

Federal investment will produce the biggest markets when linked with State, local, and private efforts. Some of these cities are already converting their fleets, their buses, their service vehicles, their regular cars. By linking with these local efforts, a modest Federal investment can help jumpstart locally and regionally significant programs.

Americans don't want Federal bureaucrats deciding what's best on the local levels. And in this case, especially, one size does not necessarily fit all. But our efforts do serve three very important goals. First, we protect the environment. Second, we create new jobs by promoting the use of fuels that are produced in the United States and by encouraging American companies to build vehicles that use those fuels. Third, we reduce our reliance on foreign oil. Americans want a clean environment, secure jobs, and a more independent country, and these alternative fuels help us to achieve those objectives.

We build on the successful experience at State and national levels in government and in business. Garry Mauro has already converted the Texas State government's fleet of vehicles to clean domestic fuels. And you just heard Secretary O'Leary manifest her commitment to doing the same with the Federal fleet. Many members of this task force have started to convert their companies' fleets of vehicles. Very often I preach to the converted; today, I'm preaching to the converters, I think. *[Laughter]* I can't believe I said that. It's been a long week. *[Laughter]*

I do want to say, seriously, that this effort is very important to me and has been from the beginning because it manifests two things that I believe very deeply and I believe all

Americans must come to believe if we're going to really take this country where we have to go.

The first is that protecting the environment goes hand in hand with economic growth as we move toward the 21st century. If you look at what's happening in this country and around the world, at the crying need to increase the rate of growth and at the same time to protect this planet, it is apparent that the future will be what we desire only if we can achieve both great levels of environmental protection and higher rates of growth. If we fail at either one, and if we fail to reconcile the two, we do so at our peril and at the peril for the whole planet.

The second is that in a complicated, fast-changing world, Government can best lead by example, not by bureaucratic fiat. I believe that very strongly. We have to try to create environments, incentives, conditions in which the objectives we desire will be more likely to occur. And the recommendations of this task force achieve that objective very, very well.

So for all of that, I thank you all, those of you who contributed to this report. The best I can do is to do my very best to implement the recommendations of the task force. And I pledge to you that the Vice President and I and the Office of the White House, with the Office of Environmental Policy and with the Chief of Staff's well-known historic bias for natural gas, somehow we will find the way to make these task force recommendations come alive in the Federal Government and in the lives of the American people. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:47 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building.

## Remarks on Lighting the National Christmas Tree

December 9, 1993

Ladies and gentlemen, I'd like to begin my remarks by asking that we recognize the years of devotion that Joe Riley has given to this Pageant of Peace. Let's give him a big hand. *[Applause]*

This has been a wonderful night for Hillary and for Chelsea and for me. I thank Sandy

Duncan for doing such a wonderful job in her tennis shoes; I think she looked sort of graceful limping out there. The DC Choral Kaleidoscope was wonderful. And I think Willard Scott is a perfect Santa Claus. You know, he will take any excuse to wear hair. *[Laughter]* But he looked beautiful. I'm especially glad to see my friends

Charley Pride and Phil Driscoll. I thank them for being here. I thought they were terrific, as was the Air Force Band that I'm proud of as the President very, very much. Thank you all so much for what you've done.

In this Pageant of Peace we come together in the spirit of our better selves, wishing that somehow, some way, we could feel the way we feel tonight and in this Christmas season, every day, all year long. We are joined by simple and universal convictions: a shared faith, a shared joy, a shared commitment now to follow the directions of our faith, to love our neighbors as ourselves, to be grateful for what we have, to wish that others had it, and to take some time to give more of ourselves to others.

I ask tonight that all of us, each in our own way, express our gratitude to the men and women of our Armed Forces who are overseas in this Christmas season, to all those who serve us here in the United States, to our families and friends, and to all those to whom we could give a little something extra.

But most of all, because of all the difficulties we have had in the United States in these last

couple of years, with violence in our own land affecting not only adults but more and more of our children, I ask tonight, at this Pageant of Peace, that we pray in this Christmas season that we be given the wisdom and the courage, the heart, the renewed sense of common humanity, to do what we can to bring more peace to the streets, the homes, and the hearts of our own people and especially our children. That is something that would be perfectly consistent with the faith and the life we celebrate tonight, something we could take out of this Christmas season that would be the greatest gift we could ever give to ourselves, to our children, and to our beloved land.

Thank you. God bless you all. And now I'd like to ask my family to come up and help me to light the Christmas tree.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:50 p.m. on the Ellipse. In his remarks, he referred to entertainers Sandy Duncan, Willard Scott, Charley Pride, and Phil Driscoll.

## Remarks in a Telephone Conversation With the Space Shuttle *Endeavour* Astronauts and an Exchange With Reporters December 10, 1993

*The President.* Hello?

*Col. Richard O. Covey.* Hello, sir.

*The President.* Can you hear us?

*Col. Covey.* Yes, sir, I can hear you loud and clear.

*The President.* Well, the Vice President and I wanted to call you and congratulate you on one of the most spectacular space missions in our history. We're all so proud of you, and we've been able to see you do all those things. It's just been wonderful, and I want to thank each and every one of you for what you've done. You made it look easy.

*Col. Covey.* Well, we appreciate the thanks and congratulations, sir. That's nice, particularly coming from you. As you know, great adventures are once-in-a-lifetime opportunities, and the seven of us were lucky to be able to be part of this great adventure.

*The President.* I know that you know this, but you have really both educated and inspired

people all over the world. I don't think any of us will ever forget the image of K.T. lifting the damaged solar panel over her head and then letting it go. That was a moment of high drama. Maybe you should come down here and help us stage our events on Earth. [Laughter]

*Mission Specialist Kathryn C. Thornton.* I think it's easier to throw away solar panels. [Laughter]

*The President.* I'm glad the press corps heard you say that. [Laughter]

[At this point, the Vice President congratulated the astronauts and the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.]

*Dr. F. Story Musgrave.* I'm Story Musgrave, sir. I'm one of the EVA group members. As you can see now, we've got some different colors here. The magenta, I guess you call it, are the space walkers, and the ones up front there in navy blue, they're the ones that took care of