

rest of the country what Barbara and I talk about as family values. I worry about the decimation of the American family. Everything we do, like child care, we try to make it that the family has a choice, or education, that the family does.

Barbara is out there trying to get people—"Read to the kids." So, I do think that family involvement is vital to the success. The Federal Government cannot get this drug thing done by itself. We've got a program. We've got to keep the families together and the families involved in solving this. That isn't a vote-getter, and that isn't going to outpromise some Democrat halfway across the State. But it is something I feel very, very strongly about and will continue to try to help the American people understand.

You've got to read to your kids. You've got to hug them. You've got to lift them up and dust them off and put them back into the game. And if you don't do that, they drift off into some of this mire. In the inner city they need help on it, too.

[At this point, County Commissioner Maureen Barrows presented a book on the history of Exeter to the President.]

The President. Listen, I apologize, but we're really almost just getting started. This

is not show business. I mean, when a guy asked a very good question on education it gave me a chance to say what I think, but also it shows what concerns people. So I hope you don't feel this—whoops, even the guy at the end of the table here feels that it's just some kind of a useless exercise.

But message: I care. We're trying. We need help. We have had and will continue to have, I think, sound and sensible programs.

And let's not forget this: It was one year ago that I had to make a very fateful decision that affected the lives of a lot of Americans. And we saw instantly the return of American pride. It doesn't matter about how you feel about when we should have gone to war, the country came together. I want to use that same kind of leadership to bring the country together now on the social problems that affect us and on getting this economy going and getting New Hampshire back to work. And I need your help.

Thank you very, very much.

Note: The President spoke at 10:50 a.m. at the Exeter Town Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Michael Dagostino, a retired rose-grower in Exeter, and Hugh and Kay Gregg, parents of Gov. Judd Gregg.

Remarks to Davidson Interior Trim Employees in Dover, New Hampshire

January 15, 1992

First, let me just say thanks for the warmth of this reception. And your chairman is just back from a trip with me abroad, and the thing got a little caught up in some of the politics of the moment, which is hard to avoid. But the concept was: Look, this isn't any time to pull back; this is a time to try to expand American markets. I am not in favor of protection in the sense of pulling away from our export markets.

So, we went over there and tried to hammer away in getting our export market extended. And one of the things that saved us in the extraordinarily difficult times that,

well, this State faces and the neighboring State of Maine, Massachusetts, and New England, and also some of the rest of the country, is our exports. So, one pitch I'd make is, no matter what your politics are, is please resist this siren's call, this wonderful call, "Well, we're going to protect." Because when you protect, you shrink the markets abroad, and you throw people at home out of work.

So that's the theme that I—take you up on your chance to say something. [Laughter] And the other thing, and I guess, is that

I expect it's difficult for somebody working in a plant here in New Hampshire to wonder, to know if the President really cares about what's happening in the economy. And I think I know this State. Went to school a thousand years ago across the border, and go up every summer of my life except 1944 to Maine, spending a fair amount of time, almost you can see it, practically, coming in on the plane. So when you get clobbered on the seacoast by a storm, I get clobbered on the seacoast by a storm. It goes further than that. When you get hurting because you worry whether you're going to have a job or you get thrown out, I do care about it. And I just wanted to say that.

What we're trying to do from the Federal level is to stimulate the economic growth of this country. And I hope you'll stay tuned at the State of the Union. I've made some proposals. I'm having difficulty, I think we all know, getting them through the Congress. But I'm going to try again, look the American people in the eye, and say, "Now look, here's what it's going to take to take a sick economy and make it a well economy."

Having said that, I'm convinced this economy is going to turn around. I've been wrong about how fast it would be, and I think a lot of other people, smarter than I, have been wrong about how fast it would be, the economists and all that. But we are the United States. We don't need to fear anything at all. We can turn this thing around, and we're going to do it.

And the last point is simply this, because I want to eat this chili before it gets cold—[laughter]—and some of you guys have got to go to work. But the last part of it is that a year ago, almost to the day—and maybe some of you all were involved; I know you were with your emotions, your hearts, and everything—but we, almost a year ago to this very minute, went into battle halfway around the world. And the country demonstrated something in support of the young men and women that fought there that we'd really lost since World War II. We came together, came together in anticipation, came together in war, and came together in victory. And it lifted the country up; the country came together.

Well, even though we're in an election

year—and I'm a realist, I've been in politics one hell of a long time, if you'll excuse the expression—some things transcend the politics. One of them is that what I want to do, even though we're in an election year, is take the same spirit of leadership and the same spirit that affected this country then, can-do spirit, and say, "All right, now let's see if we can't do the same thing with our economy," through getting the incentives built back into the system or keeping the lid on the Federal spending or whatever it is.

And I just wanted you to know: One, I know you're hurting; two, I care about it; three, I've been wrong about how fast this recovery would take; but, four, I am determined to use the role as leader of the free world, leader of the United States, to make things better. And I think we'll have a window in here, even though it's political, right after the State of the Union to have something happen in terms of stimulating the growth of this economy.

So please, vote any way you want to—that's your right and privilege—and say what you feel, but please avoid the quick fix that might sound good. One of the charges: The President doesn't know where New Hampshire is. Look, I know where New Hampshire is, and I know the heartbeat of this State. And I know the people, and I care about them, and so does Barbara Bush.

You can argue with me on the politics or on what we might have done sooner, but I just wanted you to know we do care desperately. We have tried in the White House to project a certain commitment to family, which, if you look at your kids and you worry, as Bar and I do, about the decline of the American family, it is important. So when she hugs a baby that's sick with AIDS or when she reads to a child, what we're trying to do is say we think the parents of this country—leave out the politics for a minute—have to stay involved, whether it's on child care, and our child care gives the parents a choice, whether it's on health care, don't mandate it all, get a system. And we're going to be proposing a good program that keeps the strong families of this country strong.

I say I know this State; I do. I know it

enough to know that regardless of the politics, family is important. Pride in the country is important. And I want to try to do my job in such a way to identify with that and to lead this country.

Somebody reminded me of a country-western song over here at Pease. Incidentally, I want to see how the Federal Government can help in the economic redevelopment of that area. It's a tremendous asset. And yes, I'm having to cut back on defenses, and yes, thank God, your kids and my grandkids are growing up in a world where they don't need to worry quite as much about nuclear weapons. I mean, that's a very important thing. But with it comes some big problems for jobs. So, we want to help on the economic development.

This highway bill is going to help; it's going to help New Hampshire a lot. Small business moves we've made are going to help. The new visa center is going to help. So I want to try to do the best we can. Somebody says, "Hey, Bush is bragging about the highway bill helping New Hampshire." I've got to brag about something, and you're darn right I'm going to brag about the highway bill and all the jobs that go with it.

So, we'll keep slugging it out on that basis. In spite of the problems, I think this is probably the most challenging and, in a sense, rewarding time since, well, in this whole century, to be President of the United States. Who would have thought that the changes around the world that make the world more peaceful would have happened so fast and happened, thank God, on my watch? So, I'll take the hit for the bad stuff, and give me just a little bit of the credit for the fact that your kids and mine may have a chance for a more peaceful world.

But anyway, good luck to you. I didn't

mean to—he invited me, so it's his—[*laughter*] Thanks, and bless you all. Thanks a lot.

[*At this point, Frank Biehl, manager of human resources, Davidson Interior Trim, presented a gift to the President.*]

Let me just say this: Your chairman was tough over there and took that case dramatically. You can compete. If we can get the markets open, you can sell. You workers are better than they are. The competence you see out there is better than the next guy.

I get criticized on this trip, saying Bush is trying to manage trade—all the liberal columnists on this one. Normally get hit from the other side saying protect. But this one is saying, "Well, he's now giving away his one commitment to free trade." It's not doing that at all. It is simply saying I am for free trade, but we need fair access to the other guy's market.

And that's what Bev was trying to do, and that's what I was trying to do. And we made some progress. Not as much as we wanted, but we're going to keep on. And for those that say, "Stay home," I know what they're getting at. They're thinking, "Well, the President is over there talking to Gorbachev or Yeltsin or Middle East. I wonder if he really knows that we're hurting in Dover, New Hampshire?" I've got to say to the people, yes, I know that. But the world is such you've got to stay involved. And it means jobs in Dover, New Hampshire, if we stay involved and do it effectively.

So we'll keep on trying. And now that's the second speech, and thanks for my sneakers. I'm glad to have them.

Note: The President spoke at 12:48 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Beverly F. Dolan, chairman of Textron, parent company of Davidson Interior Trim.