

war highs, within decades. So I'm very excited about it. It was a good meeting, and I'm glad to be back.

Former President George Bush

Q. Mr. President, what do you think about your predecessor's venture into skydiving? [Laughter] President Bush is supposed to be parachuting even as we speak. [Laughter]

The President. I am mightily impressed. [Laughter] And I wish him well. I'm excited. I can't wait to see him get down and give us the story. [Laughter]

President's Travel Plans

Q. Are you going to have to postpone your Mexico trip because of your injury?

The President. What we have decided to do, and I think we've announced it—we will announce it today—is to postpone the Mexico trip for about a month and put it where I was going to do my full Latin American trip to the other countries, to Central America, to South America, and the Caribbean. And what we're going to do is to make the trip to Mexico, to Costa Rica, and to Barbados, to do Central America and the Caribbean and Mexico during that time-frame. And then later in the year, we're going

to go to South America and do that trip when I'm somewhat more mobile, because, among other things, we're going to Argentina and Brazil. They're big countries. There's going to be a lot of moving around, and I need a little more physical mobility. Besides, I'm hoping to ride horses and do some other things, and I'm not quite ready for that, as you can see.

Medicare Fraud Initiative

Q. Mr. President, the cornerstone of the Florida program is the surety bond and the on-site inspections, both of which are missing from your proposal. Why is that?

The President. Do you want to comment on that?

Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala. Yes. The on-site inspection is in it. On the surety bond, it's one of the things that we have the authority under our regulatory authority, and we'll have a later announcement on that.

The President. Thank you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:32 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Lawton Chiles of Florida.

Statement on Campaign Finance Reform Legislation

March 25, 1997

In my State of the Union Address, I challenged Congress to pass bipartisan campaign finance reform by July 4th, the date we celebrate the birth of our democracy. The only way that political reform will become law is if citizens raise their voices to demand change. I strongly support the bipartisan legislation introduced by Senators John McCain and Russ Feingold, and Representatives Chris Shays and Marty Meehan. It is real, it is fair, it is tough, and it will curb the role of big money in our politics.

We know the pressing need for reform. The campaign finance laws are two decades out of date and have been overwhelmed by a flood of money that rises with every election. Above all, campaign finance reform will help us to meet our Nation's fundamental challenges. It will help us balance the budget, fight crime,

extend health care to our children, protect our young people from the dangers of tobacco. Reform will help make sure that our political system stands for ordinary Americans and helps them in their daily lives.

At Faneuil Hall, the "Cradle of Liberty," and at Independence Hall, our Founders forged our democracy. Now it is up to all of us, in a new time, to renew that democracy and to make sure that our Government represents the national interest, not just narrow interests. I thank those who are fighting for reform and who are gathered at Faneuil Hall for their leadership and urge all citizens to join in this effort. This

year can be the year that we finally pass campaign finance reform.

NOTE: This statement was read at the Project Independence rally for campaign finance reform at Faneuil Hall in Boston, MA.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia-Herzegovina and an Exchange With Reporters March 26, 1997

President Clinton. Let me say that it's a real pleasure for me to welcome President Izetbegovic back to the White House. I'm looking forward to this meeting and to getting an update on his efforts to complete the implementation of the Dayton accord. The United States remains committed to that and committed to supporting those in Bosnia who are working for that.

And we still have an awful lot of work to do in the time remaining for our mission there on the security front, and then even beyond there will be a lot more to do. So I'm pleased to have him here, and I'm looking forward to our visit.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, why did you send Dennis Ross to the Middle East?

President Clinton. Because I'm concerned about the peace process, and we have been talking among ourselves here intensely over the last several days about whether there are some ideas we ought to advance with the Israelis and the Palestinians, and particularly what we can do to minimize the violence and to get the negotiations back going. So that's what—Dennis' trip is the product of our deliberations here, and we'll see what it produces.

Q. What are you suggesting?

FBI and Alleged Chinese Efforts To Influence the 1996 Election

Q. Mr. President, we never had a chance to ask you yesterday about your response to the possibility that FBI Director Louis Freeh withheld information that you might actually have needed to conduct policy. I was wondering if you have a response to that and what you're doing, if anything, to look into whether that actually occurred.

President Clinton. Well, first of all, obviously I have no way of knowing—you don't know what

you don't get. But if you look at the last several years, or just the last couple of years, we have worked with the FBI in areas that have both national security implications and the question of a crime that violates the criminal laws of the United States. The two most obvious and most recent cases are the Khobar Towers and the Atlanta bombing during the Olympics. And we worked with them on both cases.

Now, they have dual obligations to share with the White House and with the State Department—the Secretary of State, where appropriate, information we need to protect and advance national security and to preserve the integrity of criminal investigations. And ultimately, those things almost have to be resolved on a case-by-case basis, where there is a doubt, by the Attorney General.

And I'm confident that that is what has been and will continue to be done in this case. And that's really the best answer I can give you here.

Q. Do you still have strong confidence in Louis Freeh to run the FBI?

President Clinton. Yes, I have no basis—on the basis of this incident, I don't have any information at this time which would call into question that confidence. These are not always easy questions. And that's why the Attorney General has to resolve them when there is a real doubt. I just wanted—I wanted to make sure that the national security interests of the country have been fully taken into account and that there's really been an honest effort to look at all the evidence and to resolve it.

I can't say that—to go back to your original question, since I don't know what was not given, I can't make a judgment about it.

Q. Well, why—

President Clinton. But I do know that the Attorney General was sensitive to it, and I believe will continue to make an effort to resolve the matters in the appropriate way.