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Speech

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NEA DEMOKRATIA PARTY GREECE



Anti-Terror, Rebuilding Countries after War and Securing Peace
IDU Conservative Women's Conference

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Oklahoma Corporation Commission Chairman

Denise A. Bode

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Thank you. I am delighted and honored to join you for the Conservative Women's Parliamentary Conference, to have the privilege of becoming acquainted with conservative women leaders from around the world. It is natural that I see great promise in bringing together people of good intentions from around the world. My ancestors are Italian, Scots, Irish and Cherokee Indians. Before becoming a state less than one hundred years ago, my home state, Oklahoma, was Indian Territory. I realize that most people in the world do not even know where Oklahoma is located – it is in south central United States. Specifically, Oklahoma is immediately north of Texas. In fact, I want to encourage you to think of Oklahoma as sitting right on top of Texas.

Oklahomans have a particularly strong perspective on terrorism, a perspective that is typically American, but deepened by the fact that almost seven years ago Oklahoma was the site of the first major act of terrorism on American soil. You may recall that a truck bomb was used to destroy a federal office building. 168 people were killed. Many of the deaths were pre-school children. It remains an incomprehensible aspect of that terrorist act that the young American man who set the bomb watched those little children arriving at the child care center that morning. He detonated that bomb directly in front of the child-care center.

Thus, a terrorist act is a most horrible wound. It is a wound not only to scores, or hundreds or thousands of victims, but also to those who are struck by death or grave injury to someone they loved. Of course, the terrorist injury is more enduring because it is much more than horrible death and destruction. It is purposeful, utterly senseless death and destruction. Thus, a major terrorist act strikes horribly at the body and psyche of a community, and it radiates out from that community through its state, nation and the world.

Inevitably, where the blow is struck, the pain is greatest, the recovery is slowest and the effect most enduring. Naturally, the perspective of the



It was healing when leaders among the proudly cynical American press openly embraced the spirituality that is such a central feature of American life. Though imperfectly, our national dialogue celebrated freedom, liberty, tolerance and respect for human life. America's churches, synagogues and mosques were filled. America refocused on the importance of family. A new appreciation arose for something that an American President said over one hundred years ago, "To educate a person's mind and not educate his morals is to educate a menace to society."

America's healing also showed in patriotism. Flags were displayed everywhere, in shops, every second or third car, even hung by construction crews from their worksites. All available supplies of American flags were immediately exhausted. So, newspapers printed full-page flags to be cut out and used for display.

America's healing grew strong in a steadfast resolve to resist this evil threat. One of our founding fathers, Thomas Jefferson, said, "The spirit of our citizens, rising with the strength and majesty which show the loveliness of freedom, will make this government in practice what it is in principle, a model for the protection of man in a state of freedom and order."

Could we have been better prepared for injuries inflicted on September 11? I recently reread the testimony of the FBI Section chief on International Terrorism given before the U.S. Congress in 1998. He states that the U.S. government had adopted measures to respond to terrorism and that at that point, 5 years since the 1st Trade Center bombing, there had been no foreign directed attacks on U.S. soil. Of course, that is no longer true. But what was interesting to me were the suggestions made in 1998 that only after the attack in September have been enacted. To summarize his recommendations: get a handle on communication technology use by the terrorists, particularly new encryption programs that prevent law enforcement and the military from investigating threats and actual attacks on our soil; direct significant new financial support toward the prevention of the use and development of weapons of mass destruction by terrorists and create more formal cooperation between U.S. law enforcement, U.S. intelligence agencies and our allies around the world.

With the creation by President Bush of the Homeland Security Office at the White House, a final recommendation from another source, the Hart-



Another issue that is critical to national security that I have long advocated is a comprehensive energy policy in the U.S. In the last ten years we have increased our dependence on foreign oil imports by 20 percent from 40 to 60 percent. In the previous twenty years we only increased that dependence by 10 percent. In the previous Administration there were two Presidential findings that increasing oil imports from nations harboring terrorist posed a national security threat and yet President Clinton failed to act. Now we are faced with at least some of our oil coming from nations that are funding acts of terrorism against us with oil revenues from us. We are fortunate to have a President and Vice-President who understand that energy fuels our economy and are again promoting a balanced domestic energy policy that encourages domestic production as well as a diversified energy portfolio. At the Heritage Foundation in Washington D.C. last November, I was asked to speak on the new agenda for America following September 11 and the three areas that they believed needed priority were energy, monetary policy and national defense. We are still waiting on the U.S. Senate to act on the President's energy policy and it cannot be to soon for me.

Today, each of the 50 American states Governor is planning for the protection of its people and infrastructure with support from the federal government. We know we cannot expect a federal response to take care of us—Oklahomans learned that in our own terrorist incident, but that it will be state and local law enforcement and our own National Guard units controlled by the Governor in each state that will respond. I serve at Oklahoma Governor Keating's request as chair of his task force planning a response to terrorism on Oklahoma's infrastructure. As the 3rd largest natural gas and 4th largest oil producing state in the Union and with extensive pipeline and fiber optic cable crossing our heartland location we have much to plan for. We will be the location of a national test for response to bio-terrorism that I am participating in planning during a threat exercise called Sooner Spring next month and at the national level I serve with other state officials on a new effort to communicate our planning efforts called the Committee on Critical Infrastructure. Obviously for most state and local officials, other than Oklahoma and New York, this is a new focus.

Now, healing takes the form of rooting out this cancerous threat. America respects that other nations were not wounded in precisely the way we were. Naturally, other nations will heal somewhat differently. That is why America readily accepts that many of our friends will not address that



efforts must be flexible enough to respect other countries' traditions and values while advancing principles of democracy and human rights that have been universally realized. Central to this promotion of human rights must be the promotion of women's rights.

I was in Washington, D.C. last Tuesday to hear our President speak to over 1,000 women entrepreneurs. He reminded us that in the United States, women led businesses were growing at twice the rate of all business and employed over 9 million people. Since two-thirds of the new jobs created in the U.S. were by these small businesses, the President proposed that this was the best way to stimulate the economy. He was announcing a new set of legislative and regulatory proposals that would reduce taxes, and remove regulatory barriers. How ironic that women who are so disregarded by these terrorists will be the salvation of our economy they tried to destroy. He also said wouldn't the terrorist who hate the freedom in America and other societies where women make such an impact, hate the idea of an American President coming to speak and encourage women led businesses. Wouldn't they hate this meeting and the women leaders that we hold this weekend so graciously hosted here in Oslo?

I believe that the promotion of women can be carried out with due sensitivity to cultural and religious values and in ways that marginalize rather than empower extremist forces and movements. Women have proven to be among the key figures in promoting a rich and activist civil society. Prior to the Taliban control in Afghanistan, 40 percent of the doctors and over 60 percent of the teachers were women. And this week, in many cases for the first time, Afghan girls are allowed to attend school again. How can we afford to lose a single one of those incredible young minds in solving our world's problems? Muslim leaders, particularly in my state have advocated that the best way to preserve and respect traditional core values of Islam is to strengthen and enhance their appeal through a modern, inclusive and participatory society.

Again, to accomplish these goals together will take a vigorous public diplomacy effort using the electronic media, roundtables and conferences such as these exchange programs to name a few.

And finally it will take generosity, humanitarianism and compassion as our policy. Significant aid and reconstruction, new innovations, new health care and food should be provided by America and allies to demonstrate



those to the nations like Afghanistan wounded also by terrorism that we will not, as Secretary Powell has said, "leave the people of Afghanistan in the lurch, to not walk away as has been done in the past." The U.S. just cosponsored in Tokyo a major fund raising conference for the Afghans to rebuild their country with the U.S. pledging almost \$300 million in 2002, Europeans pledging \$500 million in the first year and the Japanese pledging \$500 million over the next 3 years with a total of more than \$4.5 billion. But it will take more than financial support. It will also take our support and encouragement as conservative leaders to help them heal by establishing an open society with freedom, economic opportunity, and the rule of law.

As we fight terrorism and root out these terrorists from nations that harbor terrorists we must help them rebuild. As President Bush has stated, "We have no compassion for terrorists, or for any state than supports them. But we do have great compassion for the millions around the world who are victims of hate and oppression. We have an opportunity to make sure the world is a better place for generations to come."

We have a unique opportunity and responsibility as women who bring the next generation into the world to build a better world for our children and grandchildren. So it is particularly our responsibility to stand for freedom and against evildoers. As President Bush has said, if you want to stand against evil, do something good for your neighbor whether that neighbor is in your local community or your world community. And as elected or senior appointed officials in our governments we have the opportunity to do even greater good for our nation and our shared world. What will we do with that opportunity?

