

# Remarks on Administration Goals to Senior Presidential Appointees

**September 8, 1987**

Thank you very much, but I think George and I should be applauding you. I thought it'd be good to get together now that we've all rested from our summer vacations, although it's true summer vacations aren't always restful. You know that that leads to a story. [Laughter]

There was a fellow that was on his way to a mountain resort, and a policeman stopped him and said, "Did you know you're driving without taillights?" And the driver hopped out of the car. He was so badly shaken that the officer took pity on him and said, "Well, now, wait a minute. Calm down. It's not that serious an infraction." The fellow said, "It may not mean much to you, but to me it means I've lost my trailer, a wife, and four kids!" [Laughter]

But it's good to come together as we face these final 16 months -- only 16 months. From this moment on, we must approach each new task with the same sense of urgency that we first brought to Washington back in 1981. The challenge is no less, and the goals are still attainable. If I could interject something here: Political life has always reminded me a little of my former career. And the whole philosophy was when you come to town open big. And now, well, it's time for an even bigger finish and a good curtain call.

On the domestic side, we face one more important task -- or no more important task, I should say, then securing the confirmation to the Supreme Court of Judge Robert Bork. [Applause] Well, we all know that since his nomination Judge Bork has come under attack for being some kind of a right-wing ideologue. We also know those charges are wrong. Judge Bork believes in judicial restraint, and this means reading laws in the way intended by elected officials and pass them and not reshaping them according to judicial whim. Now, where the law deals with moral issues, Judge Bork has said -- and I quote -- "The moral content of the law must be given by the morality of the framer, or the legislator, never the morality of the judge." So, consider that irony. Some legislators are organizing opposition to a judge who believes in deferring to them and in faithfully abiding by the intent of the laws they pass. The country wants and deserves a Supreme Court that doesn't make the laws but interprets the laws.

Judge Bork is superbly qualified -- one of the outstanding legal minds in the country and a judge's judge. He's also a people's judge: a judge who believes profoundly in the Constitution that protects the people's rights and in government by the people themselves. I'm convinced that in the end he will be confirmed, but there's no denying that it's going to be a tough fight. I'll need the help of every person in this room, especially those of you who deal regularly with the Congress. I have a feeling -- well, I was going to ask a question here, but when I mentioned his name, I don't need to ask the question. I was going to ask it, you know, to limber us all up -- that when it comes to restoring judicial restraint as the guiding principle of American courts, when it comes to winning the confirmation of Judge Bork to the Supreme Court he so richly deserves, I was going to say, can I count on you? You've already answered that question.

But next, the budget process. Excuse me; it's probably more accurate to say the so-called budget process -- delay after delay, missed deadline after missed deadline, a process that's not reliable or credible. And consider what it turns out. There's the Federal program that will spend millions to build luxury hotels, restaurants, and condominiums -- that's right, condominiums. As I remarked when I spoke about this in Indiana recently, I barely had time to figure out what yuppies were before Congress started to subsidize them. [Laughter] And there are the boondoggle public work projects; the farm programs that provide little or nothing for many family farms but that have paid one already-wealthy farmer more than \$13 million dollars; the \$8 million Congress voted this year to establish -- get ready -- a center for the study of weeds.

It's time to bring an end to the yearly budget fiasco, time to enact the measures that we have put forward as part of our Economic Bill of Rights. And let me say in some areas we're not waiting for Congress to act. A new initiative I announced as part of my Economic Bill of Rights is privatization. Last week I appointed a private -- or a bipartisan commission, I should say, to report back to me on ways that we can permanently reduce the size of the Federal Government by returning appropriate activities to the private sector.

But central to the entire effort to bring discipline to the Federal budget will be passage of the line-item veto and a balanced budget amendment. On the balanced budget amendment, a special note: 32 States have already adopted resolutions calling for a constitutional convention for the purpose of drafting a balanced budget amendment -- 32 -- that's out of the 34 that are needed before a convention would actually take place. And I can tell you that every time I have mentioned balanced budget out across the country, in addresses to as many as 30,000 people in one outdoor meeting, they break into applause at that term. And it seems that here in Washington, I think -- well, I would prefer to see the Congress show the discipline to pass a balanced budget amendment on its own. But if Congress refuses to do so, then I think we'll agree it will be our intention to take the case directly to the State legislatures. You know, I'd sort of enjoy speaking back in Sacramento again. [Laughter] On August 12th I challenged the Congress to give us an up-or-down vote on our balanced budget amendment and to negotiate on every spending item, and that offer still stands.

In foreign affairs, we're engaged in intensive negotiations with the Soviet Union on arms control, as you well know, negotiations that hold out the hope of actually cutting both sides' nuclear arsenals. And then in Nicaragua there is the urgent and crucial matter of establishing democracy. In recent weeks the issue in Central America seems at times to have become confused: Who is proposing what? How many likely votes are there on Capitol Hill for this or that? But the real issue has never changed. The real issue is peace and democracy in Central America and the national security of the United States.

As President Arias of Costa Rica has said, there will never be peace in Central America until Nicaragua achieves "true democracy." If the other side wants peace, there's no reason for delay; let them democratize now. Democracy requires an immediate cease-fire with the freedom fighters; a general amnesty and the negotiated release of the thousands of political prisoners now held in Sandinista jails; a firm date for free, contested, and internationally supervised national elections; and the immediate recognition of fundamental human rights -- rights including

freedom of speech, freedom of the press, freedom of worship. The time has come to focus on the goal to bring peace and democracy throughout Central America and especially in Nicaragua.

Let's be clear about one thing. We will not abandon our friends in Nicaragua! [Applause] Bless you. We share their desire for peace, prosperity, and democracy; and we will support them in that quest just as we've supported them in the past. We will not accept a mere semblance of democracy. We got to this point through efforts of the over 15,000 freedom fighters struggling, and some of them dying, for freedom for their country. It is their country, their future, and if the recent peace agreement does not work, let's resolve that they will be able to count on our continuing assistance until Nicaragua is a genuine democracy. [Applause] Well, thank you. You've made it evident that today, as always, we stand with those brave Nicaraguan men and women who are working and praying and, yes, fighting for human liberty.

More than 6 years behind us and just 6 [16] more months to come. I want you to know how grateful I am and how deeply grateful for all that each of you has done -- for all that testifying on the Hill, for all the travel, all the speeches, and all the interviews, for all the support and for all your dedication. I know these past few months haven't been easy -- believe me, I know. And maybe the worst of it has been that at times it seemed as though events were simply happening to us. As one wit has defined history: ``It's just one darned thing after another." [Laughter] But history doesn't just happen; it's made. And even in the most difficult moments of these past months, we went right on making history, right on striving to turn our vision of America into reality.

And what do we see: a story of intense concern for the cause of human freedom in our own hemisphere; a story of spreading democracy from the Pacific rim to Latin America and beyond; a story of more Americans employed, in better jobs, than ever before; a story of more for the people and less for government. But we can't stop now. There is much yet to be done to build in those safeguards that bring low inflation, low interest rates, and increased productivity. We're at the crossroads today, and the country's waiting to see which way we'll turn. Sixteen months more for our own generation, but above all, for our children and grandchildren, let us go on making history together.

And may I conclude with a little Irish blessing -- although, some suggest it's a curse: May those who love us, love us. And those who don't love us, may God turn their hearts. And if He doesn't turn their hearts, may He turn their ankles so we'll know them by their limping. [Laughter]

Thank you all, and God bless you. I don't know what you're going to do, but George and I are going to see if we can't get back to work. [Laughter]

*Note: The President spoke at 11:31 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his opening and closing remarks, the President referred to the Vice President.*