

The President. I think 10 years from now people will look back on this meeting as a very historic meeting because we agreed to meet and then we agreed to meet again next year to work on a number of issues of mutual concern to our people. I think this is really the assurance that the people need that our region will remain unified and committed to an open economy.

Q. Standing here with leaders of the Pacific Rim, what's your message to the European Community?

The President. That we want them to be part of an open economy, too; this is not an exclusive operation. We want the Asia-Pacific community to be united but not closed, united but open. And what we want to say to Europe is we're committed to doing everything we can to get a good GATT agreement between now and December 15th; we want your help, let's do it.

Q. What about us? [Laughter]

The President. I thought it was the pool—

Q. No, no—

The President. [Inaudible]—in Indonesia. President Soeharto has invited us to meet in Indonesia next year. We decided to do it. We agreed on a number of very specific things that we would work on over the coming year. And the message again is that we want this community to be united, not divided, and open, not closed.

I was asked a question over there, "What's the message to Europe?" The message to Europe is we want this to be a united but open community and we want Europe to work with us to get a good GATT agreement by the end of the year. That's the message we want to send to our European friends. We don't want an exclusive trading bloc, we want them to join us in a new world trading system.

Q. Do you feel these countries are all as open to the United States as you'd like them to be?

The President. Well, we talked about that. That's one of the reasons that we're meeting here so that we can do more business with each other. And we talked about some specific things we might do to work toward that: the development of some nonbinding but agreed-upon principles for investment and access, the development of some technology transfer programs that could really help the United States in working with other countries with severe environmental problems, for example.

So we have made the commitments that I think we need to make at this meeting to move to a position where this community will be an even better thing for the United States to be a part of on terms that everyone can win on. So we're very hopeful. But the first thing we hope we can do is get a new world trade agreement by the end of the year.

Q. So will this be an annual event, the leaders of the APEC—

The President. Well, no, it's going to happen twice. You'll see us next year. We'll see if we'll decide to do it again. Now we're all going to Jakarta. This will be—for the Americans it will be interesting. Sign up for the trip now. [Laughter]

Q. [Inaudible]—difficult for you to communicate from various areas of Asia-Pacific area—is it difficult for you to communicate to us naturally or a very comfortable situation?

The President. Oh, I think it's like all other human relations, the more we're together the more natural it is. It got better as it went along—like life.

NOTE: The exchange began at 3:05 p.m. on Blake Island. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks to the United States Coast Guard in Seattle November 20, 1993

Thank you very much. This is a warm reception in more ways than one. And after a cold day on the boat, it's a wonderful thing to behold.

I want to thank Admiral Lockwood and Captain Murray and all the men and women of

the Coast Guard for the wonderful assistance that I have received today and that our Nation receives every day.

The Blake Island meeting I think was a great success. Indeed, these have been a good few

days for the United States. We had the leaders of 14 of the Asian-Pacific nations here in Seattle for a couple of days. We represent 40 percent of the world's people, half the world's economy, the fastest growing economies in the world. And I can tell you that the spirit of this meeting was incredibly positive, people believing that we had to reach out even more to one another, we had to lower our barriers, we had to make it possible for all of us to grow in peace and harmony and prosperity. It's the sort of thing that people join the Coast Guard of the United States to make sure happens. And you should feel very good about it.

And of course, when the Congress—the House of Representatives passed the North American Free Trade Agreement the other night—you say, “That’s about Mexico and Canada. What does that have to do with all these other countries?” The Prime Minister of Singapore got up in our meeting, and he said, “I don’t know what would have happened if Congress had voted that treaty down because the rest of us would have thought that America was going to turn away from the world. We would have said that you weren’t going to be there.”

Instead you had the President of Korea, the President of the Philippines, you had the President of Indonesia, the Prime Minister of Thailand, all these people saying, “We want you to be involved in our future. We want the future of Pacific to be a united Pacific, not a divided Pacific. We want it to be an open future, not a closed future. We want our diversity to be a source of strength.”

Even in our differences, we found a way to talk. As you know, the discussion I had with the President of China was the first discussion that the leader of the United States has had with the leader of the world’s most populous country and the fastest growing economy on the Earth since the unfortunate incidents at Tiananmen Square. So we began at least to have a conversation about our differences as well as what we have in common. This was a remarkable meeting.

To have the Prime Minister of Japan, a genuine reformer, a person who is committed to changing his country and the way it relates to the rest of the world, including the United States, in positive ways, come here and sit for a whole day today and listen, as did I, to the other leaders and talk about what kind of common ground we could find, it was very moving.

And then when we got off the boat tonight, they told me, Congressman McDermott, that the Senate passed NAFTA a few minutes ago and then passed the Brady bill. So it’s been a good day for the United States. So I would say that the 200 years that the Coast Guard has been there for America and her people have been well rewarded by the work that has been done for America in these last few days.

I would say, Captain Murray, your obvious and genuine heartfelt emotion at this moment is justified by what a wonderful country this is and what great people we have in the United States Coast Guard. I know you were there to help the victims of Hurricane Andrew; to assist those who were washed away by the flooding in the Midwest, the worst flood in well over 100 years; to work with the Red Cross and the people of California to help to fight the deadly wildfires.

On any day, the Coast Guard, on average, will save the lives of 16 people and help 360 others in distress. That’s a pretty good record. In a place like Seattle, people understand the importance of your work. I hope by my coming here today and the publicity that this visit will generate, that Americans everywhere will understand how much they owe to the United States Coast Guard.

A lot of Americans don’t know about your efforts to stem the flow of illegal drugs, but it helps to make every community safer. And I want to tell you that we’re looking for new and innovative ways to do more of that and ways that are more effective. Your work in tracking foreign fishing fleets helps protect the important American industry and strengthens our economy. Your work in responding to some 8,000 oil and chemical spills a year helps protect the environment that all Americans cherish and enjoy. Your support for scientific work, such as with your icebreakers in the Arctic, adds to the entire Nation’s research base at a time when we need desperately to invest more in research and development for our future economy as well as for our environmental security. Your efforts in monitoring the seas for the growing influx of illegal immigrants also serves our national interests in a difficult area. And in times of war, you and the entire Coast Guard stand ready to protect our Nation in the most fundamental ways. The Coast Guard has long helped to augment our naval forces through work like antisubmarine and surface warfare. For all of these

efforts, your Nation and your President are in your debt.

Your work underscores a crucial point: In order to make life better for people within our borders, we often need to take actions beyond our borders. As modern transportation and communications make the world smaller and smaller, we must engage abroad to succeed at home. And that was the whole point of this meeting we had on Blake Island.

I spent the better part of a year and a half campaigning to the American people in the race for President. And everywhere I went I said that we had reached a time when there was no longer an easy dividing line between foreign policy and domestic policy, between defense policy and economic policy, that clearly we could not be strong abroad if we were not strong at home but that it was no longer possible for a wealthy country to have a strong economy at home without being involved abroad and succeeding and winning in the global competitive economy.

Clearly, our Nation could not be secure without a strong defense, but in these tough economic times we could not pay for a strong defense without a strong economy. And so, every day and especially during the budgetary season, I will be required to make some very difficult decisions. Some of the calls will be right, and occasionally I will doubtless make some of them wrong. But I want you to know that every call will be determined on the basis of what I honestly believe is best for the long-term security and prosperity of the American people, based on those simple ideas.

There is no longer a simple dividing line between defense policy and economic policy, no longer a clear line between foreign policy and domestic policy. America, like it or not, is part of a world that is increasingly more interdependent, a world in which we are rewarded when we are productive and aggressive in selling our products and services, and in which we are punished if we refuse to compete.

There are those who long for a world in which the American people could be more secure and more immune from change. I, at least, long for a world in which we are more secure. But we cannot do it by trying to immunize ourselves from change. No free society is immune from the winds blowing through the world today. We have to find a way to make these changes our friend and not our enemy. We have

to find a way to train every American as well as the men and women of the Coast Guard are trained to do their job. We have to find a way to give people the sense that they will have access to learning and relearning for a lifetime. We have to find a way to invest in those things which will give the promise of real hope and opportunity. And I say to you as Americans, we have got to find a way to give structure, order, discipline, hope, and love back to those millions of American children who do not have the daily supports that you take for granted if you're a member of the United States Coast Guard, but without which life is very difficult to live on successful terms.

I hope today as we look out on these beautiful waters and remember that our history and our heritage are rooted to the sea, that most of our Americans came across the oceans to get here to become Americans, that we must, just like we did in the beginning, be a nation that reaches out across the seas to new markets and new opportunities and new horizons.

To those of our friends and neighbors in the Pacific and elsewhere, we're going through a difficult and challenging time. Not all our roads are easy. But this is a time which we should be grateful to live in, for after all, the cold war is over; the threat of nuclear destruction recedes. The hopes of people really have a chance to be realized in a peaceful environment. And many of the problems we have are problems of our own making that we can unmake if we have the discipline and will and vision and sheer persistence to face them and work them through.

Therefore, I say to you that I value your service and your sacrifice, your talent and your dedication, not only because you help to make our Nation stronger but because I hope that every time an American citizen sees you in this uniform, that that will help us to remember what kind of people we are and where we need to go.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:59 p.m. at the Seattle Coast Guard Support Center gymnasium at Pier 36. In his remarks, he referred to Rear Adm. Joseph W. Lockwood, USCG, 13th district commander, and Capt. Charles W. Murray, USCG, commanding officer, Seattle Coast Guard Support Center. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.