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National Republican Senate Committee Inner Circle 3/12/92 [OA 7570]

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THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

January 2, 1992

MEMORANDUM FOR RECORDS MANAGEMENT

FROM: Drucie Scaling ^{OS}
Administrative Officer
Office of Speechwriting
Room 116, x7702

SUBJECT: FILING OF PRESIDENTIAL SPEECH FOLDERS

The files listed below were compiled by the Office of Research for use in President Bush's speeches. These files are the backup material for each of the President's speeches as they are listed. The Speechwriters were Dan McGroarty, David F. Demarest, Jr., Jennifer Grossman, Beth Hinchliffe, Janice Crouse, Joseph Duggan, and Curtis J. Smith. The Researchers were Robert Simon, Jean Bunton, Gary Gershowitz, Jennifer Grossman, and Michele Nix. The date, location of the speech, and Writer and Researcher assigned to the speech are listed below.

3/12/92	NRSC Inner Circle Pension Bldg.	Hinchliffe/Nix
3/12/92	Math and Science Awards Rose Garden	Hinchliffe/Nix
3/13/92	Stryicer Medical Corp. Kalamazoo, Michigan	Duggan/Gershowitz Nix
3/13/92	Detroit Economic Club Detroit, Mich.	McGroarty/Bunton
3/16/92	Polish American Community Chicago, IL	Duggan/Gershowitz
3/16/92	Steeltech Milwaukee, Wis.	Hinchliffe/Gershowitz Nix
3/16/92	Bush/Quayle Fundraiser Chicago	
3/16/92	Bush/Quayle Fundraiser Milwaukee, Wisconsin	Grossman

[OA 7570]

3/17/92	Medal of Freedom Bentonville, AR	Demarest/Nix
3/19/92	National Newspaper Assoc.	McGroarty/Bunton
3/20/92	NCAA Football Champs Room 450 OEOB	Smith/Grossman
3/20/92	Deadline Research	
3/20/92	Deadline Calendar	
3/23/92	Staff Videos	
3/23/92	Franklin Swearing-In Commerce Depart.	Smith/Grossman
3/24/92	Food Marketing Public Aff. Washington, DC	Duggan/Simon
3/25/92	Greek Independence Day Rose Garden	Crouse/Grossman
3/26/92	Coalition for the Restoration of the Black Family Room 450 OEOB	Crouse/Nix
3/28/92	Radio Address	Smith/Simon
3/29/92	Science Olympiad Winners Room 459 OEOB	Hinchliffe/Nix
3/30/92	Gridiron Dinner	Demarest/Nix
3/30/92	Nat'l. Assoc. of Attorney Generals	Grossman

[OA 7570]

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 12, 1992

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES

Old Executive Office Building

5:12 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Let me salute those who preceded me. I guess -- has Dick Cheney been over here yet? And Sam Skinner, our Chief of Staff. And then the piece de resistance, our fabulous Secretary of HHS, Lou Sullivan, who is -- I mean that -- he's just doing a superb job for the country. But I'm pleased to be here. I remember last year being unable to show up. I think it was the aftermath of the storm -- of Desert Storm. But I'm glad to be here. Glad to see Bud Burke and Bill Pound and Bob Conner and Terry Anderson is just greeting us.

And last year, I think I owe you an apology for that. That Desert Storm, I think, was a triumph for our country. And I still believe that it holds an enduring lesson for how we in government can get things done. It's different, but there's some lessons that apply.

We saw a challenge. We met it with resolve. The subject, as you will recall, was debated vigorously. And our duty as Americans -- I think the country came together, seeing that our duty demanded nothing less than the action. But when the time came to act, partisanship was laid aside, and we put an end to the squabbling. And the job got done and Kuwait was liberated.

Incidentally, it is my judgment that that action, and I salute the people that participated in it, really restored credibility to the United States all around the world. I see it every single day that I interact with these foreign leaders.

So now I don't have to tell you all who are on the firing lines in your various states that we face a great challenge again today. We're in tough economic times. We owe it to our country to do all in our power to get the economy moving.

I am not gloomy about that, incidentally, Retail sales figures today were good. We've got some fundamentals that are getting in place, such as interest rates and inflation, that could be the forerunners of a very good recovery. But we've got to do something. So I take this getting the economy moving very seriously.

I don't believe there's any one single magic wand that can be waved to accelerate recovery. But I also know that by taking just a few common-sense steps -- and taking them now -- we can stimulate investment, help struggling businesses back to their feet, and put Americans to work.

And what will happen if we can do what I'm about to suggest to you, I think you're going to see a rapid restoration of confidence. One of the great problems we have in this country today is, even though unemployment, for example, is statistically far lower than it was 10 years ago in the recession of '82, the confidence isn't there. And I think that what I'm about to suggest would

MORE

restore confidence if they saw that these things were going to be put into effect.

To free up investment capital, we've asked for a new investment tax credit. It's a tax allowance, really. And what it does is speed up depreciation on the front end and would encourage, therefore, the purchase of new capital equipment, which obviously means jobs. I still favor -- strongly favor -- a cut in the capital gains tax. I think that would create jobs. And I also think that would restore confidence. We remember that both Houses had a majority for that -- Democrats and Republicans supporting it a couple of years ago. We could never get it to a vote.

On the housing industry -- and I'm sure many are familiar with this one -- we've asked for a \$5,000 tax credit and that would be for the first-time homebuyers, and penalty-free withdrawals from IRAs for the first-time homebuyers. The homebuilders have enormously high estimates as to what the credit itself would do for the homebuying business. So I think these would have a stimulative effect.

When I submitted this plan to the Congress, I asked them, as you remember, to put aside the partisanship and try to get some action -- pass it 52 days. We set a deadline -- March 20th.

And so now we're back in the political wars, and they're fixing to send me a package that I simply cannot and will not sign. And there is a massive increase in taxes on that package. And I fully believe that a tax increase here would be a disaster for the economy. I think it would hurt our future competitiveness.

And I think that Congress -- I don't think they will, but they ought not to doubt my resolve on this particular veto, because if they send that tax-and-spend plan down here I have to veto it, send it back. And then possibly in the Senate we can get action because some of the -- I know we've got a bipartisan group here -- but some of the Democrat incentives are very close to what we're suggesting here. And if we can narrow this package down and just go for the incentives, then when we get into all this campaign stuff we can debate whether you need a middle-income tax or a tax break on the rich or a tax increase on the rich, or whatever it is. So I'm going to keep trying very hard to keep the focus on these incentives.

I know that you feel, and I know I feel, that people are tired of the business-as-usual from Washington. And I know it's burdening some of your state capitols, too. In that area, I'm talking -- business-as-usual -- I'm talking about these unfunded mandates.

Every time I meet with the governors or legislators, they say please help us keep Congress from inflicting mandates on us. Give us the flexibility. We might have a better answer in Mobile than they do in Moline, so let us try it our way. And I understand what happens when an unfunded mandate drops in on you from Washington. You've got to find the money, if you want to participate in it, to pay for somebody else's wish list -- either by cutting out programs that you have on the books that you feel might be better or raising taxes at the local level.

In other words, Washington takes the credit and you end up taking the heat. And this message has been drilled home to me over and over again. And I think these mandates are irresponsible and they cut right to the heart of the federal system.

So I've told the Congress if they pass a mandate, they just simply cannot pass the buck. They've got to pay for it without a tax increase.

Then there's other front in our fight to restore federalism. More than a year ago -- and I know you all have been

helpful working with us on this, and we're very grateful -- we proposed a \$15-billion block grant for the states, because I believe that states are the laboratories of democracy. And you need, and your constituents need, the flexibility and the freedom to experiment -- the freedom and flexibility that this grant would permit.

And the conference has been invaluable -- your conference -- in helping get this proposal in shape. We introduced it last year, but we're going to be introducing to Congress soon -- again. And I call on them to give it swift consideration.

The key -- we all know this -- is working together -- Republicans and Democrats, the federal and state governments, the legislative and executive branches.

And I would be the first to confess that I understand the pressures of an election year. But we know what we can do in those moments when we can set partisanship aside. And I think that's what the American people are calling out for right now. And we must not let them down.

So, again, my thanks to you all for your support of this block -- for those of you who are -- supporting this block grant concept, helping us fend off more and more mandates from the Congress, and those who are with us in the idea that what we need for this economy now is something that will in a laser-like way stimulate an economy that is really ready to move and really ready to recover.

I really do thank you. And I hope this hasn't been too inconvenient -- off and on again on the schedule. But I'm off early in the morning. And I just looked forward to having a chance to at least drop in and say hello. So thank you all very, very much.
(Applause.)

END

5:21 P.M. EST

March 5, 1992

MEMORANDUM FOR BETH HINCHLIFFE

FROM: MICHELE NIX

SUBJECT: NRSC INNER CIRCLE DINNER

On Thursday, March 12, at 6:45 p.m., the President will deliver remarks to an audience of 1200 people at the NRSC Inner Circle Dinner at the Pension Building. The President will speak before dinner. THIS IS A CLOSED PRESS EVENT. Sen. Phil Gramm and wife, Wendy, will be there. Gramm (NRSC chairman) will introduce the President. FLOTUS is expected to be there. There will be many members of Congress there also -- both congressmen and senators -- and possibly some cabinet members.

The audience is made up of the small end of the major donors -- but they are nevertheless, major donors. This group consists of doctors, lawyers, and many, many small and medium business owners. For 75-80% of the audience, this will be their first time at an NRSC Inner Circle event -- since this is the first event after one of their two yearly membership recruitment drives. There will also be some Inner Circle Life Members.

The dinner is the final event of a two-day briefing for this group. My NRSC contact is faxing me over an agenda for the briefing as well as some of the literature that they send out to the Inner Circle members. Throughout the two days, the members will hear from such speakers as Gramm, Sen. Dole, Secretary Alexander, and Secretary Martin.

Themes to push for this event include -- the President's vision (look at Curt's language from Columbia speech), Republicans as team, appreciate their support. Look at a few of the recent speeches we've done for the "Republicans united" kind of language we've been using. I spoke with a representative from NRSC today and she made the following points. She acknowledged that some in this group are frustrated -- they don't see the President's campaign going anywhere. They're looking for an active president. They are concerned about the economy and they need reassurance that George Bush knows where the economy is headed and where this country is headed. Buchanan is seen as a nuisance. They don't see the President exuding much leadership on the campaign trail. Also, this event occurs after Super Tuesday -- so of course we'll want to play off the good news.

Some color: The theme of the briefing is "An American Portrait." The stage and head table will be red, white, and blue.

Behind the President, there will be a banner that has a picture of the Statue of Liberty on one coast and the San Francisco Bridge on another. In between, there will be the Washington Monument, the St. Louis Arch, and a cactus or two and a Texas oil well.

The Inner Circle is now distributing a collector's edition series of George Bush baseball cards. There will be about 8 cards sent out throughout the year. Two of the cards will be at every place setting at the dinner: one has a picture of POTUS with his shirt sleeves rolled up (from the Grand Canyon trip) with the invitation for the event on back; the other has a picture of both he and FLOTUS in formal wear with a schedule of the convention on back.

NRSC INNER CIRCLE DINNER

- date (Wednesday 11th or Thursday 12th), location ✓
- incoming and outgoing chairmen ✓
- special guests ✓
- inside jokes ✓
- is there a theme? ✓
- are there other events/seminars/speakers? ✓
- open or closed press? ✓
- makeup of audience (#, conservative?, wealthy?, pro-Bush?) ✓
- key issues for Inner Circle ✓
- what is event (before or after dinner, keynote?, etc.) ✓
- Kaufman's concerns/interests/warnings ✓

(Hinchliffe/Nix)
March 6, 1992 10 a.m.
NRSC Draft One

**PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: NRSC INNER CIRCLE DINNER
PENSION BUILDING
THURSDAY, MARCH 12, 1992 6:45 P.M.**

Thanks, Phil [Gramm]. [ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS] You're all good friends of mine, of our party's, and of our country's -- I'm glad to be able to thank you in person for your support.

I love your theme -- "An American Portrait." You know, it's good to take a moment to step back and look at this nation -- really look at it. We have a tremendous opportunity right now. We're closing out a familiar century, and we're about to embark on a new one filled with unimagined challenges and exciting new horizons. But before we can start to paint that America -- we have to imagine what we want that portrait to look like.

You and I want the same things for this great country -- and for our kids to inherit.

We want an America where we can walk our streets without fear. \\

We want an America where we can choose our kids' day care -
- and their schools. \\

We want an America where those schools offer the best education to make us once again number one in the world. \\

We want an America of less government and low taxes. \\

We want an America with a health care system that gives access to the very best -- but which doesn't let the government play doctor. \\

We want an America dedicated to preserving the family -- I

asked John Ashcroft to head up a new commission -- for I believe many troubles spring from the deterioration of the family. \\

Above all, you and I want our country to be the America of family, jobs and peace. \\ And we want our America to be the country of the possible dream. \\

We're going to get there -- though I know you can get discouraged when you look around.

Something's wrong in a country where a kid can get a condom in school but can't join his classmates in voluntary prayer. \\

Something's wrong in a country where cops can get handcuffed by regulations -- while criminals go free on a technicality. \\

Something's wrong in a country where dads won't coach Little League and doctors won't deliver babies for fear of lawsuits. \\

And something's wrong in a country where welfare doesn't encourage responsibility, dignity or hope. \\

But, my friends, remember -- this is America. Look around you again -- and you'll realize that in the midst of everything that's wrong -- there's something very right in this country.

Something's right in a country whose young people put their own lives on hold to liberate another nation held captive. \\

Something's right in a country where an entire population came together to support with pride those young men and women. \\

Something's right in a country the rest of the world turns to as the symbol of freedom. \\

Something's right in a country where the most popular song is not hate-rap, but an "Unforgettable" father-daughter duet. \\

Something's right in a country filled with individual Points of Light helping their neighbors -- from five-year-old Zachary Devries to 104-year-old Tero Coleman. \\

Something's right in a country where Americans wave the red, white and blue flag of courage -- not the white flag of surrender. \\

And something is very, very right in a country still devoted to the founding fathers' values of family, freedom and faith. \\

If America holds fast to these truths, we'll never lose our bearings. No matter how tough times are, no matter what trials we face -- America's best day always lies ahead -- and we will reach it together. I say to you -- I hear your uncertainty, I feel your concerns. This is what I will do.

In my second term as your President I will continue my fight to forge a proud legacy to leave our children. \\

I will continue to fight for a crime bill that protects our people, that unshackles our police, that locks criminals away where they belong, and that keeps drugs off our streets. \\

I will continue to lead this nation toward America 2000 -- making this the Education Country. \\

I will continue the quest for a health care plan that offers quality -- and preserves choice. \\

I will continue the fight for liability reform, welfare reform, school choice and school prayer. \\

I will continue to hold the line against a Congress that measures progress made in dollars spent. \\

I will continue to fight to create and preserve jobs -- the linchpin of economic health. \\

I will continue to fight for the economic recovery package I set forth in my State of the Union -- a short-term plan to stimulate the economy now, and a long-term one to keep us growing.

I gave Congress a deadline of March 20 -- a week from tomorrow. I'm sorry to see the liberal Democrats pushed through their own plan: a tiny, temporary tax cut in exchange for a huge, permanent tax hike -- just election-year politics as usual. Congress passed up the chance to stimulate the economy in order to choose a plan that will raise the deficit -- raise taxes a whopping \$100 billion -- ruin our economic recovery -- and not create jobs at all. I tell you -- I will veto it.

Come on, Congress -- quit punishing the people who create jobs. Pass my plan and cut the capital gains tax -- so we can get America back to work. \\

I've told you what I will do -- now I'll tell you what I will not do.

I will not compromise my principles. \\

I will not stop making the tough vetoes. \\

I have not succumbed and I will not succumb to those who would have us unilaterally disarm or retreat behind a wall. \\

I will not allow this nation to settle for less than the very best. For we are the greatest country on earth. Communism has risen and fallen -- and through it all, America still stands tall, proud, and firm, as the brightest hope for our world. \\

You and I are part of that. And there is much we can do to make this great nation greater -- to make our children's futures more brilliant -- to make our impact on the world even stronger. I want to do this. I want to be your President for four more years. \\ Think of what we can do together. \\

When you leave here and head to your homes, from the Statue of Liberty to the Golden Gate Bridge -- from the oil wells of Texas to the St. Louis Arch -- you can spread our message across the country. You can get the rest of this nation charged up and joining in with us when we say -- We believe in ourselves and in our future. \ We're going to make this the best country it can be. \ We can do it. \ We are Americans. \\

You can live the example so that when your countrymen speak with their ballots this fall, they'll say: We're voting for men and women who know what we feel, what we believe. We're voting for men and women who care about our heartlands and our heartaches. We're voting for men and women who will return the moral fibre to this country. We're voting for Republicans. \\

Thank you again for your support -- your loyalty -- your commitment -- and your faith. Let's enter this new era together, with strength and with pride, knowing that we can do anything -- we are Americans. May God bless you, and this nation we share.

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--show I will not buckle under, principles, show examples of a man who took principled action and it hurts (abortion, unemployment), etc., against political advice, against Hill experts who said couldn't sustain veto

--tell them something they never knew about GB and principles

--anecdotes

--make language real; LCD; you people right here --

--find out what he said in oath, Inaugural address, Columbus

--

--get old sayings that show firmness, strength, like "line in the sand"

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 12, 1992

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
IN CEREMONY FOR PRESIDENTIAL SECONDARY AWARDS
FOR EXCELLENCE IN SCIENCE AND MATH TEACHING

The Rose Garden

2:33 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Welcome to the chilly Rose Garden. I don't know whose idea this was, but -- (laughter.) In any event, we are just delighted to have you all here. And it's great to see Lynn Martin, our Secretary of Labor; Dr. Massey; Dr. Wong -- and most of all, let me welcome 108 very special men and women chosen from over one-quarter of a million secondary teachers in their fields. And congratulations to all of you in receiving this nation's highest honor for math and science teachers.

As teachers, you know firsthand what the spirit of innovation has brought to this country -- though we're not always ready for change. Sometimes I think that if Edison were to invent the light bulb today, newspapers would headline the story "Candle Industry Threatened." (Laughter.)

The one I like best, though, was one Lyndon Johnson used to tell about -- pointing down to the Potomac. He said, "If I walked across the Potomac, the press would say 'LBJ can't swim.'" (Laughter.)

You have shown the kind of excellence that will help this country meet the ambitious goals that we've set for our nation in this America 2000 education strategy -- goals worthy of the talent you have, and of the potential of these wonderful young kids that you teach. We know we've got to be competitive in math and science in a changing world. Our economic health -- our economic strength, our survival -- depend on how we educate ourselves to face the challenges of the next century.

We've called on our kids to be number one in the world in your subjects by the turn of the century. And it's teachers like you who will help us reach our goal, set an example, and help America to excel.

As you know, we're helping to develop world-class standards for national assessment in five core areas -- including math and science. And we've set a deadline for the first phase of the American Achievement Test: the start of the 1993-94 school year.

All tolled, we have request more than \$2 billion in federal spending on math and science education for next year's budget. And if my math is correct -- and with this crowd it better be -- (laughter) -- \$768 million of that is for pre-college. That's an increase of 123 percent in the last three years.

But I believe that the single most important thing we in the federal government can do is to simply help you do your jobs. For instance, also in next year's budget, I have proposed an expanded program of federally-assisted training for math and science teachers, in part using federal labs -- federal laboratories and federal personnel.

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Innovations like this will help us create a world-class corps of teachers.

We also want to bring new technology into the classroom, so that kids can interact with astronauts and explorers and scientists; so rural schools can have access to state-of-the-art resources; and so all American kids can be exposed to the cutting edge technologies and ideas that will shape their future.

The federal government can do a lot, we can do an awful lot, but we cannot do it all. Real excellence demands commitment from everyone in every community as we work to create a new generation of American schools. And together, we are literally going to reinvent the American school community by community, neighborhood by neighborhood, all across this country. You're showing us the way. You're leading. You're showing how we can break the mold, take our bearings by what works. And you're here today because you're not afraid to reach for excellence. And that's why I salute you all.

I salute winners like Julie Csongor, of Philadelphia,-- where's Julie? Somewhere, right there -- who fled the persecution of her native Hungary, unable to speak English. And now she gives of herself to a generation of American kids. And listen to this; she says, "I have my cake in my classroom every day. This award is the icing." Welcome and congratulations. (Applause.)

Well, I salute you and I envy you. And you share in our kids' sheer joy of learning, of making something work, of understanding the world.

Think of the scientist or engineer who will one day discover the cure for cancer, or who will use technology to push back the frontiers of space, maybe wipe out hunger. Today that man or woman is a student, maybe in your classroom. A kid who will catch a spark from you, a spark that will change his life, change her world. That's your gift. A teacher affects a lifetime.

I'm proud to be with you all here today because you demonstrate what it will take to make our students the best in the world. You encourage students by giving them direct hands-on experience. You foster curiosity not just in your students, but also in their parents and in your colleagues. You still have the joy of discovery, the excitement of optimism. And you still ask questions, and try new ways. Above all, you believe in your students and in the future of this country. And that is the spirit we all need.

We all know the real rewards of teaching aren't their certificates that you received here, but they are something much more important. Sir Thomas More described it in the play "A Man For All Seasons." And at one point, he suggests to a young man that he would make a fine teacher. "And if I was," the boy asks, "well, who would know about it?" And Sir Thomas replies: "You, your pupils, your friends, God -- not a bad public, that."

Well, thank you all so much for what you do for the young people of this country. Thank you for your excellence. And on behalf of a very grateful country, let me just extend my personal thanks also. Keep up the good work and the good works. And may God bless you all. And now get out of this cold so you can thaw out. Thank you all for being here. (Applause.)

END

2:40 P.M. EST

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 11, 1992

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
TO THE SPRING CONVENTION OF
AMERICAN SOCIETY OF ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES

The Convention Center
Washington, D.C.

1:10 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Chairman Fondren, fellow Texan, thank you for that introduction. May I salute President Taylor and all the award winners here today. I heard a story about how when Lyndon Baines Johnson moved from the House to the Senate, Jake Pickle and Gene Fondren, then Texas state legislators, flipped a coin to decide who'd run for office and go to Washington. Well, Congressman Pickle's been calling for a rematch ever since. (Laughter.) And this organization is very fortunate to have as its chairman a man of this strength and a man of this conviction.

Robert Frost once wrote that "an idea is a feat of association." Well, association is an idea as old as the American Dream itself. Actually, de Toqueville 150 years ago -- more than that -- had much to say about you. He said, "at the head of some new undertaking in the United States you will be sure to find an association." Well, since that time associations have played a vital role in our country's progress, and they continue that mission today, defining new frontiers and exploring new territory.

Before I spoke, President Taylor handed out the Associations Advance America Awards to salute those who've found a way to help -- to be, in fact, points of light. We hear too often about what's wrong in America. Well, this is what's right in America, and I salute you for what you are doing to help your communities. And again, I single out the awardees here who have starred in all of this.

Of course, it's an election year. Independent of the current preoccupation with the hype and spin of the campaigns, there will remain the issues, the big things -- the core concerns of every American that transcend political party or philosophical ideology -- jobs, family, peace. They hold us together as a society. They are more than issues we bring to the next election -- they are the legacy we must give to the next generation.

And really, that's what I want to talk to you about today -- not just the issues, but our mood as a nation, and how we must act now if we're to change America for the better. Today, weighing most heavily in the hearts and on the minds of Americans is the state of our economy -- jobs -- preserving jobs, creating jobs. You in this room know best virtually every industry and every profession in America. I don't have to tell you that people are worried about the future.

Frankly, we've had tough economic times before, with higher unemployment -- but less national alarm. There's something different about today's times -- something that touches a nerve. It strikes at the heart of what drives this country forward -- our very confidence. It challenges our belief in ourselves.

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Let me give it to you straight: Unemployment is -- what -- 7.3 percent -- about nine million people out of a total work force of 126 million. During the 1982 recession, 10 years ago, unemployment hit almost 11 percent -- a level not experienced since the Great Depression. So we ask ourselves, why is confidence today lower than at the depth of the 1982 recession?

I've heard a lot of theories. Some say those TV analysts are the problem -- rejoicing in bad news. Others say, well, it's the politicians. I myself have noted that in a political year candidates often shower the voters with a message so bleak and hopeless -- and at the same time they promise the rainbow if they're elected. That steady drizzle on the people's shoulders can wear away confidence and can wash away hope. So it's easy to suppose that the constant drumbeat about what's wrong in America is a self-fulfilling prophecy.

There may be some truth to that. But I think there are other reasons for our country's mood. People are feeling the way they do because America's got some real problems -- they're serious, stubborn, national problems. But I think it would be unfair and certainly untrue to suggest to the American people that we can't overcome these problems -- to imply that the United States of America is a country in decline. So today I want to talk about what we must do to meet the economic challenge that is before us -- how we can build economic vitality into our communities -- how we must ensure that our children see a future that is an improvement over the present.

Sometimes it helps to take some of these enormous issues and bring them down to the personal level. So when I talk about America's economic problems this is what I mean:

They are the worries of parents who have worked all their lives to get their kids through college -- and those kids can't find work. They are found in discouraged families who can't afford to pay off anything but the interest on their credit cards month after month after month. They are the doubts of young people who believe that times will never be as good for them as they were for their parents. Now, these are the things that dim our hope and drain our confidence.

American workers can see that technology and competition are changing the workplace faster than ever before. They can feel the heat -- both at home and abroad. They know American industry is being challenged to keep up or step aside -- I'm going to talk further about that later in the week out in Detroit, Michigan. We live in a competitive world, and people worry about our ability to compete.

American homeowners -- that's almost 70 million people -- worry that the biggest asset they will ever have, their home, will lose its worth because real estate values have declined. The same is true of any business, of association, or charitable organization that owns property -- they're concerned, too.

Finally, as I discussed earlier this week with the League of Cities -- and this one is fundamental -- the deterioration of the American family is very, very serious -- a root problem with tremendous ramifications for our economic well-being as a nation.

But the picture -- these are the problems, but the picture is not all gloom and doom. America -- we're now the only superpower in the world. Millions of immigrants still look to us as the land of opportunity -- because we are. We're the undisputed leader of the world that has a propensity for much more peace. And our economy is poised for recovery. Inflation is down. Interest rates low. Inventories are low. Exports at record highs. But this

recovery will come sooner, and stronger only if we in government can come together and act now.

In January, as most of you know, I sent a message to the Congress -- a plan of action. I felt it was a straightforward set of initiatives based upon tried and true economic realities. I proposed incentives for business to buy equipment, upgrade their plants, and start hiring again. I proposed a shot in the arm to get the housing industry back on its feet -- lead us into economic recovery this spring. I proposed a cut on the capital gains. And then I offered a broader plan of action to keep us strong and economically vigorous in the years ahead. And that included, as some of you all may remember, education reform called -- we call it America 2000 -- to bring the skills of our future workers up to a standard of excellence.

It included a clampdown on excessive regulations that hurt our competitiveness and reform of our legal system so that Americans can spend more time innovating and less time litigating. And I proposed record federal support -- research and development support -- to keep our nation on the cutting edge of new technologies, new incentives for business investment. I proposed a forward-looking trade policy that demands foreign markets open up to high-quality American goods and services. And I reiterated our determination to hold the line on government spending and oppose new taxes.

Well, big issues, big challenges. This is the plan I proposed -- and I set a deadline for the Congress to act. And while the Congress didn't have a comprehensive plan of its own, it didn't like the notion of a deadline. Instead, with great and earnest deliberation, the Congress fixated on how much more to tax the American people. And they would hike taxes by \$100 billion. And that plan, in my view, destroys jobs. Whereas, the plan, the incentives I've outlined here create jobs.

The last thing that this economy needs now is a massive tax increase. (Applause.) Any economist worth his salt will tell you that. But this is not new. Congress refuses routinely to take action to stimulate the economy -- but insists on these job-destroying tax increases. Everyone knows that government is too big and spends too much. Everyone knows that. And there's something else everyone knows, too: too often Congress spends the money of its customer, the taxpayer, the wrong way -- inefficiently, ineffectively, without accountability and, frankly, without compassion.

So again, I would like to call on the Congress to pass my plan by March 20 for the good of this economy and the good of the American people. (Applause.)

Now, I realize this all may sound like simply an election year blast at the Congress, controlled by the opposition party. But it is not. We really need a new way of looking at things. And I have made proposals to bring back responsibility and accountability to a system answerable to no one but itself. They are based on some fundamental principles: Rely on what works. And when possible, decentralize. Institute choice to force competition into the system. Give people more power to make the big decisions in their lives. Make the system accountable. And understand the new realities of America's global position -- that we must become more competitive.

We are not going to retreat into the failed policies of uninvolvedness, disengagement, isolation, protectionism. We cannot do that. That would shrink markets and throw people out of work in this country. So these are -- staying involved, then, is the fundamental answer on international trade. These are the important ways to reform and change our country.

Chairman Fondren once said that "Leadership requires forthrightness. Hidden agendas rarely, if ever, lead to progress and very often succeed in spoiling the brew." Well, I've never been very good at hiding an agenda, and I'm not about to try to start that now.

The agenda has really been to create jobs, protect the family, and promote world peace. (Applause.) Too many times I run up against a stone wall -- a partisan guard more determined to take sides than to move the country forward. So March 20th will be an important date. And if the Congress enacts my action plan on the economy by then, the real beneficiaries will be the American people. (Applause.)

If the Congress cannot act, or if it sends to me a bill that it knows today that I cannot and will not sign, I will take this case to the American people, and say the problem is the Congress; send a new Congress to Washington next November. But before that, I want to see us move something forward. I want to see us get something done.

And it's tough in an election year. I know that; I'm involved right up to my neck, just from coming from eight of these darn things yesterday. So I'm not being unrealistic, but I think we still have time to set aside the politics and try to pass something that most economists agree -- I think all economists agree -- would stimulate this economy and get this country back to work again. In the meantime, I will act on my own in the interests of the American people.

I drew a line in the sand -- Jane referred to it -- a little over a year ago in the Gulf. When you look back, that wasn't an easy decision. But we kept our word and we liberated a tiny country. And in the process, we sent the world, the whole world, a message. And the message was: Aggression will not stand. And that message is clearly understood. And because that message is so clearly understood, we have a newfound credibility all around -- all around the world. Travel abroad and find out that we are the United States, second to none. (Applause.)

And so now, in a figurative stance, I've drawn a line in the sand once again, right here in our own backyard. And I will keep my word again, and if we all do our part, we can ensure that our economy and our country get back on the right track.

In the meantime, keep up the wonderful work that these associations do. Government can do a lot. I know I've got to do it better. I know that Congress has to do its work better. But it can never replace that thing that de Tocqueville found so amazing about this country -- association, the propensity of one American to help another.

And when I talk about points of light, sometimes my critics say, well, he's simply forgoing his responsibility. He's simply trying to lay off on the back of private citizens the responsibility of a government. That's the farthest thing from my mind when I commend you and thank you for being points of light. Government can help. Government must help. Government must reach out a hand to those that are hurting. But it is the points of light -- it is the private sector, it is the associations that are going to make a difference in the lives of the men and women and, especially, the children of this country.

So may God bless you for your work. And thank you for letting me come back. (Applause.)