

Really important for our youngsters to understand that the culture which has said, "If it feels good, do it, and you've got a problem, blame somebody else," is a culture that's moving on. It's being replaced. We're replacing it with a culture that says, "Each of us are responsible for our behavior and our decisions." If you're a mother or a dad—if you're fortunate enough to be a mom or a dad, you're responsible for loving your child with all your heart and all your soul. If you're lucky enough to live in Tennessee or Knoxville, Tennessee, you're responsible for the quality of education in a neighborhood. If you're running a corporation, you're responsible to tell the truth to your shareholders and employees.

I feel it happening. I feel it happen, which allows me to boldly predict that, because we're the greatest nation on the face of the Earth, we will not only face down evil, but we can achieve peace in a country which is more hopeful, more decent, more optimistic for everybody who's lucky enough to be called an American.

Listen, thanks for coming today. May God bless you all, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. at McGhee Tyson Airport. In his remarks, he referred to gubernatorial candidate Van Hilleary; senatorial candidate Lamar Alexander; Janice Bowling, candidate for Tennessee's Fourth Congressional District; Mayor Victor Ashe of Alcoa, and his mother, Martha Ashe; Texas Supreme Court Justice Priscilla Owen, whose nomination to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit failed on September 5 when the Senate Judiciary Committee refused to send it forward for a vote by the Senate; Ramzi bin al-Shibh, an Al Qaida operative suspected of helping to plan the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, who was captured in Karachi, Pakistan; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

**Remarks at a Luncheon for
Gubernatorial Candidate Van
Hilleary in Knoxville, Tennessee**
October 8, 2002

Thanks for coming. Thank you all very much. Please go ahead and be seated. Well, thank you for that kind introduction, "Governor." There's no doubt in my mind that

Van Hilleary is the right man to be the Governor of Tennessee. And I want to thank you all for coming. I feel comfortable in a State where the university is UT, the colors are orange and white, and the political climate is friendly. [*Laughter*]

I made a lot of friends here, and I'm proud to be amongst you all. Thanks for your prayers, and thanks for your support. My only regret is that Laura didn't come with me today. She sends her very best to Meredith and Van and sends her best to our buddies here in Tennessee. I don't know if you know this or not, but when I married Laura, she was a public school librarian. She didn't care for politics. She didn't like politicians. [*Laughter*] And now she's the First Lady of the United States, and she's doing a fabulous job. I'm really, really proud of her, and we're doing great. We really are.

And I want to thank, for those of you who came through the line here recently and said they pray for our family. That's the kindest thing you can do for a President and his family.

I believe strongly that the character of a person matters, and I believe Van Hilleary has the character necessary to be the kind of Governor that you can trust. He's a down-to-earth fellow that speaks his mind. He is the kind of person who does in office what he said he would do. He doesn't require focus groups or polls to tell him what to believe. And he can get the job done, and that's what you want in a Governor. See, I know what it takes to be a Governor, and he's got what it takes to be your Governor.

And I had the privilege of meeting Meredith, the next first lady. She's a schoolteacher. I think it makes a lot of sense to have a schoolteacher as the first lady for the State of Tennessee. I think it makes sense that—it's also good to meet Van's mom and dad. It kind of looks like he got saddled with the same kind of mom I've got, somebody who will tell you exactly what she thinks. [*Laughter*] But I love the fact that they've got a strong family, and they care for each other a lot.

There's no doubt in my mind that Lamar Alexander will be a great United States Senator from Tennessee. And I'm not saying that just because he married a Texan. [*Laughter*]

I'm saying that because he's got a great record and a great heart. And we need him, along with another great United States Senator, and that is Bill Frist.

Tennessee has had a great history of sending important Senators to the Senate. You've sent really fine people, and you will continue that tradition with Lamar. I look forward to working with him. I look forward to having somebody in the Senate who I can count on when it comes to making sure the judges I name not only get a fair hearing but get appointed to the bench. We need people who will not—we need people on our bench who won't legislate but will strictly interpret the Constitution. I've got to tell you, the way the Senate is now set up, they're playing politics with my good nominees. They're distorting their record. And for the sake of a good, sound Federal judiciary, I need Senators like Lamar Alexander in Washington, DC.

I want to thank Janice Bowling for running for Congress and soon to be elected to the United States Congress. I appreciate her service and her willingness to run.

I want to thank my old college classmate—you used to call him Bulldog; we call him Victor—the mayor of Knoxville, Mayor Victor Ashe. I'm honored to call him friend. I appreciate his public service. And I appreciate Mike Ragsdale, who is a Knox County executive; and Beth Harwell, who is the chairwoman of the Tennessee State Republican Party. I want to thank Jim Henry, who tossed his hat in the ring and has been so gracious about helping to unite behind the next Governor of your State.

I want to appreciate all the grassroots activists who are here. Listen, I understand how politics works. You can't ever get elected unless you've got people who are willing to put up the signs and dial the phones and stuff the mailers. And on behalf of a grateful President and a grateful soon-to-be Governor, thanks for the hard work you have done, and more importantly, thanks for the hard work you're going to do. You see, we're about to the sprint phase of the campaign. And in order for Van to win, he needs you going to the coffee shops and the community centers and talking it up. See, my attitude is, when you find a good one, you've got to support him, and you've got a good one in Van

Hilleary. And he's counting on you. And I want to thank you for the work you're going to do.

A couple of points I want to make about Van's agenda, his platform. One, he's a—he understands budgets. He's on the House Budget Committee. If he can figure out the Federal Government budget, you're darn sure he can figure out the Tennessee budget. [Laughter] But he understands you can't overspend. We share this common understanding of whose money we spend. You hear these people in Washington or probably in Nashville talk about, "Well, we're spending the Government's money." It's not the Government's money, you see; it's the people's money. In order to have fiscal sanity, you've got to start with that attitude.

He understands agriculture. He knows the importance of value-added agriculture. The thing I love about his agenda, though, is his focus on education. It's by far the most important thing a Governor will do in any State. You see, educating the children of a State is really the most important priority of a State. Teaching a child to read is the new civil right. Teaching children to read is the beginnings of a hopeful tomorrow. And you better have you a Governor who's got the right philosophy.

He talked about the No Child Left Behind legislation, which we passed in Washington. It is a significant piece of education reform. And I want to share the principles with you because, as this debate goes on here in Tennessee, about who best to handle the public school system of this State, you need to listen carefully to the words that these candidates are talking about.

First, you need to have a Governor who is willing to challenge what I call the soft bigotry of low expectations. See, if you lower the bar, if you believe that certain kids can't learn, if you believe the inner-city children are too tough to educate and, therefore, we ought to have low standards, or you say a child whose parents does not speak English as a first language cannot be educated, you will have the soft bigotry of low expectations. You need to have a Governor who believes every child can learn and is willing to set the highest of high standards for every person in the State of Tennessee.

It is important to understand one size does not fit all when it comes to educational excellence. You've got to have local control of schools. It's important. You can't have your schools controlled from Washington, DC. The crux of the—one of the most important reforms in the bill is, we passed power out of Washington. We decentralized the process. We trust local people. The same thing goes for the State of Tennessee. You've got to trust the local folks. You've got to empower the local teachers and principals and parents to chart the path for excellence.

But the key to reform as well is the measurement. And that's a fundamental difference, I suspect, in this campaign. If you believe every child can learn, if that's what you believe, in your heart of hearts believe that's the case, then you want to know whether every child is learning. If you believe that every child can read, then the next logical step is, "Show me, please. Show me whether or not the children of this State are learning how to read and write and add and subtract."

The No Child Left Behind legislation had as its cornerstone, it said this: It said, if you receive Federal money, for the first time in our Nation's history, prove to us that you're succeeding. And if you are, there will be plenty of praise for the hard-working teachers. But if we find children trapped in schools which won't teach and won't change, you better have yourself a Governor who's willing to challenge the status quo. If you don't measure, you don't know. If you don't measure, you're not able to enforce high standards. If you don't measure, you can't truthfully say to the people of Tennessee, "I will make sure that no child is left behind."

And so Van Hilleary gets it, in my judgment. He understands. He understands there are no second-rate children in Tennessee. And when he finds schools that will not change, you will have a Governor who will, for the sake of the children of this State, challenge the status quo.

I look forward to working with Senator Frist and Senator Alexander and Governor Hilleary to make sure America is a safer, stronger, and better place. And I want you to know that I know we've got challenges. I live with them every day. One of the biggest challenges we face is to make sure our econ-

omy continues to grow. I'm an optimist about our economy because I know the foundations for growth are strong. Anytime that you've got interest rates that are low, inflation which is low, and productivity which is incredibly high, we've got the ingredients for growth.

We've had a few things we've had to overcome. We've had a recession we've had to overcome. We've had some people in our society who thought they could lie to the American people, to shareholders and employees. I had the honor of signing one of the most comprehensive corporate responsibility bills since Franklin Roosevelt was the President. I appreciate the support of the House Members and the Senate. And here's what it said. It said there's not going to be any more easy money in America. We expect you to be a responsible citizen. We expect you to fully tell the truth, and if not, we're going to let you serve some time.

The market is adjusting, and that's not good news for savers, which means we've got to do everything we can to make sure that people can find work. I took this page out of the economic textbook, and I think Van shares it with me: When times are slow, when the economy is bumping along, one way to help create jobs is to let people keep more of their own money. And there's a big difference of opinion in Washington, DC, about that. And the difference is, is that do you increase the size of Government, or do you let people have more money in their pocket?

In order to stimulate small business and the entrepreneurial spirit, it's important to let people keep more money so that they demand a good or a service. And when they demand a good or a service in the marketplace, somebody will produce that good or a service. And when somebody produces that good or a service, somebody is more likely to find work. The tax cuts came at the exact right time in American economic history.

It's hard to explain this. Maybe Senator Frist can explain it better than me, but the Senate agreed to the tax cuts, but they go away after 10 years. On the one hand, we giveth; on the other hand, we taketh away. It sounds pretty typical of Washington. After 10 years the tax relief plan that we passed reverts back to where—the tax rates revert

back to where they were last year. The marriage penalty that we slashed goes back to where it was. The death tax, which is a terrible tax—it's a terrible tax on farmers and ranchers and entrepreneurs and small-business people—is no longer repealed after 10 years. For the sake of economic growth, for the sake of job creation, and for the sake of giving our small businesses the chance to plan and for tax certainty, we need to make the tax cuts permanent.

And we need to control spending in Washington, DC. There is a danger—it's an election year, and there is no budget in the Senate. There is no constraint. I submitted a budget to the House—to the Congress that the House passed, which shows us getting back to balance as quickly as possible if we're careful about spending the people's money, if we fund our priorities but not get excessive. Without a budget in the Senate, we have a potential problem.

The Congress must understand, if they're interested in job creation—and by the way, there's a lot of talk about that up there, and not much action yet. But if they're interested in job creation, if they're interested in making sure people can find work, they must not overspend the people's money. There needs to be fiscal sanity in Washington, DC.

And there are other things we can do to strengthen the economy. And I'll give you one practical idea. And that is, we need terrorism insurance. There's \$15 billion worth of projects that have been put on hold or canceled in America because the manager of the project can't get insurance. The terrorists struck, and they can't get the insurance necessary to cover for terror. And therefore, these projects are on hold. There's over 300,000 jobs which are going begging because these projects aren't going forward.

And so I thought it made sense for the Congress to come together and write a law that would provide a backstop. It's a good jobs program. It's a way to immediately affect the lives of the good, hard-working people who wear the hardhats in America. They've been talking about this issue now for a year. Before they go home, they need to get a good terrorism insurance bill. If they're interested in jobs, if they want people back to work, join me in getting a good terrorism insurance

bill, one by the way, that rewards the hardhats of America, not the trial lawyers of America.

Now, there's a lot we can do to work to keep this economy growing. And I just want you to know I'm not going to rest until people can find work. We're going to continue to build on the foundation of the—of economic growth. But my most important job is to protect America. That's what's on my mind a lot, is how best to secure this homeland.

I have to tell you that because there's still an enemy out there which would like to strike us. They hate us because of what we love. We love our freedoms, and we're not changing. So long as we love freedom, they will hate us, which means they're going to hate us for a while, because we're not changing our attitude. And they're out there, and they're lurking around.

It's a different kind of war. In the old days, you know, you'd measure infantries or air forces or flotillas, and you could tell how big the enemy was or where they were or whether or not you were making progress against them. This is a group of people, their leaders hide in a cave or the dark corners of a city somewhere, and they send youngsters to their suicidal deaths. They're nothing but a bunch of coldblooded killers. We value life. In this country, we say everybody's precious; everybody counts. They don't value life. They've hijacked a great religion and murder in the name of that religion.

And so we've got to do everything we can to prevent the enemy from hitting us again. The Government's working long hours—I say the Government—the people in the Government are working long hours to run down every bit of evidence we get, every piece of intelligence. And we're better coordinated than we ever have been to really secure the homeland, to disrupt any cells that we think might exist, that we're doing everything we can to let the enemy know that we know they're there. And when we think they're there, we obviously respect our Constitution, but we're moving. And we're moving pretty darn good.

But there's a way for me to better protect you and a way for future administrations to better protect you, and that is to take all the agencies involved with homeland defense

and put them under one Cabinet officer. And it sounds simple, except when you start stepping on some bureaucratic toes. And the House passed a good bill, and the Senate is wrestling with it now, because some Senators really want to micromanage the managerial process. They want to pass a book of thick regulations that gets to make the managerial decisions for the Homeland Security Department. And that's not right. It just doesn't make any sense to tie the hands of the President and future Presidents when it comes to a matter of deep national concern.

I'll give you a couple of examples, what I'm talking about. On our border, we need to know who's coming into the country, what they're bringing into the country, and whether or not they're leaving the country when they say they're going to leave it. And yet we've got three fine agencies on the border. We've got your Border Patrol, your INS, and your Customs. They wear different uniforms. Sometimes they have conflicting strategies. We need to be able to move people inter-agency. We need to be able to button it up. We need to make it seamless. We need to be able to put the right people at the right place at the right time. But you can't do that under the—one of the versions coming out of the United States Senate. There's not the flexibility necessary to better enforce our borders.

I'll give you another example. Customs people wear radiation detection devices. They should. If you're interested in finding weapons of mass destruction, you've got to have the device on your belt necessary to do that. The union head said no, that in order to do that, it needs to go to collective bargaining. We don't have the time to argue about whether or not somebody ought to be wearing a device to better protect the homeland.

Listen, I believe these hard-working employees ought to be able to have collective bargaining. But I also know I need the capacity to manage the agency in a way so I can look the American people in the eye and say, "We're doing everything we can to protect you." The Senate must hear this. We will not accept a bill that does not give this administration and future administrations the capacity to protect the homeland.

The best way to protect the homeland, however, is to take the fight to the enemy, to chase them down, one killer at a time, and bring them to justice, which is exactly what the United States of America is going to do. And we are making progress. The doctrine that says, "If you're with us—either you're with us, or you're with the enemy," still stands. It's clear. It hasn't changed. And therefore, we still have this coalition of like-minded people or friends that are joining us in hunting these people down.

Now, this is a different kind of war, as I mentioned. Sometimes you will see progress on your TV screens or hear about it, and sometimes you're just not going to know. That's the nature of the war. Intelligence sharing is an integral part of being able to succeed against the enemy. Cutting off their money is an integral part of fighting the enemy. Arresting them or bringing them to justice is an integral part of fighting the enemy.

The other day this bin al-Shibh showed up or, as I like to say, popped his head up. He was the person that was going to be the 20th hijacker. And we got him in Pakistan, thanks to work with the Pakistan Government and our own Government. We ferreted him out, and he's no longer a problem. He's no longer a threat to the United States and any of our friends.

That's the kind of war we are waging in this part of the battle. And I bet you we've hauled in a couple of thousand of these killers. They're detained. They're no longer a problem. And like number weren't as lucky, thanks to the United States military.

And there's quite a few more to go; there's quite a few more out there. It's going to take a while. And that's why I've submitted the largest increase in defense spending—asked the Congress to increase defense spending—the largest amount since Ronald Reagan was the President, because I want to make it clear, a couple of things clear. One, when we put our kids into harm's way, they deserve the best pay, the best training, and the best possible equipment. We owe that to them, and we owe it to their parents.

And I also want to send a message to our friends and our foes: It doesn't matter how long it takes to defend our freedom; we will

defend freedom. There's no quit in America, that we understand the stakes. The enemy made clear the stakes on September the 11th, 2001, and we're not going to forget. You can hide in any cave you want; we're coming after you. It doesn't matter where you think you can hide; the long arm of justice of the United States of America will find you.

And we've got some hills to climb. We've got some pretty tough stepping to do to get there, but the country is ready for it. And the Congress needs to get that bill—the defense bill to my desk. We've been talking about it now for a while. And they're getting ready to go home. The leadership has got to understand that the country expects, and I expect, the defense bill—in a time of war—the defense bill to get to my desk. They need to stop playing politics with the defense bill of the United States.

You need to tell your kids about America, and our not only desire to answer history's call and to defend our freedom but also that anytime our Nation goes anywhere, we go not to conquer anybody but to liberate people. I think one of the great lessons of this—of the first phase of this war was in Afghanistan. And we're still there, by the way, and there's still killers there. And we've still got troops there, and we're going to be there for a while. But we went there, not only to uphold the doctrine that says, "If you harbor a terrorist, you're just as guilty as the terrorists," but we also went because we believe life matters not only in America but everywhere. We believe every child has worth. We believe every person has worth. And we believe in freedom. We believe in freedom not only for ourselves, but we believe freedom is God-given. We believe freedom is a right that everybody should realize.

And you need to tell your kids that this country liberated people from the clutches of one of the most barbaric regimes in history. And thanks to the United States and thanks to our friends and allies, young girls—many young girls go to school for the first time. It's an important lesson for our children that in the defense of our own freedoms, that this Nation will fight if we have to, to free others as well.

I've got a problem, obviously, with Mr. Saddam Hussein, and so do you. And that is, he poses a threat. He poses a threat to America. He poses a threat to our friends, our Israeli friends, our friends in his own neighborhood. He is a threat, and we've started a debate in this country about how to deal with that threat. And it's a really important debate. I don't view this as a political discourse or a political debate. I view this as a debate about our future, the role of the United States and the world, about security and freedom. And I welcome the debate, and I look forward to watching the Congress debate this issue this week. I believe we're going to get a strong resolution, backed by both Republicans and Democrats.

But it's their choice to make, just like it's Mr. Saddam Hussein's choice to make as to whether or not he will do what he told the world he would do, which is to stop lying, stop deceiving, and disarm. He told the world that he would not have weapons of mass destruction, and yet for 11 years he has deceived the world.

I went to the United Nations. I want to share with you why, because I really do want the United Nations to be effective. I don't want the United Nations to be the League of Nations. I want the United Nations to be an effective agent for peace. I want the United Nations to be able to help deal with the new issues we face. It's their choice to make as well. See, for 11 years they've passed resolution after resolution after resolution—16 resolutions, only to be defied by Saddam Hussein. And in the meantime, he has gotten stronger.

And so the fundamental question facing the world is, do we deal with this guy or not? It's the world's choice to make. We'll see whether or not the United Nations has the desire, has the backbone necessary to uphold its own resolutions and help keep the peace. But if they're unable to act, and if Saddam Hussein can't do what he said he would do, which is disarm, this country will lead a coalition and disarm him, for the sake of peace.

Committing our military into harm's way is my last choice. I say—I talk about military options as the last option, not the first option, because I understand the consequences. But I want you to know that if we have to commit

our military—and we may not have to, but if we have to—then we'll have the best plans. The full force and fury of the United States military will be unleashed, and make no mistake about it, we will prevail.

History has put the spotlight on this great Nation. And I'm confident this country will show the world and history our character, our strength, our determination, our absolute love for freedom and the values which we hold dear.

You know, the enemy hit us. I just can't imagine what was going through their mind. I suspect they thought we were so materialistic and so self-absorbed, so selfish that all we would do after September the 11th was maybe file a lawsuit or two. They didn't understand. They really didn't understand, and they're going to pay a severe price for not understanding. See, this country, instead of stepping back and said, "Oh, gosh, we're going to be terrorized and so fearful we won't act," made the absolute, decided effort to act in the name of peace and freedom.

Out of the evil done to the—to our country is going to come some good. And one of the good is going to be peace. You need to tell your children, amidst all of the discussion and the debate they hear, there is a strong desire by this President and my administration and our country to achieve peace. I believe by remaining strong and focused and determined and unrelenting in our desire to wipe out terror, we can achieve peace for ourselves, and we can achieve peace in the Middle East, peace in South Asia. I believe it's possible. I believe the enemy has handed us an unbelievable opportunity to make the world a more peaceful place, an opportunity which I intend to seize.

And at home, the enemy hit us. And instead of us falling down in self-pity, we took a step back and made an assessment of that which is important and decided as a nation to fight evil by millions of acts of kindness and decency, that a lot of people in our country stepped back and realized that serving something greater than yourself in life was an incredibly important part of being a patriotic American. You know, as we fight to make—work to make America a stronger place and safer place, we've also got to work

to make it a better place. It's happening across our country now.

People understand that to fight evil, all you've got to do is do some good. And it doesn't have to be majestic acts: Mentoring a child is part of doing good; going to a shut-in's home and telling them you love them; recognizing that, in our society, there are people who hurt, people who are addicted, people who wonder what the American Dream was all about; and also recognizing that you can be a part of changing a person's attitude and outlook by loving them.

See, Government can hand out money, but it can't put hope in people's hearts. It can't put a sense of purpose in people's lives. That's done when our fellow citizens take it upon themselves to be responsible for the society in which we live and love a neighbor just like you'd like to be loved yourself.

No, the enemy hit us. They didn't know who they were hitting. They've awakened a spirit of America here. The American spirit is strong, evidenced most clearly on that fateful day when people were flying across the country on Flight 93. They heard the plane was being used as a weapon. They realized America—that vast oceans could no longer protect us, and we were a battleground. They told their loved ones goodbye. They used the word "love" a lot. They said a prayer. A guy said, "Let's roll." They took the plane into ground to serve something greater than themselves in life.

The American spirit is alive and strong. It's not only an entrepreneurial spirit; it's a spirit of compassion and decency and kindness. There is no question in my mind that this country can overcome the obstacles in our way, and out of the evil done to America will come great good, peace around the world, and a hopeful, decent, compassionate America in which each of us who lives in this country understands the American Dream is meant for them.

I want to thank you all for coming. May God bless you, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:23 p.m. at the Knoxville Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to candidate Van Hilleary's wife, Meredith, and his parents, Bill and Evelyn Hilleary; former Tennessee gubernatorial candidate Jim Henry; senatorial candidate Lamar Alexander, and

his wife, Honey; Janice Bowling, candidate for Tennessee's Fourth Congressional District; Ramzi bin al-Shibh, an Al Qaida operative suspected of helping to plan the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, who was captured in Karachi, Pakistan; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Remarks Announcing Action on the Labor Disputes Affecting Pacific Coast Ports

October 8, 2002

I appreciate my Cabinet Secretaries joining me here for this announcement.

For over a week our ports along the Pacific coast have been shut down. These ports handle more than \$300 billion a year in trade. The work stoppage is hurting our entire economy. It is hurting truckers and rail operators who carry goods to other parts of America. It's hurting farmers and ranchers and manufacturers, retailers and consumers who make, buy, and sell the products that pass through our ports.

The crisis in our western ports is hurting the economy. It is hurting the security of our country, and the Federal Government must act. Americans are working hard every day to bring our economy back from recession. This Nation simply cannot afford to have hundreds of billions of dollars a year in potential manufacturing and agricultural trade sitting idle. We can't afford it. Because of the situation at the west coast ports, our economy is already losing up to \$1 billion a day, economic losses that translate into lost jobs.

The farm economy alone is losing a thousand jobs a day. Automotive plants cannot get all the parts they need, and they're laying off workers. Stores cannot begin stocking up for the holiday season. All of this will only worsen as time goes on.

The work stoppage also threatens our national defense. These ports load the ships that carry supplies to our men and women in uniform. These ports also receive parts and materials used by our defense contractors to complete projects and maintain military equipment.

Federal mediators have been trying to get the workers and port operators to resume operations while they negotiate their dif-

ferences. The Secretary of Labor has been working hard to get people back to work. Unfortunately, the union and the management have been unable to reach an agreement. After a lot of work, particularly by our Labor Department and Secretary, after a lot of discussions, we have been unable to bring the two parties together, and therefore stronger action is required. Because the operation of western ports is vital to our economy and to our military, I have determined that the current situation imperils our national health and safety.

I have appointed a board of inquiry to investigate the issues at stake. Today the board submitted an official report stating each party's position. I am now directing Attorney General Ashcroft to seek an injunction under the Taft-Hartley Act, ending the lockout and requiring work at the ports to resume at a normal pace. This dispute between management and labor cannot be allowed to further harm the economy and force thousands of working Americans from their jobs.

This injunction will allow the parties more time to resolve their differences. It is not, however, a permanent solution to the problem, and the Federal Government will continue working with both sides to pursue a settlement. The ultimate responsibility for an agreement lies with the worker representatives and the port operators. I expect both sides to put the concerns of our national health and safety first and work in good faith to resolve their differences as quickly as possible.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:44 p.m. on the South Grounds at the White House.

Letter to the Attorney General Directing Action on the Labor Disputes Affecting Pacific Coast Ports

October 8, 2002

Dear Mr. Attorney General:

On October 7, 2002, by virtue of the authority vested in me by section 206 of the Labor Management Relations Act, 1947 (61 Stat. 155; 29 U.S.C. 176) (the "Act"), I issued