

Now again, I say this in the context of this budget so that you can remember that I said it 4 years from now. There will be no ultimate solution to the Federal deficit until we reform the Medicare-Medicaid expenses and get them closer to the rate of inflation. That cannot be done, in my opinion, having studied this for years as a Governor who used to have to break our budget every year on it, until there is some system by which all Americans have access to basic primary and preventive health care. But we have to do it in a way that preserves what is best about health care, which is the system of private providers that is a shining monument here in Houston, and to do it in a way that overall helps the American business economy, not hurts it.

Now, is it easy to do? No. If it was easy, somebody would have done it already. It's the most complicated thing in the world. How could it not be, it's 14.5 percent of our gross national product. But we must address it if you wish to solve the Federal Government's budgetary

problems. Otherwise, you mark my words, within a couple of years, you'll have to give up the space program and everything else just to pay more for the same health care. And we cannot do that.

So I look forward to this health care debate in the spirit of excitement. This is important. This is the way I felt about NAFTA. If we can just be honest with one another and focus on the future and work through this thing, this is going to be one of the most exhilarating experiences this country ever went through because we're facing up to our challenges. But first we have to keep the deficit coming down, and we have to pass this budget. It ought not to be a partisan issue, and I need your help to do it.

Thank you, and bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:50 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Ken Lay, chairman, Greater Houston Partnership, and professional golfer Jack Nicklaus.

Telephone Conversation With the Space Shuttle *Discovery* Astronauts From Houston February 7, 1994

The President. This is the President.

Cmdr. Charles Bolden. Yes, sir. We can hear you very much. Welcome aboard.

The President. How are you, Commander Bolden?

Commander Bolden. I'm doing very fine. Our crew is hanging in there, and we're having a good time, enjoying it.

The President. Well, you seem to be having a good time. You've had a perfect launch and an exciting mission. And I want to congratulate you.

I've just been in the simulator, and I've applied to be an astronaut, but I haven't been accepted yet. [*Laughter*]

Commander Bolden. I'm certain if you pull a few strings there, you might be able to make it. [*Laughter*]

The President. You're the only person who has invited me to abuse my power since I've been President. [*Laughter*] I want to—

Commander Bolden. While we have a second, may I introduce you to my crew?

The President. Please do.

Commander Bolden. At my right is my pilot, Ken Reightler, who is in the United States Navy. Behind him is Dr. Ron Sega, who is mission specialist number two on the crew, like our flight engineer, and he's also one of the coprincipal investigators for the Wake Shield, one of the experiments we have on board.

Right over my head here is our guest from Russia, Sergei Krikalev, who right now is the second longest person to ever be in space and has spent 5 months and 10 months on two different flights on *Mir*.

To Sergei's left is Dr. Franklin Chang-Diaz, originally from Costa Rica and now a full-fledged citizen of the United States, who is on his fourth flight.

To my left is Dr. N. Jan Davis, who has been a prime op, our mess operator working

the arm for this flight. I'm really fortunate to have a great crew with me here, sir.

The President. I want to say especially how proud we are to have Sergei up there, the first Russian cosmonaut on the space shuttle. You ought to know that Yuri Koptev, who is the head of the Russian Space Agency, is here with me at Mission Control as we're speaking. So we're all looking at all of you, Russians and Americans together, and we like what we see.

Commander Bolden. Well, we appreciate that, sir. And we've had a great time. In fact, I think many of the things that we've done have given us an opportunity to demonstrate that if people decide to put their minds toward a common goal there's no limit to what can be done. And we've done a little bit of that on this flight, although it's been frustrating to people on the ground and up here. I think we've done a very good job, and everybody on the ground and here is really benefiting from what we're doing.

The President. Well, I agree with that. And I think we'll look back on this as the first step toward the kind of international cooperation we need to build the whole space station, with Russia and Canada and Europe and Japan.

I keep coming in and out. Can you hear me now? Can you hear me?

Commander Bolden. Yes, sir. It keeps going in and out, but we are getting the gist of your conversation.

The President. The American people would be happy if they only had to listen to every third word, too, I think. [Laughter] Sometimes the truth is funnier than fiction, huh?

I love Dr. Davis' hairdo. I think it will be a rage back in America when she comes—[Laughter].

Commander Bolden. Well, let me allow Sergei to say a few words to you, first in Russian, and then he'll do the translating after that.

The President. Thank you.

[At this point, Cosmonaut Sergei Krikalev spoke in Russian.]

The President. Somebody has got to translate.

Cosmonaut Sergei Krikalev. I just am glad for the program. I said, "I welcome aboard space shuttle."

The President. Thank you very much. You know, I have here—he just gave me the translation. He translated his own Russian. One of my goals is to have someday most Americans

be able to do that in another language, too. I hope we can do that.

I want to say, you know, we have the head of NASA, Dan Goldin, here. We have Congressman Brooks, Congressman Brown, Congressman Walker here. And we're all watching you with great pride.

And I also want to say, we followed a lot of the scientific purposes that are associated with your mission. And I'm especially interested in the whole issue of superconductivity, which I think has enormous potential for drastically changing the way we do things down here on Earth, and a lot of the other things you're doing.

I just want to congratulate you for being up there and for—as I said, I think this is the first step in what will become the norm of global cooperation in space. And when we get this space station finished, with the contributions of Russia, Canada, Japan, Europe, and the United States, it's going to be a force for peace and progress that will be truly historic, and you will have played a major role in that.

Commander Bolden. Mr. President, we just want to thank you again for joining us here on *Discovery*. And we're really proud to be able to serve the American people up here and show what happens when you can work peacefully together.

The President. Thank you very much. I also want to say before I sign off how much I appreciate all the crew down here, the men and women who have worked to make your mission a success. And again, I think I can speak for all of us, we're going to do everything we can to keep supporting the space program and the space station. And I hope what America is seeing of you today, particularly the cooperation between the United States and Russia in space, which is a reflection of what we're trying to do here on Earth, I hope that will strengthen the support among the American people for the space program and the space station in particular.

Thank you so much. We're all very, very proud of you.

Jack, do you want to say anything?

Representative Jack Brooks. I want to just tell them that we're awfully grateful to have them—

The President. You can only talk on this one? Here.

Representative Brooks. Well, as a Congressman from this district, I'm just delighted to wel-

come you all and congratulate you on your achievements up there and wish you a safe return home.

The President. George, do you want to say anything?

Commander Bolden. We thank you very much.

The President. I want George Brown from California to talk. He's been working for this space program for years.

Representative George Brown. Hi. It's a great pleasure for me to be able to personally communicate with you. I told the President that I had communicated with Russian astronauts several years ago and I wanted a chance to talk to some American astronauts in space. And this is the opportunity. We'll keep working for you.

The President. Do you want to say anything?

Commander Bolden. Well, thank you very much, sir. And we appreciate all of your support and hope that all of you will—[inaudible]—just by showing your interest by being there, I'm certain that that sends a very strong message. We appreciate it.

The President. Well, we want this to be bipartisan so I've got to get Congressman Walker on the phone here. We can prove that Republicans can talk in space. [Laughter]

Representative Robert Walker. Well, thank you, Mr. President, I think.

I'm delighted, too, to congratulate you on your mission. You're helping us as a nation to understand what we can achieve in space, and I think that that's going to do well for the space program in the future. So thanks very much for all you are doing.

Administrator Daniel Goldin. Hello. I just want to tell how proud I am. I mean, this is the best day of my life, having the President of the United States in our control room. Mr. President, on behalf of NASA, its employees, the people in space, we love you to be here, and we're so proud.

The President. Thank you.

Goodbye, folks. Come home to us. Bring that hairdo home, Jan. I love it.

Mission Specialist N. Jan Davis. I'll do my best.

The President. You're being in a photo-op now. You can't see that.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:06 p.m. from Mission Control at the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center.

Message to the Congress Reporting Budget Rescissions and Deferrals February 7, 1994

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the Congressional Budget and Impoundment Control Act of 1974, I herewith report one revised deferral of budget authority, totaling \$1.6 billion, three revised rescission proposals, and 27 new proposed rescissions of budget authority. The total of the rescission proposals included in this special messages is \$1.6 billion. When combined with rescissions that went to the Congress on November 1, 1993, there are \$3.2 billion in rescissions pending before the Congress.

The details of the revised deferral, which affects International Security Assistance, are contained in the attached report. The proposed rescissions affect International Security Assistance Programs; the Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Energy, Housing and Urban Develop-

ment, State, Transportation, and the Treasury; the General Services Administration; the National Aeronautics and Space Administration; the Board for International Broadcasting; the National Science Foundation; and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

February 7, 1994.

NOTE: The report detailing the proposed rescissions and deferral was published in the *Federal Register* on February 14.