosperity.

I know this Center is similarly founded upon higher-minded ideals that are first celebrating the rich heritage of the Eastern Mediterranean cultures and second, addressing the many complex and compelling challenges that the region's people face so that they too can realize the unlimited promise of this new era.

On both fronts, I believe this Center is uniquely positioned to make a truly positive and long-lasting contribution. And I believe institutions like this can serve and increasingly must serve a constructive role in strengthening the general awareness of this often misunderstood part of the world, the Middle East.

As a group most directly involved in fostering this informed dialogue and debate, I particularly want to salute the faculty here for their pivotal leadership. Not many people know this, but I spent a year back in the late 70s teaching

I was an adjunct professor at Rice University in Houston, my hometown, and I asked what that meant - «adjunct.» «Does that mean you don't get paid?» So, some thought I was over-compensated anyway, but I loved my brief time in the world of academia.

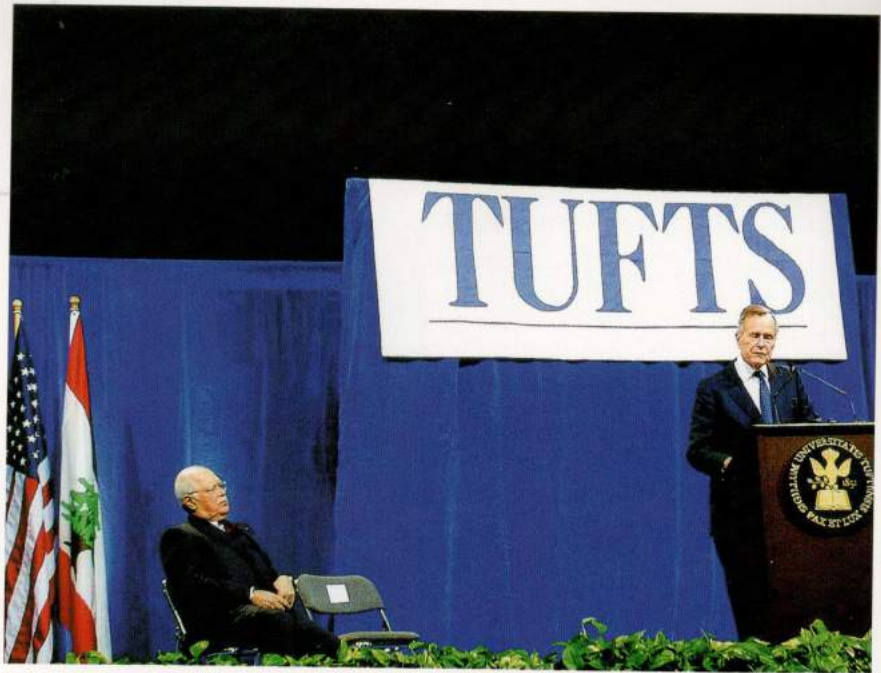
And I have great respect for the men and women who teach. They, maybe, make a ton of more money somewhere else, but they're teaching because they believe in inculcating values and history into a handful of young people.

Teaching, as I discovered, has its own reward. My friend, the late Steve Ambrose who passed away last fall, said he loved being a professor and a historian because it gave him a chance to contribute in a positive way to the world's knowledge. And in the same light, the faculty here at the Fares Center, and in the broader Tufts family, has a tremendously important role to play contributing in a positive way to the lives of the young men and women who are drawn to this campus in pursuit of academic achievement and intellectual enlightenment. And together with a dedicated team of administrators and a steadfast family of supporters, you are indeed lighting the path to understanding in a positive way at a critical time in our country's history.

I was invited to come here this afternoon to share a few perspectives on the Middle East, and as this audience knows better than most, it's a familiar exercise for speakers at lectures like this to suggest that there has never been a more timely occasion to discuss the subject they were addressing. So what I'll do here is say some remarks and I'll be glad to field some questions.

Notice that I said «field,» I didn't say «answer.» You know when you're President, you go to all these press conferences you see all the time. And the guy's like my friend and he's a friend, and he's helping us on our fight again with the war against cancer, Sam Donaldson gets up: «Mr. President, you can't leave here sir, until you give me an answer on this.» Back then, you had to tell him: «Thank you Sam, very much. I'd like to try to help you with that.» And you know, the day that the Berlin Wall came down, I see my friend John Sununu is here, the famous female reporter was standing next to my desk and she said: «Mr. President, why don't you go to the Berlin Wall and dance with the young kids? Families are being reunited as we speak. Why can't you do that like Senator Mitchell and Gephardt suggest?» The stupidest idea I've ever heard, for me to stick my fingers in Gorbachev's eyes when things are going very smoothly towards the unified Germany. But instead of telling her that I





### Twelve years after the Madrid Conference

Now, if I don't like your questions, heck with you, I'm not going to answer. We'll go to the next one, because I'm a free spirit.

Today, we are beginning to see some difficult and defining days in the Middle East. But at the outset, let me say that despite of the seemingly unending cycle of bloodshed that has claimed too many innocent victims, despite the heartbreaking suffering that we see on all sides, despite a bitter rancor that continues to plague the region, I believe that in the longer run, not the excessively long, but in the longer run, the 21<sup>st</sup> century will offer leaders throughout the Eastern Mediterranean a real chance to emerge from their current period of conflict and begin building a brighter future worthy of their proud peoples. And I know such optimistic sentiments are not now widely in fashion and understandably so. For me to suggest as much might even sound on the naïve side.

But you have to remember that in my case you're looking at someone who was right there when that was previously thought impossible before. Namely, the region's quest for peace took hold in the region, and it seems like an eternity ago. And yet it's been a dozen years since we convened the Madrid Peace Conference in Spain together with Mikhail Gorbachev and the Soviet Union was enthusiastic about this.

As long as I live, I will never forget walking into that peace conference at Madrid - this followed Desert Storm - with Gorbachev at my side and seeing a room full of Arabs and Israelis sitting across from each other and beginning to talk about peace. It made a profound impression on me. And I believe it can happen again. As long as I live I can't get it out of my mind because it was so very emotional.

Incidentally, the Madrid Conference would never have happened if the international coalition that fought together in Desert Storm had exceeded the United Nations mandate and gone on its own. If the United States had gone on its own, gone into Baghdad after Saddam and his forces surrendered and agreed to disarm, the coalition would've instantly shattered and the political capital that we've gained as a result of our principle restraint to jumpstart the peace process would've been lost. We would've lost all support from our coalition with a possible exception of England. And we would've lost all support from the smaller nations in the United Nations as well.

And out of that momentum that we achieved in Madrid, we later saw that historic handshake on the south lawn of the White House between Rabin and Arafat; the Oslo Accords that followed. And we saw King Hussein of

**Cooperation between Jordan  
and the United States**

*«You've got to reach out to the other person. You've got to convince him that long-term friendship should trump short-term adversity.»*

*«I've seen the people of the Middle East lift their own eyes to the horizon, make a clear choice for peace, realizing that they have more to gain by choosing hope over hate and seeking a common future forged by dialogue and direct negotiation.»*

**New vision required for the path  
of peace and stopping stereotypes**



Jordan, my late dear friend, join the steady march on the path to peace. You know there is an interesting case - King Hussein of Jordan, who was a friend of the United States for many years and cooperated with us on many regional problems and his judgment was very good. But during Desert Storm, he, along with Yemen and Arafat and the PLO, got in Saddam Hussein's orbit. But the minute the war ended, this is why I'm hopeful about the future, I determined, and I think King Hussein determined, that we will get the relationship between Jordan and the United States back on track. And to his everlasting credit, he went more than his fair share of the way and we did get it back on track. And I think it was a good thing and there is a message in that for those who, today, say, «How could we ever put things together? How could we ever get talking when we have such acrimony and such bad feelings?»

It can be done. You've got to reach out to the other person. You've got to convince him that long-term friendship should trump short-term adversity. And for that I salute King Hussein who understood that very well and, incidentally, at the end of his life he saw very clearly the threat from Saddam Hussein that worries us all today.

I'm sure some of you may feel the same way. But today's problems in my view cry out for more statesmen like King Hussein. And also Yitzhak Rabin of Israel. I knew him and worked with him, and he was willing to reach out for peace. He was a wonderful man, gunned down in a horrible way in his own country. These are bold and courageous leaders enough to stand down the extremists and commit themselves and their people to dialogue.

My point in noting this well-known chain of events is that, if only for a time, I've seen hope surmount hate in the Middle East itself and I've seen a forward-looking vision and a collective courage gain momentum and break the truly tragic cycle of bloodshed. Most importantly, I've seen the people of the Middle East lift their own eyes to the horizon, make a clear choice for peace, realizing that they have more to gain by choosing hope over hate and seeking a common future forged by dialogue and direct negotiation. And today, of course, the peace process that emerged as a direct result of Desert Storm, where an unprecedented international coalition, numerous partners, joined together to defend Kuwaiti sovereignty and preserve the role of international law.

And to put the Middle East back on the path of peace, in my view, it requires the parties there, once again, to choose the hard route, take the road less traveled.

*«I believe there are several dangerous misperceptions in the Middle East that must be resolved before the parties can find their way back to the path of peace.»*

*«I reject this ignorant stereotype that was adopted in some media outlets and elsewhere that all Saudis are our enemies.»*

It's going to require new vision to be advanced by the region's leaders and embraced by the people. It requires that they have the courage once again to rise above violence and recrimination and to choose hope over hate. And it's going to require Israelis and Palestinians to sit down and talk to each other. It's not going to be solved if those talks somehow can't be renewed and somehow can't be moved forward. But before that can happen, I believe there are several dangerous misperceptions in the Middle East that must be resolved before the parties can find their way back to the path of peace. And I furthermore believe that there are a number of false stereotypes that must be discarded so Arabs and Americans can rise above current suspicions and rebuild the harmonious and respectful relations that marked our earlier history.

For example, in certain quarters here in the United States, there is a certain ugly stereotyping concerning Saudi Arabia that emerged, maybe for understandable reasons, but emerged after 9/11. This stereotyping offends me and concerns me. And our President has spoken out against it several times. It's suggested that because most of the hijackers were Saudi citizens, the Saudi government and the Saudi people were also anti-American. And in my view, nothing can be further from the truth. We have different systems but with the exception of the small fringe element that frankly exists in every society. Remember Timothy McVeigh - a lot of people were going, saying, «He's probably an Arab terrorist,» - jumping to stereotypical conclusions only to find out he's a right-wing nut.

The Saudis are still our staunch allies and friends and I don't like it when some of the great newspapers in this country try to make enemies out of Saudi Arabia or any other country out there except for one that I'm going to get to. And, if I might add, together with the Palestinian statehood initiative announced last June by the President, when our President called for statehood for the Palestinians, I believe the plan introduced by Crown Prince Abdullah of Saudi Arabia last year to advance the peace process does offer real hope for ending the bloodshed in the Middle East. And so I reject this ignorant stereotype that was adopted in some media outlets and elsewhere that all Saudis are our enemies. This is as wrong as it can be. Just as it is wrong for anyone to try and cast a cloud of suspicion over all individuals of Arab descent, be they Christians or followers of the Muslim faith. Right after 9/11, I was deeply touched and still am by the comments of a little Arab - American girl, American citizen in the United States. She asked this question: «Does

*«I believe that with institutions like yours, Leila, offering positive leadership to foster a constructive dialogue between Arabs and Americans, we will indeed continue working to resist these false stereotypes and overcome the distorted perception.»*

*«The United States wants to see all the people of the Eastern Mediterranean, indeed throughout the Arab world, live in peace and security. We want them to have the freedom to determine their own destiny. And most of all, we want to see every child in that region grow up with a chance to succeed in a world full of opportunities and wonder.»*

this mean you're going to knock down my school?» She said something that really penetrated.

And so my message for Americans is that we have to remain tolerant. We've got to continue striving to be a kinder and gentler nation in this regard, choosing hope over hate. And I honestly believe we will.

I believe that with institutions like yours, Leila, offering positive leadership to foster a constructive dialogue between Arabs and Americans, we will indeed continue working to resist these false stereotypes and overcome the distorted perception. But if this is my message, my belief when it comes to American people, that we must cast aside misinformed theories and build new levels of understanding, I will also say the same thing to any family, any parent, indeed any child in the Middle East today. My message to them too is to choose hope over hate and reject the false stereotypes and distorted perception about the United States of America.

My bishop, a man of peace, said that everywhere he goes he feels that he has to apologize for the United States. I don't feel that way at all. We should be proud of what we've done to help people. We ought to continue to try to help and to bring peace to a troubled world. So I don't go around apologizing for the United States and when I go abroad I don't find people loathe us like this good man said.

The United States wants to see all the people of the Eastern Mediterranean, indeed throughout the Arab world, live in peace and security. We want them to have the freedom to determine their own destiny. And most of all, we want to see every child in that region grow up with a chance to succeed in a world full of opportunities and wonder. And yet, many people through the Middle East and beyond aren't so sure that the United States has their best interest in mind. And the most obvious example today of a distorted perception of our country relates to the debates over disarming Iraq.

Many assert that whether or not there is a war hinges on oil. This simply is not true. Those signs are not expressing the truth: «No oil for war.» It said the same back in Kuwait in 1990, in 1991, the same signs. And today the only thing that happened for oil and Kuwait was that Saddam Hussein left the country and tried to burn up all the oil fields. And they were restored and Kuwait still controls its fields and they can make the leases to whomever they want.

Signs read, «No war for oil,» but I'm sorry, I just feel it's based on certain ignorance, if you want to know the truth. It was about liberating a sovereign

**War against Iraq was about  
liberation not about oil**

**Saddam Hussein must stop trying to develop weapons of mass destruction**

nation back then and it wasn't about the United States trying to get control of Middle East oil.

Today the world has once again joined together to tell Saddam that he has crossed another line, one that in many respects is deadly.

Just in November, in fact, the 15 members of the United Nations Security Council including Syria, I should note, voted unanimously to demand that Iraq do now what Iraq should have done 12 years ago: stop trying to develop weapons of mass destruction that can be used against people in their region. And instead use that money that they have, that comes from oil, and to use all of its intelligence capability, the Iraqi people, their skills, their experience, to make products for peace, not weapons for war.

Again, I hope that these demonstrators, who are speaking from their hearts, take a hard look at it and just see how illogical it is if the United States would want to go to war in Iraq or Kuwait to get the oil. We have access to oil all over the Middle East. That's not going to change. And we're not going to seek hegemony in any one of those countries. It's about making Saddam Hussein give up his insane quest for weapons of mass destruction, weapons he's used against Iran and even his own people, before something happens to make September 11 look mild by comparisons.

The United States is not looking for an opportunity to hurt the Iraqi people. Our goal there is not regional hegemony as some suggest. It is compliance with a wide array of United Nations resolutions. It's for Iraq to get rid of weapons of mass destruction and, like every last protestor we've seen, the President shares the hope that this disarmament can be accomplished peacefully.

**Between father and son**

You know people say, «What's it like to have your son criticized?» Well you're looking at one that came in for his fair share, but probably deservedly, at least on some things, probably just emotionally so on others. It hurts a lot when it's your son. It hurts a lot more, probably, when they're criticizing, especially when some of the criticism is just meaningless in terms of having any intellectual base to it.

I know there is a false stereotype out there that our President wants to blow it alone, rush into war. That is totally false. I know there's many here on this campus, many in the United States, many in my state, many more over in Europe and throughout the Arab world who oppose war on any term. And that is a sentiment, as I said earlier, that I can understand. I would have asked hypothetically: «Were we wrong back in 1942?» Had we gone into World War II a little earlier to save 1 million Jews and to save 1 million Poles: Would



**War is not between the Muslims  
and the United States**

that have been wrong to use force? I don't know how the protesters who were saying, «No oil, no war...» in any circumstance would answer a question like that. But I think there's such a concept as 'a just war.'

Like many others who serve in the military, I've seen it first-hand. And I saw, as a young man, and I don't think any veteran, and certainly any President, could want to go to war. Abraham Lincoln often referred to being driven to his knees by the weight of the decision to send young men into harm's way. And even though now there's a lesser scale than the country being totally divided where brother is fighting brother in the North and in the South like in Lincoln's days, I know exactly how he felt. And so does the 43<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States. Devoted to his faith, he shares the innately human desire to avoid a conflict where innocent people might lose their lives.

Now that we said that I do not have any special insights to offer on what may or may not happen from here, we only have one President at a time. And last month marked my 10 years since I left office. And now I stay out of the President's way and try not to complicate his life. I've an appreciation for the big job he has to do and so I don't go around giving advice to the 43<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States. All bets are off when it comes to Barbara. As the President put it, I give him advice when he asks for it, and Barbara gives it even when he doesn't ask for it. But in summary though, look, I can say without fear of meddling, that the United States needs to continue to make clear our respect of Islam, indeed all religions.

We cannot let Saddam Hussein's later calls cause - his Johnny-come-lately calls - about this is just Muslims versus United States, or Arabs versus the United States. It is not that. We've got a strong friendship for the vast majority of the diverse peoples in the Arab world. And we've got to continue our honor-bound duty to defeat those small bands of extremists who seek to harm our nation.

And we furthermore need to make clear our respect for the extraordinary cultures that come together in the Eastern Mediterranean to make it not unlike our country, a unique and vibrant melting pot. We need to remind ourselves this is a century of all ties of culture and economic exchanges between the West and the Middle East, such as a contribution of the Muslim Arab, Muslim Persian, its philosophers, mathematicians, to the translations of the great classics and to our common civilization across the world. We've got to remember that many in the Arab World are Christians. We've got to show respect there too. We need to make clear that the new world order we still have a chance to build is not some call for American imperialism, but rather

*«I want to see Lebanon return to a former glory as a peaceful land for business and culture, prosperous, and where people can visit without fear. And when outsiders don't try to put undue influence on this great country of which he is a very high official.»*



**A united Lebanon living in peace**

**We have to learn from our history and not repeat the costly mistakes**

**The role of the Fares Center in lighting the path to understanding**

**We do not seek hegemony; we want to protect our country**

a system in which freedom and self-determination are the widely-accepted norms.

And finally, we need to make clear that we share the dream that the Eastern Mediterranean, for long the crossroads of dynamic cultures in history, could once again be a beacon in progress and prosperity.

My friend Issam has heard me say this before but, before I die, I want to see a Lebanon and its people. To see a Lebanon united, living in peace, the crossroads of culture and intermixing of various religions where everybody is living peacefully and the individual citizens are allowed to follow their businesses, or do whatever it is, go to their villages, worship the past, and hope for the future. I think that can happen in Lebanon, and I want to see Lebanon return to a former glory as a peaceful land for business and culture, prosperous, and where people can visit without fear. And when outsiders don't try to put undue influence on this great country of which he is a very high official. I am optimistic that we can do all of this and so much more if we have the courage to choose hope over hate.

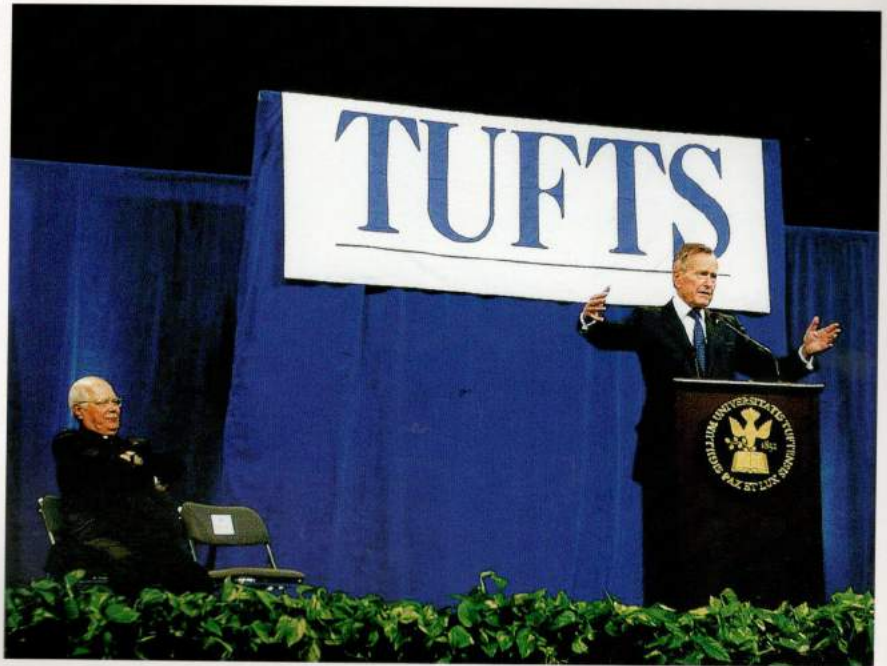
The 20<sup>th</sup> Century was the bloodiest of mankind's history. And as we stand here on the outskirts of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, we must resolve that we will learn from our history and not repeat the costly mistakes. Too many lives, too many dreams are at stake. And in the post-Cold War world, we face a new series of international challenges. And bridging the divide between East and West, strengthening our relations in that critical region, will be one of the most vital things we do. I know we have differences with European countries and they've got differences with us, some of them.

There's a vast range of coalition supporting the United States and supporting the President now, but there's a couple of quite obvious exceptions to that. But I worked on those relationships, and I feel confident that when all the hubbub dies down, when Iraq lives within the international law, you will see the United States is back together as allies and friends with both Germany and France.

In the end, one of the reasons I have high hopes for this Fares Center is that I believe you all can play a highly meaningful role in lighting the path to understanding and contributing to the world's knowledge in a very positive way. I believe it can help cast off stereotypes and misinformation on both sides and ensure that our relations are grounded in truth and rekindle the long-standing friendship and warm ties between our peoples.

We've got to keep the pressure on. It is amazing to me that just yesterday Saddam Hussein comes across a weapon that was illegal for a long, long

The happiest day of my life



time. With the pressure crawling to the fore, and the more united that pressure is, the more chance there is that this matter will be resolved in a peaceful manner.

And I hope that our allies abroad, and I hope our friends around the world, understand that. And that we do not seek hegemony. What we seek, after the horror of 9/11, is that we want to protect our country and other countries as best we can against this man, Saddam Hussein, having nuclear weapons or weapons of mass destruction.

It is just that simple. In short, I believe this kind of work to educate and with so many of you here playing an important role, will continue to inspire us all to choose hope over hate.

I know this is a nonpolitical event, but in November of 1998, Barbara and I were sitting in a little restaurant in Houston, waiting for the exit polls to come in because we had two sons up for election: one for the second biggest state in the nation, and one for the fourth biggest, on that same day. And the President rather confidently told me: «Dad, I'm gonna win by 70% of the vote.» He won by 69.8. So we didn't worry too much about the Texas reelection, but we worried about Florida.

We got the exit polls, we flew in right away in the plane, splurged, flew over Miami, and embraced our son who won a nice victory over a good man. And we're flying home, and I could see the lights of New Orleans off the side, and lights of Houston, Texas, off ahead. And I said, «Barbara, this is the happiest day of my entire life.»

She said, «What about the day we were married?» I said, «That was very nice, too, but there have been a lot of happy days for us.»

Believe it or not, this is one, seeing old friends, being received cordially here and there are many other happy things that have happened to us. And I don't know how I could single out one event, but we're just as proud of our three kids that are in public life as we are of the two that are heavily engaged in very high levels in governments.

But I can tell you this, with the fact that they are willing to serve - for those in public life who are willing to serve is enormously rewarding to their parents. And I can tell you that the more you can inculcate into yourself that the school can help inculcate into you, through this wonderful faculty, its concept that there can be no definition of a successful life that does not include service to others. The more that happens, the better chance we have for a robust economy and a wonderful peace in the years ahead.

Thank you all very, very much.