

*Aug. 29 / Administration of George W. Bush, 2001*

“Thank you, Mr. President, for our tax refund.” [Laughter] Thank you for holding that sign. [Laughter] If you’re looking for something to do with your refund, you got a little extra money, give it to Los Compadres.

We’re sure glad to be back in Texas. Our batteries are charged, and Laura and I are looking forward to going back to work tomorrow, to the Nation’s Capital. But even though we’ve changed addresses, Texas will always be home.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:43 a.m. in front of Mission San José. In his remarks, he referred to Albert F. “Boo” Hausser, chairman, Los Compadres, and his wife, Meta; former Representative Tom Loeffler and his wife, Nancy; Mayor Edward D. Garza of San Antonio; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Stephen F. Whitesell, superintendent, San Antonio Missions National Historical Park; Archbishop Patrick F. Flores, Archdiocese of San Antonio; and President Vicente Fox of Mexico.

## Remarks on the Last Flight of Air Force One Tail Number 27000 in Waco, Texas

*August 29, 2001*

Any Air Force plane carrying the President bears the name Air Force One. This plane, tail number 27000, wore the name of Air Force One for 444 missions and more than 1 million miles. Today this plane carried a President for the last time, and soon it will be taking its last flight. It will carry no more Presidents, but it will carry forever the spirit of American democracy.

Tail number 27000 entered the service of the United States in December 1972 and first served President Richard Nixon and then President Ford. It flew former President Carter and former President—Vice President Mondale to Germany to greet 52 Americans who had been held hostage in Iran. My father flew it frequently, but the President who used it the most was Ronald Reagan. It was from this plane that President Reagan disembarked in Berlin in 1987 and demanded, “Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall.”

And none of those flights would have been possible without the skill and commitment of the air crews of old 27000. For almost three decades, the pilot and crew of tail number 27000 have performed flawlessly, for not only Presidents but Vice Presidents and Cabinet Secretaries and

Members of Congress. I’m delighted that former crew members can be with us today.

Ralph Albertazzie, President Nixon’s pilot, is here; Colonel Bob Ruddick, the pilot for President Ronald Reagan; Danny Barr, who flew my dad; Chief Master Sergeant Joe Chappell, he was the chief flight engineer who rode the plane on its original voyage from the Boeing factory to Andrews Air Force Base; Chief Master Sergeant Charles Palmer; Chief Master Sergeant Denny Stump; Chief Master Sergeant Kim Johnson; Chief Master Sergeant Tim Kerwin; Chief Master Sergeant John Haigh; and of course, the man who flies me, Colonel Mark Tillman.

Between you, you have served seven Presidents, and you have served your Nation well. Thanks to you, American history has been a little less turbulent than it might have been.

Tail number 27000 flew two Presidents back home from Washington to California. It carried Richard Nixon in 1974 and Ronald Reagan in 1989. And today it will follow its distinguished passengers to its own retirement in California. A new hangar will be built for 27000 at the Reagan Library

in Simi Valley, California. Visitors will soon be able to tour this aircraft. It will remind us of Ronald Reagan's achievements for peace and international security and permanently symbolize the soaring spirit of this great man and our great country. Soon it will take its final flight westward into history.

Thank you all for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:49 p.m. at Texas State Technical College Waco. In his remarks, he referred to former General Secretary Mikhail S. Gorbachev of the Soviet Union.

## Remarks on Launching the New White House Web Site and an Exchange With Reporters

August 31, 2001

*The President.* Jane, thanks, you did a great job. And thank all the folks who worked on it. I'm very impressed, and I think the people who access this web site will be impressed as well.

A couple of points I want to make: One, I appreciate so very much the web site being available in more than just one language. There are a lot of Spanish-speaking folks in America, and they'll be able to access the web site. And that's important because I want all Americans to understand that our priorities coming into the fall will be our economy, education, opportunity, and security. And concerned citizens can read about those four categories, those four priorities of the administration, across the web page.

I was particularly impressed that Barney plays a major role—[laughter]—in helping the young understand what's going on in Washington, DC. I say that somewhat in jest, but I'm very serious about the need for all of us involved in Government to do all we can to involve our citizenry in government. There is a lot of cynicism about politics in Washington, DC, and it seems like to me the more accessible Washington becomes, the more likely it is people will participate in the process. And clearly, one way to do so is across the web page. I appreciate so very much, Jane, your artistic talents and your creativity and the

team that worked with you, as well. This page will be updated on a regular basis, obviously, as the news unfolds. But we'll be looking for more imaginative ways to continue people's interest in accessing the White House.

Finally, it's good to be here with the First Lady. As we say in Texas, she cut her teeth in libraries, and she, too, is concerned about making sure that information flows freely and that, as importantly, people are able to read what comes up on the screen.

As I said, education, the economy, opportunity, and security will be our priorities. And one of the things that I hope Congress does is work and act quickly on the education bill and get it to my desk as soon as they get back. It's an important piece of legislation. The House has passed a version; the Senate has passed a version. And I know that the leadership has had their teams working to resolve differences over the last couple of weeks. And I'm confident that if the will is there, they can get a bill to me quickly. I look forward to signing one.

I'd be glad to answer a few questions.

### *Funding the Legislative Agenda*

Q. Sir, you talk about your priorities. Are you confident that the money will be there to fund all those priorities?