

notwithstanding the fact that sometimes they stray in their political judgment—[laughter]—have an unemployment rate of 3.1 percent. Karan English, because of the courage you showed in 1993, Arizona has the fastest job growth in its history. And Marjorie Mezvinsky, because you laid down your seat, your county has the fastest job growth of any county in the entire State of Pennsylvania. Unemployment has dropped by 25 percent. And it gave me a great deal of pleasure to have you sit with the First Lady at the State of the Union Address this year when I announced that. Because of the vote all of you cast, we would in fact, balance the budget years ahead of schedule.

In “Profiles in Courage,” President Kennedy wrote these words: “Democracy means much more than popular government and majority rule, much more than a system of political techniques to flatter or deceive powerful blocs of voters. A democracy that has no moment of individual conscience in a sea of popular rule is not worthy to bear that name.”

Karen, Karan, and Marjorie, to all the rest of you, every one of you has a story. And I only wish I could tell them all tonight. The 103d Congress was chock-full of profiles in courage. And when you add them all up, by the narrowest of margins, repeatedly, they led to the first balanced budget in 30 years, and Amer-

ican economic renaissance, and a resurgent conviction on the part of our people that together we can solve our problems and seize our opportunities, and do great things; that our old-fashioned Government that Mr. Washington and his friends helped to start still works in this new-fangled age if it has the right people willing to do the right things at the right time.

It is altogether a monument to your determination, your conscience, and overall, your love of your country. So on behalf of your country, again I say, thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:54 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Counselor to the President and Special Envoy for the Americas Thomas F. (Mack) McLarty; former Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers Laura D’Andrea Tyson; former Director of the Office of Management and Budget Leon E. Panetta; former Secretary of the Treasury Lloyd Bentsen; former Deputy Secretary of the Treasury Roger Altman; former Senator George J. Mitchell, independent chairman of the multiparty talks in Northern Ireland; former Speaker of the House of Representatives Thomas S. Foley; and former chairman of the House Ways and Means Committee Dan Rostenkowski.

Remarks Announcing the Resignation of Counselor to the President and Special Envoy for the Americas Thomas F. McLarty and an Exchange With Reporters

April 24, 1998

The President. Last week, at the Summit of the Americas in Santiago, I saw again the profound change in the very character of the relationships between the United States and our neighbors to the south and the start of a true partnership based on mutual respect, mutual trust, and mutual reward.

Two quiet revolutions were the catalysts for this change. The first, of course, was the quiet revolution of democracy and open markets in the Americas. The second quiet revolution was Mack McLarty, our Special Envoy to Latin America, who helped all of us to realize that

the Americas must become a cornerstone of our prosperity and security for the 21st century.

Mack has made over 40 trips to the Americas since he became my Special Envoy. He has earned the trust and respect, the friendship and affection of leaders from the Caribbean to Central America, from Canada to South America, who value his extraordinary combination of integrity and intellect, ability and civility. He helped to change the way we see Latin America, and just as important, he’s helped to change the way Latin America sees us.

Earlier this week, Mack told me of his desire to leave this administration at the end of June

to return to his private life, to spend more time with Donna Kay, and with their sons, Mark and Franklin. It has been a day I hoped would never come, so I accept his decision with regret but eternal gratitude.

As most of you know, Mack and I have been good friends virtually all of our lives. We've taken a lot of ribbing about Miss Mary's kindergarten, but she must have done something right. [Laughter] Hillary and I have been especially grateful to have Mack and Donna as friends for a long, long time, and especially in our lives these past 5½ years. Mack represents to me everything that is good and decent in public service; honesty and civility, fidelity and kindness aren't just words to him, they're a way of life.

Just after I was elected President, I asked Mack to leave a long and varied and highly successful business career to be the White House Chief of Staff. It was a daunting task for people who were new to Washington. We had new ideas and new energy. We had all kinds of ideas about the new direction we wanted to take our country in, but we were also new to the strange and often arcane ways of this city.

As Erskine Bowles has often said to me, from his own experience, it's a whole lot harder to start up an enterprise than it is to take it over and tune it up. Mack was there at the beginning. And as Bob Rubin has said so often, and I know he would want me to say on his behalf today, it was Mack that established a culture, in our White House and administration, of teamwork and decency which has continued throughout the years, and has been responsible for much of the success that we have enjoyed.

During Mack's tenure, we launched policies that helped to turn our country around, to bring our people together, to make our Government work again. Our party had been out of office for 12 years. Beginning with Mack's steady hand as we chose our first Cabinet, he helped to put in place a dramatic change in direction for our Nation. He organized our forces at the White House and was a driving force on Capitol Hill toward the passage of our economic plan that has helped to bring such unparalleled prosperity.

It sparked a boom in investment; cut the deficit over 90 percent before the Balanced Budget Act was passed; invested in education and health care, in the environment, in science, and space; cut taxes on small businesses and 15 million

people; and led to the creation of 15 million jobs. He helped to secure the passage of the Family and Medical Leave Act, which over 12 million Americans have used when a baby is born or someone in their family is sick. He set the stage for the crime bill, continued our work that we began in Arkansas on education reform, helped us to fight and win major victories to open markets in this hemisphere and around the world through NAFTA and GATT.

After he became my counselor, I asked him to tackle complex and important missions—from his work with the Vice President to make the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta a success, to his efforts in the Gulf, to secure support for the Dayton Peace accord in Bosnia, to reaching out to the business community and other key constituencies, and to his truly historic service as Special Envoy to the Americas.

He has pursued these many missions with grace and decency and good humor, earning the admiration and trust of a pretty disparate group of people, from Dick Gephardt to Trent Lott, from Tom Donohue at the U.S. Chamber of Commerce to John Sweeney at the AFL-CIO, from Jesse Jackson to Ross Perot. Now, this does not surprise me, because as long as I've known him, he's always been well liked and well respected by everybody. And, frankly, I still resent it. [Laughter]

Let me say to Mack and to Donna and to their fine sons, thank you for serving America. To his family, I thank them for lending Mack to me for a little while. For a long time now, we have been friends; now we know we are colleagues; now we know what it's like to fight and lose and win again on behalf of the American people. It has been a wonderful experience. And again, I say that Mack McLarty is a genuinely patriotic public servant in the greatest American tradition. And as is my commitment, I promised him that for once, he can have the last word.

Mr. McLarty.

[At this point, Mr. McLarty made brief remarks.]

Q. What are you going to miss the most about the White House?

Mr. McLarty. *Muy poquito, muy poquito* [Very little, very little]. [Laughter] Probably, Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International], not having that energy, knowing that

that first question is coming at a setting like this. [Laughter]

Prime Minister Sergey Kiriyenko of Russia

Q. Mr. President, I take it you can work with the new Russian Prime Minister as you did with his predecessor.

The President. Well, I'm looking forward to it. We have a high opinion of him based on our experiences with him, and the commission set up—we had with the Vice President and the Russian Prime Minister. I look forward to continuing that. It's helped us to resolve an enormous number of issues. I also very much hope that this will free the Duma up now to consider the START II Treaty, because if they will ratify it, then we can move on to START III and continue our effort of dramatically reducing the nuclear threat.

So this is, I think, a good news day for Russia and for the United States. I look forward to seeing President Yeltsin in Birmingham in about a month, and we'll have a chance to discuss these and other matters.

Latin America-U.S. Relations

Q. Does Mr. McLarty's leaving signify an erosion of U.S. interest in Latin America?

The President. Oh, no, not at all. It is true that I don't know anybody else who could get me to go down there 3 times in 12 months—[laughter]—but I must say, every time I went I was more eager to return. And I think that through his efforts, as Secretary Albright said, the Government and the principals and, maybe in a fundamental way, even the American people have altered their notions of what our relationships with Latin America are and what they should be and what they can become. And so we will continue to even intensify our efforts.

If you look at the agenda that we embraced at Santiago—which was, in no small measure, Mr. McLarty's work—it will require, just to honor the commitments we have made, a deepening effort in Latin America. It will require us to do more than we have done in the past.

Airlines Agreements

Q. Mr. President, are you concerned about the impact on consumers of the agreements announced between the four major airlines, and will your administration look into possible anti-trust violations in those agreements?

The President. Well, any decision like that, of course, is not one for the White House to be making. But I don't think we've had enough time to analyze it to know whether we have concerns or not, so I don't believe it's appropriate for me to make a comment yet because I don't know enough about it to make a good one.

Corporate Trends

Q. Well, what about the trend in terms of the banks and so forth? I mean, the country is moving in that direction. Is that good?

The President. Well, if it's being done to compete globally, and there's still adequate amount of competition so that consumers are protected in terms of price and quality, but American business becomes more globally competitive, then it's a good thing. If it is a function of there being an awful lot of money around in the economy today and it's just one of those periodic bursts of mergers which may or may not have a good effect on consumers and may or may not lend stability to our economy, then it's much more questionable.

So I think that it requires a level of analysis about what is really going on here and why, that I simply haven't had either the opportunity to do or to get advised on by my folks. So I think it's something that should provoke a lot of comment and a lot of thought; experts around the country should be writing op-ed pieces for newspapers; people should be thinking through this, but—to help the American people understand it, because we've always had a native suspicion of bigness of all kinds in America. It goes all the way back to our beginning. It started with big government, and it's basically extended to all the large institutions in life. And Americans often feel that ordinary people don't have enough control over their lives anyway.

So I think that there is going to be this questioning atmosphere, but I would just say, we need to analyze each one of these on their own merits and ask the questions that I just put out. I'm pretty convinced that I just gave you the right questions to ask; I just haven't had a chance to analyze it and have experts talk to me about it and work it through.

Response to Criticism

Q. Mr. President, many House Democrats want to censure Dan Burton for the vulgar remark he made about you. What do you think about that remark, and what do you think should happen to him?

The President. Well, the House is obviously the judge of its own affairs, and they should continue to be. And therefore, it's not appropriate for me to comment on it.

Q. But surely as a human being—

The President. Well, as a human being, I learned that it's inappropriate for the President to let feelings—human feelings interfere with the job.

Q. Sure it is. [*Laughter*]

The President. We're going to have a—no, no, I'm saving all of that for Saturday night, Helen. [*Laughter*]

Yes, but let me just say this. Go back to my Inaugural, this last Inaugural, and even before, when Dr. Schuller and others gave me that great passage from Isaiah. A President cannot repair the breaches in a country, cannot unify a country, and cannot lift its vision if he takes personally personal assaults. You can't do it. You just have to blow it off and think about something else.

And, I mean, my advice, as I said—you asked me yesterday, I think, if I had anything to say to Mr. Burton, and I said, yes, I do—I hope he will vote the campaign finance reform bill

now that it's finally going to be put on the floor of the Senate—of the House. And maybe we can get it on the floor of the Senate if we can pass it in the House.

So I think that's the way we all ought to be. I can't further the public interest of America by engaging in that kind of debate. I just want to lift it up. I think that we all ought to just—we'd do a lot better in this town if we had less personal focus and more public focus of all kinds.

Thank you.

*White House Correspondents' Association
Dinner*

Q. Speaking of Saturday night, sir, are you looking forward to having dinner with Paula Jones in the same room?

The President. You know, we practiced all kinds of answers to this question—[*laughter*]—and most of them I think I'll have to give Saturday night. [*Laughter*] Thank you.

NOTE. The President spoke at 11 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Sergey Kiriyenko, former Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin, and President Boris Yeltsin of Russia; and Rev. Robert Schuller. A reporter referred to Paula Jones, whose civil suit against the President was dismissed on April 1. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Luncheon
April 24, 1998

Thank you very much. Thank you, Governor, and thank you, ladies and gentlemen. I'm delighted to see you, and I've enjoyed our visit already today. I thank you for being here. Len and I were just joking over on the side when Roy was talking about how we would have to explain to the media when we characterize this as the Democratic Party's "Ragtime" weekend. [*Laughter*] And Len said, "Well, I always say it's our 150th anniversary celebration weekend." But actually, for those of you who are familiar with "Ragtime," it's not a bad thing to be a kind of metaphor for the struggles of our party, the aspirations of our party, and the hope that

we have for the future of America. And so I thank all the folks who are associated with the wonderful production for helping us to celebrate this weekend.

Let me also say to you, Governor, I thank you for what you said about the Irish peace process and about the trips to Africa and to Latin America. Just before I came over here I had a visit and got an update from the British Prime Minister, Tony Blair, about where we are on that and what's going on. In a way, those two trips and the efforts of the United States to help to broker the peace, or at least to create the conditions in which peace could occur in