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Week Ending Friday, June 15, 2001

The President's Radio Address

June 9, 2001

Good morning. This week I marked National Homeownership Week by volunteering with a local Habitat for Humanity work crew in Tampa, Florida. I was privileged to work with local volunteers to help build a home for Johana Rodriguez and her family.

Like all Habitat families, Ms. Rodriguez contributed her own hard work to her home's construction. And she takes great pride in the fact that she'll soon fulfill the American Dream of being a homeowner.

More Americans than ever before are experiencing that dream. But it still eludes too many people. For instance, while the rate of homeownership amongst all Americans is nearly 68 percent, the rate among African-American and Hispanic families is under 50 percent. These numbers are troubling because homeownership lies at the heart of the American Dream. It is a key to upward mobility for low and middle income Americans. It is an anchor for families and a source of stability for communities. It serves as the foundation of many people's financial security. And it is a source of pride for people who have worked hard to provide for their families. We need to do more to promote homeownership in America. And my administration is proposing a number of ways to do just that.

Our 2002 budget dedicates more than $30 billion to the Department of Housing and Urban Development. This is an increase of almost $2 billion over current funding levels. We are working in a variety of ways to build and sustain neighborhoods in inner cities and rural communities across America.

One particular program, the American Dream Downpayment Fund, will provide $200 million in downpayment assistance to help 130,000 low income families buy homes. In addition, my administration announced earlier this week a program to allow people who receive low income rental assistance to bundle a year's worth of payments and use the money for a downpayment or to make monthly payments on a new mortgage.

We're also proposing a $1.7 billion tax credit to support the rehabilitation or new construction of up to 100,000 homes over a 5 year period. And this week I was proud to sign a bipartisan tax relief bill that will let Americans keep more of their hard earned money, money they can use to help purchase a new home or pay the mortgage of an existing home.

Government can play a helpful role but so must many others. My administration is dedicated to helping the private sector organizations, like Habitat for Humanity, that build homes and lift lives. HUD's Self-Help Ownership Opportunity Program provides seed money to groups like Habitat to purchase land for homes and build streets and utilities in local neighborhoods. Next year's budget will propose tripling the program's funds to expand its reach.

If you have an opportunity to help Habitat for Humanity or other organizations working to make the American Dream a reality for more families, I hope you do so. Government funding can help. But Habitat relies on volunteers to accomplish the bulk of its mission. And I can tell you from personal experience, there's no better way to feel like you're making a difference than to put hammer to nail and help people realize their dreams.

Thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 2:10 p.m. on June 7 in the Cabinet Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on June 9. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on June 8 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Remarks on the Execution of Timothy McVeigh

June 11, 2001

This morning the United States of America carried out the severest sentence for the gravest of crimes. The victims of the Oklahoma City bombing have been given not vengeance but justice. And one young man met the fate he chose for himself 6 years ago.

For the survivors of the crime and for the families of the dead, the pain goes on. Final punishment of the guilty cannot alone bring peace to the innocent. It cannot recover the loss or balance the scales, and it is not meant to do so. Today every living person who was hurt by the evil done in Oklahoma City can rest in the knowledge that there has been a reckoning.

At every point, from the morning of April 19, 1995, to this hour, we have seen the good that overcomes evil. We saw it in the rescuers who saved and suffered with the victims. We have seen it in a community that has grieved and held close the memory of the lost. We have seen it in the work of detectives, marshal, and police, and we've seen it in the courts. Due process ruled: The case was proved; the verdict was calmly reached; and the rights of the accused were protected and observed to the full and to the end. Under the laws of our country, the matter is concluded.

Life and history bring tragedies, and often they cannot be explained. But they can be redeemed. They are redeemed by dispensing justice, though eternal justice is not ours to deliver. By remembering those who grieve, including Timothy McVeigh's mother, father, and sisters, and by trusting in purposes greater than our own, may God in his mercy grant peace to all—to the lives that were taken 6 years ago, to the lives that go on, and to the life that ended today.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:44 a.m. in the James S. Brady Briefing Room at the White House. Timothy McVeigh was tried, found guilty, and sentenced to death for the murder of 168 people in the April 19, 1995, bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City, OK.

Remarks on Global Climate Change

June 11, 2001

Good morning. I've just met with senior members of my administration who are working to develop an effective and science-based approach to addressing the important issues of global climate change.

This is an issue that I know is very important to the nations of Europe, which I will be visiting for the first time as President. The Earth's well-being is also an issue important to America, and it's an issue that should be important to every nation in every part of our world.

The issue of climate change respects no border. Its effects cannot be reined in by an army nor advanced by any ideology. Climate change, with its potential to impact every corner of the world, is an issue that must be addressed by the world.

The Kyoto Protocol was fatally flawed in fundamental ways. But the process used to bring nations together to discuss our joint response to climate change is an important one. That is why I am today committing the United States of America to work within the United Nations framework and elsewhere to develop with our friends and allies and nations throughout the world an effective and science-based response to the issue of global warming.

My Cabinet-level working group has met regularly for the last 10 weeks to review the most recent, most accurate, and most comprehensive science. They have heard from scientists offering a wide spectrum of views. They have reviewed the facts, and they have listened to many theories and suppositions. The working group asked the highly respected National Academy of Sciences to provide us the most up-to-date information about what is known and about what is not known on the science of climate change.

First, we know the surface temperature of the Earth is warming. It has risen by .6 degrees Celsius over the past 100 years. There was a warming trend from the 1890s to the 1940s, cooling from the 1940s to the 1970s, and then sharply rising temperatures from the 1970s to today.

There is a natural greenhouse effect that contributes to warming. Greenhouse gases