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The long-term solution is more jobs, and I believe, acting together, we can do that.

There seems to be a little bit of a logjam in Washington, DC, right now. And I know that Senators from both parties, if they could hear the stories about—and I'm sure they do; I'm sure they listen when they go home. But they need to act. They need to stop fussing and stop talking and get something to my desk that will take care of the workers and provide stimulus to this economy.

I wish you all the best. I'm an optimist. We live in a great country, a resilient country, a country that will rise to the task. And I believe that the effects of 9/11 will—when we do our job, will be mitigated with job increases for you all. I really wish you the best. I hurt, that coming into the holiday season, that you're not working. But I admire your courage for going out to try to improve yourselves so you can find jobs around here.

God bless you all. Thank you for letting me come by to say hello. I wish you all the best.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:26 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida.

Remarks at a Townhall Meeting in Orlando

December 4, 2001

The President. Thank you very much. Please be seated. Thank you all very much. I'm really happy to visit Florida. The weather is beautiful. There's a lot of interesting things to do here. I recommend people from outside of Florida to come and take a look at Florida. It's a nice place to visit and a great place to live. One reason why is because you've got a great Governor. I'm not very objective. [*Laughter*]

I also—I'm proud to be traveling today with two members of my Cabinet. First, somebody who made a living and raised his family right here in Orange County, and that's Mel Martinez of the Housing—[*applause*]. There's no better person to help promote a significant part of the American Dream, that being homeownership, than somebody who came to our country from a country that doesn't encourage homeownership, somebody whose parents had the foresight to encourage him to be extricated from a tyrannical society, somebody who understood Fidel Castro doesn't trust people to own property. And that's Mel Martinez. We're working together to make sure homeownership becomes a reality for any citizen in America who shares that dream, regardless of where they live or their background.

I'm also traveling today with the Secretary of Labor, Elaine Chao. And there's a lot of Members of the United States Congress who have traveled here: homegrown Congressman Ric Keller; Ander Crenshaw is with us—thank you for coming, Ander; Congressman Mark Foley, I appreciate you; Congressman John Mica.

I recently worked closely with John and other Republicans and Democrats to forge an airport security bill which will allow the Federal Government to supervise the security of our airports, to make sure that those who travel are comfortable with the fact that we're doing everything in our power to make air travel as safe as it can possibly be. Thank you, John, for your leadership on that issue.

Congressman Adam Putnam—I had to check to make sure he was old enough, but Adam, thank you; Congressman Dave Weldon—thank you, Dave, for being here; Congressman Cliff Stearns, from Florida, as well.

And finally, I want to thank the mayor, Glenda Hood, and all those who helped encourage you all to come so that I can answer any questions you may have about what's going on in the country and the world today.

Before I answer a few questions—and I thought it was right. I know a lot of citizens in Florida and around our country may have some questions to the President, and I'm more than happy to answer some. Before I do, I do want to say a few comments.

One of the other reasons I came here is to herald a program called "Operation Paycheck." It's a program that Jeb has put in place to help displaced workers find the training necessary to find work, to help displaced workers around this part of the world, to help those who want to help themselves find the training necessary to allow them to learn new skills to find work again.

There's nothing that hurts me more than to know, as we head into the holiday season,

that some of our citizens and some of their families hurt because they've been laid off as a result of 9/11. And we have a role in the Government—in the State Government, in the Federal Government—to provide immediate help as part of an economic security package, is to provide immediate help. And so one of the things I did was announce a grant for the State of Florida to encourage programs like Operation Paycheck, one-stop centers for people to find help. And today I was pleased to announce that grant on behalf of the Federal Government, but there's more to be done.

You probably read about the fact that we're working with Congress. And I must say, relations with Congress are a heck of a lot better than they have been in the past, because Congressmen and Senators of both parties are interested about what's doing right for the American people.

And part of an economic security package is to make sure that we extend unemployment insurance benefits for those who have been laid off as a result of 9/11 and provide money—monies to help those who have been laid off with things such as child care or health insurance or transportation to a community college, to enable them to learn a new skill. We have a role to play. And I urge the United States Congress to stop talking and to get an economic security bill to my desk.

The House has acted, and for that I'm grateful. And there's always—the Speaker can tell you—there's always a difference of opinion sometimes between the House and the Senate, whether it's at the State or Federal level. But the Senate needs to get a bill, get it reconciled, and get it to my desk, so we can say we're doing the people's business in a way that will make you proud.

The truth of the matter is, economic security, however, the long-term, depends upon our ability to get our economy cranked up again, so new jobs are being created. We've got to think about how to stimulate job creation. The question that needs to be answered is how to create more jobs, and I've laid out a blueprint to do just that.

I think we ought to—and help people with more money as we head into the Christmas season, by making sure that those who filed but didn't pay taxes get a rebate, just similar to the rebates you all have just recently received. That will help low- and moderate-income Americans. We ought to accelerate the tax cuts that we have in place. More money in people's pockets mean more economic activity.

We ought to reform the corporate income tax system. This current system says that as you lose money, you begin to pay more taxes. That doesn't make any sense if we're worried about job creation. I don't think we ought to be looking back for a decade, but I do think we ought to reform the system as we head forward, to make sense. And finally, I think we ought to provide incentives for corporate America to buy more plant and equipment. That will encourage job creation.

We ought to ask the question in Washington, what's it take to create more jobs, so hardworking Americans can be able to put food on the table? That's what we ought to be asking.

Two other points I want to make before I answer your questions is, there's no question, as well, that in order to make sure our economy recovers and people are able to find work, we've got to do everything we can to prevent the enemy from hitting us again. We've got to be diligent. And so we're following every hint, every lead, every possibility, within the confines of the Constitution. My job is to provide security for the American people. My job is to make sure that we use the assets at our disposal to ferret out those who might hurt America and to bring them to justice.

We can protect our homeland by beefing up law enforcement, by encouraging the FBI to focus on prevention, by working closely with local authorities, and we're doing that. But in the long term, the best way to make sure America is safe is to find those who would commit terror against America, no matter where they run or where they hide, and bring them to justice. And that's exactly what we're doing.

For those of you who are the parents or the spouse or the brother or sister of a member of our military who may not be home during the holiday season, first, I want to thank you for your sacrifice but let you know that the cause is just. And I know you're as

proud as I am of how our military is fighting the war on terror.

We rescued humanitarian aid workers. We're slowly but surely demolishing the Government that felt comfortable in housing and abetting and feeding and hiding those who committed murder in America. And slowly but surely we're tightening the net on Usama bin Laden and Al Qaida.

They think they can run, and we'll tire. They think they can hide, and we will tire. But they have sorely misunderstood America. They don't understand our will and our determination. This great land is united to bring freedom to the world. We will bring them to justice, and we will prevail.

And so I'm honored that such a huge crowd would turn out. I want to thank you all for coming. I look forward to answering your questions. I want to thank you for your prayers, thank you for your love for the country. And now, if you've got any questions, I'm here to answer them.

Yes, sir.

Job Training and Unemployment Benefits

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Since the September 11th tragedy, many Americans with college degrees, including myself, have been laid off. What are some of the things you're doing to help people like me, who have been out of work for the past few months?

The President. Well, first of all, there's a lot of money spent from the Federal level to help—to help with reeducation. And one of the programs that I just mentioned is the use of Federal monies to empower State Governments to provide opportunities for reeducation.

I just went by a center today. I sat next to a TWA pilot, highly skilled, college-educated man who got laid off as a pilot. His dream is to go back to a local community college, become reeducated to become a computer programmer. In other words, the idea is to mate those with skills with jobs that actually exist.

The problem with the kind of Federal approach and only Federal approach is, is that we may encourage you to become trained in a job that doesn't exist. And so the real thing is, is there money available for job training? Is there money available from the Federal Government to say to Governor Bush of Florida, "Here is some dough. Set up a system that will actually match people with skills and jobs that exist." There are jobs in Florida, and the fundamental question is, how do we encourage those with skills, to funnel those with skills into those jobs?

Secondly, I do believe we ought to extend the amount of time one can receive unemployment insurance benefits. I think that's important. And I also believe that we need to have what's called national emergency grants, which are basically Federal expenditures to States to allow people to help, for example, make health care payments. And one of the things I worry about and I'm deeply concerned about is, somebody who has had a good health care plan is no longer able to afford health care. And so we ought to help people be able to afford those premiums and those benefits until they're able to get back to work.

The long term, though, is—and I keep repeating it—is, let's stimulate job growth. The best thing for you to be able to find a job is for there to be more jobs available. And I believe—I believe we're on the verge of doing just that.

I mean, we've got great tax policy in place. We cut taxes this year; we've got taxes cut for the next years coming, which will stimulate economic growth. Alan Greenspan has got monetary policy in such a shape that interest rates are low. Energy prices are reasonable. And so, we've got the framework for growth. And by the way, the same entrepreneurial spirit that existed in America prior to September 11th still exists today. They can't take that away from us.

Responsive Government

Q. Mr. President, we appreciate you coming to the community and putting a great spotlight on the tourism industry. For the past 16 years, I own a small transportation company here, 10 of which I operate at the Orlando International Airport. Due to the slowdown in the economy and certainly the events of September 11, I was forced to close my doors, putting 252 employees out of work, not to mention their families and others who support my business. We have taken

advantage of some of the programs you've put into place, such as the SBA disaster loan plan. We've been monitoring that and found out that the application is bogged down in the bureaucracy of the system. What can you do to help us, as small business, speed that process, as our window is closing rapidly on us? Thank you for your answer.

The President. Well, first get your card, and find out why your case is bogged down in bureaucracy. I can't stand bureaucracy. I appreciate the hard-working people who work for the Federal Government. I appreciate people who care enough to work for the Government to make people's—to do their job. I like that. But what I don't like is systems that get so cumbersome that those who are trying to help you don't get the product out.

I put a good man as the head of the SBA, and I believe that he's doing everything he can to make sure that applications don't get stuck in a system, that hardworking Federal employees are able to match their desires to help you with the ability to do so.

So to answer your question, I need to know your case, and I'm going to send a man right out here to ask you. Where's Logan?

Advice to Youth

Q. First of all, I'd like to thank you for being here today, Mr. President Bush. My name is Adam Hallsman, and I'm a seventh grader at Shelley Boone Middle School in Haines City, Florida. I'd like to know what the children and the small—and the young people in America, how can they help the economy?

The President. Listen to your mother. I'm still listening to mine. [*Laughter*]

I'll tell you what you can do; I'll tell you how you can help the economy: Study hard, learn a skill, have ambition, make the right choices in life so that when you get old enough, you're a productive citizen. That's the absolute best thing you can do.

But there are other things you can do. I see women of cover here, and I want to thank you for coming from the Muslim community here in America. Right after the attacks, I went to a mosque to send the signal that the war against terror had nothing to do with the Muslim faith. It has everything to do with evil, evil people. What you can do to help America, beyond the economy, is to remind people that regardless of our religious beliefs, we're all, first and foremost, Americans; that this is a country—[*applause*]

And you know what else you can do? You can find somebody in need and give them a hand. I'm worried about the fact that charitable giving in America has dropped off as a result of 9/11. It didn't drop off because of 9/11; it dropped off because a lot of people gave money to help the victims, which is great. But there's an aftermath to the attacks that we've got to worry about. There are still people in America who hurt. They were hurting before September 11th; they hurt today. And one of the things you can do as a seventh grader, and all of us can do, is remember that and give of time and money to help fellow Americans in need. I can't think of any way better to make sure our country remains strong in the aftermath of the terrorist attack, is to help; is to ask the question, "What can I do"; is to not only honor the values of America but honor the values of a good neighborhood, which is neighbor helping neighbor in need.

Small Business

Q. Good afternoon, Mr. President. First of all, it is an honor to be here with you, and we want to thank you for your godly leadership in serving this country. My name is Irma Yapur. And my question today is in regards also to small business and self-employment. As many Americans are losing their corporate jobs and are going into business for themselves, is the Government planning to provide assistance to the self-employed in small business who do not have the tangible collateral and livelihood to support a loan approval?

The President. Well, we do. We've got an SBA whose job it is to encourage entrepreneurial growth. Evidently, it may be somewhat bound in paperwork, unnecessary paperwork requirements. [*Laughter*] It's good to get out of Washington to get the real story—[*laughter*]—but the job—but that's what the SBA is for. It's to encourage—and you're bogged down in paperwork, as well, I take it? Okay, my man Logan—[*laughter*].

Look, the Government can never guarantee success in the private sector. That's not what happens in a system based upon free enterprise. We can help people, but there are no guarantees about business. We're a risk and reward oriented society. And so the best thing we can do is help you to get your business started. But it's up to you to have a good product; it's up to you to understand the market; and it's up to you to fashion a game plan that will work. And what we can do is help there, and there all kinds of ways to do that.

You're next. Yes, sir.

Tax Rebates

Q. The first one is a thank-you from all of our employees and many people who have worked. When the taxpayer rebates came, for many of them, they said they don't know what they would have done if it hadn't been for those. So very much a sincere thank-you for that.

The President. Thank you very much.

Terrorist Attacks in Israel

Q. The second one is a question. What are we doing right now to assist our allies in Israel during their time of terrorist attacks?

The President. Yes. The question is about Israel. I had the Prime Minister of Israel in my office on Sunday. He was coming Monday but decided to come sooner because of the attacks. And I commiserated with him, because a lot of innocent people had been killed or hurt as a result of terrorist activity.

The terrorist attacks on Israel—first of all, Israel has got no better friend than the United States, as far as I'm concerned. Israel is a democracy. We share a lot of values with Israel. I have a dream; I can't think of anything better than to have a dream for peace for Israel. I think the Israeli people want to have peace.

But we learned in such a vivid way that there are elements in the Middle East that hate the thought of peace and will be willing to use terror to derail any type of peace process. And so the spotlight now flashes on the Middle East in a terrible way, obviously. But it also reminds people around the world that if we want peace, that it's important for those advocates of peace to help rout out terror and to bring it to justice. It is incumbent upon Mr. Arafat now to respond forcefully, to rout out those who killed. It's incumbent upon other friends and allies of ours around the world to help bring those terrorists to justice if we want peace in the Middle East, which I do—which I do. We've got to bring the terrorists to justice.

We cannot let a few—we cannot let a few prevent the many from achieving a dream which is lasting peace in the Middle East. I hope that happens. I hope it happens for the sake of Israel. I hope it happens for the sake of the Palestinians, who suffer because of the lack of job opportunity and killing and war. I hope it happens. But first things first. We must rid the world of terror.

Worker Benefits/Economic Stimulus

Q. Thank you, President Bush. It's great to have you here in the State of Florida. I work at the airport at the Hyatt Hotel. And I'm worried—I have, luckily, kept my job, but now we're getting our hours cut and stuff. And they're trying to do the best that they can, and I'm in jeopardy of losing my benefits. Now, I'm a single mother of three kids, and I can't be without benefits, like health insurance, per se.

The President. Right. Well, I think that one of the things that we need to work on during the next session is how to make sure that the working uninsured have benefits. I proposed a plan through the tax credit system to provide just that—to make sure that you don't lose your benefits if this were to happen.

Of course, the key thing—again, I keep harking back to this—is, we've got to grow our economy, is we've got to put a stimulus—security package—a stimulus package in place that encourages job growth.

Now, the Government did act quickly when it came to your industry. After all, we provided a significant amount of loans and grants for the airline industry to make sure the airplanes, which were directly hit by the attacks, continue to fly. And I hope that the measures we have put in place, financial measures plus the security measures, will

convince the American people to get on airplanes and come down to Florida so that your hotel has got customers.

Education

Q. Mr. President, I'm an educator for the Orange County Public School System. And, first of all, I'd like to thank you very much for your ethics and integrity, because that's what we're all about in education.

The President. Thank you.

Q. I'd like to share that I am very appreciative of the focus that you and the First Lady have brought to your administration on reading instruction. And we were very happy when that took place. And we can also appreciate the fact that since 9/11, your energy and your focus has been diverted to issues that are to protect our country, and we thank you very much for that. But the reality is that 9/11 has also impacted education. We are about to experience one of the biggest cuts that we have experienced in many years here in Florida, and we're very concerned about our children and about our teachers and their future, as well. And I would just like to hear from you where you are today with education, in terms of your focus and energy.

The President. You bet. Thank you very much. I appreciate that question. Education needs to be the number one priority of any State. I'm convinced it's the number one priority of this Governor here. I believe that there needs to be a clear role for local people, State people, and a limited role for the Federal Government, because I do not believe one size fits all when it comes to educating children.

Now, having said that, I do believe that the Federal Government has got responsibilities for providing funds for disadvantaged and for beefing up reading programs around the country. So one of the things that we're going to do is to work with Jeb and other States on enhancing reading programs. There's no question about it, that if a child can't read, all the rest of the subjects are basically irrelevant. Reading is the absolute gateway to knowledge, and therefore what needs to be done is a comprehensive national reading agenda.

To answer your question, it's about to happen when the Congress passes the education reform bill and the education bill, the funding mechanism necessary for education. But education is a priority not only here, but as my good wife reminded everybody on the radio, it's got to be a priority around the world. There is no excuse for the Taliban Government to have treated women and young girls the way they have and not educated people.

Education is a domestic priority. No question about it, it's a domestic priority. And we're increasing education spending at the Federal Government to help local districts. But we also have got to remind people around the world, if we want peace in the world, other nations must do a better job of treating people with respect by making sure that they are educated, as well.

Speaking about education, you go to school, don't you? Let's hear your question.

President's Visit

Q. Hi. My name is Ashley. I just wanted to—I don't have a comment, but I have a question. Actually, I don't have a question; I have a comment.

The President. Okay. [*Laughter*]

Q. You've been doing a good job for the United States. Can you shake my hand?

The President. Yes. I will in a minute. Oh, you want to do it right now? I'll do better; I'll give you a kiss. You're a sweet girl. Thank you.

Q. Thank you very much for coming to Florida. We love you.

The President. Thanks.

Local Economies/International Trade

Q. And God bless you. This area is so dependent on tourism. Since 9/11, as you know, everyone knows it's so bad. Is there anything that the Government is doing to attract other industry into our area and to other areas that are so dependent on this?

The President. I think—I would actually get Governor Bush to answer that question. [*Laughter*] I'm afraid to share the mike with him; he might never give it up, though. [*Laughter*] Absolutely, there is a diversification program. There is. And Jeb is wise enough to understand that this part of the world needs to be diversified. And tourism will always be an integral part of the central

Florida economy, but there is a lot of interesting diversification going on here.

Now, the Federal Government's role is not to tell States how to diversify their economies; the Federal Government's role is to provide an overall picture for economic vitality and growth. Our job is to think about how best to grow the entire national economy and let States figure out and local districts and communities figure out how to diversify.

One of the interesting battles we've got going in Congress is trade. We need to be able to trade freely, it seems like to me, in the world. We've got the best farmers in the world in the United States—the best farmers. It seems like it makes sense to open up other people's markets so we can sell our products around the world.

Now, that is the place where the Federal Government, it seems like to me, has got to address job growth and diversification through large national issues. I'm sure the Congress—these Congressmen understand the value of free trade. I look forward to working with them when it comes to trade promotion authority, if it ever makes it to my desk. But it requires wise Governors and local officials to understand the opportunities through diversification. And I believe you've got a good Governor. I keep hating to tout the guy too much, because they'll think I'm not very objective, but I'm not. [*Laughter*]

Yes, ma'am.

Health Insurance

Q. Hi. President Bush, we'd like to thank you for coming here today. And just to help you out with her question about—I wanted to tap our Governor on about, because we do have a program for people that—I'm self-employed, and I don't make a lot of money, but we do have a program in this State for people like ourselves, who we can buy insurance through the State for our children, in case you lose your job. So I wanted to tap our Governor on that——

The President. It's the CHIPS program.

Q. No, it's Florida Healthy Kids here.

The President. Same thing.

Q. Right. [*Laughter*] She said she don't qualify, but if you lost your job, you would.

The President. All right.

Yes, sir.

Travel Industry/Military Tribunals

Q. First of all, thank you. Second of all, I work in a Hard Rock Hotel here in Orlando, and we love to have people come through our doors, just as every hotel and every theme park here does. My question is for the Federal Government, not just for Orlando but for everywhere, what is being done to encourage travel? I've seen a few commercials, not just within the country, but abroad. We're a great place to come——

The President. Well, there's a marketing plan. One of the things—if you noticed how I started off my talk here—I've got a rather large microphone these days, and I've been encouraging people to travel. I think the best thing we can do in America to—first of all, you can't make people do what they don't want to do. I mean, if they're not interested in traveling, they're not going to travel.

On the other hand, if they're worried about security on airplanes, we can do something about that. That's why we've rallied guard troops all across the country in airports. Until we have the new security plan in place, we're putting guards in place. And we've sped up the training and placement of air marshals on airplanes. I want the American people to know that if you want to travel and if that's your desire, if you're planning to do this in your budget and you've been thinking about it, air travel is getting safer and safer and safer. And that's the best thing the Federal Government can do.

Now, we can—we're not going to, you know, pick one part of the region over another. I don't think that's the role of the Federal Government. But—and therefore, that's why Jeb and other States, my old State of Texas, for example, is trying to encourage, always trying to compete for people who want to travel to come to our respective States. But the Federal Government can help by making sure things are more secure and people feel safe. That's really our fundamental responsibility right now, is the safety of the American people.

I know a lot of people have got some concerns about how safe we can make the country, and if we're doing—are we doing things within the Constitution. I want to talk about a couple of things to put your mind at ease.

I'll ask myself a question: Why are you having the opportunity to have a military tribunal?

Now, I want you to remember that we are at war. The United States of America is under attack. And at war, the President needs to have the capacity to protect the national security interests and the safety of the American people. And so I asked, what are all my options as your Commander in Chief? What are the options to protect America? What do I need to know about what might occur to make sure that I can come in front of the folks in Orlando, Florida, and say we're doing everything in our power, or we have every option in our power to keep you safe?

Well, one of those scenarios is military tribunals. No one has been tried in a military tribunal; except I, by Executive order, provided myself with the option of having a military tribunal, which will be used for—no American citizen will go to a military tribunal. They would only be used for those who aren't American citizens.

And let me give you one example of why it may be necessary, why it may be necessary to use such a tribunal. What happens if, in the course of this war, that we apprehend or capture an enemy and we want to bring him to justice? In the course of bringing him to justice, what if the information necessary to bring him to justice would compromise our capacity to keep America safe?

In a court of law, there would be all kinds of questions that might compromise our ability to gather incredibly important intelligence to prevent the next attack from happening to America. It seems like to me that the President of the United States ought to have the option to protect the national security interests of the country and, therefore, protect America from further attack.

You've probably read about the interviews that are taking place. There are countries that we're certain of where people who come from those countries are likely to commit a terrorist act against America. And they're here on our soil—certain citizens from those countries, on our soil. We're a free country. They're here because we're a great country. And we've got liberties that we'll protect. But we're asking those who are here as guests, enjoying our freedom, to voluntarily participate in helping us understand how best to protect the country.

Nobody is being forced into an interview. People are being—"Why don't you help us? Why don't those of you who are guests in our country help us make the land more secure? It's in your interests, and it's certainly in our interests. If you know somebody or know something, help us."

We're in the business now of gathering as much information as we possibly can gather, and we're acting on that information. People are detained in America under material witness claims. It's against the law, by the way, to publish the name of those people before they get up in front of a grand jury. We've got people that we've pulled aside because of who they may or may not know, and it turns out they violated their immigration status. It turns out, as we're looking for leads, we've found people who have actually committed other crime.

All of them in America are entitled to a lawyer. All of them in America are entitled to make phone calls. We're the freest society in the world. That's what America is all about. And at the same time, we're doing what's necessary to protect the people at home.

Airline Industry/Hospitality Industry

Q. How are you doing, Mr. President?

The President. Pretty darn good. [*Laughter*]

Q. Thanks for coming to Florida and talking to us. You've given billions of dollars to the airline industry, to try to help get them stimulated and get them going. Are you going to do any kind of grants or any type of benefits for the hospitality industry, as we're struggling to get by?

The President. Well, part of the key is, is that the first industry deeply affected after 9/11 was the airline industry. And without an airline industry there is no hospitality—oh, there may be a hospitality industry, certainly not as vibrant a hospitality industry as we would like.

It is the first major industry affected. And so our strategy was to make sure that we provide the industry that actually affects hospitality directly the means necessary to stay in business. To me, that seemed like the most

important initial leg of a strategy. And in the meantime, we're trying to help those workers who have been affected within the hospitality industry.

I am hopeful that as a result of a airline stimulus package, or airline security package, as well as a safety package and an economic stimulus package, this economy will come back; people will have the money necessary to travel; people will feel safe to travel; and the hospitality industry to recover.

But to answer your question directly, no, the answer is that the first step, and we think the primary step, needed to be what we've already done.

Yes, ma'am.

Q. Mr. President, what about tax incentives——

The President. Tax incentives for travel? That hasn't made it to my radar screen yet. [*Laughter*]

Yes, sir.

Youth, Education, and the Faith-Based Initiative

Q. [*Inaudible*]—and my wife and my mother-in-law and friends, they're in the tourism industry. Yes, my family has been very well affected by 9/11. But I have a question about the youth. Is there anything that you or your brother, Governor Bush, can do to give the youth the drive and will to look for a better future? Because it seems like a lot of them don't—it seems as if they don't have anything to lose, so they don't have anything to drive for.

The President. I can think of a couple of things. One is to remind moms and dads of America that no matter what you're doing during the day job, your most important job you'll ever have is to love your children, is to tell your children you love them.

Secondly—it goes to this lady's point right here—is to make sure that every child in America is well-educated, starting with every child learning to read. There's nothing like an education to provide hope for people. Part of the reason why people are discouraged is because they lose hope. They say, "Well, this society isn't meant for me." A hopeful society is an educated society. And so we've got to make sure we get it right, we have an education—a focus on education, understanding that education is the gateway to such great freedom and opportunity.

And finally, one of my initiatives that I'm most proud of, that passed the House of Representatives and I think will have a significant impact in America, is to rally one of the great strengths of our country, and that is the faith-based initiatives and faith-based programs which exist all across the country.

I want to talk about one. I want to talk about a couple. First of all, governments shouldn't worry about faith. We ought to welcome faith. We ought to understand that—we ought to welcome those programs that exist because somebody will say, "What can I do? What can I do to help a neighbor in need? What can I do?"

And it's not a particular faith I'm talking about. I'm talking about the Muslim faith; I'm talking about Judaism; and I'm talking about Christianity. No, the faith doesn't have a lock on a certain religion. I'm talking about people who have heard a call. And there all kinds of programs all around America based upon faith. And many of them have asked the question, what can I do to surround a child with love? What can I do to make sure that a child has got—somebody has got their arm them saying, "Somebody loves you"?

There's a lot of children who have no love in their life. Imagine what it would be like growing up in America, how tough it would be if your mom or your dad were in prison. How tough is that? The degree of difficulty for success is incredibly hard for a person. And we've got a program that we hope to get out of Congress—the House passed it; get it out of the Senate—that says, we want to fund, make monies available for mentoring programs, faith-based or not, but mentoring programs, the sole purpose of which will be to take a son or a daughter of a person in prison and encourage some loving soul to say, "I love you. America is meant for you. This country belongs to you. Get educated and go after it with all your heart and all your soul."

So there's a lot that can be done in society. You know, Government—Government must not fear these programs that exist in neighborhoods all around the country, based upon faith. We must not fear. We must fear Government embracing religion. We fear a state

religion; that's not what we're for. We don't want for one government or religion. Government will never say, "This is the religion." We're a free society for religion. But Government can embrace programs started because of faith and religion and encourage those programs to foster in neighborhoods all across America. I'm passionate on the subject because I understand the power of faith in people's lives, and I understand what it can mean.

Energy Policy

Q. Mr. President, early in your administration there was a lot of discussion of drilling for oil in Alaska and the Gulf. Now that prices are low at the pump, what are you doing to ensure that?

The President. Yes—well, I'm trying to get an energy plan out of Congress. [*Laughter*] The House of Representatives—the House of Representatives passed a good energy bill. It is stuck in the Senate. And I believe it is in our national interests to have an energy plan, to have a strategy to get us less dependent on foreign sources of crude oil.

Part of that energy plan means that we've got to enhance conservation. We've got to encourage technologies that will enable us to conserve better, and we can do that with the proper incentives. And this plan of ours that passed the House has got incentives to encourage conservation. And we're making great strides in our society, by the way, of conserving. We're doing a much better job, and we can do an even better job.

Part of it also recognizes that we need more supply. And there are several places we can find supply. One is, I believe that the nuclear industry is safe enough now to encourage more nuclear power in America. I believe that is necessary. I also strongly believe that we can explore for natural gas in Alaska without damaging the environment. And I believe that's necessary, to do that.

You know, when the vote came up in the House, a lot of people came forward to work on behalf of the vote because they understood not only did it mean energy security, it also meant jobs. I was pleased to report that the Teamsters, for example, led by Jimmy Hoffa, Jr., was out campaigning for—or lobbying or working for this bill, because it meant jobs.

But I've got great faith in the technology and the ability of our country, if given proper incentive, to become less dependent and more wise about how we develop our energy sources; I truly do. But we need a bill, and we need to get it out of the Senate. Energy prices are low, but that doesn't mean we shouldn't worry about our future. Because if the economies of the world come back, we might be in a tight again, in which case we're going to be wondering where was the energy policy that the President was arguing for back in the year 2001.

Yes, ma'am.

Families and American Values

Q. Hi, Mr. President.

The President. I'm not nervous as you are. [*Laughter*]

Q. I wrote it out, because I thought I would be nervous, and I'm here with my sister, Maggie, and my family, and——

The President. Good. Hi, Maggie. [*Laughter*]

Q. And I'm Caitlin. Our family wants to help out our country, and we think that making families strong will make our country strong. My parents believe that eating meals together will do that. Is it something that you did when you were a kid, and that you and Mrs. Bush believe in?

The President. I did eat with my family, so long as my mother wasn't cooking. [*Laughter*] Wait a minute. Just kidding, Mom. [*Laughter*] She was one of the great fast food cooks of all time. [*Laughter*] Just kidding, Mom. We ate a lot together. We did. And I think it's important to do that. That's a very interesting question.

You know, we live in a society that's a busy society. We live in a society where it's so easy to forget the fundamentals. But one of the really positive things that has come out of the evil of 9/11 was that people are beginning to ask, what's important—what's important?

I think you've touched on something really important, and that's family. And the idea of a mom and dad prioritizing family is all about not only enhancing the quality of life of their children but, collectively, making America so

much stronger and so much better after the evils.

There has been—this is an unbelievably great country we live in. The values of America are so strong; the people are so real and so good. And 9/11 has brought out, in many instances, the best in America. Part of that is the individual—the decisions individual families make about setting new priorities in their lives. A lot of it has to do with helping people in need.

I'll never forget the story of people in a Midwestern city, when they heard me on TV talk about how distressed I was that women of cover would not leave their homes for fear of some other American treating them harshly, and then Jewish citizens and Christians alike getting on the phone and saying, "We want to help you. We want to take you to the neighborhood store. This isn't the America we know."

No, the country—this country is a fabulous country. They thought they hurt us, the evil ones. They have made us stronger, more real, and a better land.

Role of Religious Leaders

Q. Mr. President, we thank you for coming, on behalf of the clergy of Orlando. We're going to be having a summit this next week, 12/12 summit, and I'm a pastor. And we want to know what we can do—we're praying for strategies of how we can assist you in our Government and assist our communities.

The President. First thing you can do is make sure people of all faiths are represented at your prayer session. It sends such a strong signal—it reminds people of the greatness of America. The evil people we fight, they don't believe in religious freedom. They want it their way or no way, and if you're not their way, they'll treat you harshly. That's why, by the way, when we liberated cities throughout Afghanistan, people lined the roads and cheered out of joy and happiness.

Secondly, you need to pray for the good Lord to protect America, provide a shield over our country, to prevent us from harm.

September 11

Q. Hi, Mr. President. I want to say, they haven't won. I got in my car today, and I'm in the same building with you, speaking to you. They have not won.

The President. Thank you very much.

Q. And would you say hello to my son Jordan and my daughter Patricia.

The President. Jordan and who?

Q. Patricia.

The President. Hi, Patricia. How are you? How old is Patricia?

Q. Five, and Jordan is in third grade. And Jordan has a question, if I could give him the microphone.

The President. You bet. Your mother is relaying the mike to you, Jordan.

Q. One thing, Mr. President, is that you have no idea how much you've done for this country. And another thing is that, how did you feel when you heard about the terrorist attack?

The President. Thank you, Jordan. Well, Jordan, you're not going to believe what State I was in when I heard about the terrorist attack. I was in Florida. And my Chief of Staff, Andy Card—actually, I was in a classroom talking about a reading program that works. I was sitting outside the classroom waiting to go in, and I saw an airplane hit the tower; the TV was obviously on. And I used to fly, myself, and I said, "Well, there's one terrible pilot." I said, "It must have been a horrible accident." But I was whisked off there. I didn't have much time to think about it. And I was sitting in the classroom, and Andy Card, my Chief of Staff, who is sitting over here, walked in and said, "A second plane has hit the tower. America is under attack."

And Jordan, I wasn't sure what to think at first. You know, I grew up in a period of time where the idea of America being under attack never entered my mind—just like your daddy's and mother's mind, probably. And I started thinking hard in that very brief period of time about what it meant to be under attack. I knew that when I got all of the facts that we were under attack, there would be hell to pay for attacking America.

I tried to get as many facts as I could, Jordan, to make sure I knew, as I was making decisions, that I knew exactly what I was basing my decisions on. I've got a fabulous team.

A President can't possibly be President without a good team. It starts with having a great wife, by the way.

And so, I got on the phone from Air Force One, asking to find out the facts. You've got to understand, Jordan, during this period of time, there were all kinds of rumors floating around. Some of them were erroneous. Obviously—for example, there was a news report saying that the State Department had been attacked. I needed to know what the facts were. But I knew I needed to act. I knew that if the Nation's under attack, the role of the Commander in Chief is to respond forcefully to prevent other attacks from happening. And so, I've talked to the Secretary of Defense; one of the first acts I did was to put our military on alert.

An interesting thing happened shortly thereafter. Condoleezza Rice, who was not with me but was with the Vice President because they were in the White House compound, called me on Air Force One after that and said that she had gotten a call from Russia, from Vladimir Putin, who understood why we were putting our troops on alert and therefore wasn't going to respond. That was an important phone call, because when I was coming up, and a lot of other older-looking people here who were coming up with me—[*laughter*]—that would never have happened in the past. An alert by the United States would have caused Russia to go on alert, which would have created a complicated situation. But that wasn't the case.

By the way, we're heading into a new era. One of the positive things that comes out of the evil was, we're reassessing relationships in order to make the world more peaceful. I believe it's important for us to have positive relations with our former enemy and to rethink the defenses of the United States of America.

At any rate, I knew I had a job to do. And I was quoted in the press the other day as saying I haven't regretted one thing I've decided. And that's the truth. Every decision I made, I stand by. And I'm proud of the decisions I've made.

Support for the Muslim Community

Q. Mr. President, peace and blessings be unto you. I'm representing the Muslim community of Orlando. And I would really like to thank you for being such a great role model, practicing what this country believes in, the higher ideals that this country believes in, your support to the Muslim community in combating racism. I am an educator; I'm a mother, and I have a strong faith. Thank you so much for holding these values high and trying to wipe the stereotypes that the Taliban has been represented of Muslim women. I am an educator, educating Muslim children in this Orlando city. Thank you very much, Mr. President.

The President. God bless. Thank you.

Listen, I've got a job to do. [*Laughter*] I've got to get back to my temporary home. By the way, my address is in Washington; my home is going to be back in Texas one of these days. But I am—I have got to go back. I wish I could stay and answer questions all night, but I've got—I'll be right there, ma'am. He's fine. I've got to get back and go to work.

I can't tell you what an honor it is to have been here. I want to thank you all for your great questions and for your incredibly warm reception. It's a huge honor to be the greatest—to be the President of the greatest country in the world.

God bless you all, and may God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:20 p.m. in the Orange County Convention Center. In his remarks, the President referred to President Fidel Castro of Cuba; Mayor Glenda E. Hood of Orlando; Governor Jeb Bush of Florida; Usama bin Laden, leader of the Al Qaida terrorist organization; Prime Minister Ariel Sharon of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; James P. Hoffa, Jr., general president, International Brotherhood of Teamsters; and President Vladimir Putin of Russia.

Statement on the Malcolm Baldrige National Quality Awards

December 4, 2001

I am honored to bestow the National Institute of Standards and Technology's Baldrige Award on businesses and schools which have