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NOTE: The President spoke at 4:08 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Exchange With Reporters During Tour of the Police Department Command and Control Center in New York City

February 6, 2002

Support for New York City

Q. Can you answer a quick—about the $20 billion?

The President. Yes, absolutely.

Q. When are we going to get it, and why does there seem a reluctance——

The President. Oh, there's no reluctance. The $20 billion needs to come to New York. And that's $20 billion, by the way, not including the Victims' Compensation Fund. And I look forward to working with the New York delegation, the Governor, and the mayor to make sure that the Liberty Zone and the Liberty Bonds become reality. Now, that's one way for us to help New York rebuild herself, and a vital part of our economy and economic growth is to have a vibrant New York City.

And so the $20 billion is coming. A lot of it has already come; there's more to come. And I look forward to working in a way to get it done.

Q. Have you had any chance to talk to Mitch Daniels and say, "Be a little nicer to New York"?

The President. No, Mitch understands my pledge. He understands what I said—when I said $20 billion, I meant $20 billion. And I'm the kind of fellow who does what I say I'm going to do. And I think it's important for the country to know that a vibrant New York City is vital for our economy. We've got to have a strong New York City.

It's not only a part of our economic scene at home, it's important for New York to be strong for international reasons, as well. And so I look forward to working with the mayor and the Governor to make sure we get this done.

Stimulus Package

Q. Any thoughts on the stimulus?

The President. Yes. Let me—one question on the stimulus. One answer on that is, at the minimum they need to take care of the workers, at the very minimum. But it's important for Congress to realize that our economy has not yet fully recovered. And therefore, I believe we still need to provide stimulus for economic growth so that there's jobs. People need work. And everything Congress ought to do is to take care of those who've lost their jobs but also recognize that people want more than an unemployment check; they want a steady paycheck. And so jobs ought to be what the people up there in Washington are asking themselves: How do we create jobs so people can find work?

Q. Why can't they get it done?

The President. You're asking the wrong man. I'm in the executive branch of Government.

NOTE: The exchange began at 1:54 p.m. During the exchange, the President referred to Gov. George E. Pataki of New York and Mayor Michael Bloomberg of New York City. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks to Police Department Command and Control Center Personnel in New York City

February 6, 2002

Please be seated. Thank you all. It's nice to be back in New York City, and I am so proud to stand here today with New York's finest and New York's bravest. I have a message for you from your fellow Americans: Police and firefighters of New York, you have this Nation's respect, and you'll have this Nation's support.

The budget that Tom talked about increases the Federal commitment to our Nation's first-responders by more than 1,000 percent. It is the right thing to do, and you all are the right—to help us continue to fight this war on terror.

I want to thank Tom Ridge for taking on a job. He was a good Governor; he's a very