

## Exchange With Reporters in Waco, Texas August 10, 2002

### *Iraq/President's Economic Forum*

*The President.* Anybody got anything?

*Q.* Do you, sir?

*The President.* Well, I do. I'm in close consultations with my senior staff on a variety of subjects. As I said yesterday, I have no timetable for any of our policies as regards to Iraq. That—yesterday I spent time with my principal advisers on that subject, as well as others.

I am pleased with the reports about the productivity of American workers. I thought that was a continuing signal that our economy grows and strengthens. Next week I'll be having an economic summit that—we'll discuss ways that we can further job growth.

So, anyway, I'll be spending some time on subjects that might interest you all.

*Q.* Mr. President, yesterday in an interview, I guess, with Scott [Scott Lindlaw, Associated Press], you described Iraq as the enemy.

*The President.* I described them as the axis of evil once. I described them as an enemy until proven otherwise. They obviously, you know, desire weapons of mass destruction. I presume that he still views us as an enemy. I have constantly said that we owe it to our children and our children's children to free the world from weapons of mass destruction in the hands of those who hate freedom. This is a man who has poisoned his own people. I mean, he's had a history of tyranny.

*Q.* I'm sorry, if I could follow up. Are you surprised that you haven't been able to build more support within the region and within Europe for taking action?

*The President.* Well, Stretch [Richard Keil, Bloomberg News], I think most people understand he is a danger. But as I've said in speech after speech, I've got a lot of tools at my disposal. And I've also said I am a deliberate person. And so I'm—

we're in the process of consulting not only with Congress, like I said I do the other day, but with our friends and allies. And the consultation process is a positive part of really allowing people to fully understand our deep concerns about this man, his regime, and his desires to have weapons of mass destruction.

Last question, and then I've got to go chip and putt for a birdie. [*Laughter*] It was a good drive.

*Q.* It looked kind of right.

*Q.* Do you think the American people are prepared for casualties in Iraq?

*The President.* Well, I think that that presumes there's some kind of imminent war plan. As I said, I have no timetable. What I do believe the American people understand is that weapons of mass destruction in the hands of leaders such as Saddam Hussein are very dangerous for ourselves, our allies. They understand the concept of blackmail. They know that when we speak of making the world more safe, we do so not only in the context of Al Qaida and other terrorist groups but nations that have proven themselves to be bad neighbors and bad actors.

Thank you. Have fun today.

[*At this point, the President continued his round of golf.*]

### *President's Visit/Legislative Bipartisanship*

*The President.* I'm having a lot of fun. It's good to be back here with my friends in Texas, including Senator Sibley, a fine lad.

*Former State Senator David Sibley.* A young man. [*Laughter*]

*The President.* We're just talking about the old days, what it's like to be in a legislative environment where Republicans and Democrats can get together to do what's right; what it's like to be in a legislative environment where people decide to do

what's best for a—something greater than themselves as opposed to what's best for a political party.

Q. Think you'll be able to do that in Washington with pension reform?

*The President.* I hope so, on all issues. My call is that Republicans and Democrats need to work together—like on homeland security, on terrorism insurance, on pension reform. There's too much politics in Washington.

#### *Judicial Nominee Priscilla Owen*

*Senator Sibley.* I don't remember anybody ever busting a judge.

*The President.* Yes, busting judges, as he mentioned. There's too much politics.

*Senator Sibley.* It never happens.

*The President.* Of course, he's talking about a fine Texas woman named Priscilla Owen, who's being busted for political reasons. She's been elected statewide here in Texas. People know her and trust her judgment. And yet, they're playing politics with her. Thank you for remembering that.

Anyway, I hope you all have a wonderful afternoon.

NOTE: The exchange began at 7:19 a.m. during a round of golf at the Ridgewood Country Club. During the exchange, the President referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Texas Supreme Court Justice Priscilla Owen, nominee to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

### The President's Radio Address *August 10, 2002*

Good morning. On Tuesday, I will host an economic forum at Baylor University, in Texas, to meet with people on the frontlines of the American economy. Small-business owners, working people, investors, corporate leaders, economists, farmers, and Government policymakers are coming together to discuss where our economy stands, the impact of the policies we have put in place, and the steps we are taking as we move forward.

After a recession that was beginning as I took office, the terrorist attacks of September the 11th, and the corporate scandals that have recently come to light, the American economy faces challenges. Yet, the great strengths of America are more than equal to its challenges. American workers are productive. American entrepreneurs are visionary. And we are acting to reach the full potential of our economy.

These efforts began last year with a tax cut that boosted our economy at just the

right time and continues to put more money into the hands of consumers. I have just signed into law trade promotion authority, which I will use to open foreign markets to American goods, creating high-paying jobs at home. I worked with Congress to enact new laws designed to keep corporate executives and auditors honest and to punish those who are not. And we are actively investigating, arresting, and prosecuting corporate wrongdoers. And this week, hundreds of companies will submit signed statements to the SEC, either verifying that their financial records are accurate or letting investors know if there are any problems.

Yet, there is more we must do, more to promote long-term growth and create jobs in our economy; more to enforce budget discipline in Congress, so we can focus on urgent priorities like the war on terror; more to guarantee pension security and improve access to affordable health