

to open the door to economic opportunity, and then other related programs, you are reclaiming the community from despair and disintegration. You're making a community whole.

And so, I am very grateful to speak for a grateful nation in saluting you for the strides that you've made. You are real-life American heroes, and all of us are very, very proud of you. And for those out there who say it can't be done, some communities can't be saved, I say to them: You all come to Dallas and see the Voice of Hope Ministries for yourself.

And thank you, then, to all of you for being a Point of Light. And God bless each and every one of you.

And now it is a privilege and a pleasure to present to the volunteers and staff of the Voice of Hope the 424th daily Point of Light recognition letter.

Note: The President spoke at 1:15 p.m. on the tarmac in front of the Dallas Naval Air Station Operations Building. Following his remarks, he returned to Washington, DC. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to Business Leaders on Fast Track Authority Extension April 9, 1991

The President. At the outset of this meeting I just want to thank all the business leaders for being here. And I particularly want to thank Ambassadors Brock and Strauss. This fight for a free-trade agreement—the Fast Track extension—it protects the Uruguay round; it protects our Enterprise for the Americas Initiative; it protects the North American trade pact that we seek, agreement with Mexico. And it is very, very important. And I want to pledge to this nonpartisan group that I will do everything I can possibly do, working with the Congress, to get this Fast Track authority passed.

And it is in our interest. The point I made to President Salinas of Mexico, for whom I have great respect, is that it is in the interest of the United States of America. I also happen to believe it will benefit Mexico.

Similarly, everybody around this table has taken a leadership role in the Uruguay round, and that one is critical. We simply cannot fail to go forward with the negotiations. I will be doing everything I can, and I want to ask everybody here to do all that you can, with the various Members of Congress. I think when they understand this that we will carry the day.

There are some questions that we have to answer, questions that have been raised by supporters. Chairman Rostenkowski

raised some questions. They're good questions. I think there are very good answers for them. But I would repeat what I said to a group in Houston, yesterday it was: This isn't a partisan matter. The Democratic leader in the Senate, the Speaker, the chairman of the Ways and Means Committee are strongly supporting this. And a lot of Republicans are. Some Republicans have reservations; some Democrats have reservations.

So, what we want to do is to approach this without—[inaudible]—in mind and get the job done. And I believe we can do it. I really am confident we can, but I don't want to see this much horsepower gathered without asking you earnestly to do the very best you can on the Hill because that's where the action is and that's where the answer should be finally decreed. But I think we're going to win it.

Ambassador Brock. So do I.

Q. Mr. President, can Iraq be persuaded to accept the refugees—

The President. It doesn't have anything to do with Fast Track. I want to talk about Fast Track today, and we'll have no more press conferences today because as I mentioned to an earlier group we've had four in the last 3 days, and that's unfair to the press. [Laughter] Maybe four in the last 4 days—something like that.

Note: The President spoke at 1:21 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to William E. Brock and Robert S. Strauss, former U.S. Trade Representatives; President Carlos Salinas de

Gortari of Mexico; Dan Rostenkowski, chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee; George J. Mitchell, Senate majority leader; and Thomas S. Foley, Speaker of the House of Representatives.

Remarks at a Meeting of the American Business Conference April 9, 1991

Thank you very, very much. And, Bob, thank you, sir, for that introduction and for letting this distinguished group use this meeting room today. It's always a pleasure to be back here. Let me also salute the ABC's leader, Jim Jones. What a job he's doing. But I remember his effectiveness in the leadership role in the Congress, and I'm glad that those energies that he has are being used and shared by all of you. We have many distinguished visitors with us today, and I won't single them out. I was told that Bill Seidman and Richard Breedon were here. But as I look around, unless they're basking way back in anonymity somewhere, they may not have made it.

But in any event, I'm delighted to see this group. Great to talk to the American Business Conference. We did a little homework on this, and I've been here four times in recent years. And then, of course, we're privileged to have two of your own with us in the administration, Bob Mosbacher and Arthur Levitt. And it's an honor and a pleasure to, as Bob says, talk to a group that stands for success—a group that admits only medium-sized companies that thrive in the marketplace. But I've got to tell you, I feel a little funny being here. After all, I'm the CEO now of an outfit that's lost money for 33 of the last 35 years. [*Laughter*]

But in keeping with today's theme—charting economic growth in the nineties—I'd like to talk about our administration's plan for generating more American success stories like your own. Our recent success in the Gulf has renewed Americans' belief in themselves. In just the past couple of months, consumer confidence has soared.

And the stock market, of course, has been climbing toward that 3,000 mark. Most economists predict that the recession soon will give way to a new cycle of growth. And, incidentally, we agree with that assessment, inside.

But we can't rest on our laurels. There's an entire world of competition out there. The administration's economic growth package is designed to let people like you do what you do best—create jobs, create new opportunities, create wealth.

Let's start with an issue that we all have to address in the next month. And I think Bob just talked about it; Jim has been participating in a meeting with me in the Cabinet Room at the White House about it—I'm talking about the issue of free and fair trade. As you know, I have asked Congress to extend the Fast Track trade authority.

Fast Track, in my view, is another term for good faith. It guarantees that Congress will accept or reject the very same agreements that our negotiators and their counterparts have worked out. And this doesn't weaken the Congress' power to review agreements; it simply prevents eleventh-hour changes that would force negotiators from all countries to start over, to start from scratch.

Our trading partners consider Fast Track a vital test of our reliability. And if we do not retain the Fast Track process, we jeopardize three critical foreign trade initiatives: the Uruguay round of trade talks, the North American free trade agreement, and the Enterprise for the Americas Initiative.

Americans understand the benefits of free trade. In the last 4 years, exports from the United States have increased 55 percent, more than twice the rate of import