

Remarks in a Telephone Conversation With Representative Ed Pastor on NAFTA

November 12, 1993

Representative Pastor. Good morning.

The President. Hello, Ed.

Representative Pastor. Yes, good morning, Mr. President.

The President. How are you?

Representative Pastor. I'm doing well, sir, beautiful weather here in Arizona.

The President. It's beautiful here, too.

Representative Pastor. The reason I called you was to let you know that November 17, we'll be supporting you on the free-trade agreement.

The President. Thank you very much. We need your help.

Representative Pastor. And I give a lot of credit to this to Congressman Esteban Torres. As you know, he worked very hard to get that NAD bank. And I know that with it we can do some things along the border.

I had a conversation yesterday with the EPA Administrator, and we talked about the resources that will be available. That was one of my concerns. So I look forward to working with her and with you to help the border communities along our Mexican-U.S. border.

The President. Thank you very much, Ed. As you well know, these environmental difficulties are going to get a lot better if NAFTA passes now that we've got the development bank there. And it also means more jobs along the border on both sides working on environmental clean-up. So I'm very encouraged.

I also want you to know that since you've been gone we've had a pretty good run in picking up some folks. Congresswoman Anna Eshoo from California came out yesterday, and we got five Congressmen from the Rust Belt. David Mann from Ohio became the first Democrat in Ohio to come out for NAFTA along with Congressman Hobson and Congressman Kasich. And then we got two Republicans from Michigan and two Members of Congress in the last week switched from no to yes, Marilyn Lloyd and Rick Lehman.

Representative Pastor. Well, Mr. President, you're doing very well.

The President. Well, we're making progress anyway. And we got Gerry Studds and Steny Hoyer when they came out last week. I think

that was a good sign because they'll work hard and try to help us pass this thing. So I'm feeling much better than I did a few days ago. But I'm glad to have this phone call from you, and I just want to encourage you to try to sway every vote you can. And let's keep working until we bring it in.

Representative Pastor. Well, I'm going to be working with Members of the Hispanic Caucus. I know that some are still undecided, so we'll be working with them.

The President. We've got about four outstanding that I think we can still get if we all work hard.

Representative Pastor. Well, we're all going to work hard for you and, hopefully, at the final count we'll be past the 218 that we need. But I'm very happy to join you in this effort and at this time would like to ask you to consider coming to Arizona one of these days.

The President. I'd like to come back. You know it's been a while since I was there. I was there during the campaign, and the State was actually very good to me. I was amazed as we came so close to victory there. And I'm anxious to come back, and I want to be your guest.

Representative Pastor. Well, you have a standing tee time, so let me know when you—and we've got a lot of mulligans. [Laughter] Let me know when you want to come out.

The President. Thanks. I've played golf in Arizona, and it was a good round for me; so I have wonderful memories of that. I'll do that. Thank you.

Representative Pastor. Okay. Thank you Mr. President.

The President. Bye.

Representative Pastor. Have a good day.

[At this point, the telephone conversation ended, and the President took questions from reporters.]

Q. Where does this put you, roughly, in terms of the number of votes you need now? Sunday you said you needed about 30.

The President. Oh, no, we're much closer now. I think we'll get what we think we have to get on the Democratic side, and I'm working

with the Republicans. I see all this stuff about their difficulties, but I don't buy that. I think that they've got some of the same problems our folks do.

I think it's clear to everybody now—let me say this again, if there were a secret ballot, this would pass by 50 votes or more. And I think everyone knows that. So now it's a question of getting the people who are in there harder for NAFTA and who know it's good for American jobs and who know it's an important part of our foreign policy for the future, that it will develop America by reaching out to the world, that it will lead to a trade pact with all of Latin America, that it will help us with the Pacific and Europe. It's a matter of sort of bringing that conviction to the fore.

And I will say again, I think that from the point of view of the Congress, the number one virtue of the debate between the Vice President and Mr. Perot is that Al Gore showed that if

you are on the right side of an issue and if you believe it, you can convince your constituents that you're right and that it's in their interest. And so I'm still very upbeat about this. But I think there will be clouds around this issue right to the last.

Q. Well, just in a ballpark idea, I mean, is it fair to say less than 20 votes away or—

The President. It's fair to say that I've got a list that makes me think we can do what we always thought we'd have to do. In fast track, I think the Democrats only had—when they voted for the fast track negotiations here, I think they only had 95 votes. But I've always thought we could do our part and we could get 218 votes on Wednesday, and I still believe we're going to.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:19 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin of Israel

November 12, 1993

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, are you considering a stop in the Middle East during your Europe trip in January to help the momentum of the Middle East peace process?

The President. The Prime Minister and I are going to talk about what we can do to keep this going, but that's not one of the things that's been raised so far by anyone.

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

Q. President Clinton, is King Hussein strong enough to make peace with Israel before President Assad?

The President. I think he's in a good position to proceed now. And of course, we all have come out for a process that will lead to comprehensive peace in the Middle East. But I think King Hussein obviously wants peace, and

the recent elections must surely encourage him. I think the people of Jordan want peace.

Q. Do you think there's a chance to reach any progress with the Syrians?

The President. I hope so. We're going to discuss that today and a number of other issues. Over the long run, I think we'll have to make progress with everyone.

PLO Terrorism

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, what's your comment on the involvement of PLO people in the kidnapping and killing of an Israeli?

Prime Minister Rabin. We consider it as a great and dangerous violation of the commitment of the PLO. In the letter that was signed by the Chairman of the PLO to me, he committed himself to renounce and reject terrorism. Keeping commitments is the basis for the advancement towards peace. We'll keep our commitments; we demand them to keep their commitments and to come up openly in renouncing