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The President's News Conference

October 21, 1994

The President. Good afternoon. Ladies and gentlemen, when I became President, I did so with a commitment to help more Americans seek a higher education, because it was important for our people and important for our long-term economy.

A big part of the problem of getting more Americans into college and having them stay there has been the broken Federal college loan program. It's too expensive, it did not provide eligibility for too many middle class people, and there were too many people who didn't go to college or, having gone to college, dropped out because they never thought they could meet their repayment options. There were others who were frustrated because they thought they couldn't take a job they might want because they simply wouldn't earn enough money to meet their repayment obligations.

Today, I want to talk about what we have done to fix that system. We already give Americans looking forward to their retirement the chance to save in what we called an Individual Retirement Account. Now we offer people at the beginning of their careers the chance to pay for college in what we call individual education accounts. Here's how it works.

The individual education account enables you to borrow money for college and then to determine how best to pay it back in the way that best fits each individual's needs as their work life changes. There will be four ways to repay the accounts, and people will be able to switch back and forth among payment options at any time and at no cost, depending on what's best for them. Under one option, you can simply pay a fixed amount back on your loan over 10 years. Two other options will permit people with very high debts to spread their repayments over a longer period of time. And as I promised during our campaign, people will be able to pay back their debts as a percentage of their incomes for the life of the loan.

This income contingent repayment, or pay-as-you-can option, will give people the chance to start a business, do community service, work as teachers, police officers, or in other public-service-oriented employment and make payments in smaller amounts in the early years if their wages are lower.

Our plan eliminates the middle man in the student loan process, who used to impose enormous and inefficient transaction costs, and, in so doing, to save $4.3 billion for U.S. taxpayers and $2 billion for students in lower loan fees. It means that more people will be able to borrow in a simple, fair, and affordable way.

Over the next few years, as part of our larger school reform, named for Congressman Bill Ford who's retiring this year, every American will be eligible for an individual education account. Already, 300,000 students have taken out these new college loans. By next year, 40 percent of all of our colleges, some 1,500 of them, will be enrolled. In January, we'll announce a phased-in plan to allow millions of people who have already borrowed for their educations to consolidate their loans into an individual education account and get the benefits of these new repayment options.

As more and more middle income Americans will discover, this is a very good deal, which is a very important part of America's long-term strategy for economic health.

Unfortunately, there are those who don't support this approach and want to take us back to the days when working families couldn't afford to send their children to college. Every single one of our political opponents voted against the college loan reform plan. Most of them have now signed a contract telling us what they would do if they controlled Congress. They would give a $200 billion tax cut to the wealthiest Americans,

they would explode the deficit, and to help pay for their promises, they have made a specific pledge to cut the student loan programs for 3 million American student borrowers every year. Well, our contract is with the future. I don't want to go back, and I don't believe the American people will support this approach.

Ten days ago I got a letter that shows how important this issue is. A 16-year-old boy named Artur Orkisz, who immigrated here from Poland just 4 years ago, attends Elk Grove School in Des Plaines, Illinois. Here's what he wrote me about his dream of going to college: "Since I came to the United States, my dream has been to attend a school like Harvard or Stanford. I rank number one in my class, but I know for a fact my parents are not going to be able to pay my tuition if I should get accepted to a good university. I'd like to know if students not as rich as others will get the opportunity to fulfill the American dream and graduate from a great university?" Well, Artur, if you're listening, I got your message, and the individual education account will help you get your wish.

Before I take your questions, I'd like to say just a word about the framework with North Korea that Ambassador Gallucci signed this morning. This is a good deal for the United States. North Korea will freeze and then dismantle its nuclear program. South Korea and our other allies will be better protected. The entire world will be safer as we slow the spread of nuclear weapons.

South Korea, with support from Japan and other nations, will bear most of the cost of providing North Korea with fuel to make up for the nuclear energy it is losing. And they will pay for an alternative power system for North Korea that will allow them to produce electricity, while making it much harder for them to produce nuclear weapons.

The United States and international inspectors will carefully monitor North Korea to make sure it keeps its commitments. Only as it does so will North Korea fully join the community of nations.

Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, when you met last January with President Asad of Syria, he said that peace with Israel was a strategic option. And you said that he was taking the risks for peace. Has he followed through on that? Do you think that he's been forthright enough? And when you go to the Middle East next week, what can you do to break this impasse between Syria and Israel?

The President. Well, I can say that there has been progress in the negotiations between Israel and Syria. Let me also say in general terms why I'm going there.

As you know, I and my administration have worked very hard for a comprehensive peace in the Middle East. It is very much in the interest of the United States. I have been invited by King Hussein and Prime Minister Rabin to be at this signing, and I think it's important that, particularly now, with the violent reaction to the efforts at peace, that the United States stand shoulder-to-shoulder with our friends and allies who are taking such terrific risks to make peace.

While I am there, I will visit Syria because it is my judgment that the visit will further the goal of an ultimate peace agreement between Israel and Syria. And until that is done, we will never have comprehensive peace in the Middle East. There has been some progress in the negotiations, which are, as you know, candid and confidential between the two. I think there will be more progress. I want there to be more progress, and I think this visit will further it.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

Q. I have a three-part question. In the overall sense, what do you expect to achieve from this trip? In view of the recent incidents, are there real security concerns? And in the interest of reconciliation, will you try to persuade Israel to release some of the thousands of political Palestinian prisoners that it still holds?

The President. First of all, let me begin with your second question. I have confidence in the security capacity of the governments and the countries that I will visit and in, of course, the work of our own Secret Service. And I think it is terribly important, especially since there have been violent reactions from the enemies of peace, that the United States stand with the friends of peace and the champions of peace at this time. It is even more

important than it would have been a few days ago that I go there and that our country stick up for this.

Secondly, what I hope to achieve is to continue to further the peace process. This peace treaty is a huge step forward. I will have the opportunity in Cairo to meet with President Mubarak and Mr. Arafat. I will have a chance there to talk about the importance of implementing fully the PLO-Israel accord. I will have the opportunity to go to Syria. As to what specific things I will discuss with Prime Minister Rabin and others, I think it's better for me to have the conversations and discuss it later.

Q. ——be trying to move everything forward?

The President. I will definitely be trying to move everything forward. My purpose in going there is, first, to stand with our friends at this moment when they're standing up for peace and the enemies of peace are trying to derail them and, secondly, to move the peace process forward.

Q. Mr. President, how difficult a decision was this to go to Damascus, since your own State Department still lists Syria as a country that supports international terrorism? And a related question, only this morning, there were Katiusha rockets landing from southern Lebanon, an area dominated by Syrian control, landing in northern Israel. How do you believe that this will advance the peace process? And do you have any assurances in advance from President Asad that he's willing to go further now than he went in Geneva earlier this year?

The President. First, I think that with regard to the Katiusha rockets, I think that matter will be resolved between the parties involved before the trip develops. Secondly, with regard to meeting President Asad, even though Syria is on the terrorist list, that remains an issue between our two countries. It is a serious issue. It has been constantly discussed between us, and it will continue to be. But I do not believe that we can permit it to keep us from pursuing a comprehensive peace as long as nothing in our peace agreements undermines our commitment to end terrorism.

So I believe that anything I can do, just as I did when I met with President Asad in Geneva, to further the peace process is something that ought to be done. And I believe that by meeting with him and talking with him and working with him, we will continue to make some advances.

Andrea [Andrea Mitchell, NBC News].

Terrorism

Q. Mr. President, what can the United States do to make sure that Hamas is not getting money from organizations here in the United States, not recruiting people and training people here in the United States? And are you satisfied with Yasser Arafat's response so far, in his willingness to really crack down on Hamas and other terrorist groups?

The President. We can, here, do everything we can through the FBI and our other law enforcement agencies to make sure that we're handling any possible illegal activities in the United States redounding to the benefit of Hamas vigorously. And just in the last week, I have given instructions to the proper Federal agencies to redouble our efforts in that regard.

With regard to your question about Mr. Arafat, I do believe, and the Israelis believe, that he did his best to support them with good intelligence when Corporal Waxman was captured and held hostage. And I believe that in the wake of the killing of Corporal Waxman, the determination of the PLO to distance itself from Hamas and to enforce the law within its territories has stiffened, and I think it will continue to stiffen.

Q. Do think that he has cracked down sufficiently in the Gaza, especially regarding this latest incident?

The President. I think that he's moving in the right direction. One of the things that we are always trying to determine in this moment when they're taking over in the West Bank and Gaza is the capacity of the Palestinian Government, the PLO government, to do that work, and we're trying to support an increase in that capacity. I can say that I believe that they're moving in the right direction.

Haiti

Q. Mr. President, having spent hundreds of millions of dollars to restore democracy to Haiti, why is it necessary for American taxpayers to spend still more, renting the

homes that Raoul Cédras left behind? I realize it's a relatively insignificant sum, but isn't that adding insult to injury?

The President. Well, first of all, I don't think it's an insult that we spent the money to restore democracy to Haiti. Let's look at what has happened in the last 4 weeks. We have restored democracy. The military dictators have stepped down. The military dictators have left Haiti. President Aristide is rebuilding his government. The economy is beginning to be rebuilt. People are being put to work at rebuilding the country. This is a signal triumph for the men and women in uniform who are down there and the work that they have done, and it is a very important lesson in what can be done to promote democracy and to end human rights abuses.

Now, with regard to the houses, let me just say that the United States and other countries that are with us on the coalition are not in the business of expropriating people's property. And when you make people leave their home, something arguably should have been done. The only instruction I gave was that nothing could be done that would exceed the fair market value of the property—that was the rule under which the State Department was operating anyway—and that some use had to be made of it. So they're either going to use it or turn around and release it so that the taxpayers in this country aren't disadvantaged by it. But I think that this policy has been phenomenally successful in terms of saving lives, not putting Americans unduly at risk, and moving this country's objectives forward. And I think the American people should be very proud of it.

Iraq

Q. Mr. President, during the last Persian Gulf crisis, the Bush White House at times suggested that Saddam Hussein should be overthrown. What's your assessment of the internal situation in Iraq now, and do you think Saddam Hussein should be overthrown?

The President. Well, the Bush White House also made it clear that a condition of their international coalition was that they would not do the overthrowing. My position is that we should keep the pressure on that regime as long as it is out of compliance with U.N. Security Council resolutions. And there are obviously costs to the regime internally from that pressure. And that is the consequence of the misconduct of Saddam Hussein. And the immediate threat is receding. The withdrawal above the 32d parallel is nearly completed.

But we will maintain the deployment at the level we have it now for a while. We will watch the situation. I am gratified by the United Nations Security Council resolution unanimously condemning that conduct. There is no question that internally the pressure will continue to build up unless Saddam Hussein decides to do the right thing and fully comply with the Security Council resolutions.

Q. And your assessment of the internal situation there?

The President. Your assessment might be as good as mine. I think there are extra pressures on them. And I think that those are creating some difficulties, but I don't want to predict what would happen within Iraq.

Midterm Elections

Q. Mr. President, to change to domestic policy—or politics. For the first time in 40 years, a multitude of polls are suggesting that more Americans are prepared to vote for Republicans in congressional elections than Democrats. Can you explain why that's happening for the first time since the Truman administration and to what degree you believe your administration is responsible for it?

The President. Well, I think it's changing in the last few days, and we didn't want to peak too soon. [*Laughter*] Let me say, just on a brief, serious note, one of the things that we know is that Americans almost always do the right thing when they have all the information. We know that Americans literally don't know a lot of what went on in Congress, who was responsible for what, and what's happening now. As more and more Americans find out between now and election day that our administration, working with our allies in Congress, did things to make Government work for ordinary Americans—like the middle class college loans, the family leave law, the Brady bill, immunizing kids under the age of 2, a dozen more

things—and that these things were uniformly opposed by the Republican congressional leadership and sometimes by all Republicans—that the Republicans killed the Superfund law to clean up toxic dumps and all the political campaign reform laws and now have a contract that would take us back to the trickle-down economics of the eighties, explode the deficit, ship jobs overseas, and cause the cuts of Medicare and all other Government programs, including student loans, and they talk tough on crime, but they've got a plan to cut the crime bill and make sure it can't be funded and police officers can't be put out there—I think the voters will change their minds. And I think that when Congress went home and the American people now have a chance to hear the debate and hear both sides, if we can get the evidence and the arguments out there, I feel quite confident that they'll do the right thing.

Medicare

Q. You and other Democrats around the country have been complaining about the contract that—the Republicans' contract with America—that it would cut Medicare steeply. Can you say that you would not propose to cut Medicare next year?

The President. You know what my position is. My position is that any Medicare savings that we can get from managing the program better should be put back into providing for the health care needs of our country. That was my position, that's the position that I offered in the health care debate, and that's still my position.

Virginia Senatorial Campaign

Q. President Clinton, there have been a lot of reports coming out about you meeting with former Governor Wilder. Can you tell us whether the subject of an ambassadorship for him to an African country ever came up during that recent meeting in exchange for any promise he made to endorse Chuck Robb? And what do you think of the comments that candidate Oliver North has been coming up with, suggesting that there should be some kind of investigation of the meeting, that you may have broken the law during that meeting?

The President. Well, first of all, there was absolutely no discussion along the lines you mentioned of an ambassadorship to an African country in return for his endorsement of Senator Robb; that just did not happen. I would not do that, I would never be part of that, and that did not happen. The Vice President spoke to it today; I will tell you again, that did not happen. It did not happen.

Now, you know, Oliver North says a lot of things, and you know, if you've got $17.5 million to buy your own version of the truth, then you don't have to be held, apparently, to the same standard that other people do. I noticed the other day he said that I wasn't his Commander in Chief, and someone asked me if it bothered me. I said, it didn't bother me nearly as much as the fact that he didn't act as if Ronald Reagan was his Commander in Chief, either, when he had a chance. [*Laughter*] So, I don't know what else to say about Mr. North.

Brit [Brit Hume, ABC News].

Foreign Policy

Q. Mr. President, you've been able to report advances in foreign policy across a number of fronts, some that you've mentioned here today. I doubt anyone here would have anticipated 2 years ago you would be spending next week, the week before the election, out of the country. Obviously, historic events have something to do with that, but I wonder if your attitude toward the role of foreign policy in your Presidency and your absorption with it and interest in it has changed or grown.

The President. I wouldn't say that, but what is happening now with regard to Haiti and Korea and Iraq in the sense that Iraq is an example of our increased mobility as a result of commitments we made in the defense budgets, what happened with the Chinese commitment to comply with the missile control regime and not to sell dangerous missiles to its neighbors, a lot of these things are the accumulation of 2 years of hard work, trying to fashion the national security of the United States and advance the economic interests of the United States and advance democracy in the post-cold-war world. And it is all—a lot of these things have come together in a short time. But we have been

working on them for quite a long time now, and it's just, I think, to some extent, a simple coincidence that the benefits of these long efforts are coming to fruition now.

You're right, I never would have anticipated going to the Middle East at this particular season, but I think it would be wrong for me not to go, particularly for the reasons I just said at this moment. I think it's important.

And one of the things I tried to say in the election campaign that I'd like to reiterate—I wish it were possible for the American people to believe what I believe about this, which is that there is no simple and easy dividing line between domestic policy and foreign policy, that in a global economy, a global society where everything is so interrelated, we can't be strong abroad if we're not strong at home. But we cannot maintain our internal strength and our values unless we are secure and strong beyond our borders.

Washington, DC

Q. Mr. President, Washington is becoming an issue in this campaign. The latest thing is that a candidate in Oklahoma says there are no normal people here. [*Laughter*] You've lived here almost 2 years now. I wonder what you think of Washington?

The President. I would be glad to testify in court that I think you are a normal person. [*Laughter*] I don't know. I think there is a bunch of normal folks here, but I think this atmosphere is sort of abnormal. The thing that I think is bizarre, though, is I think the American people need to have their antenna up when they hear that, especially since Mr. Gingrich had already said in his meeting with the Republican professional politicians that his mission in life was to convince people that I was the enemy of normal Americans. So I would just caution the voters everywhere in this country, and when they hear somebody say there's no normal people in Washington, a lot of the people that are saying it are the people that have done their best to hang on to every last job they could get in Washington in the executive branch for two, three decades now. So the atmosphere is abnormal, and that makes the people sometimes do and say weird things. But there's a lot of fine folks here, and what we ought to do is kind of get together and do better.

Deborah [Deborah Mathis, Gannett News Service].

Social Problems

Q. Mr. President, notwithstanding the problems all around the world, there are pernicious social problems here in the United States. And many of these problems, in many views, are breaking down along racial lines. Indeed, some people say that the progress of the sixties has been upset and overturned, that the great divide between black and white is worsening, widening. And lately, there is a new book out that suggests that these problems, these conflicts may be inherent, and we may be doomed to them. What do you think about race as it applies to the social problems? And what can you do, what can a government do to try and fix some of it?

The President. Well, if you're asking me first of all about Mr. Murray's book, I haven't read it. But as I understand the argument of it, I have to say I disagree with the proposition that there are inherent, racially based differences in the capacity of the American people to reach their full potential. I just don't agree with that. It goes against our entire history and our whole tradition.

I also think if you—let's just take the social problems. And I guess—I don't want to overly digress; I know a lot of you have a lot of questions, but this is a huge deal. I don't know if you saw the piece in the Wall Street Journal not very long ago where black Americans and white Americans were polled about the social problems generally, crime, family breakdown, drugs, gangs, violence, welfare dependency, the aggregate of them, overwhelming majorities agreed that these were the great problems of our country. And they've been developing for 30 years now. Then, overwhelming majorities agreed that we needed to reform the welfare system to move people from welfare to work. The great divergence came when one group said that this was caused because of the loss of economic opportunity, and the Government had a responsibility to rebuild it. And the other group said, no, this is caused by an escalating amount of personal misconduct, and people needed to change their personal behavior. In

other words, the Government can't do anything about it.

I would like to make the following points: I think both groups are right and both groups are wrong, number one. Number two, there's not as much racial difference here as you think there is. And let me try to illustrate it by starting at the second point.

The out-of-wedlock birth rate in the aggregate in the United States is today about 30 percent. It is higher for African-American young women—that is a birth where there was never a marriage—than it is for white young women, but it is rising faster among whites than among blacks, markedly faster. And it seems to be far more tied to poverty and lack of education and lack of being connected to the future than to race. Number two, it is plain that we are dealing with both the loss of economic opportunity and a changed set of social mores, a changed sense of what is right and wrong, what is acceptable and unacceptable. And I believe we need to change both.

What can the Government do about it? What can the President do about it? First, we can try to bring this economy back. In 1994, we've had more high-wage jobs created in our economy than in the previous 5 years combined. This is the first year when over half of the jobs coming into our economy are above average wages. Number two, as all of you know, I have signed laws to create community development banks and empowerment zones in our inner cities to try to get investment back there, to give hope to people who have been left behind, to try to do the economic mission. But having said that, to try to rebuild a society that has been pressured both in our inner cities and our isolated rural areas for a generation now—we're talking about 30 years of serious pressure—is going to take a concerted effort that starts with parents and churches and community groups and private business people and people at the local level. The Federal Government cannot be the salvation of that. We have to rebuild the bonds of society.

And everybody has a role to play. That's why—I want to compliment—Deputy Secretary Kunin is here, Governor Kunin from the Department of Education. We signed the elementary and secondary education act today; we're kicking off the college loan program—yesterday—we're kicking off the college loan program today. One of the things in that act that Secretary Riley fought so hard for was the so-called character education provision, so that the schools can explicitly work with their communities and agree about what values need to be transferred to children through the schools and promote them.

This is a very serious and complicated issue. I think it is a quick fix to try to break it down by race. I believe that the evidence is clear that what we ought to be working on is a way for every kid in this country to live up to the fullest of their potential. And that potential is quite extraordinary, and they will do quite well without regard to race if we can attack these problems.

North Korea

Q. Mr. President, a question on the North Korean nuclear arms accord. Even before the ink is dry on that accord, officials of the International Atomic Energy Association are complaining it denies them of a key right, that of special inspections. Doesn't this set a bad precedent for other countries with nuclear ambitions, such as Iran?

The President: I don't think it does deny them special inspections. It commits North Korea first to freeze and then to dismantle, something they've never committed to do before and something they weren't required to do under the NPT. It also commits them to ship out their spent nuclear fuel, to get it physically out of the country so they cannot do anything with it.

The question of special inspections, whether and when, is put off from the present. And that bothers some people, but if you consider the fact that the waste sites are not going anywhere, that the IAEA is going to be in the country, and that we have a commitment for a freeze and then a dismantling and that if they ever violate it they won't get the benefits that they seek from it, it seems to me this is still a very good deal indeed. And I think that what we have to do is to work with the IAEA people who will be on the ground and work out the practical details of this.

Racial Diversity

Q. Mr. President, related to Deborah's question, several years ago a Piscataway, New Jersey, school board had to lay off teachers. And it came to a white female teacher and a black female teacher. And rather than flipping a coin—as it turns out, both had been hired on the same day so they had equal experience—the school board fired the white teacher because of the color of her skin. Now, your Justice Department originally opposed the school board in court, but has flipped recently. And I was wondering if you agree with that decision, if you think that we need more affirmative action acts like this or whether that's a case of reverse discrimination.

The President. I support the position as finally articulated, but I'd like to say it's a very narrow case. That is, if you have a school district where the children are overwhelmingly of one race or another and the faculty is as well and you have two equally qualified people and you stipulate that—in this case, both sides in the lawsuit stipulated they were absolutely equally qualified—then can trying to preserve some racial diversity on your faculty be a ground for making the decision, as opposed to flipping a coin? As long as it runs both ways, or all ways, I support that decision, that is, there are other conditions in which if there were only one white teacher on the faculty in a certain area and there were two teachers, they were equally qualified, and the school board or the school administrator decided to keep the white teacher also to preserve racial diversity. That is the position the Justice Department has taken. And on those very narrow grounds, I support it because both sides stipulated, both teachers and their lawyers stipulated that there was absolutely no difference in their qualifications for the job.

Midterm Elections

Q. Mr. President, this is a political season, and you've been out in the stump a fair amount. What is your prediction of how many seats the Democrats will lose in the House and the Senate? And do you think if the Republicans manage to win the House, given all the mean things that have been said this year, could you work with a Speaker Newt Gingrich? [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, you know Newt's the person that said I was the enemy of normal Americans. I didn't say that about him. The American people have to make a judgment in the election. I can tell you this: I believe with all my heart if the American people knew the record of our administration in making advances, making this Government work for ordinary people, if they knew that; if they knew what we'd done to restore the economy, bring the deficit down, shrink the size of the Federal Government; if they knew what we'd done in passing the crime bill; and if they knew the extent to which the Republican leadership had opposed this every step of the way; if they understand what's in this contract; then if they know we have a contract with the future, that my only interest is in moving this country into the future in a stronger position, I don't believe we would lose seats at all.

Now, almost always at midterm the incumbent President's party loses seats. That's partly because there's a lag between when you do something and when people feel it. And of course, this is an extremely contentious time. But I believe that that will happen. So what I'm going to do in the next 2½ weeks is to do everything I can to get as many voters as possible to know exactly what the facts are and what our vision for the future is. Then they will make their judgment. After they make their judgment, I will do everything I can to honor their judgment by fulfilling my responsibility, which is to challenge every Member of Congress without regard to party and especially the leaders to work with me to make this country a better place. That's what I have always done, and that's what I will do.

Northern Ireland

Q. Mr. President, now that the IRA and the loyalists paramilitaries in Northern Ireland have called a cease-fire, which has been today accepted by Prime Minister Major, can you say how soon the administration will have ready a package of economic incentives to help a peacetime Northern Ireland economy? And can you characterize the package? And can you also say what is now the United

States role in the talks that are going to take place regarding Northern Ireland?

The President. Let me first congratulate the action which was taken and Prime Minister Major's response to it. I think both are very hopeful. And I am very glad that the United States has been able to be involved in this peace process in Northern Ireland. We will continue to be involved in it. And we certainly want to contribute to the development of Northern Ireland in ways that go beyond even what we've done already with the Irish-American fund. And there are a lot of private citizens in this country who are also really committed to that. And in the end, they will have the most to say about it because we need private enterprise development in Northern Ireland. We have looked at a number of options. We have not finalized any of them because obviously we want to wait for developments to unfold, until the appropriate point. We're a lot closer to the appropriate point today because of the announcements that have been made.

Bill [Bill Plante, CBS News].

Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, are you still committed to lifting the arms embargo against Bosnian Muslims unilaterally if you can't achieve it in the U.N. Security Council by November 15th, even though that might mean the evacuation by peacekeeping forces, a buildup by the Serbs, and alienation of our relations with the Russians?

The President. Well, let's go back to the timetable first. Under the law that our Congress adopted that I agreed to, the compromise we worked out between the administration and the Congress, because the October 15th deadline has passed without an acceptance of the peace plan by the Bosnian Serbs, we are obliged to go to the United Nations with a resolution to lift the arms embargo through the United Nations, but at the request of the Bosnian Government to delay it for 6 months, to give us 6 more months to work on the peace. That is our commitment. If that fails, we are then obliged to go back and consult with Congress to discuss whether we should have a unilateral lift.

I still believe that is a mistake. I have believed for more than 2 years that would be a mistake, because if we lift unilaterally it will cause the collapse of the United Nations mission. The people of the United States don't want our soldiers to go there alone to engage in a battle that is essentially a civil war. I am convinced that the United Nations troops, or most of them, will withdraw if there's a unilateral lift. And I am convinced that it will undermine our ability to work with other countries within the United Nations to resolve this. So I don't support that. But under the law I am obliged to bring that back to Congress and work it through. But keep in mind, we still have 6 months to work through this in the United Nations at the request of the Bosnian Government itself. So that's what we'll keep working on.

Hillary Clinton's Role

Q. I want to ask you about Mrs. Clinton, if I may. What is Mrs. Clinton's professional role at this point? Will she be fully engaged in the health care bill after the next Congress? And does she have any other professional or political portfolio right now?

The President. You bet she does. I mean, I think if you follow her schedule every day, you know what she's doing. And of course, she will continue to be involved in health care. I would never call it a professional role except insofar as everything she does as First Lady is professional. But we intend to continue to work on the health care issue.

I would remind you that another 1,100,000 Americans in working families lost their health insurance this year, that the new estimates are that unless we do something about the rising cost of health care, we will be spending well over 25 percent of our Federal budget on health outlays early in the next century or the next decade now. So we're going to have to face this. This is not a problem that's going to go away. It's going to keep rearing its head.

Immigration

Q. A year ago, you took a position on a California ballot initiative. Do you have any advice this year for Californians facing Proposition 187, which would deny benefits to illegal aliens, and services? And do you have any concerns about the strong tide of anti-

immigrant feelings that are in California right now?

The President. Yes, I have concerns about it. I spoke about this briefly with USA Today a couple of days ago, but I'd like to talk about it a moment.

First, let me say the people of California and the people of the United States are right in wanting to eliminate illegal immigration and increase our ability to protect our own borders, even against people that we welcome to our shores when they are legal immigrants. That was a part of the tension recently with regard to Cuba when we made the agreement to stop illegal immigration there. It was part of the early tension last summer with regard to Haiti. The people of California, therefore, are right to want that.

It is, on the other hand, a great mistake to be against immigration generally. We are a nation of immigrants. Practically all of us have forebears who came from somewhere else. And from time to time, we have been greatly strengthened by immigrants. The fact that we have so many different people of different races and ethnic groups and religious backgrounds will be, I might add, an enormous strength for this country as we move into the next century and we get into a global economy.

Let me just give you one small example, and I will come back to 187. What other country besides the United States could have undertaken the operation in Haiti and sent Haitian-American soldiers in uniform to Haiti to speak Creole to the citizens of that country? That's just one example. We're having the Summit of the Americas here in December. We can do that because Spanish is the second language of America now and because of our growing involvement in the rest of the world. So we—in being against illegal immigration, we should not be against immigration and the incredible source of strength that immigrants bring to our borders.

Now, what to do about it. I guess I've spent as much time working on California and the problems of California, the economic problems of California, as any President ever has. It was my duty to do so. They've had so many problems, caused by the decline of defense spending, caused by the recession generally, coupled with the explosion of immigration and a whole range of other problems they have out there.

Look at what we have done: We have increased spending on the States to deal with the immigration problems by 32 percent since I've been President, even though we've been cutting overall spending. We've increased border guards by 30 percent. We put 1,000 more border guards on. We have doubled the border guards in San Diego. We've had—San Diego and El Paso and Arizona. We've had very successful initiatives to slow the influx of illegal immigrants. We have toughened the penalties. We're beginning to send criminals who are illegal immigrants out of the country. We are the first administration ever to give money to the States to deal with the criminal justice costs. We're spending money on health care and education never before spent. So we are doing things that have not been done.

Barbara Jordan just issued her commission's report. We have those recommendations under advisement. We are going to do some things that will continue to increase our capacity to reduce illegal immigration. That's what I think the right thing to do is.

I have some problems with 187. One is, even its supporters admit that it's unconstitutional. And I don't think as a matter of practice it's a good thing to condition an election referendum, much less other elections in California, on a measure that even the supporters say is unconstitutional. Secondly, I think it presents significant risks. If you don't give the children health care, you can create health risks for the society generally. If you don't give the children education, and they're still in the country and you can't get them out, then they'll be on the street, and the increased risks of crime or other antisocial behavior will go up. If you turn the teachers and other educators into instruments of a sort of a State police force, it's like bringing Big Brother into the schools.

I guess what I'm saying is, I sort of agree with what Jack Kemp and Bill Bennett said in their article about it. And I applaud them for saying it. I mean, this is an issue again where our parties ought to be together. Historically, both Republican and Democratic parties have been strengthened by our immigrants. And I think—if the people of Califor-

nia would be fully candid, they would have to say that leadership decisions made in the past in California have actually facilitated illegal immigration, when they were called undocumented immigrants, in ways that people in California thought were supporting the economic growth of California in good times.

So we need to back away and change our policy. But we don't need to do it in a way that is overbroad, that runs the risk of these problems, and that is plainly unconstitutional, in my judgment. And I have fought harder, I think, than any President to help California deal with the problems of illegal immigration. I just don't think that's the way to do it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 74th news conference began at 2:32 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Charles Murray, co-author of "The Bell Curve"; former Secretary of Housing and Development Jack Kemp; former Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy William J. Bennett; and Barbara Jordan, Chair of the Commission on Immigration Reform. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks at the Kennedy-King Dinner in Alexandria, Virginia

October 21, 1994

The President. Thank you very much, Governor Wilder, especially for that introduction. You know, you mentioned the PLO-Israel signing. It put me in mind of Arafat and Rabin when you and Chuck were shaking hands then. Peace is breaking out all over. [*Laughter*]

Let me thank Margo Horner and Mame Reiley and Mark Warner for their leadership and for having us here, thank my good friend Jim Moran for that magnificent speech from the heart. Leslie Byrne had to go and win her debate, but I ask you to help her come back. She is a fine woman and wonderful Congresswoman. And Don Beyer, thanks for reminding everybody how we're doing in auto sales and—[*laughter*]—how well we are doing in our heart. You were great tonight, and I thank you for that. He can really give a talk.

You know, I want to say a few words about two friends of mine, people I serve with, Governor Wilder and then-Governor Robb. And I want to try to get you to think about this election beyond the cheerers here. First, let me say that I thank Doug Wilder for what he said about our administration and our efforts. I thank him for being a longtime friend and colleague and a worthy adversary when we were campaigning in the snows of New Hampshire. I thank him for being an example to a lot of young people in this country, that you really can get there if you have real big dreams and you work hard and you do what you ought to do. Maybe that's the most important thing of all. And I thank him for being here tonight, because what he said here tonight is a genuine expression of love and concern for the future of the people he had served for so many years in the Commonwealth of Virginia.

Let me say to Chuck and Linda Robb, I am really sorry they've had to take so many licks for being friends of mine. [*Laughter*] That goes with the territory, I guess, but I'd never have believed it if you'd told me a year or 2 ago that it would have happened. I can tell you that I have known them a long time. We served together. We've been overseas together. We've been up and down together before. And I have watched Chuck Robb go through this campaign. I have watched him attacked, vilified. I've seen his record distorted and outright falsified. I've seen him labor on in good cheer in the face of the richest campaign in the history of the United States to buy the hearts and minds of the people in any State. He had a magnificent record as a marine officer in Vietnam. He was a terrific Lieutenant Governor and a wonderful Governor of this State. Under Republican Presidents, he was telling people of both parties we had to do something about this awful Government deficit that was robbing our children of their future. But this is his finest hour.

Anybody can run and do well in the good times. Anybody can keep on going when you know you are solidly anchored in the spirit of the people. But when a tidal wave comes along, venom and anger and misrepresentation fueled by unlimited money, to stand strong, to not cut and run, to be brave