

Week Ending Friday, August 31, 2001

The President's Radio Address

August 25, 2001

Good morning. Congress will shortly return to Washington to make its final spending decisions for 2002. A new budget report released this past week shows that despite the economic slowdown that began in the third quarter of last year, the Federal budget is strong, healthy, and in balance. In fact, the 2002 budget surplus will be the second biggest surplus in American history.

The report also shows we are funding our Nation's priorities, meeting our commitments to Social Security and Medicare, reducing taxes, and still retiring record amounts of debt. This is a great achievement, and it happened because Congress worked with me this spring to agree to a responsible total level of spending.

Congress also worked with me to cut income taxes for the first time in a generation, the right policy at exactly the right time to boost our sagging economy. The faster our economy grows, the stronger the Federal budget will be.

The greatest threat to our budget outlook is the danger that Congress will be tempted this fall to break its earlier commitments by spending too much. The old way in Washington is to believe that the more you spend, the more you care. What mattered was the size of the line in the budget, not the effect of that line on real people's lives. My administration takes a new approach. We want to spend your hard-earned money as carefully as you do. And when we spend the people's money, we insist on results.

Today my Office of Management and Budget is releasing a report identifying 14 long-neglected management problems in the Federal Government and offering specific solutions to fix them. For example, the United States Government is the world's single largest purchaser of computers and other technologies for gathering and using infor-

mation. In 2002 we will spend \$45 billion on information technology. That's more than we've budgeted for highways and roads. Yet so far, and unlike private sector companies, this large investment has not cut the Government's cost or improved people's lives in any way we can measure.

Another example: The General Accounting Office has, year after year, found that the Federal student aid programs are run in ways that make them vulnerable to fraud and waste. And year after year, virtually nothing has been done to make sure that Federal aid intended for needy students goes only to the needy.

With the help of congressional leaders like Senator Fred Thompson, we are going to take on these problems, and others like them, with a focused, targeted reform agenda. We'll introduce greater competition into Government and make Government more attentive to citizens.

Americans demand top-quality service from the private sector. They should get the same top-quality service from their Government. I've asked Cabinet Secretaries and agency heads to name a chief operating officer who will be held accountable for the performance of that agency. These officers will make up the President's Management Council, to build a leadership team that listens, learns, and innovates.

Taxpayers work hard to earn the money they send the Government. Government should work equally hard to ensure that the money is spent wisely. I will work with Congress to build a Government that is responsive to the people's needs and responsible with our people's money.

Thank you very much for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 4:03 p.m. on August 23 at the Bush Ranch in Crawford, TX, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on August 25. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on August 24 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast. The Office of the

Press Secretary also released a Spanish language transcript of this address.

Exchange With Reporters During a Tour of the Bush Ranch in Crawford, Texas

August 25, 2001

Ranch Tour

Q. Shouldn't you be doing that with an axe?

The President. I've got my earplugs in.

Q. Oh, lucky.

The President. What?

Q. I was just asking, shouldn't you be doing that with an axe?

The President. No, that was Abraham Lincoln.

Q. My mistake.

The President. I'll tell you what we ought to do. What we're doing is, we're cleaning this out. We're making a trail from the top to come down, over here. Do you all want to walk in here? It's kind of neat in here. These cliffs are pretty unusual from this perspective. And then—this is a very long canyon. I'll take you down, if you want to see where the mouth of the canyon is, and the trail was cut up in here. And then I've got another canyon, right next door, if you'd like to see that, that we've improved. It will give you a flavor for the ranch.

But what we're trying to do is to make these really beautiful cutouts available for anybody who wants to walk up in here. I think you'll see that we make them pretty accessible without disturbing the natural beauty of the place.

If you want the details, that was a dead hackberry. H-a-c-k—[*Laughter*]

Q. He's writing it down.

The President. Anyway, what will happen is, is that when the rainy season comes—this all gets damp in here—we'll fire up this pile of leaves and stuff and burn it. This canyon—you can see, behind you, all the erosion—this gets a lot of water coming through here. There's seven of these on the ranch, and when it rains, these all flow down toward the bottoms. Eventually, in this case, these canyons feed into the middle fork of the Bosque River. The guy from A&M we had out here,

he spotted about 17 or 18 different variety of hardwood down below.

So what do you want to do?

Q. Come down.

The President. Come on down here, or do you want to start from the bottom and walk up? We'll start from the bottom and walk up. I've got room for five people. We'll get the scribblers, AP and Reuters.

Q. Thank you.

[*At this point, the tour continued. When the transcript resumed, the President's remarks were joined in progress.*]

The President. —just use the cedar that we cut. Used a crowbar to dig the hole. We'll put another one below and then make sure the steps are—I've got a little more work. Do you see those two? Those are dead right there. Those are ash. Do you see the two trees there, the dead trees? I'll cut them out.

And so basically, what we've been doing in here, is we've been cutting out the dead trees, the trees that have fallen down, and some undergrowth, just to open it up, so that when you sit out here for a picnic, you've got a pretty good view of this beautiful canyon.

Q. Are you trying to make a hiking trail for people to use?

The President. Yes.

Q. Now would the doctor and the nurse both normally be here, or is it the chainsaw that brought them out?

The President. No, they're with me—like when I ran this morning, they were here. They go everywhere I go on the ranch.

Q. Not that they don't trust you with a chainsaw, huh?

The President. Well, they don't trust me with my running, either. [*Laughter*]

Q. Won't the rain erode the trail? How do you stop that?

The President. Pardon me?

Q. The rain—won't the water erode the trail? Do you have to keep redoing it?

The President. No, actually we're not going to put it on the creek bottom. You'll see, there's a series of flats, as you come up the canyon. The canyon is not uniformly steep. And so there will be—one side of the canyon will be steep, and the other side will