

Announcement of Senior Executive Service Appointments November 4, 1993

The President today approved seven men and women for Senior Executive Service posts at the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the Department of Labor, and the Agency for International Development, U.S. International Development Cooperation Agency.

"I am pleased to announce the addition of these hard-working men and women to my administration," the President said.

Department of Housing and Urban Development

Jeanne K. Engel, General Deputy Assistant Secretary for Housing, Federal Housing Commissioner

Art Agnos, Regional Administrator, Region IX
Margery Austin Turner, Deputy Assistant Secretary for Research, Evaluation, and Monitoring, Office of Policy Development and Research

Department of Labor

Edmundo A. Gonzales, Deputy Assistant Secretary, Office of the American Workplace
Oliver B. Quinn, Deputy Solicitor of Labor, Office of the Solicitor

U.S. International Development Cooperation Agency

Nan Borton, Director, Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance, Bureau for Food & Humanitarian Assistance, Agency for International Development

Ramon E. Daubon, Deputy Assistant Administrator, Bureau of Latin America and the Caribbean, Agency for International Development

NOTE: Biographies of the appointees were made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Remarks on Establishing the Bipartisan Commission on Entitlement Reform and an Exchange With Reporters November 5, 1993

The President. First of all, I want to thank the leaders of Congress who are here and make a couple of comments, if I might. I am delighted that now both Houses have acted on the crime legislation. I congratulate the House and the Senate, and I look forward to working with them on getting the strongest possible crime bill out we can and hopefully meeting that goal that I have had for a long time now of putting another 100,000 police officers on the street, which I am convinced will do more in less time to lower the crime rate than anything else. I also hope that we can now move forward to a debate in the Senate and the House on the Brady bill. I hope that it will pass before the Senate goes home and the House goes home.

Finally, let me make one other preliminary comment. During all the debates on the budget, many of which were acrimonious and partisan, there was virtually 100 percent understanding on the part of every Member of Congress that, over the long run, our ability to bring our budg-

et closer to balance and to free up money for needed investments required us to take a hard look at the entitlements part of our budget.

The budget that we have just adopted has been very successful in many ways. It's helped to bring interest rates to historically low levels. We've got investment coming back into the country. We have more jobs coming back in. But we don't have the money to invest in new ventures that might be important to our national defense or to our economic growth and that's because we had to adopt steep defense cuts and a hard freeze on domestic spending for 5 years while the entitlement growth continued unchecked.

As a result of that, today I am establishing by Executive order a bipartisan commission to look into the issue of entitlements of our Government, how it works and what's the impact on the budget long-term, as well as into the general tax structure of the Federal Government. I want to acknowledge and thank the

leaders, Republican and Democrat, of the House and the Senate for agreeing to support this Commission and name members to it. Two-thirds of the members will be appointed by the congressional leadership on a strictly bipartisan basis. I will appoint a third.

And then I want to give special attention to two Members of the Congress who have worked on this very hard. One is Senator Kerrey, who had the idea for this Commission, and I intend to name him the Chair. The other is Senator Danforth of Missouri, who is in his last term but has been interested in the entitlement issue for a very long time, and I have asked him to serve as the Vice Chair. We will be naming the rest of the Commission in the fairly near future. But I'm hopeful that this Commission, by next spring, will be able to do some work which will chart a future for the Congress and for the country, which will enable us to do the people's business up here and keep the country moving forward into the 21st century.

So I thank all the leadership for their willingness to support this. And I'm going to sign the Executive order and then we'll answer a few questions and get on with our meeting, because there's a vote in the Senate.

[At this point, the President signed the Executive order.]

NAFTA Television Debate

Q. Mr. President, why are you putting the Vice President up against the king of the one-liners? Aren't you sacrificing a political career here?

The President. Let me say this, I certainly appreciate the way you characterized it. If we get an honest discussion of the issues, the Vice President will do just fine because he's an accomplished debater and, more importantly, because he's got the evidence on his side. I understand why Mr. Perot wanted to have a rally packed with people that he could get there who already had their minds made up against NAFTA. But I think the Vice President's issued the challenge to show up in Florida and have Larry King moderate the debate. And if we get a genuine discussion of the issues, I'm very confident that he'll do fine. It was his idea; I've got to compliment him. It wasn't mine. Wasn't it?

The Vice President. Absolutely——

Q. Why do you feel it's necessary to take on Ross Perot to do what many people would consider sinking to his level?

The President. Why are you sinking to his level, Mr. Vice President? [Laughter] Why did you want to do that?

The Vice President. I think the country does this from a discussion of the facts about NAFTA. What we're finding is that a whole lot of people in the Congress say, "We agree with you on the facts, but we're getting a lot of political pressure on the other side. Is there any way that you can get the facts out to a wider audience?" And I think the discussion of what NAFTA really does—it creates new jobs in America. The volume of our products being shipped to Mexico has been increasing twice as fast as the volume of their goods being shipped here. The more discussion of the facts, the better.

Q. Are you going to do one debate or three, Mr. Vice President?

The Vice President. Well, I've contacted Larry King and said that—first of all, I issued this challenge; he accepted and proposed Florida. I said I'll be there on Sunday. I contacted Larry King. And we want a neutral format and a neutral place. I don't want to go to a rally filled with 20,000 people on one side of the issue. He was generous to say that he would buy the television time. Well, let's let Larry King provide the television time.

Senator Mitchell. Why don't you pay for the television time?

The Vice President. I considered that—[laughter]—I considered just picking up the tab.

Q. Mr. President, aren't you the slightest bit concerned, not the least bit worried?

The President. No. We're making progress on NAFTA. I feel good about it. And what we find is that if people—I went yesterday, when he was having a press conference saying I wouldn't answer questions from ordinary workers. I was with a thousand ordinary working people in Kentucky answering their questions. They were good questions, good, firm, hard questions. But I just believe that this is one of those issues where the truth will set you free. I think the more people know, the more they'll be for it.

We have confidence. The Vice President, actually, when he went on David Letterman, I

knew that he could stick up Ross Perot on one-liners, right? So, that's it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:44 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. The Executive order is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.

Teleconference on NAFTA With Midwest Farmers, Ranchers, and Agricultural Broadcasters and an Exchange With Reporters November 5, 1993

The President. Hello?

Q. Hello, Mr. President.

The President. How are you?

Q. Well, pretty good today, sir. How are you?

The President. I'm great. Thank you for taking this time to visit with us.

Q. Thank you for affording us the opportunity.

The President. I know that all of you have some questions, but I'd like to make just a brief opening statement, if I might. As all of you know, I think, before I took this job I was a Governor of an agricultural State, and I learned very early that the future of agriculture in America is in exports. We've got over 700,000 agriculture jobs in America today that are export-related. And if NAFTA passes, that number will continue to rise, meaning more jobs for people in our farm communities.

I know now that a big part of my job as President is going to be to continue to raise more and more opportunities for exports in America, and I'm doing that and the negotiations we have going on with Japan now, we even have some hopes that we're going to be able to sell some rice in Japan before too long, which is a big issue for farmers in my part of the country.

We're working hard across the board to get a new GATT agreement that will open agricultural markets for our farmers. And NAFTA is a part of our comprehensive strategy to boost farm income.

Since 1986, our agricultural exports to Mexico have nearly tripled. Mexico is now our fastest growing major export market. In 1992 we exported almost \$4 billion worth of products to Mexico, 40 percent higher than 1990. And the Agriculture Department—and Secretary Espy is here with me today as you know—estimates that we will export \$2.6 billion more with NAFTA

than without it by the end of the transition period in the agreement.

So I think this is a good deal for our farmers. It's an even better deal this week than it was last week because of some of the agreements made by the Mexican Government affecting sugar and citrus and, to a lesser extent, vegetables. But it is clearly a good thing for America's farmers. That's why most of the major farm groups have endorsed it. And I'm looking forward to discussing it with the farmers today and with the people from the ag radio networks. So maybe we ought to get right into your questions and go forward.

I think Howard Hardecke is first. Is that right?

Q. That is correct, Mr. President.

The President. I remember when I was at your school.

Q. You're kidding.

The President. [*Inaudible*—it was a great night.

Q. Yes, it was.

The President. My second grade teacher was there. I hadn't seen her since she left Arkansas. She was my second and third grade teacher. I really enjoyed that.

[*At this point, Mr. Hardecke asked if other cattle-producing countries could import cattle duty-free through Mexico under NAFTA.*]

The President. That's a good question. And believe it or not, it's a question that applies not only to agriculture but to some of our manufacturing. We have strict rules of origin that apply to our agriculture as you know already—

Q. Yes.

The President. —and there is nothing in the NAFTA agreement which changes that, so that the rules of origin that apply to Australian