

Richard Nixon's Visit to Russia

Q. Mr. President, back on Russia, can you tell us about your conversation with Mr. Yeltsin? He seemed to suggest that you agreed with him on the Nixon visit. Did you talk with him about this?

The President. Mr. Yeltsin?

Q. Did you talk with him or with anyone?

The President. I don't believe—I don't think Boris Yeltsin and I discussed President Nixon's visit. I don't believe we did. You know, I talk to him on a fairly regular basis, but I think the last time we talked we were talking about Bosnia, and I don't think we had a conversation about it.

But I did talk with Richard Nixon, President Nixon, before he went there. And he raised this prospect of meeting with some of the opposition leaders. He said he thought it would be interesting. He wanted to get a feel for where they were and what kind of people they were. And again, he said he was not in the Government of the United States; he was in a different position. And I said I had no—he should meet with whomever he wanted and I'd be interested to hear his reports when he got back.

Q. But you don't think it's a diplomatic insult for Richard Nixon to have seen these other leaders, opposition leaders?

The President. No, because he's not in the Government. You know, he's not even—he was over there on a fact-finding mission, and as I said, Richard Nixon has been extremely sup-

portive of this administration's Russia policy, which has been extremely supportive of President Yeltsin and his objectives. So I think he's been, in that sense, as an American citizen and a longtime expert on that area of the world, he's been very supportive of the objectives of President Yeltsin, and I think it should be seen in that light.

Again, I can't speak to whatever the dynamics are in Russian domestic politics at this time and whether that is having any impact on President Yeltsin's decision. I can't speak to that. But all I'm saying is that I think that President Yeltsin should not assume that Richard Nixon is not friendly toward his administration and toward democracy and toward reform, because quite the contrary, he's been a very strong supporter of our policy for the last year. And I wouldn't overreact to the fact that he met with some people who are in opposition to President Yeltsin.

Thank you.

Whitewater Investigation

Q. Mr. President, what advice do you have for top aides who are appearing in Federal court about Whitewater and—

The President. Just the same advice I give everybody, you know, just tell them what happened, answer the questions, and go on. Be very open.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:50 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Memorandum on the Earned-Income Tax Credit
March 9, 1994

Memorandum for All Cabinet Secretaries and Agency Heads

Subject: Earned Income Tax Credit Directive

Last year, we fought for, and won, a major expansion of the earned income tax credit (EITC) through enactment of the Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act of 1993. This credit will help millions of workers and is a cornerstone of our effort to reform the welfare system and make work pay.

We must ensure that all workers in America who are eligible to receive the EITC are made

aware of the program and of the advance payment option. It has been estimated that approximately 2 million of those eligible for the EITC miss the opportunity to claim it because they do not even realize that the EITC is available to them. Furthermore, less than 1 percent of those who claimed EITC in past years took advantage of the advanced payment option, which would allow some participants to obtain up to 60 percent of their credit in their paychecks rather than waiting until the filing of their tax return to receive it.

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In our own departments and agencies, we must begin to spread the word about the EITC and help eligible workers meet the day-to-day expenses of raising a family by claiming the advanced EITC. There are hundreds of thousands of workers within the executive branch alone who are potentially eligible for the EITC. Many personnel and payroll offices within your bureaus and agencies are not aware of the credit, and have not informed Federal employees about the possibility of obtaining the credit in their paychecks under the advance payment option.

You are directed to instruct all bureau heads, personnel, and payroll office managers in your purview to take measures, in cooperation with the Department of the Treasury, the Internal Revenue Service, and the Office of Personnel Management, to ensure that all potentially eligible employees are informed about the EITC and can claim it on an advance basis through their paychecks.

I also strongly encourage you and your bureau heads to join me over the next several weeks in incorporating these important EITC messages into speeches and presentations that you may be making before the public. Your efforts in your organization will complement an Administration campaign to promote the EITC with business leaders, members of Congress, State and local government leaders, and EITC eligibles. Through these actions, we hope to markedly improve the effectiveness of an already successful EITC program, rewarding work, and laying a foundation to end welfare as we know it.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: This memorandum was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary but was not issued as a White House press release.

Remarks on Proposed Reemployment System Legislation

March 9, 1994

Thank you very much, John, for that introduction. Mr. Vice President, Secretary Reich, thank you for your wonderful work on this project. Lane Kirkland and Larry Perlman, thank you for being up here with us and for representing the American business and labor communities in the partnership we hope to build.

And I want to thank John Hahn from Niagara County, New York. I met him last month. As he said, he was laid off after 28 years at Bell Aerospace, and he learned new skills after 28 years as a biomedical technician. He and Deb Woodbury and Donald Hutchinson were all on our panel. It was a good one, and I learned a lot listening to them.

This morning when we were going over the day, early morning in the White House, Mack McLarty mentioned to me, he said, "We're going to talk about two things today that you ran for President to do something about because it helps all the people we grew up with." When I started out on the long quest which led all of us to this particular moment, and I talked to a lot of my fellow Governors and friends who are mayors, and others, it seemed to me

that this country was really at some risk of being thrown into the 21st century not being able to preserve the American dream and keep going and that there were at least three huge problems for ordinary Americans.

One was that more and more Americans were working harder and harder for stagnant wages and falling closer and closer to the poverty line. That's why we announced today the initiative on the earned-income tax credit and how it was going to impact working families with children to lift them out of poverty.

Another was that no matter how low unemployment gets in some areas, so many Americans are left behind by education and location, normally. But it means that when we have a 6.5 percent unemployment rate, as we do today, it's in fact quite a misnomer; that the unemployment rate today among people with a college degree is 3.5 percent; and among people with some education after high school, at least 2 years of further training, is a little over 5 percent; and among high school graduates a little over 7 percent; and among high school dropouts about 12 percent; and in many inner cities it's