

Remarks at a Luncheon for Governor Bob Taft in Columbus
May 10, 2002

Thank you very much. Gosh, it's a great Ohio welcome. I'm honored to be back. It's good to be back near the family plot. [Laughter] As you may recall, Prescott S. Bush, my grandfather, was raised right here in Columbus, Ohio. Last time I did that, my mother was watching on C-SPAN. She said, "What about my father?" [Laughter] I said, "Oh, yes, he was raised in Dayton, Ohio." [Laughter] So, Mother, I mentioned him. [Laughter]

But it's great to be back in this great State. I'm here to talk about welfare reform, but I'm also here to make sure that the good people of Ohio send this good man back to the Governor's Mansion. There's a lot of reasons to send him back, but none greater than the fact that he married well. [Laughter] Hope is doing a great job as the first lady of the State of Ohio.

When we were walking in, Bob was telling me how proud he is of Hope and the job she does, particularly to promote literacy. And I told him, "I'm real proud of my wife, too." I can't tell you how—what a great job Laura is doing. She has brought a lot of calm and a steady hand. You know, when I asked her to marry me, she was a public school librarian who didn't like politics and really didn't like politicians. [Laughter] A lot of people are now beginning to realize why I asked her to marry me. She's got a lot of class. A lot of people, however, are wondering why she said yes. [Laughter] But I wish she were here. She loves the Tafts. She really appreciates Hope and Bob, and she sends her best to you all.

I'm also traveling with some pretty good company today. I had the honor of flying down on Air Force One with a fabulous United States Senator, George Voinovich. I like George; he's the kind of fellow that tells you what's on his mind. [Laughter] There's no doubt what he believes in. One

of the things he believes in is Ohio. He loves the State of Ohio.

I'm also honored to be traveling today with members of a great congressional delegation, Deborah Pryce, Dave Hobson, Pat Tiberi, Bob Ney, and Rob Portman. These people not only represent Ohio well; they're friends. And they're people with whom it's a real pleasure to work. They bring a lot of class to the United States Congress.

And earlier today, I had the honor of meeting a fellow named Mike Turner, who won a primary in Dayton, Ohio, who a lot of people think, when he continues to work hard, he's going to be the next Congressman from Dayton. Welcome, Mike.

I also want to thank Jennette Bradley for willingness to run and to join the ticket. I appreciate you, Jennette. It's going to be a historic moment when you become the Lieutenant Governor of the State of Ohio.

It seems like ever since I was—been coming to Ohio to campaign for one Bush or another, Bennett has been around. It's great to see you, Mr. Chairman. I appreciate it.

I want to thank Tim and all the folks who organized this event. I want to thank you all for coming to help—to help Bob. You know, when you find a good, honest, decent, honorable person in politics, you need to back him, and this guy is just that. Plus, he's got a great record. He has his priorities straight. His most fundamental priority is to make sure that every child in the State of Ohio gets a good education, and the record is impressive. The record is impressive. Not only has he focused on making the Ohio schools a funding priority; he's focused on insisting that there be excellence in every single schoolroom in Ohio. I appreciate your—Bob, I appreciate your leadership. The people of Ohio have

got to understand that he has led on this issue.

And not only that, he and Hope understand that if a child cannot read, a child cannot learn. And it's important to have a Governor set a priority. Not only is public schools a priority, public education a priority, but teaching every child to read is the first priority of making sure there's excellence in every public school in the State of Ohio.

We have just passed historic reform in Washington, DC, education reform. It may be hard for you to believe, but there are, at moments, when Republicans and Democrats come together for the good of the Nation. And this is one of the cases. People from both parties came together and worked on education reform which says that we believe every child can learn in America, not some, not a few, but every child. We set the highest of high standards.

We also say that in return for Federal money—we're going to spend money; Washington is good about spending money—and in return for Federal money, we expect there to be results. In return for Federal money, you, the local folks, must show us whether or not children are learning to read and write and add and subtract. And if they are, we will sing your praises, as a society. But if not, we expect there to be change. It is not right for there to be children trapped in schools that will not teach and will not change.

High standards, strict accountability, coupled with local control of schools—I believe that the people who care more about the children of Ohio are the citizens of Ohio. And we passed power and flexibility out of Washington, DC, so that good Governors like Bob Taft can chart the path of excellence for every single child who lives in your great State.

Earlier today I had the opportunity to talk about welfare reform. We're getting ready to reauthorize the welfare bill. First of all, it is important for Americans to understand that the welfare reforms of 1996

have been a huge success, a success because the welfare rolls are down dramatically, but more importantly, a success because more and more citizens, as a result of finding a job, now have dignity in their lives.

Knowing that there are Governors like Bob Taft, I can safely say, the best way to make sure we continue with welfare reform is to trust Governors and local authorities to match up programs and needs with people. In other words, the Federal Government must get out of the way, must provide maximum flexibility at the local level, which is precisely what I intend to do.

It is good to know that you have a Governor who's willing to rally the social entrepreneurs all across the State of Ohio to make sure that people are able to get the help we want them to get. Ohio is on the leading edge of welfare reform, thanks to Governor Voinovich and now thanks to Governor Taft.

And I appreciate Bob Taft's understanding the role of Government is not to create wealth. That's not the role of Government. The role of Government is to create an environment in which small-business owners and entrepreneurs have a chance to flourish. His initiative of the Third Frontier Project for the State of Ohio understands that jobs and job creation best take place in the private sector. Governor, you're right on track, and I appreciate your vision for economic vitality. And thankfully to the United States Congress, our economy is better on track.

You may remember when I came to the State of Ohio to campaign, I said, "If you give me a chance to be the President, I'm going to make sure that people get to keep more of their hard-earned dollars." And thankfully, we passed tax relief right at the right time.

Here's what Bob and I know, that if you let people keep their own money—and, by the way, it's not the Government's money. I love to read these stories about, "Well,

the Government's money—we can't send the Government's money back." It's not the Government's money; it's the people's money. It's the taxpayers' money. When they have more of their own money, they demand goods and services. And when they demand goods and services, somebody will produce the goods and services. And when somebody produces the goods and services to meet demand, somebody is going to be able to find work. The best way to stimulate our economy was to let the American people keep their own money, so they get to decide what to do with it.

George Voinovich has been a leader in Congress, as have the other members from the congressional delegation, about joining me and the Vice President to make sure this Nation finally wakes up and has a balanced energy policy. You know, we import over 50 percent of our energy, and sometimes the people we import from don't like us. [Laughter] For the sake of economic security and for the sake of national security, this Nation needs a comprehensive energy plan that encourages conservation, promotes new technologies that will save energy and enhance renewable sources of energy, but at the same time, a energy plan that has the wisdom to promote clean coal technology, so that we're less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

Oh, there's a lot of issues we face. And you know, we've got issues related to trade. I'm pleased that the Senate looks like they've got an agreement on a trade bill. This Nation ought to be confident. We ought to be opening up markets all around the world to trade. It'll be good for our Ohio farmers to trade; it's good for Ohio small-business people to trade. I hope Congress finally gets a trade promotion authority bill to my desk. Confident nations open up markets; they don't build walls around themselves. I'm confident that we're the best producers and innovators in many products, and therefore we ought to be selling our products around the world.

I'm also working on issues like terrorism insurance, to encourage construction projects. I know the Senate will join me on that. We've just got to make sure that when we do so, we don't provide a gravy train for personal injury lawyers in America.

Obviously, we've got budget matters. You know, when I was running for President, in Chicago, somebody said, "Would you ever have deficit spending?" I said, "Only if we were at war, or only if we had a recession, only if we had a national emergency." Never did I dream we'd get the trifecta. [Laughter] But that's what we got, and we're going to deal with it. And we're going to deal with it in a way that understands that each individual American matters, in a way that promotes jobs not Government. And we're going to deal with it in a way that makes a priority the defense of the United States of America.

I've got a routine that I really enjoy there at the White House. It starts off early in the morning where, like I did at the Governor's Mansion in Texas, I bring Laura her coffee. [Laughter] My next job is to take Spot and Barney out for a walk on the South Lawn. Spot was born there at the White House when Mother and Dad were there, so she's used to the accommodations and understands the decorum necessary to go into the Oval Office. [Laughter] Barney, on the other hand, is only a year and a half. In that we've got a brand new rug, he's not allowed in. [Laughter] So Barney goes off with the gardener, and I go in the Oval Office with the dog, Spot, and sit.

First thing there, sit behind a fantastic desk that many of you may have seen. It's a desk used by Teddy Roosevelt and Franklin Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy, Ronald Reagan, some of the great names that have preceded me to the Presidency. And the first thing I do is I open up a threat assessment. I read about the fact that the cold-blooded killers are still after us. And by the way, that's all they are. They're nothing

but a bunch of coldblooded killers, and they still want to hurt America.

It's hard for a lot of young to understand why they would want to do so. And the answer is, because we believe in freedom, and they don't. We're a beacon for freedom, and they can't stand that. They cannot stand the thought that America worships freely, that we welcome people of all faiths, Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindu; you name it; we welcome. We understand a lot of Americans have no faith at all, and that's okay. They're proud Americans. We know that. They can't stand the thought that there's free and open discourse in America. They hate the thought of a free press. No, they hate our freedoms, and therefore, they're going to continue to try to strike us.

We're doing everything we can. You need to know that our law enforcement officials are communicating a lot better than ever before between the Federal and State and local governments. Anytime we get any kind of hint, we're moving. And we're sharing intelligence all around the world. Our coalition is more than just a coalition of military; it's a coalition of our respective treasuries to shut down money. It's a coalition of our intelligence gathering to share information. I mean, we are—we're on full alert in Washington, DC, about anything that might happen. But the best way to make sure that we protect the homeland, the best way for me to do my job is to hunt them down one by one and bring them to justice, and that's precisely what the United States of America is going to do.

I have submitted a significant increase in our defense budget for two basic reasons. One, anytime we commit our troops into action, they deserve the best equipment and the best training, best possible pay. And by the way, for those of you who have got relatives in the United States military, you can tell them, this Commander in Chief is incredibly proud of how they've conducted themselves. And the second rea-

son why is because we're in this for the long run. There are no calendars, no dates certain as to when this is going to be over, because we're defending freedom. That's what we're defending. No matter how long it takes, we will defend our freedoms and civilization, itself.

Oh, I know there are some saying, "Well, it's got to end by such-and-such," or "What happened here? What happened there?" That's what the enemy wants. What makes them really nervous is when they hear the fact that our Nation is united and focused and disciplined and patient.

I've traveled the country a lot, and I'm proud to report that's exactly the way Americans think. You see, I'm amazed of what—I try to speculate what went on in the minds of these people when they attacked us. They must have thought we were weak. You know, they must have thought that—this kind of false image of materialism affected their thinking. They thought we were so materialistic, we wouldn't react. They probably thought all we were going to do is maybe file a couple of lawsuits. [Laughter] They were watching the wrong TV show. [Laughter] They found out that this Nation, when it comes to the defense of our freedom, is plenty tough.

When it comes to the values we hold dear, we will be strong, and we'll be steadfast. And when it comes to enforcing doctrine, when I said, "Either you're with us, or against us," they understand. And when I said, "If you're going to harbor one of those terrorists, you're just as guilty as the terrorists," thanks to the United States military, thanks to our coalition, the world now knows what we mean.

The Taliban Government now knows what we mean. We have totally destroyed their training camps. We've disrupted their chain of command. We've got them on the run. And once you get them on the run, the key is to make sure that there's no place to run to. And so our second strategy is to make sure there is no safe haven for these killers. There is no place for them

to light. Either you're with us, or you're against us.

And there's going to be a lot of action left. I mean, when you're hunting them down one by one or in small bunches, it's going to take a while. It's just going to take a while, and that's the resolve of my Government and our Government. It doesn't matter how long it takes. See, that's the thing that people have got to understand about America. It just doesn't matter how long it takes, because we love our freedom.

It also matters that there are potential threats that we recognize. This threat bothers me: the idea of a terrorist organization teaming up with a nation that develops and harbors weapons of mass destruction. It bothers me. We cannot let the world's most dangerous regimes threaten us with the world's most dangerous weapons. For the good of our children, for the good of freedom, for the good of civilization itself, this Nation will be deliberate; we'll be patient. But we're not going to allow the world's most dangerous regimes to hold the United States blackmail with the world's most dangerous weapons.

I believe that by being firm and tough and strong, we can achieve peace. It's very important for the moms and dads to tell their children that your Government is interested in peace and freedom. If there's any doubt in your children's mind about what we're doing, remind them that when we sent our troops into Afghanistan, we liberated a country. And for the first time in a long time, young girls got to go to school. While we're chasing down the killers, we're also helping the nation rebuild herself, with medical care and food. This is a compassionate nation, a nation that longs for peace. And I believe by being firm and strong and leading the world, we can achieve peace.

I was pleased to see today that the stand-off at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem was resolved peacefully. That's positive news in a troubled region. But you

just need to know, in that region and around the world, I visualize a peace so people can live side by side in peace. And our country will continue to work in that direction.

Out of the evil will come good. Out of the evil will come good, not only around the world but here at home as well. People ask me, they say, "Well, Mr. President, what can I do to help in the war against terror?" And my answer is, if you're interested in fighting evil, do some good by loving your neighbor like you'd like to be loved yourself. If you want to help this country, go across the street to a shut-in's house and say, "What can I do to help you?" If you want to be a part of a movement in America that's taking place, mentor a child; go into your church or your synagogue or mosque and rally the good people that show up to worship, to help people in need.

There are pockets of despair in America; there are pockets of hopelessness which can and will be overcome because loving citizens have decided to do something about it. The great strength of this country is really not our military. It's not the fact that we're, you know, great and rich. It's the fact that our Nation is full of people with decent hearts and loving souls, people who are willing to take time out of their day to help a neighbor in need.

I believe that as a result of the evil done to America, many are taking a hard look at the values in their life. Moms and dads recognize that their most important job is to love their children with all their hearts and all their souls. Many citizens around our country are realizing that, while it's important to make a living, it's also important to serve something greater than yourself, your community. And it's happening. That's why I'm so optimistic that not only will we achieve peace, but we'll show the world the true face of America, a decent face, a hopeful face, a compassionate face.

It is an unimaginable honor to be the President of the greatest country on the

face of the Earth. And I'm the man with that honor.

Thank you for coming, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:15 p.m. in the Regency Ballroom at the Hyatt Regency

Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Hope Taft, wife of Governor Taft; Robert T. Bennett, chairman, Ohio Republican Party; and Tim Timken, finance chairman, Taft-Bradley Campaign. Mike Turner is a candidate for Congress in Ohio's Third Congressional District.

Statement on the End of the Standoff at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem *May 10, 2002*

I am pleased by the nonviolent end to the standoff at the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Like the resolution to the situation in Ramallah, the positive result in Bethlehem was achieved through the efforts of a number of individuals and governments. In particular, I appreciate the efforts of personnel at our Embassy in Tel Aviv and our Consulate General in Jerusalem, which were critical to the outcome, and the work of the European Union.

The end of the standoff in Bethlehem is a positive development that removes an obstacle to restoring security cooperation between the parties and should advance the prospects for resuming a political process toward peace. As I said on April 4th, this can only happen if all parties assume their responsibilities for fighting terror and promoting peace.

The President's Radio Address *May 11, 2002*

Good morning. Next week the United States House of Representatives is scheduled to debate a welfare reform plan that will touch the lives of millions of Americans. The last time Congress reformed welfare, in 1996, it put millions of Americans on the path to better lives.

Because of work requirements and time-limited benefits, welfare caseloads have dropped by more than half. Today, 5.4 million fewer people live in poverty, including 2.8 million fewer children than in 1996. Yet, the real success of welfare reform is not found in the number of caseloads that have been cut but in the number of lives that have been changed.

I've traveled all across our Nation, and I've met people whose lives have been improved because of welfare reform. I have heard inspiring stories of hope and dignity and hard work and personal achievement. Yet, there are still millions of Americans trapped in dependence, without jobs and the dignity they bring. And now Congress must take the next necessary steps in welfare reform.

Compassionate welfare reform should encourage strong families. Strong marriages and stable families are good for children, so stable families should be a central aim of welfare policy. Under my plan, up to \$300 million per year will be available to