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Remarks at Greater Manchester Chamber of Commerce
October 9, 2003
Draft #7

Thank you very much. I am pleased to be in New Hampshire again, and to see so many friends. Manchester is a popular destination these days – and not just because the leaves are changing. This city was the scene of my first great victory in 2000 – that perfect flip at the Presidential Pancake Flip-Off. I can think of nine people who are practicing with their spatulas every morning.

I thank the Chamber of Commerce and the Business and Industry Association for inviting me today to talk about the two great priorities of our country: to create jobs for Americans, and to win the war on terror. I wish I could have brought the First Lady, who sends her good wishes. She is back home after an official trip to Russia ... and to France. I'm sure you saw the picture in the paper.

The last time I was in France, I got a nice welcome, but nothing like that. Laura is a gracious representative of the American people, and America is proud of her.

Acknowledgments

- Raymond Pinard [PIN-ard], Chairman,
Greater Manchester Chamber of
Commerce (will introduce you)
- Harold Turner, Chairman, Business and
Industry Association of New Hampshire
(will emcee pre-program)
- Robin Comstock, President, Greater
Manchester Chamber of Commerce
- John Crosier (CROW-sheer), President,
Business and Industry Association of New
Hampshire

- Governor Craig Benson (R), and wife Denise

Members of Congress

- Senator Judd Gregg (R-NH), and wife
Kathy
- Senator John Sununu (R-NH), and wife
Kitty
- Congressman Charlie Bass (R-NH)
- Congressman Jeb Bradley (R-NH)

State and Local Officials

- Robert Baines, Mayor of Manchester (D)
- Bernie Streeter, Mayor of Nashua (R)
- Raymond Wiezorek [why-ZUR-ick],
Executive Council of Manchester (R)
- Attorney General Peter Heed (R)
- Senator Robert Clegg, Majority Leader,
New Hampshire State Senate (R)
- Speaker Gene Chandler, New Hampshire
State House (R)
- State Representative Carlos Gonzalez
[Candidate for Mayor of Manchester] (R)

Others

- Tom Rath, former Attorney General and National Committeeman
- Candice Glickman, Miss New Hampshire (will sing National Anthem)
- Father Ed Arsenault (will deliver the Invocation)
- Boy Scout Troop #402, Dairy, New Hampshire (will present the colors)

- USAFC Robert Perkins has been an active volunteer in New Hampshire. He helped to create a Boys and Girls Club chapter in 1995 and has been involved in numerous capacities since, including fundraising and President of the Boys and Girls Club Board of Directors, and he has dedicated five to ten hours each week for the past five years to the Boys and Girls Club.

Since I was last here, New Hampshire lost one of its finest citizens, Governor Hugh Gregg. He loved his country, and served it well. He loved this state, and believed in the common sense and wisdom of its people. And this tradition continues in his good family. We honor Hugh's memory, and I was proud to be his friend.

I began my visit this morning at Pease Air National Guard Base, with New Hampshire Army and Air Guardsmen and reservists from every branch of our military. New Hampshire guardsmen have served on every front on the War on Terror – from Afghanistan, to Iraq, to protecting our homeland, to guarding the detainees at Guantanamo Bay. They are showing what it means to be patriots and citizens, and our country is grateful.

America is being tested, abroad and at home. And we are meeting the tests of history. We are defeating the enemies of freedom. We are confronting challenges to build the prosperity of our Nation. Every test of America has revealed the character of America. After the last two years, no one in the world – friend or enemy – can doubt the will and strength of the American people.

When you become President, you cannot predict all the challenges that will come. But you do know the principles you bring to the office – and they should not change with time or polls. I took this office to make a difference – not to mark time. I came to this office to confront problems directly and forcefully – not to pass them to other presidents and other generations.

The challenges we face today cannot be met with timid actions or bitter words. Our challenges will be overcome with optimism, and resolve, and confidence in the ideals of America.

Because we believe in our free enterprise system, we can be confident in our economy's future. Our economy has been through a lot. When I took office, the stock market had been declining for nine months, and the economy was headed into recession.

Just as we started to recover, the attacks of September 11th struck another blow to our economy. Then investor confidence was shaken by scandals in corporate America – dishonest behavior we cannot and will not tolerate in our country. And then we faced the uncertainty that preceded the battles of Afghanistan and Iraq.

We have acted to overcome these challenges, and we have acted on principle. Government doesn't create wealth. The role of government is to create the conditions where risk-takers and entrepreneurs can invest and grow and hire new workers. And we know how to create jobs for Americans.

When Americans have more take-home pay to spend, save, or invest, the whole economy grows, and people are more likely to find jobs. So I twice led the Congress to pass major tax relief for the American people.

We wanted tax relief to be as broad and fair as possible – so we reduced taxes on everyone who pays income taxes.

It doesn't make sense to penalize
marriage in the tax code – so we reduced
the marriage penalty.

It costs a lot to raise children and pay for their education, so we increased the child credit to a thousand dollars – and sent the checks directly to the moms and dads of America.

It is counterproductive to discourage investment, especially during an economic recovery – so we quadrupled the expense deduction for small business investment, and cut tax rates on dividends and capital gains.

It is unfair to tax the estates people leave behind after a lifetime of saving money, building a business, or running a farm. When you leave this world, the IRS should not follow you. So we are phasing out the Federal death tax.

I proposed and signed these measures to help individuals and families – as well as small businesses. Most small business owners pay taxes under the individual rate and benefit from our tax cuts. Millions of mom and pop companies are benefiting as well from the higher expense deductions, and marriage penalty relief, and the estate tax relief.

Small businesses create most new jobs in this country. They are usually the first to take risks, the first to hire new people. By helping small businesses, we help our entire economy.

These actions are helping people across this state. We have cut taxes on 112,000 small business owners in New Hampshire. We have reduced the marriage penalty for 192,000 couples. We have increased the child tax credit for 124,000 families. I know that New Hampshire citizens can spend this money better than Washington.

We are following a clear and consistent economic strategy, and I am confident about our future. Last month, this economy exceeded expectations and added net new jobs. Inflation is low. After-tax incomes are rising. Home ownership is at record highs, and productivity is high and rising.

Factory orders, particularly for high tech equipment, have risen over the last several months. Our strategy has set the stage for sustained growth. By reducing taxes, we kept a promise – and did the right thing at the right time for the American economy.

Now our country is approaching a choice. Just as our economy is coming around, some are saying now is the time to raise taxes. To be fair, they think any time is a good time for a tax hike. At least they're consistent – but I strongly disagree. A nation cannot tax its way to growth or job creation. Tax relief has put this Nation on the right path, and I intend to keep America on the path of prosperity.

We are moving forward, but we are not satisfied. We can't be satisfied as long as we have fellow citizens looking for work. Here in New Hampshire, one out of every five jobs you have lost has been in manufacturing. We must act boldly to create jobs for Americans. So I am asking Congress to join me in carrying out a six-part plan for jobs and growth.

Businesses are more likely to hire people if health care for workers is affordable. So we need to allow association health care plans, where small companies can pool risk and gain the same bargaining power as big businesses. And to control healthcare costs, we need effective legal reform to stop the frivolous lawsuits against doctors.

Unfair lawsuits are also harming a lot of good, honest small businesses. And there are too many large settlements that leave the plaintiffs with a small sum, and the lawyers with a fortune. Class actions and mass tort cases that reach across state lines should be tried in Federal Court – so that lawyers can't shop around, looking for a favorable judge.

And most of the money in a judgment or settlement should go to the people who were harmed, not the lawyers.

Our economy will grow stronger and create more jobs if we have a sound national energy policy. We need better, more reliable infrastructure such as pipelines, gas terminals, and power lines, so whole cities aren't left in the dark. We need to give low-income people help with their fuel bills this winter.

We need to use our technology to develop clean and efficient energy sources, so we can sustain economic growth and protect the environment. And we need more energy production close to home. For the sake of national security and economic security, America must be less dependent on foreign sources of energy.

More people will find jobs when employers don't have to waste time and resources complying with needless government regulations. For the sake of American workers, we are cutting unnecessary rules, and making rules simpler to understand.

Small business owners should spend more time building companies and pleasing customers, and less time filling out endless forms to please the government.

To create jobs in this country, we are pursuing free trade agreements that will open foreign markets to good American products. Last month, I signed trade agreements with Singapore and Chile, and we are working toward other free trade arrangements across the globe.

Expanded trade will help Len-Tex and
Warwick Mills and Tender, and other New
Hampshire companies, to sell more good,
New Hampshire products overseas. I will
insist that America has a level playing field -
- because I know, when the rules are fair,
American workers and entrepreneurs can
compete with anybody, any place, any time.

There is one more thing we need to do. We need to make sure that all the tax relief we have passed doesn't disappear in future years. Because of a quirk in the legislation, the tax cuts are scheduled to go away unless we act. When we passed tax relief, Americans did not expect to see higher taxes sneak in through the back door. If Congress is really interested in job creation, they will make every one of our tax cuts permanent.

We have a responsibility to set good policies in Washington. Yet the real strength is found in the creativity and entrepreneurial spirit of Americans. That spirit is one reason I am so confident about the future of our economy.

A man named Brian Stowell is a second-generation entrepreneur based in Claremont, New Hampshire. His family-owned cabinet-making company – Crown Point Cabinetry – was started by Brian's dad, Norm, in a garage 25 years ago. Now, that business employs about 90 people – including 4 new workers who just started this week. In the next two-and-a-half years, Brian plans on adding 25 new workers.

Brian says tax cuts helped a lot.

Because of tax relief, he is putting more than 800,000 dollars of his company's money at work in new equipment: A new router made in North Carolina ... a sander made in Minnesota ... spray booths made just outside Boston, Massachusetts ... a forklift made in Iowa ... and more than a dozen other pieces of equipment, nearly all of it made in the United States.

But most of all, Brian is an optimist because he believes in the people of this country. Here is what he says: “After September the 11th, everybody collectively held their breath ... But our confidence has grown ... We’ve turned a corner. “

Confidence like that is well founded.

We live in a country that rewards big dreams and honest effort. Men and women who put their faith in America will not be disappointed.

As we overcome challenges to our economy, we are answering great threats to our security. September 11th, 2001, moved our country to grief, and moved our country to action. We made a pledge that day, and we have kept it: We are bringing the guilty to justice, and taking the fight to the enemy.

We now see our enemy clearly. The terrorists plot in secret, and target the innocent, and defile a great religion, and hate everything this Nation stands for. These committed killers will not be stopped by negotiations. They won't respond to reason. The terrorists who threaten America cannot be appeased – they must be found, and fought, and defeated.

In this new kind of war, America is following a new strategy. We are not waiting for further attacks. We are striking our enemies before they can strike us again. We have taken unprecedented steps to protect the homeland. Yet wars are won on the offensive – and America and our friends are staying on the offensive. We are rolling back the terrorist threat, not on the fringes of its influence, but at the heart of its power.

And we have fought the war on terror in Iraq. The regime of Saddam Hussein possessed and used weapons of mass destruction... and sponsored terrorist groups... and inflicted terror on its own people. Nearly every nation recognized and denounced this threat for over a decade.

Finally, the UN Security Council – in Resolution 1441 – demanded that Saddam disarm, and prove his disarmament to the world. The choice was up to the dictator – and he chose poorly.

I acted because I was not about to leave the security of the American people in the hands of a madman. I was not about to stand by, and wait, and trust in the sanity and restraint of Saddam Hussein. So our coalition acted, in one of the swiftest and most humane military campaigns in history. And six months ago today, the statue of the dictator was pulled down.

Since the liberation of Iraq, our investigators have found evidence of a clandestine network of biological laboratories ... advanced design work on prohibited, longer range missiles ... and an elaborate campaign to hide these illegal programs. There is still much to investigate.

Yet it is now undeniable that Saddam Hussein was in clear violation of United Nations Security Council resolution 1441. It is undeniable that Saddam Hussein was a deceiver and a danger. The Security Council was right to demand that Saddam disarm, and we were right to enforce that demand.

Who can possibly think that the world would be better off with Saddam Hussein still in power? Surely not the dissidents who would be in his prisons, or end up in mass graves. Surely not the men and women who would fill Saddam's torture chambers and rape rooms. Surely not the families of victims he murdered with poison gas. Surely not anyone who cares about human rights and democracy and stability in the Middle East.

There is only one decent and humane
reaction to the fall of Saddam Hussein:
Good riddance.

Now our country is approaching a choice. After all the action we have taken, after all the progress we have made against terror, there is a temptation to think the danger has passed. But the danger has not passed. Since September 11th, the terrorists have taken lives in Casablanca, Mombasa, Jerusalem, Amman, Riyadh, Baghdad, Karachi, New Delhi, Bali, and Jakarta.

The terrorists continue to plot and plan against our country, and our people.

America must not forget the lessons of September 11th. America cannot retreat from our responsibilities and hope for the best. Our security will not be gained by timid measures.

Our security requires constant vigilance and decisive action. I believe America has only one option: We will fight this war until the work is done.

We are fighting on many fronts, and Iraq is now the central front. Saddam holdouts and foreign terrorists are trying desperately to undermine Iraq's progress and throw that country into chaos. The terrorists in Iraq believe their attacks on innocent people will weaken our resolve. They believe we will run from a challenge. They are mistaken. Americans are not the running kind.

The United States did not run from Germany and Japan following World War II. We helped those nations to become strong, and decent, and democratic societies, that no longer waged war against America. And this is our mission in Iraq today. We are rebuilding schools, and reopening hospitals, and returning water and electricity to the Iraqi people.

Americans are providing this help – not only because our hearts are good – but because our vision is clear. A stable, and democratic, and hopeful Iraq will no longer be a breeding ground for terror, tyranny, and aggression. Free nations are peaceful nations. Our work in Iraq is essential to our own security – and no band of murderers and gangsters will stop that work, or shake the will of America.

Nearly every day in Iraq, we are launching swift, precision raids against the terrorists. Helped by intelligence from Iraqis, we are rounding up the enemy, and taking their weapons. And we are working our way through that famous deck of cards. We have already captured or killed 43 of the 55 most wanted former Iraqi leaders – and the other 12 have a lot to worry about.

Anyone who seeks to harm our soldiers can
know that our soldiers are hunting for them.

Our military is serving with courage –
and some of our best have fallen. We
mourn every loss. We honor every name.
We grieve with every family. And we will
always be grateful that liberty found such
brave defenders.

In defending liberty, we are joined by more than 30 nations now contributing military forces in Iraq. Great Britain and Poland are leading two multinational divisions. We are in this cause with fine allies – and that includes the good people of Iraq.

Last week, the first battalion of the New Iraqi Army completed its training. Within a year, Iraq will have a 40,000 member military force. Tens of thousands of Iraqi citizens are also guarding their own borders, and defending vital facilities, and policing their own streets. Six months ago, the Iraqi people welcomed their liberation. Today, many Iraqis are armed and trained to defend their own liberty.

Our goal in Iraq is to leave behind a stable, self-governing society – which will no longer be a threat to the Middle East, or to the United States. And we are following an orderly plan to reach this goal. Iraq now has a Governing Council, which has appointed interim government ministers. Once a constitution has been written, Iraq will move toward national elections.

We want this process to go as quickly as possible – yet it must be done right. The free institutions of Iraq must stand the test of time. And a democratic Iraq will stand as an example to all the Middle East. We believe – and the Iraqi people will show – that liberty is the hope and right of every land.

Our work in Iraq has been long and hard, and it is not finished. Americans have sacrificed in the cause of freedom and security – and that cause goes on. Beyond Iraq, the War on Terror continues. There will be no quick victory in this war – but if we persevere, our victory is certain.

I am confident of victory because I know the character of our military – shown in the conduct of young men like Army Sergeant Matthew DeWitt of Hillsborough, New Hampshire. While serving in Iraq, Sergeant DeWitt stepped forward to volunteer on a dangerous mission to root out Saddam loyalists.

In the fighting, Matthew was seriously wounded. He is now receiving care at Walter Reed Army Medical Center, where I was honored to visit him not long ago.

Matthew DeWitt was awarded the Purple Heart, but does not consider himself a hero – he says, “I was just doing my job.” Yet it is brave people like this 26-year-old from New Hampshire who protect America. We count on them, and we’re proud of them.

The war on terror has brought hardship and loss to our country, beginning with the grief of September 11th. Let us also remember that the first victory in this war came that same day, on a hijacked plane bound for the Nation's capital. Somehow, those men and women on Flight 93, knowing they would die, found the courage to use their final moments to save the lives of others.

In those moments, and many times since, terrorists have learned that Americans will not be intimidated. We will fight them with everything we have.

Few are called to show the kind of valor
seen on Flight 93, or on the field of battle.
Yet all of us do share a calling – to be
strong in adversity, and in danger unafraid.
We Americans have come through so much
together. We have much yet to do. And if
we are patient, and united, and determined,
our Nation will prosper, and our Nation will
prevail.

Thank you.