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Remarks on Arrival in Charleston, West Virginia January 22, 2002

The President. Thank you all. It's nice to be back. I appreciate this West Virginia welcome. Thank you for your hospitality, and thank you for giving me a chance to give you a little update on how we're doing as a nation.

But first, before I begin, I want to thank our friend, a great friend to West Virginia, Shelley Moore Capito, for her leadership. I've learned some things about Shelley Moore: One, she's very bright; two, she doesn't always do what the President says—she's got a little bit of an independent streak; but three, she loves West Virginia. She loves the State, and she's working hard to do what's right for the West Virginia people. And I'm proud to call her friend. And I hope you're proud to call her Congresswoman.

It's been a pleasure to work with some of the distinguished Members you have sent to Washington, DC, and there's no more distinguished than Senator Robert Byrd. He loves his State; he loves the country. I have been spellbound by his speeches. I've been interested to hear his points of view. I look forward to working with him as Congress comes back to Washington, DC, after the Christmas break. West Virginia has got a fine friend in Senator Byrd, and so does America, and I'm proud to call him friend.

And I appreciate your Governor being here today, Governor Wise. It's awfully kind of him to come and say hello to the President. We're working closely together on a subject that's dear to your heart and dear to my heart, and that's how to make sure West Virginia, and all of America, remains safe, make sure we've got a home-

land that's secure. And the Governor is working closely on this issue with us.

I appreciate so very much the former Governor, Cecil Underwood, and my friend, for being here. I don't know if they put Cecil into "Ripley's" or not—[laughter]—but he was the youngest Governor ever and the oldest Governor ever, and he's still looking pretty spry to me.

I appreciate the Speaker and the Senate President, as well as the minority leaders in the Senate and the House for coming. Thank you all for being here to say hello. And your mayor showed up. Mr. Mayor, thanks for coming, as well. It's an honor to be with my fellow citizens from West Virginia on such a beautiful day. And it's a day for me to tell you, folks, we're winning.

Little did I realize the last time I was here that I would be coming back to this very spot to thank the fine men and women of the West Virginia Guard for helping us fight and win the war against terror—all of you. For all who wear our uniform, I want to thank—say thank you on behalf of all Americans. For the moms and dads and wives and husbands and sons and daughters of those who wear the uniform—some of whom had been deployed out of West Virginia—thanks from the bottom of our hearts for your sacrifice. It is for a cause that is noble and a cause that is just and a cause that this great Nation will win.

I appreciate the fact that our Nation is now on alert, that we're ready, that if you see something odd happening in your neighborhood, that you now know to go

and notify the local police—something different is happening, and we might ought to take a look at it.

Every morning I wake up like I did this morning, and I get to the Oval Office—I'm an early morning man. Barney and Spot and I head out to the South Lawn. [Laughter] I head into the Oval Office, and the first thing I look at is potential threats to the United States. Every morning I'm reminded that my most important job in this day and age is to make sure our Government, the Federal Government and all governments at all levels, do everything we can to prevent a further attack on the good people of this country.

I want to assure you, we're chasing down every lead; we're following every hint. Our FBI is on full alert. Their primary task now is to prevent another attack. We're working with States—as I mentioned the Governor—we're working with local officers to better share information to disrupt and prevent. And I'm so proud of the way our Nation is responding, but the truth of the matter is, the best way to secure the homeland of the United States is to find the enemy where he hides and bring him to justice.

I know I'm like many moms—many dads, and Laura is like many moms who yearn for peace. We want nothing more than our children to be in a peaceful world. But I understand that in order to defeat the evil ones, we must use the mighty U.S. military to put—after we have put them on notice, to rout them out of their caves and to bring them to justice. And that's exactly what our Nation will do.

Our military has performed brilliantly. I gave them a task with clear objectives, and they're accomplishing those tasks and those objectives. I said real clear to the world that—real clearly to the world—the old west Texan in me slipping out—[laughter]—clearly to the world, I said that either you are with us, or you are against us, when it comes to finding terror. I'm proud to report many, many, many nations have

signed up to be with us. But I want to assure you all that if I tire, they will go to sleep. And if we blink, so will they. And therefore, it's so important for this Nation to remain steadfast and resolved and strong in our purpose to free the world of terror so our children can live peacefully.

I want to thank the people of West Virginia and the American people for their patience. They understand that the task at hand may take a while. They understand that this country is in this for the long pull, that in order to secure freedom for generations to come, that we, this generation, must be willing to sacrifice, must be patient, must be determined, and must be resolved. We have no other choice, as far as I'm concerned. It's either allow terror to spread its wings and terrorize others, or to stand tough. And this Nation has made the decision to stand tough. And I'm proud of her.

A fellow came the other day to the office and said, "Well, are you worried about Mr. bin Laden?" I said, "No, I'm not too worried about him. He's the guy that needs to be worried." [Laughter] But I want to assure you, the objective is not bin Laden. Oh, we'll get bin Laden. There's only so many caves he can hide in, if he's still hiding in caves. My attitude was, once we get him running, it's just a matter of time before we bring him to justice.

But the mission is broader than just one person. The mission is to make sure that terror, wherever it tries to settle in, is routed out. The mission is to say to the governments that think that we're not watching, "We're watching, and if you try to harbor a terrorist, feed a terrorist, you're just as guilty as those who would commit murder on innocent citizens."

So I want to reiterate what I said to those who are making the sacrifice by wearing the uniform, and particularly their families. I want to thank you. I grieve and mourn and pray when we lose a life. And we will, when it comes to the war on terror. But I told—

Audience member. We love you, sir!

The President. Thank you. [*Laughter*]

But I told the families that I've spoken to, by word and written letter, that this Nation is doing the right thing, that we're seeds in history, that we refuse to be shaped by terror, that we will win the war on terror, and the cause of sacrifice is noble, and it is just.

What a great nation we have: A nation that is willing to sacrifice for freedom and, at the same time, a nation that is liberating women and children in Afghanistan from the evil repression of the Taliban; a nation that not only stands on principle but a nation that is a nation of liberators. I'm so proud of our military and the American people, and the Afghan women and children thank you from the bottom of our heart.

I know a lot of people are thinking overseas, and that's—I can understand that, but we've got a lot of work here to do at home, too. The evil ones, when they hit us, affected our economy. And I've got to tell you something: I'm worried about people being able to find jobs. My economic plan is based upon this word: jobs. I want to ask that question all around the country, what do we do to create work? There's a lot of good people who want to work, and we've got to help them find work. And so I'm asking Congress, when they come back, to keep in mind one word: jobs.

Now, we've got to help people. We've got to help the good folks who have lost their job as a result of 9/11, and that means extending unemployment benefits. We can do that. That means helping them with health care, and we'll do that. But the American people, they don't want just an unemployment check; they want a permanent paycheck. And that's what we've got to be figuring out how to do.

I remember when I was campaigning in West Virginia, I said, "If you'd give me a chance to become your President, one thing I'll fight for is to let the working people keep more of their own money."

And guess what? We got it done—I mean, a real tax relief package that understands that by giving people their own money, somebody is going to spend more. And if somebody spends more, somebody is going to produce what their spending—spend money to produce what their spending on, which means they've got to hire people. Listen, tax relief equals jobs.

And thank goodness we did it when we did. This economy was slowing down—the evidence shows it—in March of 2001. It was beginning to kind of grind down, and tax relief happened at the right time. There's some weird economics going on in Washington. There are some saying they don't want the tax relief plan to go through, which is basically a tax increase. They want to raise taxes in the midst of a recession. I can't imagine what textbook they're reading. [*Laughter*] But raising taxes, or not allowing money in people's pockets in the midst of the recession, is the wrong prescription. If you want to create jobs, let the American people have more of their own money so they can spend it.

We've got to sell more products around the world. I've spent a lot of time talking to American farmers. I said, "Look, our farmers are the best in the world. We're the best at growing crops. So why don't we try to feed people who don't have food?" It seems like to me, it makes sense for us to open markets for U.S. products.

We're good at what we do. We've got the best workers in the world. We're the most productive people on the face of the Earth. We should not fear opening markets; we ought to welcome opening markets so we can sell more products. If we sell more products overseas, it means more jobs for the working people in America.

In order to grow our economy—in order to grow our economy, we've got to have an energy plan. Believe it or not, we're the first administration in a long time that's developed a comprehensive energy plan. On the one hand, it says, we've got to do a good job of conservation. We've got

to promote technologies that will enable people to have the same lifestyle without burning as much energy. We've got to figure out ways for our cars to burn less fuel, but be able to be comfortable and be able to let families drive all throughout West Virginia. We've got to conserve energy.

But conservation is only one half of the equation. In order to become less dependent on foreign sources of energy, we've got to find and produce more energy at home, including coal. I don't view the world as zero sum. I believe that we can have coal production and enhanced technologies in order to make sure the coal burns cleaner. I believe we can have both. Now, I know there are some in Washington who don't want to concede that, but they must not have much faith in the technology that's coming on line. I don't believe we can be independent as a nation unless we've got a constructive coal policy.

And so I asked Congress, once and for all, to pass a comprehensive energy plan, including exploring for natural gas in the State of Alaska so we can be less dependent.

The other day—some of the most interesting meetings are taking place in Washington. The other day I was with Jimmy Hoffa. A lot of people say, "Well, he's a Republican. Obviously, he doesn't care about the union." That's not true at all, for starters. I care about working people. I don't care what label they put on them. I don't care if they're a Democrat, Republican, independent, union, nonunion; I want to find jobs for everybody. I'm the President of everybody, not just a few. And so I sat down with Jimmy, and we talked about—and I was with the head of the carpenters and seafarers and construction people—and we're talking about jobs.

And he reminded me, one reason he was so strong for the energy plan was not only because it was good for U.S. security—he cares about U.S. security just like I care about U.S. security—but because when we explore for energy in America, it means

jobs for working people. This is just as much of a job program as it is an energy—as a national security program, folks. And it's about time Congress skips all the politics and focuses on what's right for the American people.

Congress is coming back tomorrow to Washington, and my call to Congress is, not let the year 2002 become a bitter political year. Now, I know a lot of them are running for office, and that's fine. And I've got my favorites—[laughter]—like Shelley Moore. But there are some things that are more important than political party.

The national security is more important than political party. And I appreciate the way Democrats and Republicans have worked together. Energy is more important than political party. Jobs are more important than political party. And we showed what's possible in Washington on the education bill. We passed a good piece of legislation that says, public education is a cornerstone of job security; it's a cornerstone of hope; and the Federal Government is going to take an active role in promoting accountability to make sure nobody gets left behind in America.

I trust the local people of West Virginia to make the choices for the children of West Virginia. So we're going to pass power out of Washington, so the schools are run locally. But there are some major initiatives inherent in that bill. One of them is making sure every child reads. I mean every child, not just a few, not just only one kind of child—every single child. If we want to have an America that is hopeful and prosperous, if we want to have a job-oriented country, we'd better make sure our schools teach every child how to read. And if they don't, it's time for us to start blowing the whistle on failure and changing things early, before it's too late.

So there I was, a couple of weeks ago, traveling the country, saying, "You know, Ted Kennedy is a pretty good fellow." I know that sends a lot of shock waves throughout American political scene.

[*Laughter*] It certainly shocked him. [*Laughter*] We worked together on the education bill. Instead of saying, “Well, I can’t talk to you because you’re of this party, and you can’t talk to me because I’m that party,” we said, “Why don’t we do what’s right for America when it comes to our children? Why don’t we set aside all the bickering? It’s time for us to understand in Washington that America is more important than our political parties and come together and do what’s right for the American people.”

We are a strong, strong nation, and I am so proud to be the President of such an incredible land. You know, the enemy, when they hit us on 9/11, really didn’t understand America. They thought we were soft. I guess they were watching too much TV. [*Laughter*] They didn’t understand our character or our resolve. They didn’t understand that if you anger a mighty nation, that we will rise up with one voice and bring justice. We’re a nation not of revenge but a nation of justice. We’re a nation that loves our freedom. We’re a nation—a nation based upon some fundamental values and principles.

You know, after 9/11, a lot of mothers and dads sat down at their dinner tables and reassessed their value systems. They said, “We now understand our most important job is to love our children. We may be working 8 to 5, but loving your children is forever.” There’s a lot of mothers and dads—there’s a lot of moms and dads saying, “I love you,” on a daily basis, and that’s good. Out of evil can and has come good.

Audience member. How’s Laura?

The President. She’s doing great. Thank you for mentioning her name. [*Laughter*] Laura is doing great. I got to tell you, what a fabulous, fabulous wife and First Lady she is. It’s clear I married above myself. [*Laughter*]

But I want you all to know that many have asked, “What can I do to help America?” And they’re still asking that question.

Well, the best way to fight evil is with good. The best way to let the enemy know here at home that they have not affected us is for parents to love their children more, is for people in communities all across West Virginia to help a neighbor at need. If you’ve got a shut-in across the street from you and want to be a soldier in the war against terror, walk across the street on a daily basis and say, “Can I help you?” If your church group or synagogue or mosque knows somebody who’s lonely, why don’t you help set up a mentoring program so the child knows somebody in America loves him or her. If you want to be a soldier in the war against terror, love a neighbor just like you’d like to be loved yourself.

America is defined not by our Government. America is defined by millions of acts of kindness that take place every single day all across America, because this Nation is a nation of such strong values, of such strong faith, that nobody, no evil one will ever be able to diminish the good inherent in the soul and character of the American people.

It is my honor to be your President and to be the President of such a fabulous land. Thank you for having me come. May God bless. God bless America. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:30 a.m. at Yeager Airport. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Robert E. Wise and former Gov. Cecil H. Underwood of West Virginia; Speaker Robert S. Kiss and Minority Leader Charles S. Trump IV, West Virginia House of Delegates; President Earl Ray Tomblin and Minority Leader Vic Sprouse, West Virginia Senate; Mayor Jay Goldman of Charleston; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; James P. Hoffa, general president, International Brotherhood of Teamsters; Douglas J. McCarron, general president, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners; Mike Sacco, president, Seafarers International Union; and Edward

C. Sullivan, president, Building and Construction Trade Department.

Telephone Remarks to Participants in the March for Life *January 22, 2002*

Nellie, thank you very much. I want to thank you very much, and I want to wish everybody a good afternoon. I'm calling from the State of West Virginia.

I want to begin, Nellie, by praising you and your dedication to the cause of human life. For almost 30 years, Americans from every State in the Union have gathered on the Washington Mall in order to march for life. This march is an example of an inspiring commitment and of deep human compassion.

Everyone there believes, as I do, that every life is valuable, that our society has a responsibility to defend the vulnerable and weak, the imperfect, and even the unwanted, and that our Nation should set a great goal that unborn children should be welcomed in life and protected in law.

Abortion is an issue that deeply divides our country, and we need to treat those with whom we disagree with respect and civility. We must overcome bitterness and rancor where we find it and seek common ground where we can. But we will continue to speak out on behalf of the most vulnerable members of our society.

We do so because we believe the promises of the Declaration of Independence are the common code of American life. They should apply to everyone, not just the healthy or the strong or the powerful. A generous society values all human life. A merciful society seeks to expand legal protection to every life, including early life, and a compassionate society will defend a simple, moral proposition: Life should

never be used as a tool or a means to an end.

These are bedrock principles, and that is why my administration opposes partial-birth abortion and public funding for abortion, why we support teen abstinence and crisis pregnancy programs, adoption and parental notification laws, and why we are against all forms of human cloning.

And that is why I urge the United States Senate to support a comprehensive and effective ban on human cloning, a ban that was passed by an overwhelming and bipartisan vote of the House of Representatives last July.

We are a society with enough compassion and wealth and love to care for both mothers and their children and to seek the promise and potential of every single life. You're working and marching on behalf of a noble cause and affirming a culture of life. Thank you for your persistence, for defending human dignity, and for caring for every member of the human family.

May God continue to bless America. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:08 p.m. from Charleston, WV, to march participants on the National Mall in Washington, DC. In his remarks, he referred to Nellie J. Gray, president, March for Life Education and Defense Fund. The related proclamation of January 18 on National Sanctity of Human Life Day is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.