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Remarks at a Townhall Meeting in Ontario, California

January 5, 2002

The President. Thank you all very much. *Mario, muchas gracias por tu palabras.* Thank you all for coming.

[*At this point, the President spoke in Spanish, and no translation was provided.*]

Thank you for letting me come. Thank you for taking time out of your *fin de semana para hablar con el presidente*. I'm honored that so many came out for this weekend. It gives me a great chance to share some thoughts with you as we begin a new year that I believe is going to be a fantastic year for America. And I look forward to answering some questions you may have.

I want to thank your Governor for being here. Governor Gray Davis kindly took time out of his schedule for coming. Governor, thank you for coming. I want to thank some of the members of the mighty—and I mean, mighty—congressional delegation from the State of California. We've got Gary Miller, whose district this is. Gary, thank you for coming. David Dreier, chairman of the Rules Committee—David, thank you for being here.

David and I worked closely together to get a trade bill out of the House of Representatives. He knows what I know, that trade is good for creating jobs in the State of California. Fearful people, people who don't trust the ability of our entrepreneurs, build walls around America. Confident people tear them down, and I'm confident in the American spirit. I'm confident that the entrepreneurs of our country—Hispanic, Anglo, African-American—compete with anybody, any place, any time, and let's trade freely.

Congressman Calvert, Congressman Issa, are with us, as well. Thank you two for coming. And finally, Congressman Jerry Lewis is with us today.

I notice the people in the uniforms here applauding a little louder. They understand that Congressman Lewis plays an incredibly important role when it comes to appropriating monies for the United States military. There is no—he's been strong on the defense of America. I look forward to working with Jerry Lewis in the next budget cycle to make sure that the defense of this Nation is the number one priority of the budget of the United States.

I want to thank Rosario Marin, the Treasurer of the United States, for being here. It's nice to be back in your neighborhood, Rosario. I want to thank Hector Barreto, the Administrator of the SBA; Ruben Barrales, who works for me in the White House. Thank you for coming, Ruben.

I want to thank our host organizations, the Latin Business Association, the Ontario Hispanic Chamber of Commerce, the Hispanic Chamber of Commerce of Orange County, and the Latino Coalition, for your sponsorship. One of the things that I am most proud of, of our Nation, is the number of Latinos who own their own business, the number of Latinos who really work hard to access the American Dream.

The growth of Latino-owned small businesses in California is astounding. It is amazing how many people now can say, "I am a proud business owner." To me, that is what America is all about, somebody who has a dream, somebody who works hard and can say to themselves and their community, "This is my business. This is something I own, and nobody can take it away from me."

And the job of Government is always to remember the importance of the small business and the entrepreneurial dream. The job of Government is not to try to create wealth. The job of Government is to create an environment in which people are willing to take risks to realize their dream. It's to educate people. It's to provide opportunity and then make the playing field as level as it is and

see who can succeed or not in the great country called America.

This has been an amazing year for Laura and me. Some things occurred that we expected. Some things happened that we didn't expect. I'm going to talk about one thing we were able to anticipate and one we weren't. First, I will tell you that nearly a year ago I hosted a group of business leaders to Austin, Texas, before I had become sworn in as the President. And leaders all around the country came and made it very clear that our economy was pretty darn slow, and I knew we needed to do something about it, and I'm going to talk about that in a second.

So it was expected that there would be unemployment on the rise, expected that after a period of great prosperity, the economy would slow down. And we took some action that I'll describe here in a second. Obviously, what was not expected was what took place on September the 11th, and we're doing something about that, as well. This great land of ours made a clear statement, that we will not let terror stand, that those who inflicted damage on America would pay a severe price.

We learned some interesting lessons, that we're now vulnerable at home. I remember giving a speech to a group of high school seniors right after September the 11th, and it dawned on me in the middle of this talk that this is the first high school class that—in a long time, that is graduating in a time when somebody is attacking America.

These evil ones still want to hit us. But after September the 11th, America is now ready. We're after them. Any hint of somebody wanting to harm our country, we're acting. We've got thousands of FBI agents chasing down every single lead. We respect people's constitutional rights, and we will continue to do so. But if we think somebody is fixing to hurt the American people, we will move in this country. We're now on an alert because of September the 11th. And I want to thank the police officers who are here. And I want to thank whoever—if any FBI agents are here, and all law enforcement officials in the State of California and all across our country who are working endless hours to make sure with gather any information possible to protect the American people.

My most important job is the security and safety of the American people. Every morning I wake up, and when I wake up, I go to the Oval Office. I'm kind of an early morning guy, by the way. I take Barney and Spot out. [*Laughter*] They take a good look at the Rose Garden—[*laughter*]—up close and personal. [*Laughter*] And then I head into the Oval Office. And I read about the potential threats to America. And one of my first meetings is to visit with the head of the FBI. And my question every morning is, "Mr. Director, what are you doing about this threat? What's happening with this lead? Are you taking care of this piece of business?"

The culture of our law enforcement has changed to the point where they now know what I know, that we've got to do everything in our power to protect the American people. But the best way to secure the homeland of America is to find the evil ones wherever they try to hide and bring them to justice. And that's exactly what the United States military—[*applause*].

I am very proud of the U.S. military. They've done exactly what we've asked them to do. For those of you who wear the uniform, thank you. For those of you who have got loved ones who wear the uniform, thank you, as well. We're making steady progress in Afghanistan. The evil ones awakened a mighty giant. You know, we're a compassionate people, and we're a decent people, but if you come after us, you will learn that you have made a big mistake.

It seems like the more TV channels there are, the more anxious people become on TV. But I want to remind my fellow citizens, we've only been at war for 90 days. That's not a very long period of time. But in 90 days, we've made incredible progress. The Al Qaida, the Usama bin Laden group, can't claim Afghanistan as a haven anymore.

You know, they were like parasites. I know we've got some ranchers and farmers here; you understand what a parasite is. Parasites try to take over the host, and if there's enough parasites and if they've been there long enough, the host itself becomes ill. The host no longer is in a position of power in Afghanistan; the Taliban has been routed.

But you know what my most meaningful memory has been recently? And that has

been the joy on the face of women and young girls in Afghanistan as they have been liberated from one of the most brutal regimes.

We're taking action. We're taking action against evil people, because this great Nation of many religions understands, our war is not against Islam or against faith practiced by the Muslim people; our war is a war against evil. This is clearly a case of good versus evil, and make no mistake about it, good will prevail.

The American people are patient, very patient, and for that, I'm grateful. I appreciate so very much the fact that the Americans from all walks of life have stepped back and have figured out that this is going to require a lot of effort and energy to succeed in our war against terror. And I want to thank you for your patience. We're now in a dangerous phase of the first front in the war against terror. Because of the terrain in Afghanistan and because there's still hostile elements, we're pursuing our objective cave by cave. You see, the people that tend to send young, innocent boys to their death in the name of Allah want to save their own skins by hiding in caves. And I've told the world, just like I've told our military, we will do whatever it takes to bring them to justice. They think they can run, and they think they can hide, because they think this country is soft and impatient. But they are going to continue to learn the terrible lesson that says: Don't mess with America.

This conflict will have its casualties as we pursue our objective, and we mourn for Sergeant Nathan Chapman, and we pray with his family for God's blessings on them. Nathan lost his life yesterday, but I can assure the parents and loved ones of Nathan Chapman that he lost his life for a cause that is just and important. And that cause is the security of the American people, and that cause is the cause of freedom and a civilized world.

Our hunt for any terrorist activity is not just confined to Afghanistan. I truly believe this is a defining moment in history, and this country must lead. We must seize the moment. We must make our country and other countries that embrace freedom a place where children can grow up in peace and be able to realize their dreams. And therefore, we must find terror where it exists and pull it out by the roots and bring it to justice. Terror is evil, and wherever evil exists, the free nations of the world must come together in a massive coalition that says, terror will not stand. And the United States is ready to lead that coalition, not only in Afghanistan but wherever we find terror.

And we're making good progress. We're cutting off their money. There's going to be all kinds of fronts in this war on terror, and one of them is the financial front. They like to move money around, and obviously, in order to fight a war against the United States or any of our allies or anybody who embraces freedom, you've got to have money. And so they set up front groups, groups that sound good, the such-and-such foundation for making sure people have got a good life. And yet, what ends up happening is, a chunk of that money ends up in the pockets of evil people who don't respect civilization, who don't like freedom, who resent the fact that men and women should be free. And so, we're working with our allies in our coalition to cut off their money. And we're beginning to have an effect. We're beginning to have good progress about finding who is funding them, and we're chasing the money all the way to the source. And when we find somebody in some country who is writing checks on behalf of groups of people that would hurt us, we're asking that country to hold them accountable.

You see, there's no shades of gray in this war against terror. Either you're with the United States or you're not with the United States. And because this Nation has shown such strong resolve and unity, because we're patient, and because we're going to be successful in the first theater, a lot of the fence-sitters or those who would like to be on the fence are beginning to realize it's in their best interests to be with us.

The Nation is united, and there is a resolve and a spirit that is just so fantastic to feel. And I am obviously grateful to be the President of such a strong and vibrant land.

We have responded to the issues abroad with unanimity and clarity of purpose and resolve. And that's the way we should respond to problems here at home, as well. We ought to come together to do the right thing. We need to focus on asking the question, what's the best thing for America? It's time

to take the spirit of unity that has been prevalent when it comes to fighting the war and bring it to Washington, DC.

The terrorists not only attacked our freedom, but they also attacked our economy. And we need to respond in unison. We ought not to revert to the old ways that used to dominate Washington, DC. The old ways is: What's more important, the country or my political party? I stand here as a proud party man, but let me tell you something: The country is far more important than the—[*applause*].

We've made some good progress about working together. I'm getting ready to sign an education bill next week. It's a really good piece of legislation. I'm real proud of it. I want to thank the teachers who are here and the people who are concerned about educating our—making sure our public schools are the best they can be. And by the way, the cornerstone of that bill is that every child can learn—every child in America.

And a lot of my friends in Midland, Texas, are going to be amazed when I stand up and say nice things about Ted Kennedy. [*Laughter*] He deserves it. He worked hard on this education bill. And I can proudly sign it, and I can proudly say I appreciate Senator Kennedy's strong work and input into making this bill a good bill.

But there are troubling signs that the old way is beginning to creep into the people's minds in Washington. After all, it's an election year. It's tempting to revert back to the old ways. But America is better than that. We're better than that.

This economic debate is troubling me. You see, I'm the kind of fellow who says, "Let's work together and focus on results, not rhetoric. Let's do what's right for the people who have been hurt. We need to work and then share credit, not pass blame."

And there is no question that the attacks of September the 11th hurt our economy. I mean, there's no question about it. It was slow beginning last year; it started to recover a little bit; and then the attacks hurt. I mean, after all, who wouldn't think it would? The attacks affected the confidence of the American people. It affected our psychology. It makes sense that it affected our psychology.

But we're recovering. And there are some good signs. But my attitude is, so long as any willing and able worker can't find work, we need to do something about it. The unemployment rate is 5.8 percent, but if you're unemployed, it's 100 percent for you.

The principle I have been operating on is this: In tough times, people need a check to help them when they're unemployed, but what they need for the long term is a paycheck. And we ought to be asking the question, how do you create jobs in America?

I do think we need to help those who have been affected by the attacks by expanding unemployment benefits, including help with health care costs. I think that makes sense, to help somebody whose life was severely affected, and we ought to do that, and we ought to make sure that we get that done.

But I also understand that we need to ask the question, how do we expand jobs? What can we do to encourage investment so that employers are able to go out and provide more work for American people?

I had the honor of meeting with JCM Corporation officials today. As you can tell, they're here. [*Laughter*] Carlo Moyano—his daddy started the firm; he's now running it. I'm going to get it mixed up, but they had 10,000 square foot of warehouse; now they've got hundreds of thousands of square foot of warehouse. He's living the American Dream. This is a company that started in a garage. It's now a major manufacturer. He said the best thing Government can do is to provide incentives for the expansion of plant and equipment, because he understands what I understand: If you expand plant and equipment, you expand jobs.

And he had asked the question, what about jobs? How do we create jobs? And when we ask that question, we've got to understand that the major job growth occurs in the small-business community in America; those are the creators of new jobs.

And that's why, in the beginning of last year, I worked so hard to get the tax cut passed. That's why, because—let me explain. If you think the economy is going to slow down, the best way to recover is to let people have their own money in their pockets to spend, not the Government.

Somebody told me the funniest thing. They said, "There are some in Washington saying that the tax cut caused the recession." I don't know what economic textbook they're reading. [*Laughter*] The best way to come out of a recession is to say to the small-business person, "We'll let you keep your own money." When we cut taxes on all rates, we said to the sole proprietor or the limited partner, "It's your money. You spend it in order to expand the job base in America."

We have priorities in Washington. Defending our homeland is going to be a priority. A strong defense is a priority. But something that shouldn't be a priority is to raise your taxes. There's going to be people who say, "We can't have the tax cut go through anymore." That's a tax raise. And I challenge their economics, when they say, "Raising taxes will help the country recover." Not over my dead body will they raise your taxes.

I'm confident that a new spirit can prevail in Washington. I hope people come together and do what's right for the American people. It's going to be a task—for some, it's kind of a steep hill. But I believe if that's what the American people want, it can happen. It's certainly what your President wants.

I also want our country to continue to embrace the values that make our Nation so wonderful. I've always told people that I believe the great strength of our country lies not in our halls of Government, but in the hearts and souls of the American people.

I got to see—running for President is certainly not a distant memory. [*Laughter*] It really puts you through the paces. But it's important because if you pay attention to what you see, you will begin to really see the strength of America. I see the strength of our country in our classrooms. I see the strength of our country in faith-based institutions that—of Christian faith, Jewish faith, Muslim faith, all of which exist to help people in need. It's the true strength of America.

After September the 11th, many of our fellow countrymen took a step back and said, "Is my life worth it now? Am I living my life the way that—in a worthwhile way?" People have begun to assess their priorities. I've been pleased to read story after story about how moms and dads are beginning to realize the most important job they will ever have is to love their children with all their heart and all their soul.

I love the story that came out of Michigan about the women of cover, of Muslim faith, who didn't feel comfortable about going to their home. And so Jewish and Christian groups, ladies' groups, went to the neighborhood and said, "We'll walk you to the store," because the America we know is not one that castigates an individual based upon their religion. The America we know is a society that's open and free and a society that says, "If you dream the big dream, you can realize it if you work hard." It's a society that says, "You can worship the way you want to worship," and a society which says, "You've got to love your neighbor just like you love yourself." That's the spirit of America that I know.

It's a million acts of kindness and compassion on a daily basis that define the true spirit and the true strength of America. We live in a blessed land. The values are great; the system is wonderful; but most of all, the people are the best in the world.

Thank you for coming. God bless. Thank you all. I'll be glad to answer some questions. Now that I'm in California, I've got to walk around like a talk show host. [*Laughter*]

California Water Resources

Q. Mr. President, my name is Al Lopez. I'm a member of the Western Municipal Water District. Our agency works in cooperation with all the water agencies throughout the Inland Empire to provide adequate drinking water for our Inland Empire.

California has to reduce its dependency on the Colorado River. Congressman Calvert is working very closely with legislation to reauthorize Cal-Fed, and we would hope that one of those projects would meet your support, especially for the Riverside-Corona theater that will provide much water to our Inland Empire for its economic base.

The President. Thank you, sir. Tell Calvert to come on by and drop it off. [*Laughter*] Thank you very much. I appreciate your work. Listen, I understand water. I grew up in Midland, Texas. There you go. [*Laughter*] You remember how much water we didn't have there. [*Laughter*]

Yes, sir, back in the back.

Energy Policy

Q. First, sir, a message from the crew that just recently returned from the U.S.S. *Enterprise.* My son-in-law was aboard that. From the last man and woman on that crew, they are honored to call you their Commander in Chief.

The President. Okay.

Q. And my question, sir, after you make Tommy Daschle go to his room for being bad, tell us something about your plans to end our dependency on foreign oil.

The President. There you go. He brings up a very important point, because in order to make sure our economy remains strong and vital in the long run, we have got to have an energy plan. Over 50 percent of our energy comes from overseas. Fortunately, a lot of it comes from Canada. But a lot of it comes from the Middle East.

And it seems like, to me, we've got to do a couple of things: One, find more oil in an environmentally friendly way. I think we can do this without drilling off the coast of California. I know that we have got the technologies necessary to explore in places like Alaska without damaging the environment—the technologies have changed so dramatically.

I know you all had a fright here in California. It's an indication of what could happen again. When you start running out of energy and demand is high, there's either going to be price spikes or shortages.

I've worked with your Governor to try to help get through this situation. One of the things that California has done is, they have expedited permitting for plants driven by natural gas. But we better figure out where we're going to get the natural gas from in order to make sure that you've got ample electricity in the future, and therefore, we need to explore. And I repeat, we can do so without damaging our environment. I am absolutely confident of that.

The other thing that's important to note is that in our own hemisphere, Mexico, which is obviously a vital neighbor, imports natural gas from the United States. So we've got to find more. We've got to find more not only for ourselves but to make sure our neighbor to the south is able to grow. There's nothing more important for America than for Mexico to be strong and vibrant and to have good growth.

We also can do a better job of conservation. Governor Davis, the last time I met with him, reminded me that California has done a very good job of conservation, that you have been able to reduce dependency by conserving better. And so we've got plans, an energy plan that passed the House, that's stuck in the Senate, that do provide incentives for better means to conserve.

Thirdly, technology will help lead us away from dependency. I notice our Department of Energy was talking about a new automobile research plan to help develop a new fuel cell system for automobiles. It's coming. And the fundamental question is, how do we get from here to the day when the new technologies become market-accepted? And it starts with getting a plan out of the United States Congress. It passed the House; it's stuck in the Senate. It's time to get the bill moving and get it to my desk.

Go ahead and yell it out. If I don't like the question, I'll just change it. [*Laughter*]

Prayer

Q. Mr. President, I'm a Navy chaplain, serving with the Marines in Twentynine Palms, California. I am also honored to have you as my Commander in Chief.

The President. Do you have a question?

Q. My question is very simple: How can we, as pastors, pray specifically for you and your family?

The President. Well, first—thank you. I have—first of all, I believe in the power of prayer. And I have felt the prayers of the American people for me and my family. I have. And I want to thank all of you who have prayed. People say, "Well, how do you know?" I say, "Well, I can just feel it." I can't describe it very well, but I feel comforted by the prayer.

I think the thing that—the prayer that I would like America—is to ask for is to pray for God's protection for our land and our people, to pray against—that there's a shield of protection, so that if the evil ones try to hit us again, that we've done everything we can, physically, and that there is a spiritual shield that protects the country.

Do you have a question? Come on underneath. The man's got a question.

September 11

Q. First of all, I'm very impressed in how you handled the situation on September 11th.

The President. That's plenty. No. Thank you.

Q. What was the first thing that went through your head when you heard that a plane crashed into the first building?

The President. Yes. Well, I was sitting in a schoolhouse in Florida. I had gone down to tell my little brother what to do, and—just kidding, Jeb. [*Laughter*] And—it's the mother in me. [*Laughter*] Anyway, I was in the midst of learning about a reading program that works. I'm a big believer in basic education, and it starts with making sure every child learns to read. And therefore, we need to focus on the science of reading, not what may feel good or sound good when it comes to teaching children to read. I'm just getting a plug in for my reading initiative.

Anyway, I was sitting there, and my Chief of Staff—well, first of all, when we walked into the classroom, I had seen this plane fly into the first building. There was a TV set on. And you know, I thought it was pilot error, and I was amazed that anybody could make such a terrible mistake. And something was wrong with the plane, or—anyway, I'm sitting there, listening to the briefing, and Andy Card came and said, "America is under attack."

And in the meantime, this teacher was going on about the curriculum, and I was thinking about what it meant for America to be under attack. It was an amazing thought. But I made up my mind that if America was under attack, we'd get them. I wasn't interested in lawyers; I wasn't interested in a bunch of debate. I was interested in finding out who did it and bringing them to justice. I also knew that they would try to hide, and anybody who provided haven, help, food, would be held accountable by the United States of America.

Anyway, it was an interesting day.

Higher Education

Q. *Senor Presidente, mi nombre is Andrea*—I'm a teacher in Rancho Cucamonga.

The President. Yes, I was there. I gave my Social Security speech there.

Q. I'm a professor at Chaffey Community College in Rancho Cucamonga. What is your vision for higher education for all people?

The President. Thank you. First, let me tell you, I am a big believer in making sure our community colleges remain affordable, available, and flexible. And the reason I believe that is that I understand that the best way to make sure people have got the ability to work is for there to be a training—a retraining opportunity.

In other words, communities must figure out how to match up a community college system with jobs that actually exist. It seems like, to me, in order for America to be hopeful for everybody, we need to have flexibility, at some point, in the higher education system. And the best place for that flexibility to occur is at the community college level.

Technologies race through the country, our economies, but people get left behind. And therefore, there needs to be a system to retrain people for the jobs that actually exist, and the best place to do that, in my judgment, is the community college. I'm not pandering. I happen to believe that.

Now, higher education takes all kinds of—there's all kinds of different ways to achieve higher education. A community college system is one, a 4-year college; there's others. One of the things I think we need to do is expand the Pell grant system to help people afford higher education.

I've got a couple of more, and then I've got to hustle. Yes, ma'am.

Q. [*Inaudible*].

The President. Thank you. You can repeat that if you want to. [*Laughter*]

The First Lady's Wardrobe/Small Business

Q. Well, like you, Mr. President, I too believe in the American Dream. I am a young Latina entrepreneur who caters to top-level executive women in their clothing needs. One of my dreams is to design an exclusive garment for the First Lady, Laura Bush.

The President. Yes, well, you've got a very good marketing department, I see that. [*Laughter*]

Q. How can you, as President, help me realize that dream? [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, you just helped yourself, which is part of realizing a dream. [*Laughter*] Secondly, I can take the tape of this show—I'm confident somebody back there is making a tape—[*laughter*]—and present it firsthand to the First Lady.

But the other thing—the other way to help you on your business and to help you expand is to let you keep some of your own money, so that you can reinvest it, and so that your business can grow. It's one thing to be able to have a good marketing plan—and I appreciate your boldness—[*laughter*]—but it's another thing to be able to have the cash flow necessary to implement the strategy.

It's important for Government to set priorities, and we're going to set priorities. But it's also important for Congress to realize that one way to put a halt to any economic recovery that's beginning is to overspend, is to keep too much of the people's money. And therefore, one of the interesting debates is going to be, do we let the people keep the money that we promised them or not? And you heard my position on it loud and clear. The answer is, absolutely they get to keep the money. Like this entrepreneur right here.

Yes, sir. Yes, sir. You probably think the Marines are the best branch in the service, don't you?

Montgomery GI Bill

Q. Yes, sir, I do. I was a recruiter for 3 years, so I know we are. Sir, the question I have, it goes back to education—[*inaudible*]—all marines, all soldiers, sailors, and airmen, we pay into the Montgomery GI bill. And there was talk in Congress about us being able to share that money that we've put in and the Government's going to match for our educations, to go towards our family. I was wondering what you thought of that so we could use——

The President. I'm not sure what the status of that proposal is. I remember discussing it with my OMB Director. I thought it was a good idea when we discussed it; I just don't know where the proposal is right now.

Last question, then I've got to go up to Oregon. Yes, ma'am. Then I've got to go back out to the ranch. There are a couple of cows waiting for me. [*Laughter*] You know, when I first got back from Washington, it seemed like the cows were talking back. [*Laughter*] But now that I've spent some time in Crawford, they're just cows. [*Laughter*]

Yes, ma'am.

Amendment To Prohibit Flag Desecration

Q. What is the status and your feeling on the amendment to prohibit flag desecration?

The President. I don't know what it is. I'm for it. And that's a good question. I just don't know exactly where it stands right now. I need to—okay. *Como esta*?

Immigration

Q. *Muy bien*. I'm so proud you came here from the largest State of Texas, and the biggest President of the world.

The President. Thank you.

Q. *Jorge*——

The President. *Si*.

Q. For those of you who don't speak English, it's "George." I have a question. As an American Mexican, we face the problem with immigration.

The President. Yes.

Q. I'm very concerned. And I want to ask you what we can do to help to solve this problem, not only with the illegal immigration but with the millions of people living in the United States with the proper papers to work.

The President. Right. A couple of things. First, short term, is to make sure that the INS functions, that the INS is able to expedite the paperwork for people who are legitimately here in the country, and expedite the paperwork necessary for families to reunite. If you believe in family values, you've got to have families together, it seems like to me. And yet, we're too bureaucratic when it comes to the INS, and we need to streamline it and make it work.

Secondly, we've got to understand that in the past, at least, there have been people who were trying to hire people and people willing to work. And it makes sense to me to have

a system that matches willing employer with willing employee.

Thirdly, the long-term solution is for Mexico to grow a middle class so that people don't feel like they have to come here to work. The long-term solution—family values don't stop at the Rio Bravo. If there's somebody who has got children to feed, somebody, a mom or a dad who has got little ones to take care of, and they make 50 cents in a State in Mexico or they could make $5 in America, they're going to come to America if they believe in their children, if they have the same values you and I have.

Values don't stop. And so, therefore, it seems like, to me, the best thing we can do is to have a strong relationship with Mexico, a free trading relationship with Mexico so that Mexico is more likely to grow a middle class, which means that person who is willing to walk miles across Texas desert to work to feed her children will be able to find work close to home.

That's why I said one of the most important foreign policy relations we have is with Mexico. The stronger Mexico is, the less pressure on our border. The stronger Mexico is, the more prosperity there will be in both our countries.

Listen, thank you all for coming. God bless, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. at the Ontario Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Mario Rodriguez, member, board of directors and advisors, the Latino Coalition, who introduced the President; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Sfc. Nathan Ross Chapman, USA, who was killed January 4 by hostile fire in Afghanistan; Carlo Moyano, president and chief executive officer, JCM Corp.; and Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida.

The President's Radio Address

January 5, 2002

Good morning. The events of September the 11th left America sadder and stronger, and they clarified some important goals for our country. We have a war to wage and a recession to fight. Defending our country and strengthening our economy are great priorities for 2002. We must be determined, and we must keep our focus.

This Saturday, I'm traveling in Oregon and California, talking with people who have been hit hard by the economic downturn. When I return to Washington on Monday, I will be meeting with my economic advisers and other officials to discuss the latest economic data and work for a quick recovery for our economy.

My administration has offered our ideas for creating new jobs. I've proposed speeding up the tax reductions Congress passed last year because the faster tax rates come down, the faster our economy will grow. I have proposed tax refunds for lower and moderate income families to put money in the hands of people with kids to support and bills to pay. I have proposed reforming the alternative minimum tax so employers and entrepreneurs no longer see their taxes rise as their profits shrink. In tough times, we need to encourage entrepreneurship and small business growth, not punish it. I've proposed better tax treatment for employers and entrepreneurs who invest in new equipment, which will help the hardworking people who use the equipment, and those who manufacture the equipment. The Council of Economic Advisers estimates that these ideas could save at least 300,000 threatened jobs.

I'm also calling on Congress to act immediately to help the unemployed workers. I've proposed extending unemployment benefits by 13 weeks, and I've supported tax credits to protect the health insurance of workers who've been laid off.

But we can't stop there. It is important to help workers who've lost their jobs. It is even more important to help workers find new jobs. In tough times, people need an unemployment check, but what they want is a paycheck. Americans want the independence of a job and the satisfaction of providing for their families, themselves. A job is more than a source of income; it is a source of dignity.

I made my proposals to create new jobs and help dislocated workers on October the 4th, 3 months and 943,000 lost jobs ago. The House of Representatives accepted my proposals, but the Senate Democratic leadership would not even schedule a vote. Some in the