

The President. Is everybody going in there? [Laughter]

[At this point, the President toured the house and then took questions from the press.]

Tax Cut Legislation

Q. Can I ask you your response to all those Senators that are saying they expect you to compromise on your tax cut plan?

The President. Well, there's 100 opinions in the United States Senate, and I respect every opinion, but when they listen to what the American people want, they're going to find out people want something, they want a tax relief that's substantial and real. And I look forward to working with the Senate.

Q. Does that mean you are or are not willing to compromise, sir?

The President. I'm willing to listen to the 100 different voices who've got different views about where this package ought to go. And of course, I'm pleased with what happened in the House. And as I've said all along, I laid out a plan that I thought was the right size to begin with, and look forward to working with the Members to get this done. And we need to do it in a quick way in order to provide a little second wind to the economy.

Q. What about Democrats running ads in the State against your tax package but wrapping that issue around the issue of the Florida recount, saying your brother delivered this State, and now look at what we're getting?

The President. Some of the Democrats here want to keep revoting the election. But if they would listen to America, they would find that Americans want to move forward. Secondly, there are some who would rather spend the surplus on bigger Government. And I have an honest disagreement with those types of people.

The American people, when they hear that we've got enough money to meet needs such as building housing on military bases or refurbishing housing on military bases, if we set priorities and have fiscally sound leadership in Washington, DC, they will find that there is enough money for tax relief.

And I can understand why some—I mean, I don't understand it, but some people want to increase the size of the Federal Govern-

ment. And if the people that are running those ads here in Florida want to travel the State and say, "Support us because we want to increase the size of the Federal Government," I think they're going to find a lot of people aren't going to listen.

Thank you all.

Faith-Based Initiative

Q. You're not backing down off your faith-based program, are you?

The President. Oh, not at all, no. Our faith-based—we've submitted a package to the United States Congress. I'm proud of the Faith-Based Initiative. There is a lot of bipartisan support on the Hill.

And somebody mentioned something about an article today. I haven't read it yet. But no, we're moving forward. It's the right thing to do.

Q. Thank you, sir.

The President. Okay, see you all soon.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:45 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Gen. Michael E. Ryan, USAF, Chief of Staff; and Chloe Bryant, Senior Airman Bryant's daughter. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the Youth Activities Center at Tyndall Air Force Base

March 12, 2001

Amy R. Justice. Thank you for coming, sir. We're really looking forward to this.

The President. I'm looking forward to hearing from them. But one of the things I—my job as the Commander in Chief is to boost morale in the military. In order to keep the peace, the military must be strong and morale has got to be high. And I've come to talk about base housing. We want to make sure people are well housed in the military, and there's some money in my budget to do that.

[At this point, a baby cried.]

The President. Don't worry about it. Base housing's on the way. [Laughter]

I got to see new housing, and I got to see not-so-new housing. And it was important to

do so, and I appreciate the general giving me a tour. Anyway, thanks for letting me come by.

And by the way, I'm proud to be traveling with my brother Jeb. If you've got any problems, write him—[*laughter*—and the two Congressmen from this area. Congressman Boyd and Congressman Scarborough are with us. And of course, General Mike Ryan, who is from the Joint Chiefs. I appreciate you being here, General, as well.

But thank you all very much for giving me a chance to come. I look forward to hearing what you have to say, and it's your chance to give the Commander in Chief a few suggestions. And I'm interested.

I do want to say that I know a lot of families are worried about all the deployments that take place. And we'll honor our commitments. But the mission of this military is going to be, to be ready to fight and win war and, therefore, stop war from happening in the first place. And I think that's important for all of the folks who wear the uniform and their spouses to hear. The mission will be well focused, and that's what we'll be focusing our resources and attention on. I take it very seriously, because—and I believe strongly that we're going to be able to keep the peace. It's a noble mission for all of us involved with the military.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:16 p.m. He was welcomed by S. Sgt. Amy R. Justice, USAF, 325th Medical Group. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to the Rotary Club and Chamber of Commerce in Panama City

March 12, 2001

The President. Thank you all. Sit down, Governor. [*Laughter*] Well, I'm glad I came. Thank you for the invitation.

Audience members. We're glad to have you. [*Laughter*]

The President. It's one of these responsive meetings. [*Laughter*] Governor—what a good man he is. The key to our success is pretty simple: We listen to our mother. And

she is still telling us what to do. I'm listening about half the time.

I appreciate the two United States Congressmen who are here. Joe, thank you very much, and Allen, thank you very much, as well. I'm honored to have you both here. I've had some good visits with both of the Members. Sometimes we agree; sometimes we don't agree. But the thing about these two men is that we're going to agree to be respectful to each other. And that's what this country wants.

I want to thank the members of the Rotary. I want to thank the members of the chamber. I want to thank the economic development folks who gave me an opportunity to come and talk about what's on my mind. Walking in, the man from the Rotary said, "Our slogan is: Create awareness and take action." And that's exactly why I'm here. I want to create awareness about a common-sense budget and ask you to take action to help me get it passed.

It's good to see the leaders of the Florida Legislature, members elected to the statewide—on the ticket here in Florida. I want to thank you all for coming. I know there's a lot of local officials here. I always believe the government closest to the people is that which governs best. So I appreciate you all being here.

It was my honor to go to Tyndall today, to see the good folks who wear the uniform of the United States military, to tell them how much I appreciate their service to the country. I'm reminded today of how dangerous service can be. We lost some servicemen today in Kuwait on a training accident. I hope you'll join me in a moment of silence for those soldiers and their families.

[*At this point, a moment of silence was observed.*]

The President. God bless.

I'm here to talk about a budget. And there's a lot of talk in Washington about budgets. But here's what I believe. I believe the people who can best affect the budget are the people who pay the bills in the first place, the taxpayers of America.

Sometimes it seems like we tend to talk to ourselves in Washington. And that's why I like to travel around the country, talking