

love them every single day; make sure they turn off the TV so they become good readers. [Laughter] And always remember that we're lucky to live in such a fabulous nation, the nation called America.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:03 a.m. on the factory floor of John Deere Harvester Works. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Jose Moreno of East Moline; Mayor Stanley F. Leach of Moline, IL; Robert W. Lane, chairman and chief executive officer, Deere & Co.; John S. Gault, general manager, John Deere Harvester Works; Chuck Thompson, president, United Auto Workers Local 865; and President Vladimir Putin of Russia.

Remarks in Springfield, Missouri

January 14, 2002

The President. Thank you all. I appreciate it. Thanks for coming. I thought the Senator—I thought the Senator was going to offer me a pretzel. [Laughter] Not one of those ones that are hard to chew. Now, I see a lot of the students who are here. This gives me a chance to give you some good advice: Always listen to your mother. [Laughter] Mine used to say, "Never swallow your pretzel until you've chewed it." [Laughter] I guess I wasn't listening.

But it's great to be back here in the great State of Missouri and Springfield. I want to thank the Chamber of Commerce for hosting this event. It gives me a chance to share some of my thoughts with our fellow citizens as I work my way down the heartland of America. I started earlier in Moline, Illinois, at a factory that makes John Deere tractors. I am here to talk to farmers. I'm on my way down to New Orleans to remind people that much of what we grow and produce in America is shipped overseas, out of that port. I'm really here to remind people of the great values of our country, lived in your everyday lives.

So I want to thank you all for coming. I'm grateful for a fine United States Senator and a good friend of mine, Kit Bond, for being here. Thank you for coming, Kit. I appreciate my Secretary of Commerce as well as the Secretary of Agriculture for joining me on this trip. Thank you both for coming. I want

to thank Kenny Hulshof and Todd Akin, of the United States Congress, for being here today. I want to thank those two fine Members of the House of Representatives for coming. I see my good friend Jim Talent is here. I appreciate you coming, Jim; I'm looking forward to visiting with you on the way out to the next stop. I want to thank so very much Roseann Blunt for being here, the wife of your Congressman. The first lady of your fine State met me at the airport, and I want to thank Lori Holden for coming out to say hello.

But most of all, I want to thank you all for taking time out of your day to be here to greet me. It's been an unbelievable experience to be your President.

Audience member. [Inaudible]

The President. Thank you. I'm so proud to come and be able to share some thoughts about how to make sure America remains strong and to make sure people who are trying to find work are able to do so. You know, my view about this is that the role of Government is not to try to create wealth. The role of Government is to create an environment in which people are willing to take risks, in which the entrepreneur is willing to expand through capital investment. The job of Government is to create an environment in which people are willing to create jobs, so people who want work can find work. And that starts with making sure our Nation is safe, in order to make sure—in order to make sure that there's confidence in our economy and that the environment is good for job creation.

My biggest job is to prevent the enemy from hitting us again, and that's exactly what I'm going to do. We take homeland security very seriously in America now. I put a good man in place, Tom Ridge, to make sure that any time we get any hint that anybody would try to harm America again, we'll act, and we'll act strong. If we get any scintilla of evidence that somebody may try to harm America, we will bring them to justice.

I want to thank the law enforcement officers and officials who are on alert. And we've got to remain on alert. You see something unusual happening in your community, contact the local law enforcement. We're on the look. But the truth of the matter is, the best

way to protect America is find the enemy where they hide and get them.

I am so proud—I am so proud of those who wear our uniform. We have given them a big task, and they're performing brilliantly. For those of you who may have a son or a daughter in our military, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. For those of you who have a husband or wife in the military, or a mom or a dad, I want to thank you from the bottom of my heart. Our military is doing us proud.

We have sent them on a difficult mission. It is getting more difficult as time progresses. After all, we've got our troops now looking in caves, looking in villages, scouring the countryside. When I first announced our mission, I told the American people it may take a while, that we must show discipline and resolve, and we must be steadfast in our purpose. And that's exactly what the American people—that's how the American people are reacting. And for that I'm grateful and so are our troops.

We had objectives that our troops have accomplished. One, we said, "If you harbor a terrorist, if you hide a terrorist, if you feed a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorist," and the Taliban is paying a price. I hope you're as proud as I am of the pictures of joy as our troops have liberated the women of Afghanistan, the Taliban. We're not only fighting for freedom; we're liberating people from the clutches of oppression.

And now we're after Al Qaida. They think they can run; they think they can hide from the mighty United States. But we're patient; we're strong; we're resolved. We're going to stay on the hunt until we bring them to justice.

In order to make sure people can find work, we better make sure everybody in America is educated. I had an honor—I had the high honor of traveling our country last week with authors of a good education bill. It's one, by the way, that says every child can learn—every child can learn. We must teach children the basics. And in return for help, you must show us—just like you say here in Missouri—whether or not children can read and write and add and subtract. And if they cannot, let's correct problems early, before it's too late.

It also says, inherent in that bill, the people who care more about the children in this part of the world are the moms and dads and teachers who live in this part of the world. We believe in local control of schools.

I stood up in front of the American people there on this trip, and I said, "You all may not believe this—certainly the people in the Crawford, Texas, coffee shop may not believe it when I say it—but Ted Kennedy did a fine job on this bill." [Laughter] I never thought I would hear myself say that. [Laughter] Of course, he never thought I would say it. [Laughter] But I meant it—I meant it.

It goes to show what can happen when Republicans and Democrats set aside their political differences and focus on what's right for America. Let me tell you what we need in Washington: We need people to put party aside and say, "America is the most important thing in Washington, DC."

In order to make sure people can find work, this Nation better—better knock down trade barriers. See, one of the things we're good at, really good at, is growing food. We're the best in the world. And it makes sense that if we're good at growing food, that we ought to be trying to sell it not only at home but, when we have a little extra, overseas.

If you want to be—if you're good at something and the best at something, it makes sense to allow that product to be overseas. One of the things I'm fighting for and one of the things I think makes great sense is for this nation to be a free trade nation—not to be afraid to compete but let us compete. And when we can compete in a fair way, we can whip anybody when it comes to selling food.

The other thing we need to do is to make sure we have an energy policy. We're a blessed nation because we can grow our own food, and therefore, we're secure. A nation that can feed its people is a nation more secure. Now, if you're secure when you feed the Nation, it seems like one of the things we ought to try to be more secure about, as well, is having an energy policy that makes us less reliant on foreign sources of energy.

We can do a better job of conservation, and we will. We can do a better job of distribution, and we must. We can use some

innovative products to provide energy, like ethanol. But one of the things we've got to do is to explore for energy in our own lands in an environmentally sensitive way.

We had a trade bill bottled up in the Senate. I hope they move it when we get back. We've got an energy bill bottled up in the Senate. I hope they move it when we get back. It is in the Nation's interests that we move those two bills.

And finally, in order to make sure people can find work—and I'm worried about the fact that the evil ones hit us and it caused people to lose their job—in order to make sure they can find work, we've got to have good, sound economic policy coming out of Washington, DC. And that starts with understanding how jobs are created.

One way you can create jobs is to lower people's taxes. If people have more money to spend, it means somebody has got to produce more for them. And the producers then need to hire people. It's Economics 101. Except sometimes people in Washington haven't taken the course. [Laughter] We passed a meaningful tax cut, and now some of them want to take it away from you by delaying it.

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. Yes, I agree. The best way—the worst thing to do is, in the face of this recession, is to not let people have their tax break. It doesn't make any economic sense. And that's why we're not going to let them—that's why we're not going to let them repeal this tax cut.

And not only that, we can help workers who got laid off. We need to extend the unemployment benefits, and we need to help them with their health care. And we can do that, if we make our mind up to put people's lives ahead of partisan politics. But I'm going to remind the folks in Washington that what people don't want is an unemployment check; what they want is a permanent paycheck. And therefore we've got to put plans in place that stimulate our economy, that creates jobs, that says to employers, if you buy equipment, you get a little extra in order to help people find work.

No, we can do a better job in Washington, DC, of addressing this economic downturn. And I'm confident when the people's voice

rises up, the good folks up there elected to represent you all and everybody else will hear you loud and clear.

One of the things that the evil ones didn't figure out was how strong we are. Oh, they knew we had a nice military, but they didn't think we'd use it. They made a bad mistake. But what they also don't understand is the character of our Nation. They don't understand what I know, that the great strength of this country really isn't in our airplanes or guns; it's not in our stock market. Those are parts of our country that are strong, but the great strength is in the hearts and souls of our fellow citizens. This is a nation of a lot of character. It's a strong nation because we're strong people. It is a nation that is determined and patient, but it's also a nation that's compassionate and decent.

The evil ones hit us, and they caused a lot of loss of life and a lot of anguish, a lot of fright and a lot of fear. But they also caused folks all across our country to search their soul about life. They caused moms and dads to ask the fundamental question of what was the most important thing for them. The good news is about America, moms and dads all across America are now saying, "My most important job is to love my children with all my heart."

What the evil ones did is they reminded us that there are things important in life, such as loving your neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself. People ask me all the time, what can they do to help fight terror. And one thing you can do is walk across the street and tell a neighbor in need you love them. If you find somebody who's shut in, just spend a little time. If you want to fight evil, mentor a child who needs to learn how to read, support your teachers, get involved with public education. If you want to fight evil, make a contribution to a local charity, go to your church or synagogue and mosque, and figure out how you can help a community become a better place.

That's what's happening all across America. You know, folks, we're going to win the war, but we're also going to win because the goodness of America will overshadow the evil of those who take innocent life.

It is such honor to be moving around the country, to be with the good folks who make

the country strong. I want to thank you so very much for your hospitality; I want to thank you for your prayer. May God bless America. Thank you all. Thank you all very much, and God bless. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 1:15 p.m. in the BMP Hangar at the Springfield-Branson Regional Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Jim Talent, candidate for U.S. Senate in Missouri; and Lori Hauser Holden, wife of Gov. Bob Holden of Missouri.

Remarks in Aurora, Missouri

January 14, 2002

Thank you all very much. So there I was, sitting in the residency at the White House—[laughter]—watching a football game, eating a pretzel. [Laughter] And the next thing I know is Barney, the Scottish terrier, is wondering what the heck happened. [Laughter]

I want you all to know that I learned a good lesson, and that is: I should have listened to my mother. [Laughter] She said, “Never try to swallow your pretzel until you chewed it.” [Laughter]

Thank you all for coming, and thank you for letting me come. If you see some of the folks who lined the road coming in, tell them thanks. Really, I wish we had a bigger hall so I could thank everybody in person, but there’s a lot of people from your communities that are out there to wave, and I’m really grateful. Thank the high school kids and the teachers for being out there, as well.

I’m working my way through the Midwest, through the heartland, because I want to send a couple of messages to the American people. One message is, food is really important for the economy of this country, that in the year 2000, \$1.3 trillion of the GDP came from food and fiber, 24 million Americans were employed as a result of work and food and fiber, that if we’re talking about the economic health of the country, we’ve got to always understand it begins with a healthy farm economy. And if we’re worried about creating jobs—which I am—then we’ve got to think—we use some common sense principles in order to expand the job base so people can find work.

I’m also glad to be in the heartland because it’s a place that understands values, the values of family and faith, of personal responsibility and hard work.

I started my day in Moline, Illinois, at the John Deere plant, where they’re making Harvesters, and then here, of course, in Aurora and Springfield, Missouri. And then I’m on my way to New Orleans, where they sell the product. It’s a good message for America, to understand how the farmer works in relationship to the equipment manufacturer, in relationship to the exporter.

I’m so happy that people in my administration understand the importance of the farmer to our country, starting with our Secretary of Agriculture, Ann Veneman, and the Secretary of Commerce, Don Evans. Thank you both for being here.

I want to thank Senator Kit Bond for traveling with me today. He was giving me a good lesson on Missouri politics, as was Jim Talent, when we drove over. Thank you for coming, Jim. And I’m traveling with two members from the Missouri congressional delegation, Kenny Hulshof and Todd Akin. Thank you all for coming.

Now, my friend Roy Blunt isn’t here. He’s evidently on a mission somewhere else, but he sent his better half. And I want to thank very much—I want to thank sweet Roseann Blunt for coming, as well. Thank you for coming. I want to thank the Missouri Farmers Association. I want to thank the people who run this outfit. And I want to thank my fellow citizens for coming today.

One of the things I strongly believe is that the role of Government is not to create wealth. The role of Government is to create an environment in which people are willing to take risk, an environment in which people are willing to risk capital, an environment that heralds the entrepreneur and the small-business person. That’s the role of Government.

If the role of Government is to create an environment in which people are willing to take risk, one of the things Government must do is to work hard to create confidence in the people. And at this moment in history, the best thing I can do, along with my administration, in order to build the confidence of