

The President. Well, first of all, a majority of Republicans supported this treaty and all the Democrats. And I think we can get a balanced budget supported by a majority of Republicans and a majority of Democrats in both Houses if we work together in good faith. This was not some unilateral move. This was an honest, good-faith negotiation. We put 28 clarifying conditions on to the treaty that we worked very hard with Senator Lott and others with.

I am—what I am willing to do, I'm willing to work through this process on the budget just the way we worked through this. I'm very encouraged by it, and I think that America should be encouraged by it. If we work together in a very practical way to do what's in the national interest, I think we can get there.

Q. Mr. President, how far apart are you right now with the Republican leadership and the Democrats in Congress in achieving a balanced budget agreement?

The President. I don't want to characterize it. They're working hard, and they're working in good faith. And I want to leave it like that.

I'm going to—we're going to talk tomorrow. It's late. Let's go to bed.

Missing Military Trucks in Texas

Q. Mr. President, we're told that two military trucks are missing tonight, one carrying four unarmed Air Force missiles, the other said to be carrying machine guns and mortar. Mr. President, we're told that they are overdue 3 to 4 days. What's being done to find these trucks, and is foul play suspected?

The President. I've just been briefed on it. The FBI is working on it—working hard on it. It's my understanding that one of the trucks has been recovered, and that the other one has weapons that are inert and cannot cause any harm. But we're working on it. We'll have more reports tomorrow.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:51 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Senator Bob Dole; Gen. Colin Powell, USA (ret.), former Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Gen. Brent Scowcroft, USAF (ret.), former National Security Adviser.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto of Japan and an Exchange With Reporters

April 25, 1997

President Clinton. Everybody in? Let me say it's a great honor for me to host my friend Prime Minister Hashimoto here at the White House. We had a nice visit last night, and he was here at the time the Chemical Weapons Convention passed, so we shared a moment of celebration. And we have a busy agenda today, and of course we'll have a press conference later and we'll do our best to answer your questions.

But I think it's important to reaffirm that the relationship the United States has with Japan is unique and comprehensive and profoundly important to our future and to the stability and prosperity and peace of the world. And we intend to keep working on it and make it better.

Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Hashimoto. I find myself being a very lucky man. I was lucky enough to be invited by Bill last night, after arriving here in

the evening, and I could share the greatest moment with Bill for the wonderful passage of the splendid Convention in the Senate. The fact that I was able to share that wonderful moment together with the President, itself, makes my trip to Washington worthwhile.

I see all the familiar and very inquisitive faces in this room, so there will be many questions asked of me, but even with that fact, I'm very happy that I was able to share the moment with the President last night. And last night I was very appreciative of the kindness of Bill because he got Mickey Kantor on the phone without any fighting between us. [Laughter]

President Clinton. He tried to get him to switch sides, but he didn't do it. [Laughter]

China-Russia Relations

Q. Mr. President, does the U.S. or Japan have any reason to be concerned about the treaty between China and Russia?

President Clinton. Well, my view is that the United States should have a partnership over the long run for stability in the Asia-Pacific region that includes our longstanding alliance with Japan and a positive relationship with both Russia and with China. And as long as any agreement they make is consistent with that kind of positive partnership and is not directed in any negative way toward their neighbors, I think that we don't have anything to worry about.

Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Hashimoto. I wonder if there's anything I could add to that wonderful statement. That was a splendid answer to the question, I believe. If I may add, I think that the summit between the President and President Yeltsin in Helsinki was a great contributor not just to the stability in Europe but also the stability for the entire world.

I think the President gave a succinct answer describing the situation of the moment. It's very important that Russia and the European countries have a stable relationship. We are in the transitional period of great change. We are trying to engage, for example, China as a constructive partner in international society, and we're transforming the G-7 summit to the Summit of Eight. So in that context, I think the President gave an excellent answer to your question.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

President Clinton. We'll answer the others later. We're going to have a press conference later.

Q. —Governor Weld as Ambassador to Mexico?

President Clinton. We're going to have a press conference later, and I'll answer all the questions. We have to work.

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

Discussions With Prime Minister Hashimoto

Prime Minister Hashimoto. I guess we have to shake hands again. [Laughter]

President Clinton. Yes. Let me say very briefly, it's a great honor for me to have my friend Prime Minister Hashimoto here in the Oval Office. He made Hillary and me feel very welcome in Japan not so very long ago, and we're glad to have him back here.

We just had his daughter and son-in-law and grandchild in here. We were playing with the baby, so we're a little late in getting our work started. And we had—but we had a very good visit last night, and he was here at the moment that the Chemical Weapons Convention passed the Senate, which was a happy coincidence for me and, I think, for him. And we have a lot of business to transact today, and I'm looking forward to this meeting and also to the press conference that we will have together after our meeting.

Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Hashimoto. [Inaudible]—when the Senate was just passing the Chemical Weapons Convention. We were able to share that joy. It was all the more pleasing for me to share that great moment with the President.

I expressed my sympathies for the damage caused by the flooding in the State of North Dakota and Minnesota. Also, I expressed my gratitude to the—cooperation by the United States up to the solution of this incident in Peru. It was a wonderful moment between the two of us. And I'm sure that we will have very meaningful discussions in our meeting.

Q. Mr. President, do you think Japan should go ahead with the additional food aid, putting aside—

President Clinton. We need to discuss that.

Q. —Prime Minister on trade and particularly the current account trade surplus, sir?

President Clinton. Obviously, we don't want it to go back up. We've made some real progress. But we'll discuss that. We'll have a press conference later.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Prime Minister Hashimoto spoke in Japanese, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto of Japan

April 25, 1997

President Clinton. Good afternoon. Before we begin the discussion of my meetings with the Prime Minister, let me say that I have just come from signing the instrument of ratification to the Chemical Weapons Convention, along with the Vice President and the Secretary of State and others who worked very hard for it.

Last night's strong bipartisan vote in the Senate will keep our soldiers and our citizens safer, and it will send a clear signal that Americans of both parties are united in their resolve to maintain the leadership of our Nation into the next century.

It is very appropriate that the vote took place last night when I was visiting with the Prime Minister and that the signing took place a moment ago while Prime Minister Hashimoto was here, because Japan set a very strong example for the world by ratifying this treaty more than a year ago.

I am particularly pleased on this historic day to welcome the Prime Minister to Washington. Over the last 2 years, Ryu and I have met many times. We've built a good friendship that reflects the shared values and interests of the world's two strongest democracies and leading economies. Today's discussions were no exception. The Prime Minister and I continued our work to make sure that our partnership meets the challenges of the new century.

Our security alliance remains the cornerstone of peace and stability in the Asia-Pacific region. Building on the joint declaration we signed in Japan last April, we are strengthening our co-operation while reducing the burden of our bases on the Japanese people. Today we reviewed recent progress in consolidating some of our bases in Okinawa in ways that reflect our continuing sensitivity to their effect on the lives of the Okinawan people. I particularly appreciate the strong leadership and support for our alliance the Prime Minister showed in passing legislation to enable our forces to continue using these important facilities.

We also discussed regional security, including our joint interest in promoting peace and stability on the Korean Peninsula. The United States and Japan are united in urging North Korea

to accept the standing offer for four-party peace talks. I want to thank the Prime Minister for Japan's role in the Korean Energy Development Organization that has helped to keep North Korea's dangerous nuclear program frozen.

The Prime Minister and I agreed on the critical importance of cooperative relations with China. We also agreed on the need for the international community to stand firmly behind the progress of democracy in Cambodia.

We both recognize the importance of keeping our economic relationship moving in the right direction. Over the last 4 years we've worked hard to open markets and achieve a better balance in our trade and investment ties. I told Prime Minister Hashimoto we need to build on this success to create new opportunities in key sectors for both the workers of our country and broad benefits for the consumers of Japan. We both want to promote strong domestic demand-led growth in Japan and to avoid a significant increase in Japan's external surplus. These are essential to sustaining the progress that has been made.

I welcome the Prime Minister's commitment to restructuring Japan's economy, including his support of far-reaching deregulation. An ambitious reform program should bring economic benefits to Japan and improve market access for American and other foreign firms. To this end, we have agreed to intensify talks on deregulation under our framework agreement.

Among the global issues we discussed were preparations for this June's Summit of the Eight in Denver and how we can work together to strengthen reform in the United Nations. Tomorrow the Vice President and the Prime Minister will discuss our common agenda to fight disease, protect the environment, and meet other important common challenges.

Finally, let me say I had the opportunity to thank the Prime Minister for Japan's efforts to bring our young people closer together. The new Fulbright Memorial Fund will send 5,000 American high school teachers and administrators to Japan over the next 5 years. We welcome the Prime Minister's initiatives to send high school students from Okinawa to study in the