

Thank you very much for the privilege of sharing this evening with you and for the warmth of your friendship, for the dedication of your purpose. And may God bless the United States, the greatest country on the face of the Earth. Thank you very much.

*Note: The President spoke at 7:20 p.m. in the Los Angeles Ballroom at the Century Plaza Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Jerry Weintraub and Rabbi Marvin Hier, board member and dean of the Simon Wiesenthal Center; the singing group Wilson Phillips; actor Tony Danza, master of ceremonies for the dinner; Arnold Schwarzenegger, Chairman of the Presi-*

*dent's Counsel on Physical Fitness and Sports; Gayle Wilson, wife of Gov. Pete Wilson of California; Senator John Seymour; Representative David Dreier; Thomas Bradley, mayor of Los Angeles; Ron Ronen, Counsel General of Israel; humanitarians Simon Wiesenthal and Elie Wiesel; Swedish diplomat Raoul Wallenberg; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; former Senator Rudy Boschwitz; Robert C. Frasure, National Security Council Director for African Affairs; Irvin Hicks, Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs; Robert G. Houdek, Charge d'Affaires at the U.S. Embassy in Ethiopia; and Secretary of State James A. Baker III.*

## Exchange With Reporters Aboard Air Force One

June 17, 1991

*The President.* We received a second letter from President Gorbachev, and it relates to the arms control situation, the START differences. We view it as a positive response. Obviously, when you're dealing with these details on START, when you're dealing with highly technical issues, it's hard to categorize letters of this nature. But the tone was good, the determination to reach agreement was positive. And we're looking very closely at the details, which I think would be most inappropriate to discuss here. We're down to some—as I mentioned the other day coming out here—some very fine points on arms control.

So, that's two letters in a very short period of time—the first, very positive tone on the grain credits. We're looking forward to a visit this week, I think it is, from Mr. Yeltsin when he comes here. And this last, the second letter on START, I view it as very important.

I know your next question will be, well, when will we have a summit meeting to initial something or sign something on START? I just don't know the answer to that. General Scowcroft can maybe follow up on it. But we don't have the answer. I'm still holding the dates at the end of June and the end of July, and I'm hoping

that we can move as quickly as possible to conclude it. But I have to say this is very positive.

### *Soviet-U.S. Relations*

*Q.* Did the letter discuss any kind of timetable on wrapping all this up?

*The President.* I don't think so. It didn't discuss—you mean on dates? No. But what it did is to respond to some of our suggestions on START and to build on some suggestions that they had previously made. But I'd say it's a narrowing of differences, and that's what we're—we're in agreement here where it's 96 percent, or, you know, close to it, concluded. I remember Moiseyev sitting in the Oval Office saying, "This much separates us," just this much. And so, I think maybe it's a little less today. But we've got to take a look at it.

*Q.* Is this a response to——

*The President.* I wouldn't say breakthrough, but I think it's progress.

*Q.* Is it a response to the ideas that were put forth in Lisbon?

*The President.* Yes.

*Q.* And do you think that Baker and Bessmertnykh are going to be able to kind of tie this up in Berlin?

*The President.* We keep going in increments. We're going to try. They're going to be in touch now. I think our U.S. policy—we've got to hammer out maybe a detail or two in light of this letter. But yes, that's exactly what we want to do, is to get it done. And I'd have to say I'm a little more optimistic about it.

*Q.* How close?

*The President.* Well, I can't say. As I said, Moiseyev said, "this far." Now we'll move it down to "that far." I think people agree on that. I don't think that they think there's a wide difference. What I do think is that some of the differences that remain are fairly difficult.

*Q.* —still about a summit this summer?

*The President.* Well, I'm talking that way, and I think President Gorbachev would like that. I think it's in our interest. We've got lots of subjects to talk about in addition to this. But this one, obviously, is kind of a *sine qua non*. We can't go forward—that means—[laughter]—something that's important, without which—but, no, it's progress. I don't want to overstate it. I don't want to get hopes up. But yes, on terms of holding dates and trying to get a summit meeting, I really want to have it. I mean, we'll see President Gorbachev in London, notwithstanding. But there are a lot of bilateral issues that we need to talk about. And following the Yeltsin visit, there may be even more. So, we'll keep plugging away on the thing.

*Q.* There was some talk of taking some of the final technical details like the really nitty-gritty on telemetry and kind of kicking that down the road, leaving that to a joint commission or something like that.

*The President.* I don't think we can duck the—well, here's the expert. I don't think we can duck the—

*Q.* Do you want all the specific language wrapped up and in the treaty?

*The President.* Well no, we'll have a meeting without having every "t" crossed and every "i" dotted on a treaty. But on a question of this importance that you mentioned, encryption of data, we've got to make progress. I mean, that's one of the remaining issues, frankly, and I have not gotten from our experts—one of them who is standing next to me—exactly how much

progress we may have made there. But we can't duck that. We don't want to mislead the United States Congress, and there's no point in suggesting that there's not a problem when there is. But that's one that we have to make real progress on, and they know it.

*Q.* Is there still a problem there?

*The President.* Well, we're going to wait and see when we get the analysis, but I'm afraid we haven't solved it all, let me just put it that way.

*Q.* —dot every "i" and cross every "t", isn't that how you got in trouble with CFE?

*The President.* No. We crossed every "t" and signed a treaty. Then we had a little problem on interpretation. That's very different. What I'm saying is we've got to narrow down these major issues to get them to agreement. But there's a step then between that and writing out an X-number-of-page treaty. And that's going to be highly complicated drafting, but the drafters will have these problems resolved before they start. So, that's what I was referring to.

#### *South Africa*

*Q.* In South Africa today there was another—

*Q.* On registration.

*The President.* Well, we're going to analyze it carefully. The law, our law, says lift the sanctions when these four out of five conditions are complied with. So, we have to—

*Q.* Is there still a problem with political prisoners? Is that—

*The President.* Let Brent respond to that. [Laughter]

*Note: The exchange took place in the morning while the President was en route from Los Angeles, CA, to Grand Junction, CO. The following persons were referred to: President Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union; Boris Yeltsin, President of the Republic of Russia; Brent Scowcroft, Assistant to the President for National Security Affairs; Mikhail Moiseyev, Chief of the General Staff of the Soviet Union; Secretary of State James A. Baker III; and Soviet Foreign Minister Aleksandr Bessmertnykh. The final questions referred to the elimination*

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*by the South African Government of the law which classified all South Africans by race at birth. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.*

## Remarks to Community Members in Grand Junction, Colorado *June 17, 1991*

What a day. What a magnificent day. Thank you very, very much, Governor Romer, and all of you. Let me just say at the outset, I wish all of you—not all at the same time—but all of you could have been riding in that limousine from the airport. There is no way that I can begin to tell you how emotional Barbara and I felt about that warm welcome to this wonderful corner of God's Earth. You really made us feel at home. And you talk about patriotism and values—it's right here. Thank you very, very much.

Let me first salute the Governor, about whom I'll have more to say in a minute, doing an absolutely sensational job chairing our National Education Goals Panel. I want to single out our leaders of the State legislature who are partners with the Governor in this effort. My friend, longtime friend, Ted Strickland, the president of the Colorado Senate; Chuck Berry, the speaker of the Colorado house; and all the other distinguished individuals on the steering committee for Colorado 2000.

And it's not just the big names. I just met with the leaders in this community who are leaders for revolutionary change in education. We had a fascinating seminar and I learned a lot from them. I salute your Congressman Ben Campbell, who's doing a great job for this district. Dr. Rosier, President Kieft, and others who—those are just two of the many that joined us for this panel I referred to. And, of course, to our outstanding Secretary of Education, Lamar Alexander. He is leading this country in a wonderful new direction.

A word about your geography. On the way in I was struck by the majestic views of the Grand Mesa, that great big table that looks like just the kind of place where God might have done His homework or put down the palette He used to paint the

sky. Some beauty. You are very, very lucky.

And I thought, as we drove in, about the vast frontiers that lie out here. And some will say that America's frontiers have been fully explored, developed; some will even say lost. But one frontier knows no limits, needs constant development, and cannot be lost. And that's the frontier of the American mind, the unlimited vista of American imagination.

As a people, our love of learning has guided every step of our progress. I love it when Barbara Bush, committed to literacy and education as she is, comes home and tells me these moving tales of how kids are trying to struggle against adversity to learn, how adults learning to read create a new dimension in their lives. And I might say, with some little husbandly pride, the Silver Fox is doing one heck of a job for education.

The Northwest Ordinance of 1787 declared this: "Knowledge, being necessary to good government and the happiness of mankind, schools and the means of education shall forever be encouraged." Now that same need to encourage education brings us together today, 204 years later. You can think of education as a competitiveness issue, or an economic issue—but above all, education in America is a moral imperative.

Thomas Jefferson knew, and Eastern Europe recently reminded us, that the powers of any society rest ultimately with the people themselves. Education provides the grounding in ideas and values crucial to maintaining democracy and prosperity. It serves as our greatest source of social, economic, and yes, moral power.

No domestic program has greater influence over our future. None attracts more attention or generates more passion on the part of our people. And none will have a higher priority with this President than