

May 24 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1995

ued cooperation with you in this endeavor. I shall communicate with you further regarding our efforts to foster peace and stability in the former Yugoslavia.

Sincerely,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Remarks Following a Meeting With Surgeon General Nominee Henry Foster and an Exchange With Reporters

May 25, 1995

The President. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. Dr. Foster and I have just had coffee. We discussed some of the issues we always discuss in terms of the health challenges our country faces. And of course, we discussed the upcoming vote in the Senate committee on the question of his confirmation. I want to say again, he has my strong support. I believe that he should be voted out of the committee and he certainly should be confirmed by the United States Senate.

In the hearings, he clearly demonstrated his qualifications to be America's doctor. And as I have said repeatedly, I hope the American people will never forget the group of young people who came up from his home State and his home town to talk about the work he had personally done to urge them to live upright and healthy and productive lives and the work that he had done to rescue them from difficult circumstances. If he is not qualified to be America's doctor, it's hard to imagine who would be.

There have been a lot of politics and a lot of talk back and forth on this nomination, but now the time has come to do the right thing. And I trust that the committee and, ultimately, the Senate will do the right thing and confirm Dr. Foster as Surgeon General.

Surgeon General Nominee Foster

Q. Do you think they will, the committee and the Senate?

The President. I believe they will.

Q. What do you base your optimism on?

The President. Well, I base my optimism on the fact that usually in this country right prevails over political pressure over the long run. They have—we have dragged this thing out. You know, Dr. Foster was never a political football

before; President Bush thought enough of him to make him one of the Points of Light. And because we had a hearing, and he demonstrated in the hearing why he should be a Surgeon General, and he answered all the questions.

Q. Do you think you can overcome the filibuster, sir?

The President. Let's get out of committee first. I think you've got to get out of the committee, and then I think he certainly should be. We'll have lots of arguments to make about that in the appropriate time. I think, if the majority of the United States Senate is for him, he should certainly be confirmed.

Budget Proposals

Q. Mr. President, it looks like the rescission bill is going to pass today. Do you still intend to veto it? And what happens next?

The President. Well, the answer to your question is yes, if it passes in this form.

I want to emphasize, first of all, I am for a rescission bill that cuts this much spending. I have sent a bill to the Congress that cuts even more from the deficit. I have been very specific about it.

My objection is that having—after I negotiated with the Senate on spending reductions, we got politics as usual. Congress went behind closed doors and cut a lot of education and training out and put some pork in the bill for specific Congressmen and specific congressional districts and States. That's the old politics. What we're doing here now is new and different, and we can't continue to do it.

So if the bill comes to me in the same form, without the restoration of the education and training, yes, I will veto it. Well, what happens next? Then—well, they have a bill right now

which they could vote on today and send to me before they go on recess, which would cut the spending, restore the education by not protecting the pork. Now, that's my position. And that's what I think should be done.

If instead I get the bill and there's a veto and they go home for their break, then when they come back, we ought to get together and restore the education and the training funds, reduce the deficit by as much or even more than is in this present bill, and then let them send it to me, and I will sign it. I am for making a downpayment on the deficit reduction in this rescission bill.

I certainly want to get the money out to Oklahoma City, to finish our obligations in the California earthquake, to deal with the floods in the South, and of course we've got some other problems in other parts of the country, to fulfill the commitment of the United States on the Jordan issue as part of our Middle East peace process. I want to do all of that, to cut the spending and to get that money out there. But if we're going to be cutting around here, we cannot afford pork protection, politics as usual. We have to do what we're going to do in the open, not go behind closed doors and change all the priorities. We need to do this in a disciplined, good way.

So that is my position. It is very clear, and it has nothing to do with deficit reduction. I am for as much—I will support more spending reduction, but not in this form.

Bosnia

Q. Do you support, sir—do you support NATO air strikes around Sarajevo today?

The President. Well, my position is that NATO should be prepared to react when our commanders on the ground need them. And you know, I've been—of all of our NATO allies, the United States has been the most vigorous proponent of the use of NATO airstrikes in all appropriate circumstances. And we've laid those out repeatedly.

Thank you.

White House Security

Q. Mr. President, after still one more attack on the White House, are you starting to think, "Why me?"

The President. No. [*Laughter*] I do think—first of all, the American people should know that the system here worked and the Secret Service did a terrific job. And the two agents in question immediately put themselves in harm's way to do their job. And the system worked exactly as it is supposed to work. And the whole rest of the system worked. It was amazing. It worked. It worked quickly. And it's something that every citizen of this country can be very proud of.

I—to answer your other question, I don't, no. I just think that in a couple of cases, we've had people who for their own personal reasons have seen this as a symbol of something that they could attach themselves to in some way or another.

I do—I will say again that in our country today, we all need to try to reach out to each other and to talk and to reach across our divides when a lot of people out there may be like this gentleman, in trouble, and maybe can be brought back just by people reaching out to them and by trying to avoid letting things get to that point. And certainly I think that about the political rhetoric and dialog.

So I hope that we'll take another opportunity to reexamine, all of us, how we might make this country work better and have more thoughtful words and try to keep people from getting to extreme positions in their lives. But in this case, I don't feel badly at all. The Secret Service did a terrific job, and I'm very proud of them.

Thank you.

Q. So you have no fears?

The President. No.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:54 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Remarks to the White House Conference on Trade and Investment in Ireland

May 25, 1995

Thank you very much. Secretary Christopher, Secretary Brown, Senator Mitchell, Deputy Prime Minister Spring, Sir Patrick Mayhew, Mr. Ambassador, ladies and gentlemen, to all of you of Irish, British, and American heritage from the business communities of these great nations, I thank you for being here. I have looked forward to this day for a long time, to having people like you here who see the opportunities for trade and investment that come from peace and the opportunities for trade and investment to support peace. I'm especially delighted that so many are here from Ireland and the United Kingdom. And to all of our friends from Northern Ireland, your attendance here shows your dedication to a future of cooperation and prosperity, and we're particularly glad to have you.

Let me say a special word of thanks to George Mitchell for the tremendous work he has done in organizing this conference. His devotion to the cause of nurturing peace and growth in Northern Ireland and the Republic's border counties has played a central part in the progress that we celebrate here today. I'm delighted that he will lead another mission to Ireland this summer and even more pleased that he's agreed to continue his work in overseeing our economic initiatives through the end of this year.

Ireland is lucky to have George Mitchell on its side, even if it has to put up with the envy of the United States Senate, the Supreme Court, and Major League Baseball. [*Laughter*] You know, George is Irish and Lebanese. Maybe when we succeed in Ireland, if the Secretary of State is not finished, he'll volunteer for other duty. [*Laughter*]

As all of you know, the United States has a keen interest in a stable and democratic and prosperous Europe, but that interest is particularly strong when it comes to Ireland. Our strong bonds of kinship, culture, and history shared with the peoples of the United Kingdom in Ireland are well-known.

This is a moment of historic opportunity for you and historic interest for the United States. For my own part, people ask me from time to time why this is a matter of such deep per-

sonal interest to me. It goes beyond my Irish roots. I wish I could just say that's all there was to it. But an important part of our mission at this moment in time as Americans is to help reconcile the divisions which keep people apart and lead them sometimes to violence both within our own country and around the world.

If you look into the next century, you could thank the good Lord that we may, we may succeed in removing the nuclear threat from the children of the 21st century. But we still see these ancient impulses that keep people apart based on religious or racial or ethnic differences. I tell my fellow Americans all the time that the great genius of our country in the next century may be our ability to exalt the greatest amount of diversity of any large country in the world. But it is still a challenge for us here. You see it all the time. And we can think of no greater mission in our quest to reconcile diversity than trying to help peace and prosperity succeed in Northern Ireland and in Ireland in general.

This is, as I'm sure you know, an extraordinary gathering of which you are a part. Never before have representatives of all the political parties in Northern Ireland, officials from the United Kingdom and Ireland, and so many business leaders joined to help us to build a better tomorrow. The conference shows anew the historic progress that has been made toward a just and lasting settlement and toward a peace that respects the rights and traditions of both communities.

In the last few months, thanks to the ceasefire and the momentum of the negotiations, a powerful transformation has begun. Peace is closer than it's been in a generation. For the first time in decades, children can walk to school without worrying. Families that have endured so much violence with so much dignity can now enjoy the blessings of days without violence and nights without fear. The roads between north and south are more open than they have been in 25 years. And citizens of the Republic are visiting the north in even greater numbers. In Belfast, the army patrols have ended; the body