

**Remarks by
U.S. Secretary of Commerce Donald L. Evans
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Thank you. I want to thank Bill Reinsch and Michael Jordan for inviting me to join you tonight - and all of you for being here.

Bill did leave out one key fact in that kind introduction. I'm the second engineer to serve as Secretary of Commerce. The first was Herbert Hoover. He went on to be President. I've already told President Bush not to worry! I love the job I have.

And I look forward to working with the new members of the President's economic team. John Snow is a well respected and highly successful business leader, who guided CSX during a period of tremendous change.

Our nation is in a time of tremendous change. Tonight , I'd like to talk about one aspect of that: international trade.

You recall when President Bush came to office, the United States was not even in the game on trade. Where are we now? I'm proud to say that the United States is back where it belongs - in the lead, driving the process of trade liberalization. The reason for that change is simple. President Bush has delivered on his commitment to free trade.

Let's review the record

First, President Bush established that Congress could trust him as an advocate for America's economic interests at the negotiating table. That led to the passage of Trade Promotion Authority.

Second, the President's leadership allowed us to finalize agreements on China's accession to the WTO ... and on a free trade agreement with Jordan.

Third, the President's leadership brought new energy to negotiations on a Free Trade Agreement of the Americas ... and to free trade talks with Chile that had been stalled for years.

Fourth, with the President's leadership, we are close to concluding negotiations with Singapore. We have launched talks with Central America. And the President has sent notice to Congress of his intent to initiate free trade talks with South Africa, Australia, and Morocco.

Finally, and, most importantly, we have launched a new round of multilateral negotiations in the World Trade Organization.

Let me take a moment here to thank you for all your help in moving the trade agenda forward: your support for the passage of TPA ... your leadership and work on the President's WTO proposal to end tariffs on industrial and consumer goods ... your advocacy for a world clear of barriers to human freedom.

Just before the historic November elections, President Bush sent Congress a new national security strategy for the 21st Century. He set out a clear vision for the safety of our nation in a time of uncertainty - a time of world-wide struggle between the forces of good and evil.

That strategy rests on three pillars: First, as Americans, we will defend peace by defeating the forces of terrorism. Second, we will preserve peace by strengthening our ties with friends around the world who share our goal of a stable, peaceful, and prosperous world. Third, we will extend the reach of peace by sharing the blessings of freedom with all mankind.

Tonight, with the remainder of the time I have with you, I want to focus on this third pillar - sharing the blessings of freedom.

President Bush understands that we Americans have a unique responsibility in the world. We are the guardians of a dream that draws men and women from across the globe. We call it the American dream. But it's really the dream of all mankind - to have a world that lives in peace and prosperity.

Six billion people live on this planet. Three billion of them live on less than two dollars a day. Too many people are without work, without hope, in too many parts of the world. That's not right, and that's not good.

Trade speaks to those needs. Trade unleashes economic potential and economic growth. Trade creates and reinforces the institutions and framework that sustain democracy and freedom. Trade creates the opportunity for people everywhere to realize their dreams.

Government has a role to play. But government doesn't create wealth. Government doesn't create prosperity. All government can do - and all it should do - is create the right conditions for you to create wealth. Our job is to keep the runway clear, so you can soar as high as innovation and initiative take you.

But, what that implies is that you, in the private sector, share the responsibility for asserting American leadership on trade. You share the responsibility for achieving a more peaceful world, the more compassionate world, the President envisions.

Here's what that responsibility means. You, the private sector, are stewards of "compassionate capitalism." As stewards of "compassionate capitalism, you have a great responsibility to your companies, your shareholders, your employees and your communities. You also share a responsibility for people all over the globe achieving their dreams. President Bush put it this way: "We have a responsibility to build a world that is not only safer, but better."

Let me put that responsibility, that challenge, in context for you.

According to UNICEF, some seven million children die each year of malnutrition. The World Bank reports that a billion people in urban and rural areas lack access to electricity and energy.

Still more seriously, the World Health Organization tells us that over two million people die a year of dysentery due to bad water.

And that 40 million people worldwide have HIV/AIDS, which is now the leading cause of death in Sub-Saharan Africa.

Building a better, safer, more compassionate world means addressing the needs of those people as well as are own.

The critics of trade would say that free markets are the cause of those problems. What President Bush and all of you know is that free markets are not the problem. They are the solution.

So, what must we do? In my view, there are two steps we must take. First, we must reinforce the connection between free markets and the basic human freedom to which all men and women are entitled. Wherever we go, we have to explain how free and open trade around the globe is an

essential part of building a "world that is not only safer, but better." Second, our action globally - particularly the actions of you in the American business community - must match our rhetoric if we are to build a safer and better world.

Over the past two years, my job as Secretary has taken me all over the world. I've found that all too often people don't see the good in America. They say we're too materialistic. That we don't care. That they're not sure they can trust us to do the right thing.

And yet, when American companies do business overseas, they bring more than business to the table. They bring the American values of service, volunteerism, compassion and democracy with them. In every country I travel to, I visit a hospital or school supported by an American company. Last week in Lima, Peru, I visited the Huachipa School, which gets funding from the BellSouth Foundation of Atlanta. Small children were in school learning, instead of working in brick factory.

And I want to thank the members of the Council for the good work you do in communities abroad as well as here at home.

That brings me to my final point. What comes back to me again and again in my travels is this: people all across the globe want the same things we do - security, good health and opportunity for our families.

When I was in South Africa last month, there was a deeply disturbing story in the newspaper. It was about a mother in Zambia. She had sold everything she had, her household goods, even her clothing. And now, according to the report, she was trying to sell two of her daughters so she could get food to feed her other eight children.

A part of her problem had to do with trade. Significantly, the Zambian Government has balked at accepting American food aid because of European concerns that it might contain genetically modified organisms.

There are two lessons to draw from this story. First, no parent on earth should be faced with such a horrendous choice. And it is our responsibility to do something about it. Second, we must confront Europe with the human damage that results from their ill-founded attempts to protect their farmers from American competition through junk science.

Let me end on this. I'm an optimist by nature. So, I believe trade will keep expanding, and building a better world. You in the private sector have a significant role in this effort. You're our strongest allies in advancing the cause of a safer, better, more compassionate world.

The story of America is one of breathtaking accomplishment - of always reaching higher than our grasp. Our economy has been shaped by triumphs nothing short of staggering ... and by ingenuity so astonishing it could only be a gift from God.

Ultimately, our challenge is to harness these talents to build a world that trades in freedom ... a world of peace and prosperity... a world where no mother ever feels compelled to sacrifice one child to feed another. In this room, there is the power to create such a world.

I look forward to working with you to make that world a reality.

Thank you, and God bless you.