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NOTE: The President spoke at 10:45 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the White House Conference on Climate Change

October 19, 1993

Ladies and gentlemen, first let me thank you all for being here and thank the Vice President, the Cabinet, our Science Adviser, Katie McGinty, and others who worked so hard on this policy. If I might begin by just observing, I was looking at the clouds hoping we didn't have too much of a climate change this morning before the event could unfold.

This is an issue which has been of great concern to me for a long time. When I decided to seek this office back in 1991, I did it after having spent more than a decade as a Governor deeply frustrated by what seemed to me too often to be inevitable, persistent, aggravating conflicts between the impulse to promote economic opportunity for the people that I represented and the clear obligation, the moral obligation, on all of us to try to preserve this planet that we all share. And anyone with eyes to see could look down the road and recognize that, even with imperfect scientific knowledge, at some point the impulse to give people something to do would have to be reconciled with the obligation to preserve the planet we all share and that if there were ways through the use of technology and partnerships and ingenuity to actually enhance economic opportunities while preserving the planet, how much better off we would all be.

That is what we have sought to do in this administration. The Vice President outlined the number of things that we have tried to do to move the environmental agenda forward and at the same time move our economy forward. I remember so well the sort of shocking but bracing and reinforcing feeling I had the first time I began to go to New Hampshire, which is what you have to do in this country if you want to ultimately become President, to find that people just living their own lives in what was in a very economically depressed State also believed that we could find a way and that we had to find a way to pursue our economic objectives and fulfill our moral responsibilities to have an aggressive and responsible program about the environment.

That cannot be done unless we change our attitude about what we put into our atmosphere and how we respect the air we breathe. That requires us to meet head-on the serious threat of global warming. I made a commitment to do that on Earth Day this year, to make a commitment to an approach that would draw on the most innovative people we could find in this country, whether they were in business, labor, government, or the environmental movement, to turn this challenge into an opportunity. And that's what this report seeks to do. It seeks to give the American people the ability to compete and win in the global economy while meeting our most deep and profound environmental challenges.

We have begun the task of linking our economy to the environment today in what I believe is a truly extraordinary fashion. And I think if all of you read the plan in its exquisite and sometimes mind-bending detail, you will see that it is a very aggressive and very specific first step; I would argue, the most aggressive and the most specific first step that any nation on this planet has taken in the face of perhaps the biggest environmental threat to this planet.

The task is accomplished primarily by harnessing private market forces, by leveraging modest Government expenditures to create a much larger set of private sector investments, and by establishing new public-private partnerships to bring out our best research and our best technologies. This plan takes the environmental debate where it should have been years ago, beyond a confrontation over ideology to a conversation about ideas, beyond polemics to real progress.

On Earth Day I made a commitment to reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases to 1990 levels by the year 2000. And I asked for a blueprint on how to achieve this goal. In concert with all other nations, we simply must halt global warming. It is a threat to our health, to our ecology, and to our economy. I know that the precise magnitude and patterns of climate change cannot be fully

predicted. But global warming clearly is a growing, long-term threat with profound consequences. And make no mistake about it, it will take decades to reverse. But the first step is before us today. And because most of our recommendations do not require legislation, something which will doubtless please the Congress with all the burdens they have already on their plate, we can take action on our plan beginning today.

This plan is the result, as the Vice President has said, of genuine collaboration based on solid scientific and economic analysis, including funding to back up each and every proposal it contains. Like the announcement of our clean car initiative last month, this approach to global warming encourages public-private cooperation across a spectrum of economic, technological, and environmental questions. There are 50 separate initiatives in this plan, touching every sector of our economy because the problem, frankly, affects every sector of the economy. There are measures to improve energy efficiencies in commercial buildings and to make better household appliances. There are new agreements with public utilities to reduce greenhouse gases and new public-private ventures to increase the efficiency of industrial motors.

The plan will make it possible for all Americans to purchase appliances unlike any we own today. When your furnace dies or your washer breaks, you'll be able to go to a local store and buy a new appliance much more efficient than any you can buy today, and one that will save money in its operation. The energy savings we achieve will lower the cost of doing business in America and make us more competitive on the world market and more prosperous here at home. And the investments generated by this plan will create jobs in the sectors that make, install, and use energy efficient and pollution-cutting technologies.

Finally, to meet the challenge of global warming, as I have said with regard to cutting the deficit and reforming health care and in so many other areas, we frankly must all take some more personal responsibility. We will all benefit environmental and economically from the actions we are proposing today, and it will take all of us to make this plan work. So I say to all the American people: If your utility offers you help in conserving energy in your own home, seize it. If you own a business and the EPA offers you a chance to join the Green Lights program, do it. If you run a factory and the Department of Energy offers you a plan to help install an efficient motor system, use it. You will save money, and you will help your country and your fellow citizens.

This plan isn't designed for an archive. It's designed for action, for rapid implementation, constant monitoring, and for adjustments as necessary to meet our goals. It's part of a long-range strategy that includes the establishment of a team here in the White House to identify and implement those policies which will continue the trend of reduced emissions.

The action plan reestablishes the United States as a world leader in protecting the global climate. I urge other industrial countries to move rapidly to produce plans as detailed, as realistic, and as achievable as ours. This initiative gives us a chance, a very, very good chance to reduce greenhouse gases, grow our economy, and create a new high-skill, high-wage job base in America.

We take pride here in this country in the love we have for our land, in our leadership among nations, in our ability to set new goals and solve new challenges. Today we have given life to those values again. And through them, we will help to build a healthier environment and a stronger economy for decades to come. We also will help to meet our moral obligation to ourselves, our neighbors around the world, and most important, to our children.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:27 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to John H. Gibbons, Assistant to the President for Science and Technology.

Message to the Senate Transmitting the Israel-United States Tax Convention Protocol

October 19, 1993

To the Senate of the United States:

I transmit herewith for the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification the Second Protocol Amending the Convention Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the State of Israel with Respect to Taxes on Income, signed at Washington on November 20, 1975, as amended by the Protocol signed May 30, 1980. The Second Protocol was signed at Jerusalem on January 26, 1993. Also transmitted for the information of the Senate is an exchange of notes and the report of the Department of State with respect to the Protocol.

The Second Protocol further amends the 1975 Convention, as amended by the 1980 Protocol, in large measure to accommodate certain post-1980 provisions of U.S. tax law and treaty policy. The new Protocol also reflects changes in Israeli law and makes certain technical corrections to the Convention that are necessary because of the passage of time. It will modernize tax relations between the two countries and will facilitate greater private sector U.S. investment in Israel.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Protocol and give its advice and consent to ratification.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 19, 1993.

Message to the Congress Transmitting Reports of the Department of Transportation

October 19, 1993

To the Congress of the United States:

I transmit herewith the 1992 calendar year reports as prepared by the Department of Transportation on activities under the Highway Safety Act and the National Traffic and Motor Vehicle Safety Act of 1966, as amended (23 U.S.C. 401 note and 15 U.S.C. 1408).

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 19, 1993.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report of the Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee

October 19, 1993

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 5347(e) of title 5 of the United States Code, I transmit herewith the 1992 annual report of the Federal Prevailing Rate Advisory Committee.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
October 19, 1993.

Statement on Congressional Action on Department of Commerce Appropriations

October 19, 1993

The House/Senate conference decision to bolster the Department of Commerce FY94 budget to $3.56 billion, a 12.6 percent increase over FY93 levels of $3.16 billion, represents a vote of confidence in this administration's investment priorities and in the Department of Commerce. The budget increases reflect the increased responsibilities of the Commerce Department under the leadership of Secretary Ron Brown.

Congress' decision hits a home run for this administration's civilian technology and defense conversion policies. It demonstrates the importance of our efforts to promote economic growth through civilian technology and address the aftermath of economic dislocation resulting from the end of the cold war. Their decision affirms our goal of building a stronger, more competitive private sector able to maintain U.S. leadership in critical world markets.

Highlights of the Commerce appropriations include: