

about will be coming up.

Q. Do you think the invasion might hamper the current Mideast peace talks?

The President. You missed it. I'm not going to take any questions. Thanks.

Q. Thank you.

[At this point, one group of journalists left the Oval Office, and a second group entered.]

Q. Are relations with Sweden different since Carl Bildt took over?

The President. Put it this way: I don't think they could be much better. And we're very happy with the relations with Sweden. We view it, incidentally, as a very important bilateral relationship. And I have great respect for what this gentleman on my right is doing and what he has already accomplished. And he's already had a very good, thorough discussion with the Secretary of State, and now I look forward to having one with him. But I welcome Prime Minister Bildt here, and just to say he comes to a fertile territory because there's an awful lot of respect for what he's doing, right here in this Oval Office, the State Department, all across our Government.

Q. Do you really have time with Sweden after the setback in New Hampshire?

The President. Yes, I've got time for it.

Q. Shouldn't you put America first, to quote the famous—

The President. I'd like to think America is first. But that's the way I look at it. But I don't think any President would look at it differently. But we are going to stay engaged around the world. We've got a leadership role, and we're working closely with leaders from different countries. And clearly, Sweden is a very important country. I can learn a lot from him—

Q. What can you learn?

The President. —about what's happening in Eastern Europe, for example, what's happening in the Baltics, what's happening in Europe itself. And I can tell him that we plan to stay engaged. And no domestic politics is going to dissuade us from that.

Q. What specific roles do you see Sweden—

The President. Listen guys, this isn't a press conference. This is what we call a photo op. But I just really wanted to say, with the Swedish journalists here, a warm welcome to this very able Prime Minister. We're just so pleased he's here.

Thank you all very much.

Note: The exchange began at 11:03 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks at the Departure Ceremony for Prime Minister Carl Bildt of Sweden

February 20, 1992

Mr. Prime Minister, I am delighted to have welcomed you on your first official visit to Washington and to have shared very profitable, congenial talks.

Prime Minister Bildt comes here at a time when Europe is being transformed and when Sweden itself is beginning a new chapter in its history. As the Prime Minister remarked on his election night last September, the winds of political change blowing through Europe have finally reached Sweden.

Well, he understands well his nation's past. Just more than 100 years ago, his

great-great-grandfather was Prime Minister. But even more, Prime Minister Bildt represents a rising generation of leadership for a people seeking a new role in Europe and a new birth of freedom and initiative in Swedish domestic policy.

We welcome Sweden's desire to play a more active part in the emerging global community. The Prime Minister is committed to democracy, to free markets. And I know that as active partners in the common endeavor to create a free, open, and prosperous world, the United States and Sweden will make a real difference.

Feb. 20 / Administration of George Bush, 1992

Sweden and the U.S. share a deep and unswerving commitment to peace, and Sweden is a vital partner in our global non-proliferation efforts. A model peacekeeper, Sweden has shown its commitment to this function of collective security many times, with distinction, in the United Nations system. Sweden has taken a firm stand against terrorism, supporting our efforts to bring to justice those who sabotaged Pan Am Flight 103. And during the Gulf war, Sweden provided humanitarian and economic assistance.

Our partnership in the service of freedom and democracy is not a new one. Americans and Swedes share more than 350 years of friendship, dating back to 1638 when the Kingdom of Sweden established a colony along the Christina River in Delaware. American patriots of Swedish origin fought in our Revolutionary War and signed the Declaration of Independence. Sweden was

one of the first nations to sign a treaty of friendship and commerce with a newly independent United States.

That legacy of partnership continues today on contemporary issues, for example, through the new investor visa arrangements our Government agreed upon today. And after today's talks I am confident that this friendship will continue to flourish.

Mr. Prime Minister, let me explain to you our sincere thanks for this new spirit of cooperation and friendship. It strengthens our relations. And your visit has clearly helped build the basis for a solid partnership as we face together the challenges that lie ahead.

Thank you for coming our way. And the best of luck to you, sir.

Note: The President spoke at 1:19 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on Senate Action on Energy Legislation

February 20, 1992

Last night the Senate passed S. 2166, the National Energy Security Act of 1992, which marks a substantial milestone in implementing the President's national energy strategy issued one year ago today. This legislation will lead to the creation of hundreds of thousands of jobs and keep billions of dollars from flowing overseas for the purchase of foreign oil between now and the

year 2010. The bill includes increased conservation, promotes the use of alternative fuels for motor vehicles, and permits greater use of natural gas. We are extremely pleased that the Senate passed the President's legislation, and we urge the House to also act soon on this vital administration program.

Remarks to the American Legislative Exchange Council

February 21, 1992

Thank you for the welcome. May I thank Fred Noye and Sam Brunelli and all the others assembled here. This has become an annual ritual, one that I look forward to very, very much. I don't know whether Jack Kemp is here—he was going to be; been here. And Sam spoke. I have great confidence in both of them. But I really wanted

just to come over and say a few words, express my greetings to all of you.

Thinking of ALEC, I wanted to talk here about how you get things done, the key to good government. And Americans, I think, sensible ones, know that the Federal Government simply cannot do everything and shouldn't even try. It could get the job