

This is a very great country. Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7 p.m. at the Hotel Savery.

Remarks on Employment Statistics and an Exchange With Reporters in Duluth, Minnesota

November 4, 1994

The President. Good morning, everyone. I have always thought the best social policy was a good job. And with our national economic strategy that was adopted last year by Congress, we have been creating millions of those jobs.

Today we can see that in the report that the Nation's unemployment rate has fallen to 5.8 percent, its lowest level in 4 years. And while we still have more work to do to make this economy, work for all Americans, it's clear that progress has been made. While we have been shrinking the Government and reducing the deficit, America has been growing the economy. More than 5 million new jobs have been created in the last 21 months, more jobs in high-wage industries this year alone than in the previous 5 years combined.

Had we listened to the doubters, this progress never would have been made. Those who opposed our economic plan argued that growth would stall, that jobs would be lost, that the deficit would go up. They were plain wrong. We have delivered what the American people have long wanted: lower deficits, \$100 billion lower than predicted; strong growth, nearly 4 percent a year since I assumed office; and with the new revision, over 5 million jobs, 5 times as many per month as were created in the previous administration.

Of course the real heroes in all this are the American people, the workers and their firms who have made America the most competitive economy in the world, the heroes in the auto industries whose facilities are filled today with more workers than they've had since 1979. And for the first time since 1979, American automobile companies have outsold their Japanese competitors all around the world. The heroes are the people who are working full-time, even though they live on modest wages.

This improving employment picture is, in short, a credit to the hard work and the responsibility and the productivity of working Americans, as well as to the partnership that our Gov-

ernment has established with the private sector. We have to continue with this economic policy that puts people first. It is working.

Republican Contract With America

Q. Mr. President, Haley Barbour says you're telling a big, bald-faced lie when you say the Republicans intend to cut Social Security benefits, sir. Are you playing fair? Are you telling the truth?

The President. Well, why don't you ask Mr. Barbour what his position is? They want to have it all ways. They're out here now running ads criticizing this economic plan, which has plainly played a role in this terrific recovery we have. They're playing to the worst instincts of the American people.

With their contract, what have they tried to do? They have made one trillion dollars' worth of promises. Now, you don't have to take my word for it; look at the study done by the House Budget Committee. Mr. Barbour has the following options if they intend to keep their promise—huge tax cuts, spending increases, balance the budget—the following are his options: You can cut everything 20 percent across the board, which is a \$2,000-a-person-a-year Social Security cut. If you say, "Well, I don't want to cut Social Security," then you cut everything else 30 percent across the board, including Medicare. You devastate Medicare, veterans benefits, the agriculture programs, and much of the other good things done by the National Government.

Of course, there's always the possibility that Haley Barbour's right, they're just going to deliver the goodies and forget about paying for them, in which case you go right back to the 1980's, exploding deficits, shipping our jobs overseas, putting our economy in the ditch. This economy is growing. We are moving in the right direction because we have played on America's strengths. I'm interested in making this country

strong; they're interested in talking tough and acting weak. And their weakness made this economy weak. They were weak when they were in office. They were weak; they let this deficit get out of control. They stopped investing in our future. They didn't expand trade as they should have. They behaved in a weak fashion. They talked tough; they played to the fears of the American people. They are very, very good at it. But they did not build America's strength. I'm interested in this country being strong at home with good jobs, strong families, safe streets, and strong abroad. And that is what this election ought to be about.

Midterm Elections

Q. Mr. President, in these final days before the election, you're focusing in on Minnesota and Michigan, California, Washington State. But you're avoiding a lot of other States where there are some very close contests, Oklahoma, Tennessee, Texas, Florida. Why aren't you going to those States instead of coming to these States twice?

The President. First of all, I'm going where I think I can do the most good. Secondly, in Tennessee, the Vice President, who is from Tennessee, has been there and is going back and is spending a lot of time. We're practicing division of labor. I've been to Florida; I've done, I think, all the good I can do there. I also think, in the Federal races, I can have more impact than in the State races. So I'm doing the best I can with the limited time we have. I have a vigorous schedule. We're going back to Michigan. We're going to try to make one or two other States, too, before the end. But I'm doing what I think is most important.

Secondly, I believe that thanks to you, all of you, that wherever I go the most important thing is to get the message out, get the message to the American people that we have made a good beginning in these last 21 months, that we are dealing with problems that accumulated for years before I took office, that I don't pretend that we have solved all the problems. I

know there are still things to do, but we ought to keep going forward, not turn back. That message goes across America no matter where I am.

Death of Michael and Alexander Smith

Q. Mr. President, the Nation has been stunned by the news of the deaths of these two children in South Carolina. Do you have any reflections on that this morning?

The President. Well, I think like every American, especially every parent, I have followed this gripping incident, and it's been a heart-breaking thing. I think today what I would like to do is to say a word of encouragement to the people of Union, the people of the community, beginning with the sheriff and all the law enforcement officials, all the children who prayed, all the people who worked to try to recover those children.

It is very important that they not, in any way, feel that their efforts are diminished. The American people looked on them with enormous admiration, the way they pulled together across racial and other lines, the way they tried to find those children, the way they worked to get to an answer, the way they prayed for the safety of the children. I just don't want them to believe that somehow what the mother did in any way diminishes the quality, the character, the courage of what they did.

And so my thoughts and prayers are with them today. And I would hope the American people would feel that way as well. I think we were all moved and deeply impressed by how that community responded, and this awful turn of events cannot undermine that.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 a.m. at the Holiday Inn. In his remarks, he referred to Haley Barbour, Republican National Committee chairman, and Susan Smith, who was charged with murder in the drowning of her children after originally claiming they had been abducted by a carjacker on October 25.