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Exchange With Reporters Following a Meeting With Mayor Richard M. Daley in Chicago, Illinois

March 6, 2001

President's Visit to Chicago

Q. Why don't you tell us what's on the conversation table?

Mayor Daley. [*Inaudible*]*—*a wonderful book on Chicago, the great past, present, and future of this city. So I'm very honored and pleased to be here at luncheon with the President.

The President. I just got a lesson in Chicago politics. [*Laughter*]

Q. What is that lesson, Mr. President?

The President. [*Inaudible*]*—*for the second time in 6 months. [*Laughter*]

Mayor Daley. I told him we both have great brothers. [*Laughter*]

The President. That if you run for President, make sure you get the mayor on your side. [*Laughter*]

I respect Mayor Daley. I don't know if you remember, but every time I came to Illinois I always made a point of saying that I wish the mayor were on my side, because he'll make a huge difference for people he backs. More importantly, he's made a huge difference for the people of this city. He's one of the Nation's really good mayors.

We had a long-ranging discussion, and I came just to introduce myself so he got to know me. And he now knows he can pick up the phone and call the White House anytime he needs to.

Q. Can you give us a bit of insight into what you all talked about?

The President. We talked about just about everything. We talked politics, of course, and we talked about issues that face Chicago. He gave me a lot of good advice—want to pay attention to the big-city mayors. And I told him we've got a lot in common; we're both problem solvers, the kind of people that when we identify a problem, we try to work hard to solve it. And that's what the

mayor's reputation has been. I also thanked him for the good work he's done on education reform here in Chicago.

Tax Cut Legislation

Q. How about selling him on the budget and tax cuts?

The President. We didn't spend a lot of time on the budget. I'm going to spend a little more time downstairs on the budget. The mayor gave me some interesting advice on tax relief that—as you know, he made—well, he can speak for himself, but he talked about the earned-income tax credit and the need for the good citizens of this city who are eligible for the EITC to go out and find it.

Vice President Dick Cheney

Q. How's the Vice President?

The President. I haven't talked to him. I talked to him late yesterday afternoon. He sounded great. He told me he'd be back to work soon.

Q. Should he cut back on workload?

The President. No, he shouldn't.

Q. Why not? Is the job—

The President. Well, because he's needed. This country needs his wisdom and judgment. And he's the kind of man who listens carefully to his body, and he is not going to put himself in a position where he gets very sick. Anytime there's any doubt as to whether or not he needs to see a doctor, he'll see a doctor. And he's plenty strong and plenty capable of carrying the workload that he's been working in the past.

Keep in mind, I'm not his doctor. It's going to be up to his doctor and his wife and his family to make the decision. But I don't think he needs to cut back on his work.

Q. What advice did you offer—[*inaudible*]?²

Q. [*Inaudible*]*—*job of Vice President, with all it currently entails, too stressful for him?

The President. Not at all.

Ann [Ann Compton, ABC News], good to see you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 1:45 p.m. in the Executive Conference Room at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks at the Chicago Mercantile Exchange in Chicago

March 6, 2001

Well, thank you all. Thank you very much. Scott, thank you very much. I thought I had seen just about everything in life, until I came here. [Laughter] It is an honor to be in entrepreneurial heaven. What an exciting place. Thanks for having me. I appreciate the hospitality, and I appreciate you giving me a chance to come and talk a little tax policy with you.

I've had quite a day here in Chicago. I got a Chicago political lesson for lunch. [Laughter] I dined with the mayor. It's the second political lesson I've had in recent weeks. [Laughter] The first lesson I got was in early November—[laughter]—if you know what I mean. [Laughter] I told the people of Illinois every time I came here, I said, "I wish the mayor were on my side, because he's good." But more importantly, he's a really good mayor. He's a good mayor of a big city. We've had our time for politics; now it's time to do what's right for our country and for the cities.

The mayor and I share something in common. We're both problem solvers. We try to have a clear-eyed view and a commonsense approach to solving problems. And so we're going to have a good relationship. And I'm so honored the mayor was gracious in dining with me.

I'm also honored to be here with the Speaker of the House—just happens to be from the State of Illinois. I like to describe the Speaker as a trustworthy man. He's the kind of fellow who says when he gives you his word, he means it. Sometimes that doesn't happen all the time in the political process. Sometimes they'll look you in the eye and not mean it. [Laughter] The Speaker means it when he tells you something. I look forward to working with you, Mr. Speaker.

I'm honored to be traveling with your United States Senator Fitzgerald. We flew down on Air Force One today. He's a good young leader. Congressman Lipinski is with us. We're going to fly back from here to Washington. He and I will have a little quality time together. [Laughter] I'm looking forward to it, because he's a quality person. I

appreciate the Lieutenant Governor coming, as well, and thank you very much for your hospitality.

There's a lot of people here reminding me that they're from Texas, and I appreciate my fellow Texans who are here—a lot of Chicago folks thanking me for the Sammy Sosa trade. [Laughter] I'm reminded about the truth when I come to a place like this—the entrepreneurial spirit is what America is all about. That's what this country is about.

The job of Government is not to try to create wealth. That's not the role of our Government. The role of Government is to create an environment in which the entrepreneur can realize his or her dreams, which the small business person can start a company and make it grow. So my job is not only to deal with problems; my job is to understand the philosophy that has made the country great—and never forget it, never forget it—and that is that we're going to have dreamers in America.

We're facing a problem, and the problem is our economy's slowing down. You all know that as well as anybody does. This kind of great boom is beginning to sputter a little bit. And the question you need to be asking the President is, "What do you intend to do about it, Mr. President?" And here it is.

One, have sound budgeting in the Federal Government. It's to say to the spenders in Washington, DC, "Here are the priorities for our country." A priority is educating children. And let me—as an aside, as I continue to praise the mayor—he has done a good job of setting high standards, strong accountability in the schools of Chicago. So a priority of mine is public education. I believe every child—every child—ought to be educated and not one child left behind.

A priority is to make sure we keep the peace by having a strong military. We need to pay the men and women who wear the uniform more money, to keep morale high. A priority is Social Security, to make sure the moms and dads of the World War II generation get the promises made. But it's also to be bold enough to reform the system, to let younger workers take some of your own payroll taxes and manage it for your own account. That's a priority of mine. Medicare and health care is a priority. And we double