

LEAVITT HAS REASSURING WORDS

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While always appropriate, those words take on extra meaning following the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11.

They were the foundation of Gov. Mike Leavitt's televised address to Utahns Thursday night. While he does appear monthly on two public television stations, a prime-time talk is out of the ordinary. But then as Leavitt stressed, these are no longer ordinary times for Utahns or for Americans.

Leavitt's appearance followed a trip to Washington, D.C., last week where Utah's governor met privately with President Bush and the nation's top security advisers.

The focal point was security for the upcoming 2002 Winter Olympic Games.

Leavitt is to be commended for his alertness and initiative not only regarding the Olympics and everything that surrounds the Games, but for the overall security of the state. His friendship with Bush gives him opportunities that other governors might not have to discuss local issues.

The governor, while noting the seriousness of what has transpired the past few weeks and the need to learn from it, was upbeat and optimistic during his remarks.

He's on target when he states that while the state and its citizens must be more aware of potential harm, Utahns should not let the threat of that harm prevent them from going about their daily lives.

The Olympic family is not going to let the threat of terrorism stop Utah from hosting what Leavitt hopes will serve as "a global milestone of healing" and a "worldwide marker of triumph for good" next Feb. 8-24.

As Leavitt noted, "Terrorists depend on surprise and complacency, and neither of those will be present during the Olympic Games."

Because of what happened Sept. 11, when terrorists crashed airliners into the World Trade Center and the Pentagon, there will be more emphasis on security.

"Olympic security has always been a top priority. We have a plan developed over four years by the best security authorities in the world. It was an excellent plan prior to Sept. 11. It will be even better now," Leavitt stated.

Comforting words from the state's top official.