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Question-and-Answer Session With Students at the Saturn School of Tomorrow in St. Paul, Minnesota

May 22, 1991

The President. Any questions? I'll answer it without the computer. This guy, Lakers.

Q. Do you ever have any time to have fun, like go outside and, like, throw a frisbee or go out and play?

The President. Yes, we do. We go to Camp David. Have you ever heard of Camp David? And I go up there on the weekends. They've got all kinds of sports.

Q. You mean, you go up there and actually play around and stuff?

The President. Yes. We have a baseball pitching machine, for example; we have a bowling alley; we've got a place where you can shoot skeet; they've got a gymnasium, a lot of workout—we play wallyball, which is a volleyball game inside the racquetball court. You can swing a golf club. It's wonderful. And there's swimming. You like swimming?

So, you do all that. And at the White House, you probably don't see it in the pictures, but there's athletic facilities in there, and that's fun. But when you go out, go outside the gates, you usually have a lot of people with you and stuff.

But at Camp David, why, it's more relaxing, so I can do pretty much what you can do. If I want to go out—if my wife, Barbara, and I want to go out for supper, we can do it. We can go to a restaurant. But you have these guys come along, some of the press and some of the Secret Service and all of that. But it's not that tough.

Q. What's the best thing about being President?

The President. Well, in the most serious vein, I love coping with the problems in foreign affairs, and I'm determined to see this program that we're working on in education—we call it America 2000—be a success. We've got to do better in education, we've got to do better in fighting against drugs and crime.

A President can't do all of this, but he can have a program. Then the Congress has to come and help, you see. But I like that part of the job—trying to do something that'll help somebody, trying to do something that will enhance the peace.

Recently we had a war that you're all familiar with, and the President had to make the decisions—you going to go to war or not. And there was a big principle there, and that was that a big guy doesn't bully his neighbor. It was an international principle with all the U.N. countries supporting what we did.

So, on the substance, that's what I like about my job. And the pleasure side, it's just—people are very nice to me in the White House. There are wonderful people that work there, you know. Got a good staff and work with good men like our Secretary.

Yes, Vikings man.

Q. Would you admit your grandchildren to go to this school?

The President. Yes, I'd—well, one of them is 14, and maybe he would be advanced a little more. We've got one who is—we've got them all ages. But I hope that someday the schools they go to will have this kind of innovative program.

Q. Who inspired you to be President?

The President. That's a hard question. Because I was in politics and my dad started in public life. And you know, when you have a father doing something like—he was a United States Senator, and then it evolved from that. In the late seventies, I tried and got defeated. And then I got to be Vice President—was picked by President Reagan. And then it just flowed from there. Had tried in '80, lost, got up and dusted myself off and tried again.

Q. You still didn't answer my question, though. Why did you want to become President?

The President. Well, see, the reason I just gave her. But I want to try to help. I headed up there, and it's—you know, you have to have some motivation—ideological motivation. I think that our administration is doing good things for the country—so, doing good things for the country is one. And then I think when you're my age and

maybe younger, too, you want to think that you can contribute to world peace. It's a big picture thing. But you look around the troubles—the Soviet Union and China and South America and all of this. I think we can help. I think the United States is still respected, and I think people still look up to us. So we want to use that respect and credibility to help them. It's wonderful in that sense.

Q. How does it feel to be President?

The President. Well, it feels pretty good, except at times, when you have some big problems out there. But I'm lucky, because I have very good people: the White House staff, very good people in the Cabinet, very good people that are working—these ambassadors and people that are working the problems I was telling this guy about.

So, it's not that complicated. You have to have good advice, and there's certain things you have to do. You just can't say ''do this,'' because you have to go to Congress and work with them. But it's a wonderful challenge. I love it. Every single day I'm there I like it very, very much.

Q. How old were you when you thought about becoming President?

The President. How long ago did I start?

Q. How old were you when you thought about——

The President. That's a good question—started thinking, I mean. I don't know the answer. I honestly don't know the answer, whether it crossed my mind when I was in high school. It might have. In those days, everybody wanted to be President. You wanted to be a fireman and a policeman in sixth grade, and you want to be a President when you get about a senior in high school. So, a lot of people did. But I can't say I was motivated and driven by that period in my life.

I've got two more, and then I've got to go. They're signaling me to get out of here.

Q. When were you first interested, or did you ever expect to be running for the President or being the President?

The President. Well, I can't remember, as I told him, when I was first interested, but then I think seriously started thinking about it in the late seventies.

Q. Do you like having to get up and having to go—like split-second having to go to different countries and stuff like that?

The President. I like that kind of travel. I loved coming out here today. I love getting out of the White House, and I love that. And I like listening to you guys. You say, well, I wonder whether he's just putting this on or whether he's acting or whether he likes it. I like it. I learn; each question, I learn what might be on your mind. I learn in the classroom. I learned here. And we're trying to revolutionize education. And I see these good questions, see what you can do with this, and I'm thinking we've got to succeed.

So, I like getting out for that reason and, yes, I love to go abroad. Our country is still very well respected around the world, and we have a leader—we're the leader of the free world and people look up to us. So, you go there and try to encourage programs or policies that will enhance that, will make it better.

This guy, and then I've got to run. They're signaling. I'll give the pilot one chance after this. Go ahead.

Q. When you go bowling, do you always have like the Secret Service agents go with you?

The President. Yes. Well, close by. If I went there, we'd have to have Secret Service guys there. They go there ahead of time, and they'd want to protect the other bowlers from me. [*Laughter*] I'm a bowler. But no, you can go do that. You just ask them, and you've got to give them a little advance notice. But there's a lot of—we saw yesterday the death of a good friend of mine in India. I don't know whether anybody noticed that. But his name was Rajiv—did you see it?

Q. Yes. Last night.

The President. You're right. Rajiv Gandhi. And we knew him well. Barbara and I knew him well. I just talked to his wife this morning. Here was a man, he was out campaigning, and a terrorist got him. Allegedly a bomb in a flower basket—he goes by and somebody pushes a button. So, there's a lot of stupid people out there that think you can change things by terror. We have to be on guard in this country, even though we've been blessed by having less of it.

Last question.

Q. How do you feel about Saddam Hussein's actions?

The President. Condemn it. The most brutal thing we've ever seen. It was without any moral underpinning. The whole world rose up against him. Do you remember, he tried to say it's him against—the Arabs against the United States? But the United Nations said something different: It's the whole world against his brutality. When you see what he did to the environment, when you see what he did to the people of Kuwait, when you see the principle that he offended, principle of aggression against a neighbor—nonaggression against a neighbor, why, you say this man has no redeeming value. He's a bad person. Unfortunately, there are people like that in the world.

Well, I had better run, but thank you. Thank you so much.

Q. Thank you so much. Thank you for visiting.

The President. I like to do—you've got a good man over here, hoping he's a teacher. You did a great job. Thanks a lot. It made it much more interesting this way. Thank you all. Good luck. Nice to see you.

Reporter. Mr. President?

The President. No press conference. Let me explain something to you guys in the class. The press—these ones you see—now, you'll see him on Channel 4 tonight. No, on NBC tonight. So, you watch. And their job is to ask me questions and for me to give answers as best I can. Sometimes I do it. We have press conferences. Maybe you've seen it. And then sometimes they'll understandably want to get an answer to a question. But I can't do it all the time. I have to do it in a rather organized fashion. So, we do it mostly in press conferences.

But they've got their job to do, like he is and wants me to answer. I'm not going to answer it right now. Not that I'm afraid to answer the question, but I just have to get on the schedule, and once we get bogged down, we're in the middle of a press conference. But that's the way it works. But you'll see some of these people tonight. Jim [Jim Miklaszewski, NBC News], you'll see. And who else have we got? But it'll be on the television. Brit Hume back there with ABC—and they come along. See, they come on most of the trips, not all. Sometimes we answer the questions, and then they write the stories. You'll see them reporting on the visit to the school tonight. That's the way it—now, whether Time magazine over here—you ever heard of Time? Well, see, now, he's going to write a glowing piece about this education program. [*Laughter*.] We've got high hope.

But everybody, all these guys—and they won't say it, but they'll all be impressed with what they've seen here. And in various ways that will help other schools take the initiative that your school has taken.

Hey, listen, thanks a lot. Nice to see you. Good luck to you.

Note: The question-and-answer session began at 12:30 p.m. in the Discourse Room. In his remarks, the President referred to Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander; Rajiv Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India, and his wife, Sonia; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this session.

Remarks to Students and Faculty of the Saturn School of Tomorrow in St. Paul, Minnesota

May 22, 1991

Thank you, Governor. Let me just say I'm here to—thank you very, very much. I'm here to talk about education. But with that North Stars introduction, let me put it this way: they took it on the chin last night, but who knows? We've got a whole new skating match out there today. I have just seen in the classroom—re: the computer—what Minnesota has seen on the ice. I think we saw a lot of Bellows, a lot of Gagner, a lot of