

1989 ANNUAL MEETING

1 Mr. President, our discussions in
2 this project even exceeded our expectations.

3 Another one of your predecessors,
4 Thomas Jefferson, also understood the need for
5 foreign markets, the importance of foreign languages
6 and the vital link between education and innovation.

7 He believed that America's
8 opportunities would not expand beyond our borders
9 unless we made the necessary investments within our
10 borders. And we agreed.

11 Two centuries later, chief
12 executives across this country are working with this
13 President to achieve Jefferson's vision of a safer
14 world for our people and a brighter future for our
15 children.

16 With that mission in mind, it is
17 my pleasure this morning to introduce the person who
18 can help our nation realize its promise and our
19 people reach their potential.

20 Ladies and gentlemen, I present to
21 you the President of the United States.

22 (A round of applause)

23 **PRESIDENT BUSH:** Thank you very much. Thank
24 you, Governor Baliles. I thank all of you.

1 Before I make my remarks, I want
2 to comment on a very disturbing report that we've
3 just heard.

4 There are unconfirmed reports that
5 Colonel Higgins has indeed been executed. And I had
6 planned to go on out to Nevada for another appearance
7 today and then to go to Oklahoma tonight, but this
8 matter is of such concern to me and to all of you and
9 to the American people that I think it's appropriate
10 that I go back to Washington.

11 Whether the report is true or not,
12 I know I speak for all here when I try to express to
13 the American people the sense of outrage that we all
14 feel about this kind of brutality, of this
15 uncalled-for terrorist.

16 This was a young American colonel
17 serving an international force, and it is incumbent
18 on all of us to try to rectify this situation, if at
19 all possible.

20 I have no more to share with you
21 on this, but -- We have not been able to confirm this
22 horrible report, but I will go back to Washington and
23 convene our top national security people and first
24 establish to the best of our ability if the report is

1 true and figure out what might conceivably be done.

2 So I'm sorry to bring to this
3 meeting a message of that nature, the bad news, but I
4 thought you would want to know about it.

5 Jerry, that's it. Thank you very
6 much.

7 I want to commend you on your
8 success as chairman of this group. I studied Latin
9 for four years. Soon you will be chairman emeritus.
10 E in Latin means out; meritus, damn well deserves to
11 be. I want to commend you -- that having been
12 said -- commend you on that. It's been a joy working
13 with you.

14 I want to salute our host and my
15 friend, Jim Thompson, a great governor, former NGA
16 chairman, who has rocked the world of Illinois
17 politics by announcing that he will not run for a
18 fifth term.

19 We were just getting used to him
20 out here, and now he's not going to run. But thank
21 you for your hospitality.

22 I would like to rise to John
23 Sununu's defense. He is not quiet and retiring.
24 That's all I'll say about him.

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But I think it is good to have a chief of staff who knows how the governors function and the importance of the governors in this whole federalist system.

I think he had mentioned Edgar Duwinski, a member of my cabinet, a good friend, long standing; and I want to salute him and also Secretary of Transportation, Illinois' own Sam Skinner, who is here with me today, both doing outstanding jobs, and Sam digging in now, working on a national transportation strategy.

Terry Branstad, the incoming president, I will say I look forward to working with you; and I hope we will have an era of real cooperation, just as we have with Governor Baliles.

Let's begin by saying what is the role of the governor in the American political life?

Well, the talk of a great observer of the 19th century observer once asked a country politician the same question. And the answer he got was this: The governor accounts for absolutely nothing and is paid only \$1200.

Well, you still can't get rich off a public salary, but today, I don't think there's any

1 question in the minds of the American people that the
2 office of governor accounts for an awful lot,
3 accounts for a great deal.

4 In fact, leadership in America is
5 increasingly the sum of your efforts and of your
6 vision, and that's why I consider myself a
7 federalist.

8 I was there when President Reagan
9 issued the executive order on federalism, and I want
10 you to know that I stand by it.

11 We believe in federalism, and yet
12 we are a people, one nation, indivisible. Just as we
13 share our cherished Constitution, so we also share
14 common challenges and responsibilities.

15 To cure our nations of illiteracy
16 and drug abuse and crime, we must act in tandem,
17 President with governor, governor with mayor, up and
18 down the line; and, in short, we've got to find our
19 collective link as a nation.

20 That's why I've come to Chicago to
21 meet with all of you fellow chief executives.

22 We share as executives a special
23 responsibility, and some describe it as a great
24 burden. But for us, if it is a great burden, if it

3
1 is a burden, it is one that is cheerfully accepted.
2 To sit where the buck stops, to resolve disputes, to
3 help those in need and to set a course for the future
4 to know a special kind of satisfaction.

5 In fact, our missions as
6 executives are so similar that many presidents have
7 called on you for guidance.

8 Teddy Roosevelt, who called the
9 nation's first conference of governors, the
10 forerunner of this association, convened the
11 governors of the White House. And he brought the
12 nation as governors together to call for conservation
13 for the end of the reckless denuding of our forest,
14 and they started a tradition that we are carrying on
15 today, working together as president and governors
16 for a cleaner environment.

17 I thought you might be interested
18 in a peripheral note here.

19 I've just gotten back from the
20 economic summit in Europe, and the whole question of
21 environment is on the minds of these western European
22 leaders unlike any time that I've ever seen.

23 I think that's a good thing, and I
24 think it is going to cause all of us to work together

1 internationally, just as my plea is here that we work
2 together inside our great country.

3 We have proposed, as you know, the
4 first major revision of the Clean Air Act in more
5 than a decade.

6 I read a headline in one of the
7 great newspapers of this country where some say it
8 didn't go far enough and others said it went too far.

9 I figured well, maybe we're not
10 doing too bad on it.

11 But it sets tough standards. It
12 gives trades and industry the flexibility needed to
13 reduce costs and break the long-standing legislative
14 law jam.

15 The potential for consensus is
16 there. The American people want clean air, and we
17 can work together to see that they get clean air.

18 Then there was another Roosevelt,
19 great President, Franklin D. Roosevelt, who called on
20 the governors to help him stem the financial crisis
21 of the great depression.

22 Today, we don't meet in a spirit
23 of immediate crisis, plenty of problems out there,
24 but the nation is fundamentally sound.

1 But the decline of our educational
2 system and the threats of crime and drugs, the
3 economic dependency of so many and, yes, that ever
4 present federal deficit and the problems that come
5 with it, these problems threaten to endanger the very
6 leadership position of America in the next century.

7 And for America to remain
8 competitive will require your best efforts and your
9 executive know-how.

10 The ultimate challenge, as
11 Governor Baliles put it, is to become again the
12 Yankee traders that we once were, and he's not
13 talking about George Steinbrenner. He is referring
14 to the clever ships. Your creative response to our
15 nation's competitive position is more than
16 perceptive; it's overlooking, an attribute to the
17 best kind of leadership.

18 At this economic summit that I
19 mentioned, the competitive position of our nation was
20 an underlying theme in the discussions of the great
21 economic issues of trade and monetary policy and
22 international debt, but no less important to America
23 was the start of my journey, that part that took us
24 to eastern Europe and central Europe.

1 Poland and Hungary today are not
2 the economic magnets that we find in western Europe
3 or the Pacific Rim, but I saw tremendous potential in
4 the awakening spirit of those lands.

5 It is absolutely amazing the
6 changes that are taking place on the economic front
7 there and on the political front as well. And the
8 beauty of it is that we can boost reform without
9 massive government-to-government programs.

10 We can do the most good as
11 American leaders by simply facilitating trade and
12 investment, by simply opening doors for opportunity
13 and encouraging those governments to move as fast as
14 they can towards privatization.

15 But to open these doors will
16 require leadership at every level of government.

17 You've already established a great
18 tradition of searching for those opportunities
19 abroad, and now I ask you to include Poland and
20 Hungary on your list.

21 While governors have no normal
22 role in foreign policy, you are becoming our economic
23 envoys and ambassadors of democracy. You are a new
24 force in restoring American international

1 competitiveness and expanding world markets for
2 American goods and services and, of course, your
3 focus is, and I think must be, on the critical
4 domestic issues.

5 As chief executives, we know
6 firsthand how crucial our social health is to the
7 future position of America, a nation in which half of
8 our youth is ignorant of geography, in which drugs
9 are rampant, in which a substantial proportion of the
10 population knows little hope; and such a nation will
11 not long remain competitive.

12 And in the final analysis,
13 improving our schools, driving out drugs and bringing
14 hope and opportunity to those who need it most, these
15 are issues of our national well-being, even our
16 national security.

17 First and foremost are our
18 children and their education. Working together, we
19 can raise the level of learning in the classrooms of
20 America.

21 On April 5, I sent a package to
22 the Congress, an educational reform package, based on
23 four principles rooted in the practical experience of
24 the states.

1 To have reform, excellence in
2 achievement must be recognized and rewarded.

3 To have reform, federal dollars
4 should be targeted to those most in need.

5 To have reform, we need
6 flexibility and choice, choice for parents, choice
7 for schools in their selection of teachers and
8 principles.

9 And finally, the essence of reform
10 is accountability in education and reward for those
11 schools that show progress.

12 If implemented, I believe that
13 these measures will restore the quality of American
14 education and redeem the future of millions of
15 children, but there is more to be done.

16 On June 5, I asked the business
17 community to study what the private sector can do, to
18 energize and support educational reform. There are
19 wonderful programs in effect now for business leaders
20 to assign people from their companies to help in the
21 local school districts. These have been pushed and
22 fostered by many of you around this table.

23 I want to renew my pledge to
24 assemble the governors in a summit, to share ideas

1 and to explore options for educational progress.

2 Only twice before have the
3 governors met with the President on an issue of vital
4 national importance, and now there will be a third
5 such conference and historic meeting on education.

6 And so I invite you to work with
7 me at a governors' summit on education to be held on
8 September 27 and September 28.

9 We have not yet selected a place,
10 but we want to go forward and do that.

11 (A round of applause).

12 **PRESIDENT BUSH:** Together we can find ways to
13 strengthen our schools, to enlarge opportunities and
14 to improve our nation's educational performance.

15 As chief executives, we also see
16 drugs and crimes as the most harrowing domestic
17 threat to the future of America.

18 I proposed on May 15 a common
19 sense approach to detour the criminals' use of
20 weapons, to reform the criminal justice system, to
21 enhance enforcement and prosecution and to expand
22 prison capacity to ensure both the certainty and the
23 severity of punishment.

24 I propose the hiring of 825 new

1 federal agents and staff, 1600 new prosecutors and
2 staff and an additional \$1 billion for federal prison
3 construction, and I proposed tough new laws,
4 including mandatory principles onto prison terms, no
5 deals without cooperation and the death penalty for
6 those who murder our police officers.

7 But I need your leadership to see
8 results.

9 Work with me. Toughen your laws
10 and put the worst offenders behind bars. If you do,
11 we will take back the streets.

12 Finally, America cannot continue
13 to lead the world if we lag in providing opportunity
14 at home.

15 Last year, as you know, Congress
16 and the administration enacted major welfare reform
17 legislation, the Family Support Act of 1988, and this
18 act grew out of a consensus that the well-being of
19 children depends on more than material needs.

20 Children need a family environment that encourages
21 self-sufficiency, in a word, character.

22 With this in mind, I reestablished
23 the low income opportunity board within the White
24 House, and I've asked that board to assist you in the

1 complex and time-consuming process of obtaining these
2 federal approvals for experiments in state welfare
3 reform.

4 So many innovative policies have
5 come from the states, so we want to work together to
6 keep your administrations free to experiment, free to
7 be creative.

8 In fact, I've asked our domestic
9 policy council and the low income opportunity board
10 to make flexible the guiding principle so that states
11 will have greater freedom to experiment with welfare
12 reform.

13 I'm pleased to announce that this
14 week the DPC, domestic policy council, has committed
15 itself to give you greater room to maneuver and to
16 grant waiver requests as quickly as possible.

17 Many of our responsibilities
18 overlap in education, law enforcement and welfare.
19 At times, there's been friction, a lot of friction
20 between the states and the feds. And perhaps what we
21 need between the federal government and the states is
22 friendly competition, well-known to Chicagoans.

23 Here, along the majestic lakefront
24 sky line, there's been an ongoing competition among

1 developers to retain the title of the world's tallest
2 building. You talk about one-upmanship, this is it,
3 a whole new meaning.

4 Yet this is the kind of
5 one-upmanship that builds, not destroys, that lifts,
6 not lowers, that takes us all a little closer, a
7 little closer to the stars.

8 I have committed the powers of my
9 office to lift America, starting in the classrooms,
10 in the streets, working together. I am absolutely
11 convinced that we can achieve a national consensus in
12 spite of the overriding budgetary problems that the
13 federal government faces.

14 Working together, we can make the
15 next century an American century.

16 Thank you. Thank you all for what
17 you do for this country, and I'm just delighted to
18 have been with you.

19 Thank you very much.

20 (A round of applause)

21 GOVERNOR BALILES: Thank you, Mr. President.

22 The president has agreed to take a
23 couple of questions.

24 I'll call on our vice chairman,