

## The President's News Conference With President Fidel Ramos of the Philippines *November 22, 1993*

*President Clinton.* Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. I want to read this statement about the meeting I have just concluded with President Ramos, and then we'll have remarks by the President. And then I want to make a statement about the airlines issue, after which we will both answer questions.

First, let me say it's a great pleasure for me to welcome President Fidel Ramos of the Philippines to Washington. We had a very good discussion at the historic APEC leaders' meeting in Seattle, and I'm delighted that he accepted my invitation to come to the White House for further talks.

Our two nations have enjoyed warm relations for almost a century now. Our soldiers have fought side by side. President Ramos knows the value of our cooperation first hand, having himself served in combat in Korea. I'd also like to congratulate him as a graduate of West Point for the award he recently received from the United States Military Academy as one of their outstanding graduates.

Throughout the cold war, the Philippines hosted two of our key military bases in the Pacific. And now with the cold war over, the Philippines remains one of our Nation's most vital friends and allies in the Asian-Pacific region.

The Philippines also helped lead the march toward democracy over the past decade. We all recall the impressive courage of the Philippine people in 1986 as their prodemocratic struggle inspired freedom-loving people everywhere in the world. President Ramos played an important role in that drama. And it is fitting, as I said, that he has been honored by West Point and recognized by people all across America for his devotion not only to democracy but to the cause of human rights.

In our discussions today, President Ramos and I covered a range of bilateral, regional, and global issues. We reviewed the results of last week's APEC meetings and agreed to work jointly to advance the spirit of community in our region. We share the goal of achieving open trade and investment, prosperity, and increasing regional economic integration. We agreed that Congress' approval of NAFTA this past week will bolster

our regional efforts to reduce trade barriers and may improve our chances of securing an acceptable new GATT agreement.

I told the President that I very much admire his own efforts toward economic liberalization. I'm impressed by his steps to free foreign exchange and liberalize trade and investment and by his ongoing efforts to achieve reform in banking, taxation, and customs.

Our bilateral relations with the Philippines have witnessed a transformation in recent years. The end of the cold war and the closure of our bases there, however, have not changed the basis for continuing cooperation between our two nations. We've now begun a renewed partnership, based on our long historical association, our shared values, our expanding trade and investment links, our bilateral security cooperation, and our common dedication to democracy and human rights.

We took several steps today to enhance our partnership, agreeing among other things to negotiate a bilateral extradition treaty which will help us to combat global crime, terrorism, and narcotics trade. We agreed to pursue a mutual legal assistance treaty to facilitate evidence exchanges in criminal matters and again to strengthen our cooperation in narcotics control. I want to thank President Ramos for his action to ensure the renewal of our close security cooperation. Those efforts have enabled a successful visit of the U.S.S. *O'Brien* to Manila in a joint military exercise on Philippine territory.

We look forward to continuing cooperation with the Philippines, in APEC, the ASEAN regional forum, the United Nations, and on global issues ranging from nonproliferation to environmental protection, something that President Ramos referred to over and over again at the APEC meeting just a few days ago.

President Ramos has been a strong friend of the American people, and I look forward to working closely with him and the Philippine people in the days ahead.

Let me say in introducing him, also, that there's been a great deal of discussion over the last couple of years, and certainly in recent days, about whether the basic cause of human rights

is somehow a product of the Western cultural tradition. If you look at the Philippines, the Philippine version of human rights shows that human rights can take root anywhere and be appreciated, revered, and respected anywhere, thanks in no small measure to President Ramos.

The floor is yours, sir.

*President Ramos.* Thank you, Bill.

Ladies and gentlemen, today President Clinton and I set a new orientation for Philippine-American relations. These relations have a long history behind them. But the fundamentally altered political and economic environment in the world and in our region and the changed requirements of both our peoples have made it necessary and desirable for both of us to embark on a new partnership.

This new partnership we affirm shall be based on the values that both Americans and Filipinos cherish deeply: the sanctity of human rights, the value of democracy, and the efficacy of the free market. President Clinton strongly supports our commitment to these values, something which we find encouraging and for which we are grateful.

Our partnership, we agreed, shall also be anchored more firmly than ever before on the benefits that both our countries derive from our economic relationship. I deeply appreciate the support which President Clinton expressed for our program of economic reform and economic development, and I value the confidence that he manifested in the program's success.

I also thank President Clinton for the steps that this administration intends to take to encourage more American investments in the Philippines. At the same time, I raised with him the question of improved access for Philippine exports to the American market. And in the context of our economic partnership, President Clinton and I resolved to work even more closely together for the punctual and successful conclusion of the Uruguay round and in general the further liberalization of the world economy, even as we recognize the special requirements of the developing countries.

Security cooperation, particularly within the framework of the Philippine-U.S. Mutual Defense Treaty of 1951 remains a vital element in Philippine-American relations. President Clinton and I agreed that our cooperation in security matters must be strengthened despite the changes in the global and regional security situation which no longer requires the permanent stationing of American forces in the Philippines.

The mutual defense treaty continues to be valuable to the security of East Asia. We welcome and appreciate, as do others in the region, the continuing American commitment to regional security which President Clinton reaffirmed today, including America's determination to oppose any resort to the use of force in the Kalayaan or Spratly area.

A human link in our relation with the United States is the community of over 2 million Filipinos in this country. I appreciate President Clinton's recognition of their contribution to American society. And in order to be able to assist each other better in the enforcement of the law, President Clinton and I agreed that our officials should begin work on an extradition treaty between our two countries.

I also raised to President Clinton two matters that are close to my heart. The first is the old issue of the rights of the Filipino veterans of World War II. The other is the so-called Amerasian children issue.

Finally, my delegation and I thank President Clinton and his delegation for the warmth and cordiality with which we conducted our discussions. Those discussions, I am sure, will lead to a new and a strong partnership for the benefit of both Americans and Filipinos.

Thank you, Mr. President.

#### *American Airlines Strike*

*President Clinton.* Thank you, Mr. President.

I would like now to read a statement on the airline strike, and then we'll take some questions from both the American and the Filipino press here.

I am pleased to announce that I have spoken with both parties involved in the American Airlines strike and that both have agreed in principle to end the strike and to return to the bargaining table immediately. They've also agreed to resolve all matters under dispute through binding arbitration. All American Airlines flight attendants will be reinstated.

I believe this agreement represents an important step forward for all Americans, including families that will be able to reunite over the holidays, the flight attendants themselves, all of whom will now be able to return to their jobs, and American Airlines which can now return to serving the traveling public. I hope this is the beginning of a happy holiday season for all of us.

I want to encourage all the people involved in the American Airlines family to now return to work together without any bitterness and with a spirit of mutual respect as they attempt to work through these issues through binding arbitration. This company and its employees are a very important part of the American economy, a very important part of the airline sector that has been troubled for the last couple of years and that is a very important part of our high-tech future.

I am very pleased by the agreement which has been reached. And I now ask all parties involved to approach it in good faith and with good spirits. I also want to say that I have spoken with the Secretary of Transportation and the Secretary of Labor, along with members of the National Mediation Board, and I want to thank them for the work that all of them did to help to bring matters to this point today. I am very pleased by this development, and again I want to thank the representatives of both sides, the attendants and the company, for making this important statement. And I look forward to the ultimate resolution of the issues.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

#### *North Korea and Japan*

Q. Mr. President, is it true that the United States is prepared to sweeten the pot, give aid, recognition, call off Team Spirit, if North Korea agrees to nuclear inspection? And with the Japanese access to plutonium, don't you worry about Japan building the bomb?

President Clinton. Well, how many questions was that?

Q. Three. [Laughter]

President Clinton. Good for you.

Q. [Inaudible]

President Clinton. I'm glad to know you were keeping score. [Laughter]

As you know, President Kim of South Korea will be here tomorrow. And our administration has been working on a new approach to deal with this issue. I want to discuss it with him tomorrow, and then I expect to have an announcement on it.

I think it's fair to say that Japan does not wish to become a nuclear power and that in my talks with Prime Minister Hosokawa and with President Jiang of China, it was obvious to me that no one in the region wants North Korea to become a nuclear power. So we're

going to do everything we can in close consultation with the countries most affected in the region to try to find a resolution to this. I also discussed this with President Ramos today because the Philippines has important membership on the IAEA, and he gave me his thoughts on it. We are working on it. I want to consult with President Kim tomorrow, and then I expect to have another announcement.

#### *American Airlines Strike*

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us, how did this American Airlines settlement come about? What role did you play in it? You said that you talked to both sides today. Did you put pressure on either side to accept this?

President Clinton. No, I don't think that would be a fair characterization of it. We were contacted—and our staff can give you some more background later after the press conference—and the White House has been actively involved all morning trying to bring the parties to this point. But to be fair, they were willing to be brought to this point. They were interested in trying to figure out what procedures we might follow so that we could get the strike over with, bring the flight attendants back, start the planes flying again. So I have to give them a large share of the credit. But they were willing to have us try to work out this arrangement, and I am grateful for that.

Bruce Lindsey had a lot to do with it this morning, talking to representatives of the two sides on the phone and talking to the Labor Department, the Transportation Department about what had been done to date and kind of getting a sense of where we were. And it all fell into place about an hour ago. And then I had to call them both, and we had to go over it all one more time to make sure that we were all singing out of the same hymnal about how the process would work and what rules would apply and things of that kind. And I feel quite good about it.

Is there anyone from the Korean press who has a—I mean, Filipino press?

Q. Philippine press, Mr. President.

President Clinton. Go ahead.

#### *The Philippines*

Q. Both you and President Ramos, have you discussed any details concerning the United States commitment to the multilateral aid initiative to the Philippines? And will you please ex-

pand on your talks concerning the vets, the veterans issue, as well as the Amerasians?

*President Ramos.* To the first of the three questions, let me say that we hardly discussed aid at all, but the main focus of our discussion was economic cooperation, which would result in more investment and trade in the Philippines and within Asia and the Pacific. In regard to the veterans problem, President Clinton and I agreed that we will continue looking at ways and means to make it right for the Filipino veterans of World War II. Of course, we both realize that there is legislative action involved, and the solution of the problem is not entirely within the hands of the Executive. Regarding the problem of the so-called Amerasian children, we agreed to work on this matter as well as to encourage the nongovernment organizations to do their part. I informed President Clinton that there is an NGO that is very active in the Philippines representing the concerned people of the United States, called the Pearl Buck Foundation, that has been in this kind of work for a long, long time now and with which we intend to establish close linkages on the part of the Philippine Government and also our Philippine NGO's.

#### *Presidential Security*

*Q.* Mr. President, on this 30th anniversary of President Kennedy's assassination, do you personally feel that the case is closed, that Lee Harvey Oswald did act alone without any assistance? And secondly, as you travel around, are you concerned about your own personal security as you wade into crowds and go around and talk to people?

*President Clinton.* I am satisfied with the finding that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone. I'm also very satisfied with the work done by the Secret Service in my behalf. Most of the crowds that I see now have been through some sort of screening process, particularly if there's been a lot of advance notice of my coming. But it's impossible for a democratic leader in a free world, I think, to live in a shell. One of the greatest things a President has to guard against all the time is just becoming isolated from the feelings, the concerns, the conditions of daily life that all other Americans have to confront. And so there's always going to be a tension, if you lead a free country and you're accountable to all the citizens of that country, between the legitimate desire of the security forces to protect

you and the desire that I have not to lose touch and get totally out of sync with the lives of all the people whom I must represent.

Anyone else from the Filipino press? Yes.

#### *Extradition Treaty*

*Q.* Yes, President Clinton, an extradition treaty has been tried before between the Philippines and the United States. What issues remain from the point of view of the United States before such a treaty can be concluded?

*President Clinton.* Well, let me say we did not even discuss the outstanding issues today. We want to leave that to our negotiators. I think what President Ramos wanted to know was whether I was willing to do it. And the answer is I am very much willing to do it, and I believe that we will succeed.

#### *Handgun Control Legislation*

*Q.* Mr. President, the Brady bill has come so close before and failed with the end of a congressional session. Is there anything that you can do or that Democratic leaders can do to try to save it from an obstacle in the conference committee and to try to get the Senate to agree to the conference before Congress goes home?

*President Clinton.* Well, we might have just a shred of a chance of that. You know, the Senate was anxious to leave, and they've worked hard this year. The Congress has worked very hard. The House just passed overwhelmingly a comprehensive campaign finance reform, so that's another issue that the House and the Senate have acted on they'll have to conference. There may be some small chance it can be done now. But I don't want to hold out false hope. I would like it if it can be done. I would love it if the Congress could give the Brady bill to the American people for Thanksgiving. But I do believe that the size of the vote in the Senate and the marked shift almost overnight in the position of those who were promoting the filibuster shows an awareness that we have to lead on this crime and personal security issue and an understanding that the American people want something done at the national level and they want something done at the local level. And they want people to roll up their sleeves and go to work, not get in the way. So I believe that even if we fail to secure it at this 11th hour, that it'll pass when the Congress comes back and fairly quickly. I wish that it could be done now. I don't know if it can

be done now.

Q. So why should people wait another few months?

*President Clinton.* I don't think they—

Q. They won't be back until—

*President Clinton.* I don't think they should. I think it should pass now. But I don't know if I can get it done. If it were up to me, it would be done right this minute; it would have been done months ago. But I can just tell you, we are working on it. We are exploring all possible options. I don't know if it can be done.

#### *Extradition Treaty*

Q. As a loyal member of the Philippine press, I'm quite disturbed about the extradition treaty. Are you planning to make provisions to protect the interests of political asylum, from the Philippines and vice versa, Mr. President?

*President Ramos.* The details are being worked out by our respective legal staffs. But I think you will appreciate the fact that the two governments have finally undertaken this effort on a joint basis.

During the Marcos period when the regime was very repressive and a lot of Filipinos came over to the United States to seek asylum, naturally there was no agreement on extradition because the United States wanted to protect those that had sought political asylum in this country. But we shall be concerned here with really extradition in the strictly criminal sense, as applying to violators of the revised Penal Code of the Philippines.

#### *Environmental Issues*

Q. Can I just follow up, sir, very important, on the environmental issue. I know you have talks on extradition and Amerasian and veterans. I think environment is a very important issue and is a concern not only of Asian countries but all countries in this world. Have you discussed anything on how to protect the environment for the Philippine side?

*President Ramos.* I brought it up at the APEC meeting itself as a concern of developing countries as well as of countries in the Asia-Pacific region. I discussed this extensively with Vice President Gore during our meeting, and I repeated it in our meeting with President Clinton.

The Philippines must be recognized as one of the first, if not the first, Asian countries that created the mechanism to implement the guidelines agreed to by most countries in the Earth

summit in Rio in June 1992. And we're proud that we have this kind of a record in the international community. And we are very thankful to the United States Government for supporting many efforts on our part to improve our own Philippine environmental situation.

*President Clinton.* Let me just give you one specific example that President Ramos suggested, not now but in Seattle, that we look at establishing within the APEC region a technology transfer center that would accelerate the movement of technology for environmental protection and cleanup from the countries that have it to those that need to acquire it. So I think you can look forward to a time when we will really press this forward. It's very much in the interest of the United States, both environmentally and economically to do. And I really appreciate the fact that of all the APEC leaders, President Ramos was the one most insistent that we make progress on this.

#### *Crime and the Community*

Q. Mr. President, you've been talking a lot lately about children killing children. And a number of sociologists are now suggesting that not enough focus has been put on the parents who fail to supervise these children. Do you agree with that? And what can be done about it?

*President Clinton.* Absolutely, I agree with that. I think that the conditions you see today in a lot of the most desperate areas of our country are the result of a confluence of forces, one of which is plainly the breakdown of order within the family and the kind of direction and support that traditionally has been the province of parenthood. That's one reason, one thing.

Secondly, there has been a simultaneous breakdown of a lot of the community supports and alternatives to parental guidance that used to exist in a lot of communities. After all, there have always been children in trouble. There have always been children who had parents who were neglectful of them, even abusive of them. But in times past, there have been more alternative community supports than there are now. And one of the reasons that my speech to the Church of God in Christ got such a warm reception from the folks there is that many of them feel that they're holding back an even worse deluge, that the churches are almost the only community supports left in a lot of these neighborhoods.

The third thing, obviously, is the decline of available employment in a lot of these neighborhoods, so that a lot of the role models who would have been there, people who would have been there either in the home or in the neighborhood, are not there.

And then the fourth thing are the rise of drugs, not only as an instrument of personal abuse but also as an alternative economic system.

And then, finally, the ready availability of weapons, especially handguns and assault weapons, to reinforce an alternative economic and social order; all these things are working to-

gether. But clearly, we're going to have to have more efforts by people at the grassroots level, the churches, the community organizations, the local folks, to reinforce a sense of parental responsibility and accountability in whatever way we can.

Thank you. We have to go.

NOTE: The President's 34th news conference began at 2:30 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Bruce Lindsey, Assistant to the President and Senior Adviser.

## Remarks at the National Democratic Institute Dinner *November 22, 1993*

Thank you very much, Ken. And thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for that warm welcome and for the work you do. It's a real honor for me to be here tonight among so many friends and colleagues who have worked so hard to promote democracy throughout the world. The work of NDI is well-known and highly prized, from Russia and the Baltics to Mexico, Paraguay to the African Continent and many other places where you are working to breathe life into the idea of democracy. I salute you for that work.

I think the knowledge that so many Americans have of your work and the credibility it has gained in the Congress is one reason that I was able to secure, with the help of some of the people here present, a substantial increase in funding for the National Endowment for Democracy at a time when we were cutting more than half the items in the domestic and the foreign budget.

I would also like to thank you for Brian Atwood and for the fine job he's done at AID.

I am delighted that tonight you're honoring two extraordinary leaders, Korean President Kim Yong-sam and Senator George Mitchell. Their lives have given meaning to the ideals which have inspired so many millions of people around the world who struggle for democracy.

President Kim's valiant efforts since his service as a young assemblyman to bring democracy to Korea are a model to aspiring democrats everywhere. He has certainly paid a price for his devotion to freedom and democracy. And all

of us and all freedom-loving people everywhere in the world should honor the personal price he paid, and then the fact that, once given the chance to govern his country, he lived in office by the ideals he expressed out of office. More should do the same.

I also want to thank the NDI for honoring my good friend Senator George Mitchell, whose contributions to democracy, whose work for responsive Government here at home, and whose personal integrity prove once again that politics can be an honorable profession. When I went to the meeting of the Asian-Pacific leaders in Seattle, on the heels of the remarkable vote for the NAFTA treaty in the House of Representatives and its following overwhelming support in the Senate—something which, I add, I am convinced is good for democracy in Mexico and throughout Latin America—George Mitchell made sure that I did not forget that one of my missions was to espouse the cause of human rights in all the countries of the world who seek to be our full partners in moving toward the 21st century, and I thank him for that.

Not long before I came over here tonight, and after I finished the day's work, I went home to be with my daughter for a few moments. And she had a friend from school over, and they're studying for an examination around the kitchen table, the way I did so many times when I was her age. And we turned on the evening