

had already decided to build 100 homes through Habitat for Humanity. But because of the spirit of the moment, which he has so eloquently recounted, he decided that he would double it and do 200 homes and make millions of dollars in contributions to dreams for people like Vivian and Theron Miller. And it's not only the largest financial contribution in Habitat's history, it mobilized, because of that money, the volunteer efforts of young and not-so-young Habitat volunteers all across America, people who want to give something to their country, who can't afford to pay for the materials to rehab it but are more than happy to come and roll up their sleeves and work on weekends with people like Vivian Miller to make homeownership a possibility.

So today, thanks to Habitat and to this wonderful corporation and its leader and the people here in DC, Vivian Miller joins the proud ranks of America's homeowners. Before you know it, she'll be complaining of all the junk mail in her mailbox, just like everybody else. [Laughter] Vivian, I congratulate you and your two sons, including the one who is in college and can't be here today. Congratulations to this community and all those who made it possible. I want to once again thank your pastor and your church for supporting you and all the others who volunteered to work on this project.

I believe that Habitat has the capacity to literally revolutionize the sense of community and responsibility, caring about one another in this

country. And I hope that Frank Belatti's example will be followed by business leaders throughout the country. I hope more and more people will be doing this. And I assure you that we are committed to moving these properties that can be restored and can be made living places with happy homes and happy families and stronger communities. If we can do our part, we're going to do it.

But all of you have made this possible today. This is a great day for the American spirit, and I hope all over America tonight, when people see this, they will draw renewed strength and pride and ask themselves: What can I do to make more of these things happen?

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:32 a.m. in Southeast Washington, DC. In his remarks, he referred to Frank Belatti, chief executive officer, America's Favorite Chicken Co. and owner of Church's and Popeye's; Mayor Sharon Pratt Kelly of Washington, DC; Carol Casperson, executive director, Washington, DC, Habitat for Humanity; Wayne Walker, member of the International Board of Directors, Habitat for Humanity; Rev. Eugene Weathers of Galilee Baptist Church; Vivian Miller, a single mother who received a house through Habitat for Humanity, and her son, Theron Slater; and Millard and Linda Fuller, president/founder and co-founder of Habitat for Humanity International, respectively.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Chairman Eduard Shevardnadze of the Republic of Georgia

March 7, 1994

Whitewater Investigation

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us whether you or the First Lady were ever briefed after those meetings that have now been brought under question by the Special Counsel?

The President. I'm going to have a question-and-answer session after Chairman Shevardnadze and I have our meeting, and I'll be glad to answer some questions then.

Q. Would you answer that question later for us?

The President. I'll be glad to answer questions, yes.

Republic of Georgia

Q. What can you tell us about your meeting today with Mr. Shevardnadze? Are you able to offer more help? Are you concerned about recent developments in Russia and what threat they may provide to his country?

The President. Well, the United States has strongly supported Chairman Shevardnadze and the territorial integrity of Georgia. We've done

our best to be good allies, and last year we tried to help with aid and we will do so again this year.

We want to talk a little about what can be done to help with peacekeeping efforts there and about other matters that affect their destiny in Georgia, including, obviously, events in Russia and other countries in the region. So I've really looked forward to this meeting for a long time. And I have many questions; I'm going to be listening hard today.

Q. [Inaudible]—U.N. troops there? U.N. troops to Georgia?

The President. Well, we want to talk about that today. We're going to have a visit about that.

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:05 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

The President's News Conference With Chairman Eduard Shevardnadze of the Republic of Georgia

March 7, 1994

The President. It's a real pleasure and an honor for me to welcome Chairman Eduard Shevardnadze to the White House today. Few leaders in our time have earned the degree of international respect that Chairman Shevardnadze enjoys. He's a statesman whose vision and diplomacy have played an immeasurably important role in bringing a peaceful end to the cold war.

This was our first personal meeting, although we've talked by phone on other occasions. It was a productive one. We discussed the great political and economic challenges facing Georgia. We discussed the steps the United States can take to help Georgia to meet those challenges.

I reaffirmed in very strong terms America's support for the independence, the sovereignty, and the territorial integrity of Georgia. And I expressed support for the efforts sponsored by the United Nations to find a lasting political settlement to the conflict in the Abkhaz region of Georgia. I'm hopeful that the parties to that conflict can achieve in their negotiations and maintain an effective cease-fire. If they can, the United States would be inclined to support a U.N. peacekeeping operation in Georgia, an operation that would not involve U.S. military units. We've already begun consultations on this issue with the Congress, whose views and support will be important. And Chairman Shevardnadze will have the opportunity to discuss this and other matters with Members of Congress during his stay here with us.

In our meeting today, we also discussed Georgia's efforts to expand cooperation with other nations in the Caucasus region. We agreed that both our nations have a tremendous stake in the success of reform in Russia, that a democratic and market-oriented Russia at peace with its neighbors is in the interests of Georgia and the United States.

I made it clear in our talks that the U.S. is committed to encouraging greater political freedom and economic renewal in Georgia. That commitment is outlined by the joint declaration and bilateral investment treaty we've signed today.

Our commitment is also underscored by the \$70 million in assistance the U.S. has allocated to Georgia so far this year. Most of these funds are dedicated to humanitarian efforts. As Georgia moves toward peace and proceeds with reform, we're prepared to increase our technical and economic assistance as well.

This is clearly a difficult time of transition for Georgia. But throughout its rich history, Georgia many times has met and overcome adversity. I'm hopeful that the renowned resilience of the Georgian people will serve them well as they build a more stable and prosperous future. As they face that work, the Georgian people are indeed fortunate to have a leader with a vision, the stature, the leadership, and the courage of Chairman Shevardnadze. And I look forward to working with him in the days ahead.

Mr. Chairman.