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working hard to make sure the Federal Government is more responsive to your needs.

Since we met last, America has been attacked and has been wounded by terrorists. We've been inspired by acts of courage and generosity. And this Nation has confirmed a deep sense of national purpose. We're determined to protect the American people by fighting terror wherever it is found. This cause will take years, require the patience of the American people, and it will require participation of all levels of government.

And we've made a very good beginning. Our military has routed the Taliban, and we're hunting down Al Qaida. We've worked to take preventive measures to stop any attack, and we're prepared to respond should they come.

The Governors have taken threats seriously, and you've acted quickly to confront them. And our Nation is grateful.

At every stage of this crisis, I have benefited from your counsel. I've been inspired by your leadership. I was touched by my friend George Pataki's calm demeanor during the crisis in New York. I know our Nation needs to develop a national strategy to protect the homeland, and that's why I picked a fellow Governor, a former Governor, and a good friend, Tom Ridge, to lead the effort.

America's Governors have displayed leadership at a time when history demanded it. And so it's with deep respect and gratitude that I offer this toast to the Governors of the United States.

God bless.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:10 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Don Siegelman of Alabama; Gov. George F. Ryan of Illinois; Gov. Jane Swift of Massachusetts; and Gov. George E. Pataki of New York. This transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 25.

Remarks on a Comprehensive Energy Policy

February 25, 2002

Thank you all for coming today. I'm honored to be joined by Secretary of Energy Spence Abraham and Administrator Christie Todd Whitman of the Environmental Protection Agency. We're here to discuss an energy plan, a comprehensive energy plan that recognizes that through technology, we can increase our national security and economic security by reducing demand for petrochemicals, and at the same time, we can clean up the air in our country. I want to thank these two leaders for having a practical vision as to how to achieve common objectives.

Any sound, comprehensive energy policy must both increase production and reduce consumption. It's important for Americans to remember that as we debate an energy bill, as we have a discussion about an energy plan, that America imports more than 50 percent of its oil—more than 10 million barrels a day. And the figure is rising.

This is dependence on foreign oil. And this dependence is a challenge to our economic security, because dependence can lead to price shocks and fuel shortages. And this dependence on foreign oil is a matter of national security. To put it bluntly, sometimes we rely upon energy sources from countries that don't particularly like us.

Now, it's also important to realize that the transportation sector consumes more than two-thirds of all the petroleum used in the United States, so that any effort to reduce consumption must include ways to safely make cars and trucks more fuel efficient. New technology is the best way to do so, and today we had a chance to see some of the best new technologies being developed by American ingenuity.

Hybrid cars, the likes of which we just saw over there, are already in existence. They run on a mixture of gas and electric power. They are several times more fuel efficient than most cars on the road today. I was told by the representatives of the manufacturing companies that more and more hybrid cars will be available in the marketplace next year. And this is good news. It's good news for our environment, and it's good news for American consumers who are not only worried about the environment but understand the ramifications of dependency on foreign sources of crude oil.

And then the fuel cells are being developed. Fuel cells will power cars with little or no waste at all. We happen to believe that

fuel cells are the wave of the future, that fuel cells offer incredible opportunity.

Now, there's a lot of obstacles that must be overcome in order to make fuel cells economically viable. And therefore, we're promoting more research and development. In January Secretary Abraham announced a $150 million FreedomCAR plan, focused on development of fuel cell technologies that run on hydrogen, whose only emission is water vapor.

Imagine when that technology comes into being. Imagine how less dependent America will be on foreign sources of energy and how more easy it'll be to clean up our air. And we've got plenty of water, and if water vapor is the product, we'll be in good shape. But we need to have a focused effort to bring fuel cells to market, and that's exactly what my administration is dedicated to do.

There's been some breakthroughs already. After all, NASA developed fuel cells to generate electricity, heat, and water in space vehicles. Businesses started using them in 1995. And that's why we are optimistic that within a reasonable period of time, that fuel-cell technology will become more widespread.

We've also, in the bill I submitted, made it clear that any good comprehensive energy plan must encourage consumption by providing over $3 billion of consumer tax credits, available for those who purchase hybrid and fuel-cell vehicles over the next 11 years. In other words, there is a role for the Federal Government, not only to encourage research and development but a role to provide tax credits to enhance the marketplace.

Technologies will also enable us to preserve our environment as we explore for natural gas at home. And I urge the United States Senate to pass a comprehensive energy plan quickly. The House has acted, and now the Senate must act. And the Congress needs to get a bill to my desk.

The other feature about the energy bill that is important is that it's a jobs bill. That's why the Teamsters strongly support the energy package we submitted to the United States Congress. This is an important piece of legislation, and I urge quick action.

Thank you all very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:05 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks on Being Presented With the World Trade Center Bullhorn and an Exchange With Reporters

February 25, 2002

President Bush. Listen, I want to—I want to welcome Bob Beckwith to the Oval Office, and his wife, Barbara, and his two grandchildren and son and daughter who are here, and son-in-law.

As you may remember, I met Bob on the heap of a burnt-out fire engine in New York. And he didn't know, and I didn't know that we were going to meet on that day, and I had—I was traveling there with George Pataki and Rudy Giuliani. And it was my chance, after the National Prayer Service, to go to New York City and tell the good people of that town, that city, how the Nation stood with them. I had a chance to go and see the firefighters and the police officers who had been giving every ounce of their energy to rescue their fellow citizens.

And I was given a bullhorn, and it turned out to be one of those moments where I had a chance to speak to the world on behalf of the citizens of New York. And Bob was standing there by my side.

I told Bob when he came in, "You made me famous that day." But I want to thank you, Bob, for coming back, and I want to thank Colonel Wiese as well, who rescued the bullhorn and will let me keep the bullhorn for the library. There's a father-and-son exhibit that's going to go on at the Bush Library, "Bush 41" Library, at Texas A&M, and this will be one of the key parts of the exhibit. It's an historic—really an historic memento. Something we didn't choose, but it's one of those days that I'll never forget, and I want to thank you.

Mr. Beckwith. I'll never forget.

President Bush. It was an amazing experience. You know, I didn't realize at the time that you and I walked up on the heap of a burnt-out fire engine. I didn't realize that—and what's interesting, as a result of that, some people in Louisiana saw us standing on the fire engine and went and raised