

NOTE: The President spoke at 7 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to George T. Frampton, Jr., Assistant Secretary of the Interior for Fish and Wildlife and Parks; Roger Kennedy, Director, National Park Service; Ambassador Laurence W. Lane, Jr., Ambassador-at-Large to Japan; Steve W. Coleman, founder and president, and Josephine Butler, vice chair, Friends of Meridian Hill; Phyllis Cohen, deputy superintendent, Dade County Public School District; Richard Gale, director, National Fire Center in Boise, ID; and Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, administrator, New York City Central Park.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Guntis Ulmanis of Latvia
May 24, 1994

President Clinton. Since we're not going to do a press availability—it's late in the afternoon—I'd like to make a brief statement about the purpose of this meeting and then ask President Ulmanis to say a few words.

First, I want to welcome him to the United States and express my appreciation for the close working relationship we have had with him during my tenure and his, which have overlapped.

Our administration has worked very hard to support the withdrawal of Russian troops from the Baltics in general and from Latvia in particular. We have been very involved in trying to help resolve the dispute between Russia and Latvia over the facility at Skrunda, and we have been very pleased at the resolution of that. And we have supported the resettlement of Russian soldiers and the housing program for them when they leave the Baltics and go back home. And so we look forward to the completion of that effort this summer. And we are very, very pleased about it. It's an important part of our overall objectives and our long-term relationships with all the nations in the Baltics area and the CIS, and particular with Russia. So I'm very pleased about that.

I'm glad to have President Ulmanis here. And he, perhaps, has a word or two he'd like to say.

President Ulmanis. I'm honored about the progress that has been made since I have met with the American President. At that

time we talked about very difficult problems, and I'm happy to say that some of those problems have been resolved.

An issue that's very important to the Baltic area is the whole question of troop patrols, and that will occur after a few months. We have legally established a basis for the Skrunda facility, and we have ensured that this will not be turned into a Russian military base.

This is a great achievement also for the United States, since we worked together on this issue and were able to resolve it together. And today I have come here to talk about the way we can work together in the future.

I want to ensure that in the future the Baltic area is not a victim of any kind of aggression, that we establish a good—[inaudible]—stimulating the area and that we begin to develop that area economically.

When I was speaking with the Pope recently, we talked about the fact that the Baltic area could be a key to peace in that area. Now we can talk about various kinds of development in the area of agriculture and social fields, in economic area. But most importantly, we need to talk about how we can help former Russian army personnel leave the Baltic area voluntarily.

Thank you.

Russia and the Baltic Countries

Q. You're sure they will pull out? And does that mean out of the entire Balkans area, out of Estonia, Lithuania, wherever they are?

President Ulmanis. He's convinced that that will be the case, and that's why he's here.¹

President Clinton. Our preliminary—I say it's not preliminary with regard to Lithuania and Latvia—but we think by the summer that all the negotiations will be concluded. The Yeltsin government and President Yeltsin himself have been personally—he's been personally involved in this. I have been personally involved in it. We discussed these matters in enormous detail when I was in Russia. I think it's going in the right direction.

And the leadership of President Ulmanis and the leaders of all the Baltic States, I

¹ As translated by an interpreter.

think, has been quite key to this. So I feel good about it. I think it's going in the right direction. And it clearly will be a force for stability and democracy in the years ahead in that part of the world.

China and Japan

Q. [*Inaudible*—Secretary Christopher has been consulting with Congress today. Have you got a better idea on what you plan to do about MFN for China and where that's going, and could you share that with us?

President Clinton. Yes, I have an idea of where it's going. No, I'm not prepared to share it with you, because we still have not only ongoing negotiations with Congress but with others as well, and there are a number of things that still have to be resolved. We're working through it as quickly as we can. We will resolve it as quickly as we can.

I do want to say that the United States announced some very good news today. Late last night we reached agreement with the Japanese on returning to our trade talks with them. They are an important part of our long-term strategy for peace and stability and democracy in Asia. And I think that will support what we hope will be a long-term, positive relationship with China and our desire to advance the cause of human rights within the country. I think Japanese—the break there with the negotiations is a big plus. And we've been working hard on it. I talked to Prime Minister Hata today. I'm very encouraged about that. And we'll have the Chinese decision as quickly as we can work through it.

Q. Before you go to Normandy? Before you go to Normandy?

The Cabinet

Q. Is there going to be a Cabinet shakeup?

President Clinton. Sometimes I'm the last to know, but as far as I know there isn't. [*Laughter*] Unless you know something I don't, the answer is no.

Well, the deadline's June 3d. And I don't expect to announce it in Europe.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:16 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. President Ulmanis spoke in Latvian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Nomination for a Judge on the United States Court of Appeals

May 24, 1994

The President today nominated Judge José A. Cabranes to serve on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit.

"Judge Cabranes has an outstanding record of achievement in the legal profession, in academia, and in public service," the President said today. "I am confident that he will continue to serve with excellence and distinction on the appellate bench."

NOTE: A biography of the nominee was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Remarks at the United States Naval Academy Commencement Ceremony in Annapolis, Maryland

May 25, 1994

Thank you very much, Secretary Dalton, for those fine remarks. Admiral Lynch, thank you for your comments and your leadership here at the Academy. Admiral Owens, Admiral Boorda, General Mundy, proud parents and family members, faculty and staff of the Academy, brigade of the midshipmen: It's a great honor for me to join you at this moment of celebration. I'm delighted to be back here on the eve of the Academy's 150th year.

Since 1845, the U.S. Naval Academy has provided superb leadership for our Navy, for our Marine Corps, and for our entire Nation. And I cannot imagine a more valuable contribution.

The last time I was here, I joined some of you for lunch at King Hall. And ever since then, whenever people have asked me what I liked best about my visit to the Naval Academy I try to think of elevated things to say, but part of my answer is always pan pizza and chicken tenders. [*Laughter*] In memory of that luxurious meal—[*laughter*]—I have today a small graduation present. In keeping with longstanding tradition I hereby grant amnesty to all midshipmen who received demerits for minor conduct offenses. [*Laughter*] See, today the interest group is in the stands, not on the field. [*Laughter*]

Next week I will have the proud responsibility to represent our Nation in Europe in