AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

you can make a huge difference in the lives of our fellow Americans.

See, societies change one heart, one conscience, one soul at a time. Everybody has worth, and everybody matters. No, out of the evil done to America is going to come a compassionate society. Now, this great country will show the world what we're made out of. This great country, by responding to the challenges we face, will leave behind a legacy of sacrifice, a legacy of compassion, a legacy of peace, a legacy of decency for future generations of people fortunate enough to be called an American.

There's no question in my mind—I hope you can tell, I'm an optimistic fellow about our future. I believe we can overcome any difficulty that's put in our path. I believe we can cross any hurdle, climb any mountain, because this is the greatest nation on the face of the Earth, full of the most decent, hard-working, honorable citizens.

May God bless you all, and may God bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 a.m. in the National Guard facility at Trenton-Mercer Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Brig. Gen. Glenn K. Rieth, Army National Guard, The Adjutant General of New Jersey; Gov. James E. McGreevey of New Jersey; Ramzi bin al-Shibh, an Al Qaida operative suspected of helping to plan the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, who was captured in Karachi, Pakistan; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks at a Luncheon for Senatorial Candidate Doug Forrester in Trenton

September 23, 2002

The President. Thank you all.

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. Thank you all very much. Thank you all. Well, thank you, "Senator." I appreciate those kind words. [*Laughter*] I believe it's in New Jersey's interests—I believe it's in America's interests that Doug Forrester be the next United States Senator from this State.

And I want to thank you all for helping him become that Senator. I want to thank you for being here today. I want to thank those of you who are involved in grassroots politics. I want to thank you for what you have done and what you're going to do. I want to thank you for going to your coffee shops, your community centers, your churches, and your synagogues and your mosques to talk about a good man who has decided to serve the people of New Jersey.

I want to thank you for getting ready to stuff the envelopes and to dial the phones and to put up the signs and to turn out the vote for a good man, a man who didn't need to run for office, a man that had a nice, comfortable life. After all, he married well. [*Laughter*] He's got a fine family. He's a successful businessman. And yet, he decided to serve his State and his country, because he believes deeply in the future of the country. I like to put it this way: When you find a good one, you've got to back him. [*Laughter*] You've got a good one in Doug Forrester.

I'm honored to be standing beside a man who was an Eagle Scout as a youngster, who they tell me sold flags door to door. It makes him a patriot and an entrepreneur. [*Laughter*] I appreciate the fact that he moved to this State to attend the Princeton Theological Seminary. It's a man of faith, a man who is self-made, a man who has got his priorities straight, a man

who will be a breath of fresh air for New Jersey in the United States Senate.

We both married above ourselves. [*Laughter*] And it didn't take me long to figure that out, having met Andrea and her children. My wife sends her best. I thought about her today. Actually, I thought about her more than once, since I delivered her her coffee this morning. [*Laughter*] Good lesson for you guys out there. [*Laughter*] Just trying to set the example for others. [*Laughter*]

We met some fine folks who help the Red Cross here in New Jersey at Air Force One. And the lady said, she said, "You know, I'm a public school librarian, just like your wife." And I said, "Well, Laura was a public school librarian. When she married me, she wasn't interested in politics, didn't particularly care about politicians either." [*Laughter*] "And now she's First Lady of the United States, bringing great comfort to the people of this country." She sends her best to the Forresters. She looks forward to seeing Andrea when Doug wins.

I want to thank members of the New Jersey congressional delegation being here. I see Chris Smith and Frank LoBiondo. Are you here, Franky? There he is. Appreciate you for coming, Frank. Jim Saxton is here, I know. I appreciate you coming, Jimmy. Thanks for being here. I want to thank Mike Ferguson for coming as well. Thank you, Mike.

You've got two members—two folks here who are running to become Members of Congress: Scott Garrett, who's running in the fifth—thank you for coming, Scott—Buster Soaries, my friend who's running in the twelfth. Thank you, Buster.

I know Donnie DiFrancesco is here. I appreciate you coming, Don. It's good to see you. Give your wife my best. I appreciate so very much the party chairman of the State of New Jersey, Joe Kyrillos. Joe, where are you? Thanks, Joe, Mr. Senator. I want to thank Bob Prunetti for coming back again a second day—second event in one day.

And finally, I want to thank the chairman of this campaign, a man who brought a lot of class to the Governor's office here in New Jersey, Tom Kean. Thank you, Tom, for being here.

I ended with Tom because this is where Doug cut his teeth in politics. See, he worked for the good Governor. He was a part of his budget office and then ran his—a director of pensions, ran the pension system as director of pensions, made sure that the people were taken care of. If you're interested in understanding his priorities, look at the job he did when he worked for this good man as the Governor.

See, he cares a lot more about people than politics. He's going to keep his commitments when he—he's the kind of fellow, when he says he's going to do something, that's what he's going to do. That's what you need from New Jersey. He's somebody who speaks plainly and just was running to get something done, as opposed to running just for the sake of holding the office. If he says he's going to protect seniors when it comes to Social Security, that's what he's going to do. He's going to work with me to modernize Medicare, to make sure our seniors have got prescription drug benefits.

He understands what I know, that the role of Government is not to create wealth but an environment in which the entrepreneur and small business can grow. That's the role of Government. When we got up to Washington, DC, the country was headed into a recession. The market started correcting in March of 2000; that's when it peaked. And then the summer the economic growth started to slow. And so by the time the Vice President and I showed up in Washington, DC, we were in three-quarters of recession. And we had to do something about it. See, my attitude is, anytime anybody wants to find work can't find a job, we've got a problem in America. I want our people working.

So here's what I did—and Doug understands this; that's why I'm standing by his side. We took a page out of this textbook. It's a little different from what some of the other folks in Washington are trying to do. The page says that if you've got an economic slowdown, one way to help the economy recover is to let people keep their own money. We've got a lot of hard-working Americans, who, if you give them more of their own money, let them keep their own money, they're going to spend it on a good or a service. And when they demand a good or a service, somebody will provide. And when somebody provides for that good or service, somebody is more likely to find work.

Now what's interesting about what happened in the tax relief plan is, thanks to a quirk in the Senate rules—it's one of these deals where Washington gives tax relief and then takes it away after 10 years. I must confess that's hard to explain in Crawford—[*laughter*]—and probably in the fire stations and police stations here in Trenton. It's hard to tell people who work hard for a living that you've got tax relief, but then because of a quirk in the rules, it goes away. Listen, we need a Senator up there who agrees with me that we've got to make this tax relief permanent. We've got to provide relief for the working people.

And I need somebody up there to work with me to make sure that the Senate does not overspend. See, I'm going to stay focused on our economy, because I understand it's part of how we make sure America is a stronger place. But if the Senate and the Congress overspends, it will serve as a drag to any economic recovery. It's one thing to fund priorities, and we will do that. But you've got to understand something about Washington: Every idea is a brilliant idea. [*Laughter*] Everybody's program sounds like just a perfect program. And then when you add up all the perfect programs and all the good ideas, we're not talking millions; we're talking billions of dollars.

The second problem we have in Washington is, sometimes the spenders forget whose money they're spending. You'll hear, we're going to spend—the Government is going to spend the Government money here, and the Government is going to spend the Government here. We're not spending the Government's money, folks. It's your money we're spending, and we need fiscal responsibility in Washington, DC.

We need to set priorities and fund those priorities. You know, the Senate doesn't even have a budget. It couldn't get a budget passed. If you don't have a budget, guess what happens? You have the tendency to overspend. If you don't have a budget, there's no discipline or fiscal restraint. And so for the sake of fiscal sanity, we need Doug Forrester in the United States Senate.

I say priorities; I say priorities. The most important priority we have today and tomorrow is to protect the homeland. That's the most important priority in America. It's a priority because there are people who hate America still on the loose, see. They hate us because we love freedom. They hate and we love freedom. And we love the fact that people from all walks of life can worship freely in this country. That's what we love. We love the idea that people from all backgrounds can worship an almighty God the way he or she sees fit. The enemy hates that. They hate that idea.

We love the idea that people can debate and speak their mind and holler and whoop about politics. They hate it. They hate free thought and free speech. We love a free press. They hate it. See, they hate freedom, and we love freedom. And for so long as we love freedom, which will be forever as far as I'm concerned, they're going to try to hurt us again. And so our number one priority should be reflected in our budget—it is reflected in how I think and what I do—is to make sure this great country

is secure from a bunch of coldblooded killers. And that's all they are.

There's a lot of good people—there's a lot of good people, a lot of good people who wear the uniform at the local level, working hard to secure the homeland. A lot of good firefighters and EMS and police officers spend a lot of time, a lot of time worrying about you and your health. There are a lot of good people at the State level, a lot of fine people at the Federal Government level worrying about our security. We're running down every lead. You've got to just know, anytime we get a hint, a whiff, a suggestion that somebody might be trying to come back to America, we're moving. We'll protect our rights.

Listen, I believe strongly in the United States Constitution. And I know we can protect that Constitution and at the same time make sure this homeland is secure. We've got the FBI and the CIA talking like they never have been before. We're sharing intelligence. We've got people around the world helping us. We've got freedom-loving countries sharing information with us. No, we're moving hard.

But to make sure that we even do a better job, I asked the Congress to join me in setting up a Department of Homeland Security. Listen, I didn't run for—my slogan wasn't, "Vote for George. He wants Government to be bigger." But I do want it to work. I do want to be able to say to the American people we've left behind—I do want it to be said we worked together. Republicans and Democrats worked together to leave behind a strategy and the ability for future Presidents to more adequately secure the homeland.

And we're having a little problem in the Senate, see. The House passed a good bill. It allows me to move people anytime, any place, anywhere in order to best deal with an enemy which isn't going to be bound by bureaucratic rules or handbooks or volumes of micromanagement. That's not what they have to deal with. And I refuse to have future Presidents or this President deal with a Senate trying to tell me through micromanaging the process how best to secure the homeland.

I'll give you one example. On our borders we need to know who's coming into America. We need to know what they're bringing. We need to know if they're bringing something in the country, and we need to know if they're going to leave when they say they're going to leave. That's logical, and that makes common sense. And yet, on our borders, we've got three different departments dealing with our border security. We've got the INS and the Border Patrol and the Customs, all full of fine people, staffed by really great Americans, all working hard to make sure that border security is a part of the homeland security. Except in cases now, they've got different uniforms, different cultures, different styles, perhaps different strategies. And for the sake of the country, I need to have the flexibility to meld those organizations together. I need to be able to say to the American people that we're working together. The Senate doesn't hear it yet, but the Senate is going to hear from me if they don't pass a good bill as this.

And my message to the Senate is: You need to worry less about special interest in Washington and more about the security of the American people. But the best homeland security strategy is to hunt the killers down, one person at a time, and bring them to justice, which is what we're going to do.

It's a different kind of war, but folks, we're still at war. We're still at war. This is an enemy which—it used to be you could count an enemy's tanks or the size of its fleet, the number of aircraft they had, and say, "Oh, gosh, we're making progress. They had a thousand airplanes. Now they've got 50. We're making progress." [*Laughter*] That's not the way this war works right now. See, that's not the way it works. You've got to remember, their commanders hide in caves or in the dark corners of certain cities around the world

and then send youngsters to their suicidal deaths. Theirs is an army which doesn't take a lot to fund. They're resourceful, and they're tough, but they are not as tough as the United States of America.

And we're making progress. It's hard to tell whether we're making progress or not, but we are. One person at a time, one person at a time——

Audience members. [*Inaudible*].

The President. ——thank you—one person at a time. The other day, as you noticed, there was a fellow hiding in the dark caves—or dark corners, not caves—it was in the city, dark—dark corners of a city in Pakistan. He was going to be the 20th hijacker, bin al-Shibh. He wanted to come here to kill. He didn't make it, because we fortunately did not give him access. His brothers obviously made it. They're all now dead. And he thought he was going to come. And he thought he could hide, however. You can't hide from our justice. We finally got him.

And it's typical of what's taken place. We're running them down one at a time. We've got them on the run. We're going to keep them on the run. There have been over a couple thousand of these killers who we have brought to justice. We have arrested them. It's either us or—remember that doctrine, either you're with us—by the way, a doctrine which still stands—either you're with us, or you're with them. And we're rounding them up slowly but surely. And the other piece of news is, about like number weren't as lucky as bin al-Shibh. They're off the face of the planet. They're no longer around. Slowly but surely, we're going to dismantle the Al Qaida terrorist network, so they can never hurt America and freedom again.

I sent a defense bill that says—and it's a big increase, because I strongly believe that anytime we send one of our troops into harm's way, he or she deserves the best pay, the best training, and the best possible equipment. We owe it to the troops, and we owe it to their loved ones. And if you're anybody out there who has got a member of the United States military in your family, first of all, thanks. You thank them on behalf of the Commander in Chief. I'm confident and proud of our abilities.

And secondly, I've asked for this increase in defense spending because I want to send a signal to the world, to both friend and foe alike, that when it comes to the defense of our freedoms, we're in this for the long pull. We're in it for the long haul. There's no calendar on my desk that says, because we're getting tired, we're going to quit. When it comes to freedoms, no matter how much the cost, no matter how long it takes, we will defend the freedoms of the United States of America.

The Congress has got the defense bill in committee. They passed it out of the House, and I'm grateful. They passed it out of the Senate, and I'm grateful. But what I'm not grateful for is, they can't get it to my desk. They need to reconcile their differences, set this as a priority, get it to my desk. For the sake of our national security, I want to sign the defense bill before they go home.

That's why we need people like Doug up there in the Senate. We don't need to play politics with the defense bill. We need to do what's right for the country. And we need to also send a message, and I sent a message the other day, right up the way here, to the United Nations.

Here's the message I sent. I said, when we see a threat to our country, we want to work with others, of course. When we see a threat to freedom—let me put it to you that way, not just to our country, but to freedom—we'll work with others to make sure that threat doesn't materialize. See, we believe not only in dealing with the immediate. We want to make sure that we deal with problems before they become so acute that we look back and say, where were we—where were we?

And we're dealing with a man in Iraq who has done a couple of things that I

remind you about. One, he gassed his own people with weapons of mass destruction. He has invaded two countries since 1980. He's a man who told the United Nations time and time and time again, "I will disarm. I don't have weapons." He lied or deceived. He has made that body look weak. For the sake of peace, the United Nations must make a decision as to whether or not it's going to be a debating society, like the League of Nations, or have the capacity to keep the peace. It's their choice to make. It is their choice to make.

There are no negotiations with Saddam Hussein about what he should or should not do. He's already said what he would do. The negotiations—the discussion is within the United Nations Security Council, and soon they will tell the world whether or not they're going to be relevant or whether or not they're going to be weak. For the sake of world peace, I hope they're relevant. However, for the sake of freedom and peace, if the United Nations will not deal with Saddam Hussein, the United States and our friends will.

We owe it to our children to defend freedom. We owe it to our children and children elsewhere to keep the peace. I want you to know that behind the rhetoric is my strong desire for the world to be a—to live in peace. And I believe it's possible. I believe it is possible that if we remain strong and focused, speak clearly about good and evil, speak clearly about the need for all of us to bind together to fight terror, to resist those who hate peace, that we can achieve peace. I recognize it might be a steep hill to climb. There's going to be some hurdles to cross. But by being resolved and determined, we can achieve peace. We can achieve peace not only here at home, but we can achieve peace in the Middle East. We can achieve peace in South Asia. By leading the world, we can achieve peace in places where people have quit dreaming about peace.

See, the enemy hit us. They didn't know who they were hitting. They thought probably after September the 11th, 2001, we'd kind of take a hard look and then maybe file a lawsuit or two. [*Laughter*] They don't understand the character of this Nation. They don't understand our determination, nor do they understand our good heart and good will.

I want you to remind your kids that when it came to enforcing the doctrine that said either—the doctrine said, "If you harbor one of those killers, you're just as guilty as the killers," that we went into Afghanistan—the first theater we went into, as a great country—with friends, but we went in not to conquer anybody, not to conquer anybody. We went in to uphold doctrine and liberate people. There are young girls going to school in Afghanistan for the first time, thanks to the United States of America.

That's the nature of our country. That's the kind of people we are. We love freedom. You see, one of the things that distinguishes us from the enemy is, everybody has worth, as far as we're concerned. Everybody counts. Everybody matters. Life is precious. That's what we believe in America. And it's not just American lives that are precious; it's the life of every child, every citizen around the world. That's what they didn't understand about this country, and now they're learning the hard way.

No, out of the evil done to America is going to come some great good, I believe. Here at home as well, we can achieve great good. See, there are pockets of despair here in America. There are places where people hurt. Sadly enough, there are some neighborhoods where people say, "The American Dream isn't meant for me. When you say American Dream, what are you talking about? It's not meant for me." There are places where people are addicted, people are lonely, people have just given up.

And as long as they hurt, we hurt. And we have a chance to do something about it here in America. See, people have asked me, right after September the 11th, 2001,

"What can I do to help?" I said, "What you can do to help is, you can love a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. If you want to fight evil, do some good. If you want to fight evil, help somebody who hurts."

No, some of the greatest welfare programs in America come out of our churches and synagogues and mosques, because you know why those institutions exist? To love somebody. There's a universal call, and that's what's happening in America. This country is going to change, one heart, one soul, one conscience at a time. It changes when you put your arm around a child and says, "Can I help you learn to read?" It changes when you walk into a shut-in's house and say, "Can I love you," or, "Can I help you?" It changes when you run a Girl Scout or a Boy Scout troop. It changes when you care about the quality of education in your neighborhood. It changes when you become a responsible citizen.

See, one of the reasons I first sought office down in Texas was because I wanted to work—be a part of a cultural change, the change of culture from one which it said, "If it feels good, just go ahead and do it," and "If you've got a problem, blame somebody else." I wanted to be a part of a cultural shift that said, "Each of us are responsible for the decisions we make in life, that if you're a mom or a dad, it's you who is responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul."

If you're living in Trenton, New Jersey, you're responsible for the quality of life in Trenton. If you're running a corporation in America, you're responsible for telling the truth and treating your employees and shareholders with respect.

No, the enemy hit us. The enemy hit us, but instead of weakening America, it strengthened America. We still grieve for those who lost their life, but the country is responding so magnificently. People do love a neighbor more. People are loving their children more.

Perhaps the most vivid example of serving something greater than yourself, perhaps the most vivid example of being not self-absorbed and materialistic that you don't understand the call, happened on Flight 93. It's a serious lesson for our youngsters to understand. It's a serious moment. It's a significant and serious moment in our Nation's history. After all, we had people flying across the country. They thought they were on a normal trip. They learned the airplane was going to be used as a weapon. They learned that America's oceans—the oceans no longer protected America. They told their loved ones "Goodbye" or "I love you." They said a prayer. One guy said, "Let's roll." They took the plane into the ground to save life, to serve something greater than yourself in life. These brave souls represented the true spirit and greatness of our country.

You can probably tell I'm an optimistic person; I am, and I have every reason to be. After all, the United States is the greatest country on the face of the Earth, full of the greatest people. I know Doug Forrester wants to keep it that way, and so do I.

I'm honored you all came today. Thanks for supporting Doug. May God bless you, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. at the Sovereign Bank Arena. In his remarks, he referred to former Gov. Tom Kean of New Jersey; former Gov. Don DiFrancesco of New Jersey, and his wife, Diane; Robert D. Prunetti, county executive, Mercer County, NJ; Ramzi bin al-Shibh, an Al Qaida operative suspected of helping to plan the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, who was captured in Karachi, Pakistan; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.