

Q. Let me clarify, though, sir, is there any way to get the people back to work without resolving a balanced budget plan?

Speaker Gingrich. There might be a way, yes.

Senator Dole. Yes.

Speaker Gingrich. We're going to explore today some ways to get that done by unanimous consent over the next 2 days. But I think it takes working it out together, and we haven't done that yet.

Senator Dole. Just let me add that we're sending—we're in recess now in the Senate, subject to call of the Chair, and I hope to be able to give Senator Daschle some language to look at this afternoon. And I want to congratulate Congressman Armey for his leadership on the House side with the Speaker, because if we can work this out it could be done yet today.

Q. And have people back to work?

Senator Dole. Well, it would go down to the President as quickly as we could. It's a Middle East peace facilitation act. It's the same language we passed last Friday in the Senate deeming people essential. And the third element of the package would be expedited procedure, if we get an agreement, so we can get it through the Senate in less than 60 days, I guess. We just take the budget reconciliation language and shorten the time and put that in the resolution.

Speaker Gingrich. We'll try to get that down here by sometime this evening if we can get it all worked out. It's all got to be done—our system is complicated even at best, and it takes a little while, but we hope to get it worked out today.

Q. President Clinton, what's your reaction to that, sir?

The President. I think the people ought to go back to work, and I think they ought to be paid. And I think if we don't do it, we're going to see some very serious consequences that should not—that neither the public nor the public employee should have to endure. And I think we need to keep working at this until we get an agreement. I'm prepared to work until we get an agreement. We've just got to keep working through it.

But these are complex issues. To protect Medicare and Medicaid, education and the environment, the things that are at the core of the resolution we adopted, and get the budget balanced in 7 years is not easy to do. We're going to have to work at it.

Q. [*Inaudible*]*—the Republicans rejected last time? You thought you had an agreement on something like this and the House Republicans rejected it?*

Q. Why did you change your position, Mr. Gingrich?

The President. Wait, wait, wait. Let's don't ask any more questions like that. We're trying to work this out, and I think—give us a chance to meet today, and give them a chance to do their work. Let's see what happens.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:40 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House, prior to a meeting with congressional leaders. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on Most-Favored-Nation Trade Status for Russia

December 29, 1995

To the Congress of the United States:

On September 21, 1994, I determined and reported to the Congress that the Russian Federation is in full compliance with the freedom of emigration criteria of sections 402 and 409 of the Trade Act of 1974. This action allowed for the continuation of most-favored-nation (MFN) status for Russia and certain other activities without the requirement of an annual waiver.

As required by law, I am submitting an updated report to the Congress concerning the emigration laws and policies of the Russian Federation. You will find that the report indicates continued Russian compliance with U.S. and international standards in the area of emigration.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
December 29, 1995.