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So she'll be very active there. But we haven't decided what specifically she'll do.

"Independence Day" Movie

Mr. Brokaw. Here's a question from the Internet, one more: "Independence Day," the movie, could we really fight these guys off, or what, Mr. President?

The President. I loved it. I loved it and——

Mr. Brokaw. A lot of people did, apparently.

The President. Mr. Pullman came and showed it. I thought he made a good President. And we watched the movie together, and I told him after it was over he was a good President, and I was glad we won. And it made me wonder if I should take flying lessons.

But yes, I think we'd fight them off. We find a way to win. That's what America does. We'd find a way to win if it happened.

The good thing about "Independence Day" is there's an ultimate lesson for that—for the problems right here on Earth. We whipped that problem by working together with all these countries. And all of a sudden the differences we had with them seemed so small once we realized there were threats that went beyond our borders. And I wish that we could think about that when we deal with terrorism and when we deal with weapons proliferation—the difference between all these other problems. That's the lesson I wish people would take away from "Independence Day."

Mr. Brokaw. Mr. President, we thank you very much for being our first guest here on "InterNight," the new enterprise of MSNBC, which combines cable television, of course, and the Internet and telephones and over-the-air broadcasting as well. We thank you very much. We wish you well, and Bob Dole as well in the coming months.

The President. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The interview began at 8:00 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to President Boris Yeltsin, Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, and Security Council Secretary Aleksandr Lebed of Russia; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; King Fahd bin Abd al-Aziz Al Saud of Saudi Arabia; Bill Gates, chairman, Microsoft Corp.; Richard Lamm, candidate for Reform Party nomination for President; and actor Bill Pullman. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to the National Governors' Association Conference

July 16, 1996

Thank you. Thank you very much, Governor Thompson, for your kind words and for all your good work as chairman of the NGA over the past year. And thank you also for your work on reform, especially on reforming welfare, not only in the bold plan you have developed in Wisconsin but also as a leader on behalf of the NGA on Capitol Hill. And to Governor Miller, let me add my congratulations to you as you take on the responsibility of leading the NGA. It's one of the best jobs I ever had, and I know you'll enjoy it as well.

I regret very much that I can't be with all of you for this meeting. I had especially looked forward to being with my good friend and my fellow Democrat, Governor Pedro Rossello, in Puerto Rico, and I hope I can see you there before too long. But I'm glad you're there, and I'm glad you're having a good meeting.

This is the 4th year I have spoken to the NGA as President. And more than ever before, I believe that we are poised together to make real, bipartisan progress and that our Nation's Governors have a critical role to play. I want to thank all of you for the work you have done so far to grow your economies, to help your people be better educated, to reform welfare and fight crime and preserve the environment and move people forward.

We have to think a lot about that now. We all know that just 4 years from now we will enter that long awaited and very much discussed 21st century. You know as well as any group of Americans that there are tremendous forces of economic and social change remaking our country. I believe that on balance this is a positive and hopeful time, an age of enormous possibility, a chance for us to build a country and a world for our children that is stronger and safer and more full of opportunity than any that has existed before. I believe we can do that if we meet

these new challenges with our most enduring values. We have to offer opportunity to all. We must demand responsibility from all. And we must work hard to come together across all our diversity as a great American community.

We'll have to meet these challenges not by edicts from Washington but by working together at all levels, by cutting redtape and working with the private sector, by setting national goals for ourselves but challenging States and localities to find the best way to meet those goals.

Four years ago when I sought the Presidency, our Nation was drifting with uncertain steps toward this new century. Unemployment was nearly 8 percent; job growth was very slow; the deficit was at an all-time high. After 12 years as a Governor, I vowed to do what chief executives in every statehouse in America must do, put in place a comprehensive strategy for economic growth and follow a path of fiscal responsibility. We cut the deficit, expanded trade, invested in our people and technology and the future.

The results are in. Our economy has now created over 10 million new jobs; 3.7 million Americans have become new homeowners. Today, we learned again that inflation continues to moderate. Real hourly wages have begun to climb for the first time in a decade. And we have surpassed our goal of cutting the deficit in half.

Just this morning, we're releasing the midsession review of the budget. Four years ago, the deficit was $290 billion and headed upward. Today, we are projecting it will be $117 billion this year. We've cut the deficit by 60 percent in 4 years, bringing it to it lowest level in dollar terms in 15 years. As a share of our economy, it's now at its smallest level since 1981, the smallest percentage of the economy—excuse me—since 1974. We've got a lot more to do. I am determined to finish the job and balance the budget in a responsible way and at the same time do more to give all Americans the education and training they need to succeed in this new economy.

But the fact is our economy is now the soundest it's been in a generation. Unlike the expansion of the 1980's, we can also be pleased that this growth is being felt in all regions of our country. America is growing, and your States are helping it to grow.

We're also making real and bipartisan progress in other areas as well. We've put in place an anticrime strategy that was tough and smart, putting 100,000 police on the street, toughening penalties, taking guns off the street by banning 19 deadly assault weapons through the Brady law. Now, not a single hunter has lost a gun due to these bills, but 60,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers have been denied guns.

We're encouraging communities to pull together to give their young people the values and the discipline they need. That's why we've been working to give communities the ability to impose stronger curfews, enforce truancy laws, and require things like school uniforms.

These strategies are being tried in communities all across our country. And all across our country the crime rate is coming down for 4 years in a row. We must now bring this same focus to bear on the rising tide of youth crimes and gangs and drugs. I ask you to work with our administration to tackle this challenge as well. Although the crime rate is going down, in too many areas in our country the juvenile crime rate is going up. But we see in the areas where it's going down that there are strategies that work there, too.

If you look at the areas where we've moved forward in the economy, in dealing with the crime problem, we've done it not by clinging to old arrangements or discarded philosophies or political partisan divisions but by moving forward together, developing new approaches, taking the best ideas from all sides, putting our values of opportunity, responsibility, and community to work.

Now, as all of you know very well, none of our challenges cries out for these approaches more than welfare. All Americans, without regard to party, know that our welfare system is broken, that it teaches the wrong values, rewards the wrong choices, hurts those it was meant to help. We also know that no one wants to change the current system in a good way more than people who are trapped in it.

Since the time when I served as cochair of the NGA's welfare task force, about a decade ago now, I have been committed to end-

ing welfare as we know it. I worked with many of you for years to fashion new solutions. Today, after long years of effort, I believe we are poised for a real breakthrough in welfare reform. Real welfare reform requires work, imposes time limits, cracks down on deadbeat parents by enforcing child support, provides child care.

Now, you haven't waited for Congress to act, and we've worked with you to change the face of welfare. We've cut through red-tape and worked with you to set up 67 welfare reform experiments in 40 States, with more to come. We've granted more than twice as many waivers as the previous two administrations combined. And now, 75 percent of all welfare recipients are already under new rules. The New York Times called this a quiet revolution in welfare.

Well, I am proud that there are 1.3 million fewer people on welfare now than the day I took office and that child support collections are up 40 percent. But there's more to do. As you know, the State of Wisconsin has submitted a bold plan to reform welfare. We're working closely with Governor Thompson's staff, and I am committed, as I've said before, to getting this done.

I'd just like to emphasize the things about this Wisconsin plan which are compelling to me: the idea that people should be required immediately to be ready to go to work but that in return, they would have health care and child care guaranteed and that the welfare money could be used to pay income supplements or wage supplements to private employers to put these people to work and that if there is no private employment, these folks would be given community service jobs.

That's what we ought to be doing everywhere. If we can create these jobs, we ought to require people to take them. I know every Governor would agree with me that for all the good that's come from these waivers, however, we can do a lot more once we pass comprehensive national welfare reform. If we pass national welfare reform, we can do an even better job of collecting child support across State lines. And if we pass national welfare reform, we can eliminate this waiver process altogether.

For too long, the welfare issue has been marred by partisanship; it's been mired by gridlock. But in recent weeks up here, all this seems to be changing. I think we've now reached a real turning point, a breakthrough for welfare reform. The new leadership of the Senate, along with the leadership of the House of Representatives, now indicated that they want to move forward with bipartisan welfare reform and are dropping their insistence that welfare be linked to the block granting of Medicaid. They've said that they want to work to pass legislation I can sign, rather than sending me legislation they know that I would reject.

As you know, Congress sent me a welfare reform bill last year that fell short of my principles as well as those expressed by the NGA in your February resolution. After my veto and your unanimous resolution, I am pleased that the congressional leadership has made several significant improvements that have made this a much better bill. They've added $4 billion in child care, included a $1 billion work performance bonus to reward States for moving people from welfare to work. They removed the spending cap on food stamps so that States don't come up short in tough times. Their original bill made cuts in structural changes that were tough on children: a school lunch block grant, a 25 percent cut in SSI for disabled children, cuts in foster care. The current bill drops all these provisions.

Congress has taken long strides in the right direction. Now as we approach the goal line, we do have a chance to make history and make this bill even better. We can give all our people a chance to move from welfare to work, to transform our broken welfare system once and for all.

So I hope that Congress will continue to improve the bill along the lines that you and I have long advocated and along the lines of the strong bipartisan bills introduced by Senators John Breaux and John Chafee and Representatives John Tanner and Mike Castle, another former colleague of ours. We must not let this opportunity slip from our grasp as it has too many times before. Let's put politics aside. Let's give the American people the best possible welfare reform bill. And let's do it before the August congressional recess.

I am determined that this will be the year that we finally transform welfare across America. If Congress doesn't act, we still have to continue to act, to make responsibility a way of life and not an option. Today I am taking the steps that I can take as President to advance the central premise of welfare reform, one that is embodied in all the proposed welfare bills: that anyone who can work must do so. We'll say to welfare recipients, ''Within 2 years you will be expected to go to work and earn a paycheck, not draw a welfare check.''

Here is how we will do that. I am directing the Department of Health and Human Services to require everyone who takes part in the jobs program to sign a personal responsibility contract and commit to going to work within 2 years. States can than take away the benefits if they fail to live up to that commitment.

Today 28 States already impose work requirements and time limits, everyone of them under welfare waivers granted by our administration. I believe all 50 States should follow that lead. This action will ensure that that happens even before welfare reform legislation passes. Of course, this will take effect only if Congress fails to enact welfare reform legislation. I far prefer a bill passed by Congress, and I know you do, too. So let's agree: One way or another we will make work and responsibility the law of the land, but we want a good welfare reform bill.

Ten years ago at an NGA meeting in Hilton Head, South Carolina, I heard testimony from a woman from Little Rock, a woman who had moved from welfare to work through our State's work program. She told us, ''The best thing about work is not the check. The best thing is when my boy goes to school and they ask him, what does your mamma do for a living, he can give an answer.''

Well, today, 10 years later, that lady has a job, and she's raised three children. One has a job, and two are in school. By her undying effort and her unbreakable spirit she shows us that we can make a difference, that this cycle of welfare can be broken, that welfare can be a second chance, not a way of life.

So let me say in closing that we can meet all our challenges if we'll work in this way and if we'll follow the example of the NGA: be bipartisan, cooperative, look for results, not abstract rhetoric, not be ashamed to learn from each other and take our best ideas from each other, and putting our values to work. That's how we can reform welfare and meet our other challenges. If we do that, this country will enter the 21st century stronger and more vibrant than ever before, with the American dream alive for all our people.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 11:20 a.m. from Room 459 of the Old Executive Office Building to the NGA conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Tommy G. Thompson of Wisconsin and Gov. Zell Miller of Georgia.

Remarks to the United States Agricultural Communicators Congress

July 16, 1996

Thank you very much, Mr. Secretary. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for that warm welcome. And I was listening to Dan Glickman say all those outrageously positive things, and it reminded me that that was a living example of Clinton's third law of politics, which is, whenever possible, be introduced by someone you've appointed to high position. [*Laughter*]

Steve and I were talking up here; he said, ''You know, the last time I was on a platform with you, you fell through a hole in it.'' And it's really true. It was—what was it—a soybean meeting in Arkansas when I was Governor, and he and I were on the platform together and there was a crack in the platform. My chair fell through it. [*Laughter*] It really did a lot for my confidence right before I got up here to speak that he reminded me of that. [*Laughter*] As far as I know, we're all right.

I'm delighted to be here. I want to begin by thanking all of you for the work that you do every day to keep in touch with people in rural America. I want to thank Secretary Glickman who I believe has done a magnifi-