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Remarks to the Community in Stockton, California

August 23, 2002

The President. Thank you all. I'm glad I came, and thank you all for coming. I'm honored to be here in the great city of Stockton, California. I appreciate you coming to give me a chance to share with you some of my thoughts and concerns and hopes about our great Nation. I appreciate you being here.

I want to thank the mayor. My only regret is the mayor didn't take me down to Billy Hebert Field to see the team play. [*Laughter*] I'm a baseball guy. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank so very much the members of the congressional delegation who met me at Air Force One. I appreciate the hard work of Richard Pombo, who represents this district. I was so pleased that he found a tie for this occasion. [*Laughter*] Doug Ose from the next congressional district is here with us. Doug, thank you for coming. These are two fine Members of the United States Congress with whom I have good working relations, people with whom I can work to do what's right for the American people.

I picked—I picked a fine Cabinet. You need to judge a President based upon the people who he listens to. I listen to some mighty fine people; I really do. I've got great advice, not only in the national security side but also on the domestic side of my job. And I picked my neighbor, somebody from Compton, to serve in an incredibly important position, particularly for the folks in this part of the world, and that is to serve as our Secretary of Agriculture. Ann Veneman is doing a fabulous job.

Mr. Mayor, thank you very much for helping put on this occasion. I particularly want to thank the Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce for their hard work in getting this all ready and inviting people to come.

There's one friend I've got here that I've got to say something about. He's a great citizen from Stockton. He's been a longtime friend of mine and my family's, and that's, of course, Alex Spanos. I like to be around optimistic people. It's important to stay in touch with those folks who are optimistic. Once again he has told me that the San Diego Chargers are going to win the Super Bowl. [*Laughter*]

Audience member. ——Super Bowl one last time——

The President. That's right. [*Laughter*] And once again, he believes it. [*Laughter*]

Today, at Air Force One, I met Malikah Rashied. Where is Malikah? Where is she? Oh, there she is. Thank you, Malikah. She is a Freedom Corps volunteer. She volunteers for the country. In this case, she works for the California Conservation Corps, assisting in fire prevention cleanup projects, in cleanup projects. We need, by the way, to have a forest policy that—[*applause*].

I mention her because I want people to understand that I understand the true strength of America. It is not in the halls of our Governments but in the hearts of our people. And there are people like her all across the country who are willing to try to make the communities in which they live a better place for all of us. I appreciate your service.

I also appreciate you working on fire prevention. And that's something the Federal Government needs to work on. Listen, we cannot allow our forests to become places where kindling piles up. It doesn't make any sense to me to fly over these huge fires that are consuming much of the West and realize our forest policy encourages—doesn't prevent, doesn't work to make the forest healthier and safer. The forest—the hands-off forest policy proposed by well-meaning people has failed, and now we need to do something about it.

We've got a lot to do in this country. We really do. We've got some big hurdles, big challenges ahead of us. One of the things I've found in Washington is if we can get rid of all the politics and get people thinking about what's important for the Nation, we can get some things done. We really can.

Oh, I know we'll never get rid of all the politics. But at least we can get people thinking and setting the right priorities on behalf of the American people. That's the most—one of my most important jobs, and we're making some progress. If you look at the record, when people decide to come together, we're doing some things right for the American people, starting with making sure the funding priorities of the Government is to win the war on terror.

A new priority has been to help secure the homeland by working with our brave first-responders, the police, the fire, the EMS teams all around the country, those who work hard here in Stockton and all around America. It's been a priority of ours, and both Republicans and Democrats have come together to fund that priority for the good of the country.

I proposed some tough new standards on—for corporate reform. Like you all, I took a look out there and saw a problem. And the problem was, we had some folks who were trying to fudge the numbers. We had some people who decided they weren't going to tell the truth when it came to their assets and liabilities, to the detriment of not only shareholder and employee but to the country itself.

You see, a few—a few began to shatter the confidence of the American people. And so we decided to do something about it. Republicans and Democrats came together. I was honored and proud to sign the most comprehensive corporate reforms since Franklin Roosevelt was the President. This wasn't a Republican idea. It wasn't a Democrat idea. It's an American idea to hold people responsible who betray the public's trust, and that is what we're going to do.

I remember giving a speech in New York about how I thought the corporate accountability bill ought to go. And at one point in the speech, I talked about the fact that our business schools don't teach right from wrong. They're unwilling to say to future business leaders, "There's a right way to deal with things, and there's a wrong way." And I was lamenting that fact, and I called upon our business schools to show leadership and to teach future leaders right from wrong.

And I was working a ropeline afterwards, and a fellow walked up who's a professor at a business school. And he said, "Thanks for saying that, Mr. President. We needed to hear that." And a large guy—I assumed he was one of the construction folks that was there, construction union leaders that was supportive of this initiative—he said, "If you want to teach them right from wrong, Mr. President, the best lesson you can send is put them in handcuffs."

And that's what's happening. And that's what happening. We cannot let a few—and I emphasize "a few"—set the tone for the many who are decent, honorable citizens of this country who take care of their shareholders, who are good to their employees, who tell the truth. So we're working together.

The other day, I had the honor of signing a bill that both Republicans and Democrats supported that gives me the capacity to open up markets for U.S. goods. Here's my attitude about trade: If you're good at something, you ought to promote it. If you're good about—if you're good at growing crops, you ought to figure out how to sell more of the crops. And we're the best in the world at farming and ranching.

I'm thrilled to be here in the breadbasket of America, because it gives me a chance to remind our fellow citizens that we have an advantage here in America: We can feed ourselves. And we've always got to be able to do that. It puts us in a—it gives us a strategic advantage, a strategic edge. Imagine if we were going around the world asking for food. It would put the President in a pretty tough position. [*Laughter*] They may want to bargain a little high. [*Laughter*]

But fortunately, we can feed ourselves, and not only that, we produce more food than we need, because we're good at what we do. And therefore, it makes sense on behalf of the producers to open up markets. We ought to be feeding—feeding the world. Where people are hungry, they ought to be eating American food. We ought to be knocking

down those tariffs and those barriers. We ought to be leveling the playing field, and that's precisely what I'm going to do with my new authority.

I told Ann—and she would testify to this—and I told Zoellick, who's our trade man, I said, "I don't want our agriculture producers to be shunted aside when it comes to opening up markets." As a matter of fact, when you're good at something, it ought to be the cornerstone of your policy. So I want agriculture to be the cornerstone of good international trade policy, and it will be. And we made some progress.

I don't know if you've been following this, but we had a little problem with the Russians for a while. They agreed to take our chickens. They were going to buy U.S. chickens, and then all of a sudden they decided not to buy the chickens, and that created a problem. It creates a problem for the chicken growers. It affects prices of other commodities, truly does.

And it was interesting, at one of my press conferences with Vladimir Putin, who I like—he's a good man—he said, "You know, the good thing about our new relationship, as opposed to talking about war, we're talking about chickens." [*Laughter*] But I want the agricultural folks here to understand, we talked about chickens up until yesterday when Secretary Veneman announced an agreement with the Russians that they're going to take U.S. chickens. They're going to honor their obligations.

I bring these examples up because it shows what is possible in Washington when people decide to work together. And they're getting ready to come back in August. And when they come back in August——

[*At this point, there was a disruption in the audience.*]

The President. ——and when they come back in August——

[*The disruption continued.*]

Audience members. Boo-o-o!

The President. And when the Congress comes back after their August break, I hope they keep in mind the fact that we need to continue to work together on behalf of the American people. We need to work——

Audience members. U.S.A.! U.S.A.! U.S.A.!

The President. And as we work together to make—to make America more secure, we must do so on three fronts. We must work together to make sure that there's economic security. We must work together to make sure there's homeland security. And we must work together to make sure that we win the war on terror to defend our freedoms.

I hosted some folks down to Waco, Texas, the middle of Texas in the middle of August. They obviously had something on their mind. And it was a really interesting forum to hear from people from all walks of life talk about the difficulties they face, the hurdles they face, to create jobs. That's what I'm interested in.

When I hear somebody who wants to work can't find a job, I view that as a problem. It concerns me. I want people to be able to find work. That ought to be the cornerstone of any good economic policy.

And so part of what Congress needs to do is to get together and work on ways to make sure that there's economic security for the American people. The platform for growth is good. It just is.

We've had problems, no question. When we came in, there was a recession. History shows that for the first three quarters of my Presidency, we were in negative growth. The next three quarters have been positive growth, which is good news for the American people. Wages were rising. The productivity of the American worker is the strongest in the world. We're good at—our workers are really good. Our entrepreneurs are innovative. We've got a good tax base, good monetary policy. Interest rates are low. And so we've got the foundation for growth.

But I'm not content with our progress, and here's some things I'd like to see done. First, I can't tell you how strongly I feel and passionately I feel about the need to make the tax cuts that we passed permanent.

See, here's the chapter of the economics book I read—and I admit, some of them in Washington didn't read this chapter. [*Laughter*] I believe that when times are slow—and remember, the first three quarters of our administration was negative growth—when times are slow, you let people keep their own

money. And when they keep their own money, they demand a good or a service. And when they demand a good or a service, somebody produces the good or the service. And when somebody produces that good or service, someone is likely, more likely to find work. That's how it works.

And therefore, the tax relief happened at the right time. Not only did we provide lower tax rates—which, by the way, is a spur to small-business growth. Most small-business owners are sole proprietors. Most small-business owners pay tax rates at the individual rate because they're limited partnerships. Most small businesses—small businesses create most new jobs in America. And therefore, we ought to have policy that encourages the growth of small businesses. By cutting individual rates, we understand the importance of small business.

And not only that, we put the death tax on the road to extinction. The death tax is a bad tax. And not only that, we began to change the marriage penalty, because we want the Tax Code to encourage marriage, not discourage marriage.

But here's why I bring up the issue. Because of a quirk in the Senate law, all the work that we did reverts back to normal in 10 years—"normal" being what it was prior to the tax relief. In other words—it's kind of hard to explain—[*laughter*]—but you get tax relief, and you don't get tax relief, see. It stays in place for 10 years, and then it goes away.

And so Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, have got to understand, for the good of the economy, we need some permanency. People need to be able to plan. They need to be able to know that what is real today will be real tomorrow. Therefore, the tax cuts need to be made permanent.

We've got a problem when it comes to construction here in America, because many folks cannot get insurance to cover losses from potential terrorist attack. There's about $8 billion worth of projects that have been put aside because people can't get terrorism insurance. That means we've got some hardhats here in America who aren't working who should be working. That means there's some good, hard-working folks who aren't as active as they should be in the job market.

And therefore, I have asked Congress—the House responded, and the Senate came up with a version; they need to get together—to provide terrorism insurance legislation to help these big construction programs go forward. This bill would put people back to work, so long as the House and the Senate understand that the priority is not trial lawyers but hardhat workers in America.

Congress, when they get back, needs to give me an energy bill. In order for the economy to be strong, we've got to have an energy plan. We've got to have a bill that promotes renewable sources of energy, that encourages conservation. But we need more energy explored here at home in an environmentally friendly way. It is in our economic security that we find more energy at home. It is in our national security that we become less dependent on foreign sources of crude oil.

Congress needs to get to work on a reauthorization of the welfare bill. See, the welfare bill is coming up again. And, by the way, it worked when we said to people we will help them find work. It made people less dependent upon Government. It has been a successful, successful public policy in America, and we need to continue that. There are some in the Senate who want to say work isn't important, and so they've got all kinds of loopholes. I think work is incredibly important. Work leads to dignity. And therefore, they need to give me a welfare bill like the House bill that says, we're going to help people help themselves by finding work. That's what we're going to do. We're going to train people for jobs, but we're going to insist that they work in return for help.

And there's one other vital piece of legislation that they need to get to me before they all go back to their districts and campaign, and it's this. I want to unleash the great compassion of America by recognizing the power of faith-based institutions in our society. I ask the question, "Does it work?" That's what I ask. Does it work if somebody's heart is changed and therefore they get off alcohol and drugs? Does that work? And if it does, our Government ought not to fear programs based upon the capacity to change somebody's heart. As a matter of fact, we ought to welcome those programs. We ought to say, "If you've got an idea and you've got a cross

on the wall or the star of David or if you're a mosque, we welcome those ideas to help change society, one person at a time."

We'll never fund religion. Of course we're not going to fund religion. That's not the purpose. But we want to help people, and we should not discriminate against programs which have the capacity to help save lives. When we save a life in America, we make America a better place for all of us.

Congress has got work to do on the homeland security front as well. My most important job is to protect you all, our fellow Americans, from another attack. That's my most important job. And make no mistake about it, there are coldblooded killers out there, and we're doing everything we can to find them. Some people might not think they're out there. They're out there; they just are.

People say, "Why? Why would someone want to attack America?" And the answer is because we love freedom, that's why. They hate us because we value each life. Each life is important here in America; everybody counts. Ours is a country that recognizes in our great diversity that every single person has worth, and they can't stand that. They can't stand the thought of a nation which recognizes that people can worship an almighty God in different ways, that we welcome that type of diversity in America, that we love that freedom. They don't like free speech. They don't like a free press. They really don't like anything about us, it turns out. [*Laughter*] But they're killers. That's the only way I can tell you how I think about them. They're coldblooded killers, and therefore my most important job is to protect the homeland.

And so when I looked at ways to protect the homeland, I realized when I looked at our homeland security there in Washington, we've got over 100 agencies that have something to do with protecting the homeland, and they're scattered everywhere. In order to set the number one priority of these agencies to be the homeland defense, I decided to create a Department of Homeland Security with a new Cabinet Secretary. I did that not to create the size of Government but to make the Government work better. I did it to be able to start changing cultures within agencies. I did it to make sure that agencies had that number one priority, so that I could report back to the American people that we're doing everything we possibly can do.

And the House of Representatives passed a good piece of legislation, for which I'm grateful. The Senate is now wrestling with it, and I've got some problems with how they're wrestling with it. You see, I need to be—my Secretary needs to be able to move people to different agencies, if need be, to protect America. We need to put people in the right place at the right time.

I'll give you an example. We've got to know who's coming in the country, what they're bringing in the country, and whether or not they're leaving the country. And yet, when you go down to the border, you'll realize they've got the INS, the Customs, the Border Patrol. We've got to be able to have the same strategy, the same culture. We don't need three competing agencies. We need to figure out how to bring people together to accomplish the objective, and that means we need some flexibility.

Yet, when you look at the Senate bill, it sounds like they're more interested in special interests that have got lobbies in Washington, not the people. They're more interested in having—micromanaging the Department. They're more interested in protecting their turf than giving us the flexibility to do what it takes to protect the American people.

But the best way to secure the homeland is to hunt the killers down, one by one, and bring them to justice. And so the first order of business for both Republicans and Democrats when they get back to Washington is to get the defense appropriations bill on my desk as soon as possible. They ought not to play politics with defense appropriations at this time in American history.

I've asked for the largest increase in spending since Ronald Reagan was the President—defense spending—since Ronald Reagan was the President. I did that for two reasons: One, anytime we commit our military into harm's way, they deserve the best training, the best pay, the best possible equipment. And for those of you who have loved ones in the military, you thank them on behalf of a grateful nation and a Commander in Chief. And I thank you for the sacrifice of your family.

And secondly, the defense increase sends a clear signal to friend and foe alike that when it comes to defending our freedom, we're in this for the long haul. You see, there's not a calendar on my desk in Washington that says, now time to quit. That's not the way I think. I believe history has called us into action. History has put the spotlight right here on America. History will determine whether or not we understand the value of freedom, the necessity to keep a vast coalition together to make the world more peaceful. See, that's my goal. My goal is for there to be a peaceful world.

There's going to be some steep hills to climb, because this is a different kind of war. It's not the kind of war that many of our veterans fought in. It's not the kind of war we can measure infantry brigades marching across plains, or squadrons of aircraft. We can't count the enemy's aircraft. We don't know how many foot soldiers they have. That's not the kind of war. Remember, these are the commanders who hide in caves and send their youngsters to their death. That's the kind of enemy we fight.

So we've got to think differently, which means we've got to use all intelligence at our disposal. We've got to make sure that we continue to talk with our friends and allies, that when they know something, we need to know it, and when we have learned something, we will share it with them. It means we need diplomatic pressure. It means we've got to be bold enough to enforce the doctrines. When I say, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorists," I mean it. When I say, "You're either with us, or you're with the others," I mean that too. And we're enforcing that doctrine. And the Taliban found out exactly what we mean.

I want the youngsters here to understand the nature of your Government. We don't seek—we do not seek revenge here in America. We seek justice. We don't want to conquer anybody. That's not the way we think. We want to liberate people. See, we believe every life matters. It doesn't matter whether it's an American life; every life counts.

And so when we liberated Afghanistan from the clutches of the barbaric regime called the Taliban, young girls—many young girls went to school for the first time. No, this great country, this great country—this great country has a vision of peace and justice and compassion for our fellow human beings.

But we also understand that in order to achieve those goals we're going to have to do what it takes to make the world more secure. We're going to have to do everything we can to rid the world of terror. And we're making some progress; we're making some progress. We've—our coalition has arrested, hauled them in, however you want to call it, a couple of thousand of them. About that many weren't quite as lucky so far.

We've got more work to do, though. We just do. Where they bunch up, we'll get them. We're making it clear that—to other nations, once we get them on the run, don't let them light in your part of the world. And so we spent time destroying training camps and disrupting infrastructure and disrupting communication capacities. We're getting them on the run. And you watch: Slowly but surely—slowly but surely—we will achieve the objective and bring them to justice.

And as we do so, we can achieve some larger objectives. And by the way, there is another objective that we've just got to keep in mind for the sake of our children and their children. We cannot allow the world's worst leaders to harbor and develop the world's worst weapons, to hold those of us who love freedom hostage. We must not do that.

No, the enemy hit us September 11th, nearly a year ago. And I just can't imagine what was going through their mind. They said, "Well, this Nation is not going to do anything. They're so materialistic, so self-absorbed, and so selfish that they might file a lawsuit or two—[*laughter*]—but that's all they'll think about doing. They'll kind of crumble under their own greed and their own self-centered attitude about life." They didn't know who they were hitting, though, did they?

Out of the evil done to America is going to come some good, because we're a great nation. We can achieve peace—we can achieve peace—by being strong and diligent, reminding people of the great, God-given values that are important to all humanity. We can achieve peace, and will. We can achieve peace—you got to know how I think—I believe we can achieve peace in the Middle

East by being strong and determined and to focus on what's best for people. We can achieve peace in South Asia. I know this seems like high hurdles, but we have a chance. Out of the evil done to America can come some incredible good around the world.

And some incredible good can come here at home too. See, it's important to remember, in this land of plenty there are pockets of despair and hopelessness. There are people who hurt. There are youngsters who wonder or not—whether America is meant for them, whether or not the American Dream applies to them. And of course, it does.

See, I believe when one of us hurts, all of us hurt. When one of us is diminished, all of us are affected. And therefore, we need to do something about it here in America. I believe the enemy has wakened a spirit in this country that understands, in order to fight evil, in order to fight evil—that in order to fight evil, you can do so by loving your neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself. And that's happening.

It's important for our fellow citizens to recognize that if you were to mentor a child, you're a part of defining the true compassion of America. If you go into a shut-in's home and say, "I love you. What can I do to help you," you're making a difference here in America. If you help feed somebody who's hungry, you're making a huge difference in showing the world the true character of this country.

No, out of the evil done to America is going to come some good, because Americans understand that being a patriot is more—is more than just saying the Pledge Allegiance; being a patriot is serving something greater than yourself.

We learned that lesson most profoundly on September the 11th, when citizens were flying across the country, or thought they were, on Flight 93. They realized their airplane was going to be used as a weapon to take life, perhaps in the Nation's Capital. They were on the phones, and they told their loved ones they loved them. They used the word "love." They said a prayer. They said a prayer. One guy said, "Let's roll." They drove the plane in the ground to serve something greater than themselves in life.

It is that spirit of serving something—it is that spirit that recognizes while one of us can't do everything, each of us can do something, one thing to help change America, one heart and one soul and one conscience at a time. No, out of the evil done to America is going to come great good, because this is the greatest nation on the face of the Earth, full of fantastic, compassionate, decent fellow citizens.

May God bless you all, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. in the Stockton Memorial Civic Auditorium. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Gary A. Podesto of Stockton; Alex G. Spanos, chairman of the board, San Diego Chargers; and President Vladimir Putin of Russia. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks to the Hispanic Community in Santa Ana, California

August 23, 2002

Thank you all. Thank you all very much. Gosh, thanks for coming today. It's my honor to be back in California—such a vibrant and exciting State. I am thrilled to be here in Santa Ana, and this is a vibrant city. And one reason why is because it's got such an energetic, visionary mayor. And Mr. Mayor, I appreciate—and I appreciate your hospitality. And I want to thank Laura, the first lady of this city.

I know something about marrying people named Laura. [*Laughter*] We both married above ourselves, Mr. Mayor. [*Laughter*] So, I want to thank you, and I want to thank your city council for hosting us here. And I want to thank very much the—I want to thank the fine folks at this beautiful facility for welcoming us. It's a magnificent asset for this community and for this county and for this State.

It's a thrill to be here to talk about some of the priorities for our Nation. We've got some big priorities, and we've got some big jobs to do. But there's no doubt in my mind we can achieve our objectives, because we're America, and we're full of Americans—people bold and courageous and strong.