

Remarks to Agricultural Leaders*June 18, 2001*

Well, thank you very much. It's nice to be home. *[Laughter]* And welcome to the people's home. As I'm sure you can imagine, it is an unimaginable honor to live here, and it was an unimaginable honor to represent our Nation overseas.

We had a really good trip, and I'm sure Ambassador Zoellick will brief you on the trip after I say a few words. But let me just say to you that—well, first, let me thank Ann Veneman for the job she's doing. I knew when I picked her, I picked a really smart, capable leader. And she has fulfilled all expectations. She's going to do a great job as representing an incredibly important part of our Nation's economy and our Nation's culture. So, Madam Secretary, thank you very much for your leadership. Zoellick, thank you, sir, for your leadership, as well.

I told people when I—that should I become the President, we would never use agriculture as a throwaway, as just a bargaining tool. And when I interviewed my friend Bob Zoellick, who I've known for a while, I said, "I want you to understand, the cornerstone of good trade policy is good ag policy. And we're not going to leave our farmers and ranchers behind when it comes to international agreements."

And I think you're going to find when he talks to you and when you question him, he's going to hold true to that philosophy. And I'm proud of his work. He's tough and he's steady, and I've got a pretty good look at who he's negotiating against—*[laughter]*—but he's going to do a fine job for all of America, including the agricultural sector.

I'm honored that Members of the United States Senate are here, and Members of the House of Representatives are here. Mr. Chairman—well, Mr. Ex-Chairman. *[Laughter]* Thank you all for coming. *[Laughter]*

We're going to discuss here an incredibly important issue, and that is, how do we make sure American agriculture thrives and survives and grows stronger over time? It starts with understanding a couple of things. One, that we needed tax relief so that those farmers and ranchers who are actually in the black can keep more of what they make. And

thanks to Members here, we got good tax relief.

And by the way, we also eliminated the death tax, which is incredibly important to American agriculture. And I want to thank you all on the stage here for—as well as your Members, for working hard to make the case that getting rid of the death tax is only fair, and that for those who worry about urban sprawl and issues such as that, that getting rid of the death tax is going to allow the family farm or the family ranch to pass from one generation to the next. And so it's a good piece of legislation, and many of you all helped make the case. And for that, all of us are grateful.

I also said in the campaign I'd work for value-added processing, that I wanted to make sure that the products we grew at home here had received enhanced value because of U.S. processing. And part of our energy plan, as you learned recently, includes ethanol. And that's an important part of an agriculture and an energy and an environmental mix that I think is best for the United States of America.

And finally, trade. And it's incredibly important for our Americans to understand how important trade is. The agricultural sector understands that. Twenty-five percent of farm receipts are generated by exports. One-quarter of all the revenues coming into the farm economy are generated as a result of a farmer in America or a rancher in America selling that product overseas. And that's as it should be. Our farmers and ranchers are the most efficient producers in the world. This is an area where our country has a competitive advantage. We're really good at it. And the job of this administration must be to open up more markets for ag products.

I used to tell people in the course of the campaign, I want America to feed the world. I want our great Nation that's a land of great, efficient producers to make sure people don't go hungry. And it starts with having an administration committed to knocking down barriers to trade, and we are.

And you're about to hear from the Trade Representative, Ambassador Zoellick, who will describe to you a couple of things: one, that we want a new round of WTO discussions started with ag at its core, and it will

be. I know there are some concerns about NAFTA in the country, but if people look at the statistics, farm exports to Mexico have doubled, nearly doubled, since NAFTA. That's important. I do believe we ought to expand the free trade of the Americas. I want this whole hemisphere trading in freedom, and I think it makes sense for our farmers and ranchers to do so.

In order for me to be as effective as I can be—and by the way, we understand this, too, and this is important for people to understand that our farmers face incredible barriers to trade. And let me just give you a few statistics. The EU's tariffs for over-quota beef is between 91 percent and 177 percent. Japan's tariff for over-quota wheat is between 242 percent and 256 percent. Canada's tariff on over-quota butter is between 299 percent and 314 percent. Not only do America's farmers and ranchers face overt tariffs, there's hidden barriers, as well, such as unscientific thought about the products we grow. One of the things Ambassador Zoellick and I talked about is making decisions based upon sound science, and not using science as a—or false science as a way to block entry for U.S. products.

And Zoellick also came back with some pretty good news from China. I don't know if you have all been following his negotiations there, but we're beginning to get our bilateral agreement with China made. And he can give you the details. But the agreement with China will end export subsidies and, we anticipate, boost U.S. agricultural exports to China by \$2 billion a year. He sat down and rolled up his sleeves and kept in mind what I asked him to do. And he delivered a good agreement.

But there's more to do, and he told the Chinese that our bilateral agreements—that compliance, an early test of their willing to trade, will depend upon bilateral agreements on citrus and wheat, meat. And so we're just making—we're beginning to open up that big market. And I think the Ambassador deserves a lot of credit. But don't give him any until he describes exactly what he did to you. *[Laughter]*

But what I really want to do is to urge you all to help us get a trade promotion authority bill out of the Congress. I realized

how important that was when I went overseas. I realized how important it was when I was at the Summit of the Americas. We've got countries in our hemisphere saying, "Will you trade with us?" And I say, "You bet." It's a free-trading administration, so long as everything is level and fair. And they say, "But how can we know you can trade with us when we negotiate a deal and you don't have the authority to strike it without having to submit the bills to every single amendment there could be up on the Hill?"

You see, they recognize that other Presidents used to have trade promotion authority. And now I don't. And we're missing some great opportunities, not only in our hemisphere but around the world. These are opportunities for people who earn a living the hard way. These are hard—these are opportunities for hard-working ranchers and farmers. These are opportunities for working people.

I believe the more we trade overseas, the more prosperity there is at home. And I urge the Congress—and I know the Members here understand this—to pass trade promotion authority so this administration can open up markets all around the world. This is an important piece of legislation. This legislation is one of my top priorities because it's—a top priority of mine is the health of the agriculture sector in America.

You know, my wife just took off for Crawford, Texas, today. When we go there, people are wondering whether or not they can make a living off the land. And they're more likely to be able to do so with more markets open.

And I mean a trade promotion authority bill, too, that's not laden down with all kinds of excuses not to trade. I want a bill that doesn't have these codicils on it that frighten people from trading with us. I like to remind people that if you're a poor nation, it's going to be hard to treat your people well. And if you're a poor nation, it's going to be hard to have good environmental policy. And trade is the best way to eliminate poverty. Therefore, our trade agreements ought to be free from codicils which prevent us from freely trading.

And so I want to thank you for coming to the White House to give me an opportunity to urge you to work with these five Senators and three Congressmen, to work hard to get this trade promotion authority moving.

The power to be—well, most of the power that be—sits right here. And these Members can use your help, as can we. This call to arms for trade promotion authority is not a hollow call. This is important. It's not only important for this President; it's important for future Presidents, because the world is a fantastic opportunity for us. And it's an opportunity we have got to seize if we expect to have prosperity in one of the most vital sectors in our Nation, and that's prosperity on our farms and ranches, a place not only where people will hopefully be able to make a good living, but a place where people nurture the great values of America: faith and family.

It's my honor to be here, to have you here. Thanks for coming. I appreciate so very much your giving us a chance to call you into action. I'm honored to be up here with your leaders, and I do want to thank the Members of the Senate and the House for being here, as well.

God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:28 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Haiti

June 18, 2001

Dear _____:

Pursuant to section 559(b) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 2000, I hereby transmit to you the final semiannual report concerning the status of Haiti's progress.

The report contains eight subsections that provide information required by section 559(b) of the Act. These subsections address:

- Governmental Institutions Envisioned in the 1987 Haitian Constitution;
- Privatization of Haiti's Major Public Entities;

- Efforts to Re-sign the Lapsed Bilateral Repatriation Agreement, and Cooperation in Halting Illegal Migration;
 - Investigation and Prosecution of Extrajudicial and Political Killings, and Cooperation with the United States in Such Investigations;
 - Removal and Maintenance of Separation of Human Rights Violators from Haitian Public Security Entities or Units;
 - Ratification of the 1997 Maritime Counter-Narcotics Agreement;
 - Development of Haiti's Domestic Capacity to Conduct Free, Fair, Democratic, and Administratively Sound Elections; and
 - Demonstrated Commitment of Haiti's Minister of Justice to the Professionalism of the Judiciary, and Progress Toward Judicial Branch Independence.
- Sincerely,

George W. Bush

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Joseph R. Biden, Jr., chairman, and Jesse Helms, ranking member, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations; Robert C. Byrd, chairman, and Ted Stevens, ranking member, Senate Committee on Appropriations; Henry J. Hyde, chairman, and Tom Lantos, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations; and C.W. Bill Young, chairman, and David R. Obey, ranking member, House Committee on Appropriations.

Executive Order 13217— Community-Based Alternatives for Individuals With Disabilities

June 18, 2001

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, and in order to place qualified individuals with disabilities in community settings whenever appropriate, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Policy. This order is issued consistent with the following findings and principles:

- (a) The United States is committed to community-based alternatives for individuals with disabilities and recognizes that such