

July 6 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1995

alternative. I have made a commitment that I will have more conversation and less combat, like I did with my conversation with the Speaker up in New Hampshire. I have made a commitment to try to work for the long-term interests of our country, not just for the short-term gain. These are profoundly important things. And I have made a commitment not just to berate the worst in our country but to try to extol, extol the best—people like you that are doing things that work.

What you have to do is to be active and good citizens. Tell these Members of Congress that you will support cutting the deficit, you will support balancing the budget, but investing in our country and having the Federal Government play a role, which in the larger scheme of things is still a modest role but a critical one, is absolutely essential for our future.

You've been working hard out there, and a lot of you work under very difficult circumstances. But there is no more noble, no more important task, especially at this moment when we stand on the threshold of a new century.

I thank you for your service to your country. I thank you for your service to the children and to the future of America. I wish you well. I ask for your good wishes and your strength and your willingness to stand for what you know is right for America.

God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 2:20 p.m. from Room 459 in the Old Executive Office Building to the National Education Association (NEA) convention meeting in Minneapolis, MN. In his remarks, he referred to Keith Geiger, NEA president.

Telephone Conversation with Space Shuttle *Atlantis* Astronauts July 7, 1995

The President. Hello? Captain Gibson?

Commander Robert L. Gibson. Hello, Mr. President. This is Captain Gibson. We're online.

The President. Welcome home, and congratulations. We are very proud of you.

Commander Gibson. [Inaudible]—Mr. President. It's a pleasure for us to be back, back on the ground again, and to have had the opportunity to take part in this flight.

The President. Well, the pictures were wonderful, and we all watched you with absolute fascination and incredible support and enthusiasm. This is truly the beginning of a new era of cooperation in space between the United States and Russia. We've built a new relationship between our two countries. We're doing things together. And I think that what you and your team and what the Russians did together symbolizes that more than anything that I could ever say. And I think because of your mission now, the United States and Russia, with our partners in Canada and Japan and Europe, are going to be able to meet the challenge of building the international space station. And I hope

you and all of your team members will take an enormous amount of pride in that.

Commander Gibson. Well, thank you, Mr. President, for those extremely kind words. We certainly will. And I can tell you very honestly that at least all of us on the crew have a lot of very good friends in Russia and among the Russian Cosmonaut Corps and elsewhere in Russia. And I look forward very much to all of us continuing this.

The President. So do I. Before I sign off—I know you're tired and I know you're glad to be home—I want to offer a special congratulations to Norm Thagard on his record-breaking stay on orbit. We're all very proud of that. And I want to invite the entire crew to the White House as soon as you can come, because I want to hear some more about the mission and we need to talk about where we're going from here to keep the United States commitment to space exploration, travel, and to keep our whole program strong and alive.

Astronaut Norman E. Thagard. Mr. President, thanks for the words. This is Norm Thagard. The Russians took good care of me. We're great friends, so I think if what we did on a personal

level is any indication, there won't be any problem with us on an intergovernmental level as well. And I'm sitting here looking at my two Russian crewmates, and I couldn't be more pleased with a crew that I've ever had.

The President. The next time we have any problems between American and Russian officials, I'm going to send them into space. I think I now know how to solve all international problems. [*Laughter*]

I thank you very much, and I look forward to seeing all of you. Welcome home.

Commander Gibson. Thank you, Mr. President. We really appreciate your time and your support.

The President. Thank you. Goodbye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:27 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on the National Economy July 7, 1995

Today's employment report shows that since the start of our administration, the economy has created 7 million jobs, with over 92 percent of them created in the private sector. When I ran for President, I stated that this country must have a strategy to strengthen and restore the American dream and that a core element of this strategy must be to create more and better jobs for hardworking Americans.

Seven million jobs in 30 months is very good news, but still not good enough: millions of fam-

ilies are still working harder than ever just to stay in place. In order to increase incomes for hardworking Americans, we must remain committed to a broadbased economic strategy to reward work, balance the budget, open markets for American goods, invest in education and training, target tax cuts to helping families invest in their futures, and take serious steps to health reform while protecting Medicare.

The President's Radio Address July 8, 1995

Good morning. Last week I spoke to you about the need for Congress to pass reforms to end welfare as we know it. I want Congress to send me a bill that requires work, demands responsibility, and provides the child care people need to move from welfare to work.

This issue is now before the U.S. Senate. The truth is, Republicans and Democrats alike know what's needed to get this job done. A majority of Senators in both parties agree with me that welfare reform must require everyone who can work to go to work. We agree on the need for the toughest possible child support enforcement. And we agree that no one who can work should be able to stay on welfare forever. So we are close.

Congress could put a bill on my desk, a good bill, within the next few weeks. After a genera-

tion of debate, we have a chance, finally, to do what's right for the taxpayers who pay for a failed welfare system and for the people who are trapped by it. But in recent days we've seen unsettling signs that progress could fall to gridlock. This week, Republican leaders said that a threat from the far right in their own party could keep them from passing a welfare reform bill this year. A handful of Senators are threatening to hold welfare reform hostage to their own political views. They're threatening to block a vote on any bill that doesn't cut off all help to children whose mothers are poor, young, and unmarried.

I believe their position is wrong. Republican and Democratic Governors also strongly oppose Washington telling them to throw children off the rolls simply because their parents are under