

self-employed people.

But I think that the providers system we have in America is very good now. And I think we ought to leave the doctors, the hospitals, all the private providers and private choice in providers intact, but we'll have to do some more in rural areas especially, and in inner cities to provide for some assistance just to get doctors and nurses and clinics out there in places that are terribly isolated. But the fundamental system is sound. It's the insurance and the coverage that is messed up. The delivery system—if you've health care in America, you're getting pretty good health care.

Thank you. I've got to go, sorry.

Representative Dan Rostenkowski

Q. Could you comment on Chairman Rostenkowski's situation? The buzz among Indiana Republicans that I spoke to today was that that's the real story. It's not policy, but it's practical

politics, and if he's indicted you're really dead in the water.

The President. Well, I don't agree with any of that, but I can't comment on something that hasn't happened. I have no way of knowing, and I think it would be irresponsible for me to do that. I mean, I'm a public official. I don't know what the facts are. We'll just have to see what happens, and I have no reason to believe that the conference won't proceed and produce a report and the Congress won't vote on it no matter what.

Q. [*Inaudible*—Stevens says that you are holding up the whole investigation to get the budget over with.

The President. Well, you know that's not true, don't you?

Q. Well, of course, I know that's not true. We have to ask.

NOTE: The interview began at 4:07 p.m. at the Sheraton Chicago Hotel.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With Congressional Leaders July 27, 1993

Economic Program

Q. Mr. President, are these your “delay in gridlock” friends?

The President. These are my friends. This group had always supported an aggressive approach to deficit reduction, the balanced approach.

Middle East Peace Talks

Q. Are you sure?

Why is Secretary Christopher coming back?

The President. Because I want to talk with him about the Middle East before he goes there.

Q. Do you think the peace process is in jeopardy, sir?

The President. Well, I hope not. I certainly have no reason to believe that it is, but obviously

I'm concerned about it. I think the Syrians have shown commendable restraint so far. And I don't think we should let Hezbollah and all these groups that don't want anything good to happen in the Middle East derail the peace process by what they do. I don't think we should, any of us, should allow that. I mean, I really want something to happen there. So I'm very hopeful. But I thought that in view of the events there, that he ought to come home, and we ought to have a conversation about it before he goes to the Middle East.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:20 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.