

Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



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Contents

Addresses and Remarks

See also Meetings With Foreign Leaders
Arkansas, tornado damage in Arkadelphia—
281
Child safety lock devices for handguns—284
Coalition for America's Children, public
service announcement—273
Human cloning, prohibition on Federal
funding—278
Michigan, joint session of legislature in
Lansing—290
Radio address—271

Communications to Congress

Canada-U.S. second supplementary Social
Security agreement, message transmitting—
276
Hong Kong-U.S. extradition agreement,
message transmitting—284
International agreements, letter transmitting
report—300
Iran, message transmitting notice—288
Iraq, letter reporting—313
Trade agreements program, message
transmitting report—300

Communications to Federal Agencies

Child safety lock devices for handguns,
memorandum—287
Educational excellence in math and science,
memorandum—299
Prohibition on Federal funding for cloning of
human beings, memorandum—281

Executive Orders

Commission To Study Capital Budgeting—
277

Interviews With the News Media

Exchanges with reporters
Arkadelphia, AR—281
Oval Office—272, 278, 284
News conference, March 7 (No. 137)—300

Meetings With Foreign Leaders

Palestinian Authority, Chairman Arafat—272

Notices

Continuation of Iran Emergency—288

Proclamations

National Older Workers Employment Week—
312
National Poison Prevention Week—289
Save Your Vision Week—276
Women's History Month—275

Statements by the President

Balanced budget amendment, Senate action—
283
Death of President Jagan of Guyana—299
National economy—312
Northern Ireland peace process, Belfast
talks—288

Supplementary Materials

Acts approved by the President—318
Checklist of White House press releases—317
Digest of other White House
announcements—316
Nominations submitted to the Senate—317

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, March 7, 1997

The President's Radio Address

March 1, 1997

Good morning. Today I want to talk about what we must do to strengthen our effort to keep drugs away from our neighborhoods and out of our children's lives. First, we must fight drugs before they reach our borders and keep them out of America. This is a battle we must fight together with other nations.

Every year the President is legally required to certify whether other nations are doing their part. Yesterday, I accepted Secretary of State Madeleine Albright's recommendation to certify Mexico, to certify that Mexico is cooperating with us in this fight.

Mexican President Zedillo is fighting a tough, uphill battle against the drug cartels which corrupt Mexico's law enforcement agencies. But President Zedillo has taken brave action, firing more than 1,200 tainted officials, extraditing criminals for the first time, passing tough laws, arresting his own drug czar for corruption. In the past year, their seizures of marijuana, cocaine, and heroin are up, drug-related arrests have increased, and eradication efforts have reached record levels.

Make no mistake about it, Mexico has a serious drug problem. But Mexico's leaders recognize that problem, and they have the will to fight it. We must do whatever we can to give them the means to succeed. Stamping out the drug trade is a long-term battle. It won't be won overnight. We will continue to press our Mexican partners to take tough action that will protect all our people from drugs.

Stopping drugs at their source is a critical part of the antidrug strategy I announced earlier this week. My balanced budget pays for the largest antidrug effort ever. Under the leadership of our national drug czar, General Barry McCaffrey, who's here with me at the radio address this morning, this plan will crack down on drug dealers and

help parents teach their children just how dangerous drugs are. We must give our children the straight facts. They need to hear a constant drumbeat from all of us: Drugs are wrong; drugs are illegal; drugs can kill you. The more children know about how dangerous drugs are, the less likely they are to use them.

Our drug strategy includes an unprecedented national advertising campaign to get out the facts and shape the attitudes of young people about drugs. And we must do more to sever the dangerous connection between illegal drugs and violent crime.

Illegal drugs are involved with the vast majority of violent crimes in America—drug dealers carrying guns, violent criminals on drugs and out of control, gang wars over drug-trafficking turf. One million Americans are arrested every year for breaking the drug laws. Two-thirds of all the men in State prisons have abused drugs regularly.

Unfortunately, most of the people who enter jail as drug addicts leave jail still addicted or about to become addicts again. When criminals on parole or ex-convicts out of jail go back on drugs, the chances are enormously high they will commit new crimes. According to some experts, 60 percent of all the heroin and cocaine sold in America is sold to people on bail, parole, or probation. Two-thirds of prisoners with a history of heroin or cocaine use who are released without treatment are back on drugs within just 3 months. We must break this cycle of crime and drugs once and for all.

Last fall, Congress passed my proposal to require drug testing and treatment for prison inmates and convicts on parole. Our prisons must not be illegal drug markets, and anyone given a chance to go straight and live a better life must be absolutely drug-free. The bill I signed said to the States, we want to continue helping you build prisons, but if you want the money to do that, you must start drug testing prisoners and parolees.

In December, I announced Justice Department guidelines to help States meet this requirement. The guidelines are straight-forward. By March 1, 1998, one year from today, every State must submit to the Attorney General a clearly defined, comprehensive plan to test prisoners and parolees, to treat those who need it and punish those who go back on drugs.

Today I'm announcing that I am sending all 50 Governors a letter to make it clear that General McCaffrey and Attorney General Reno are prepared to help every State get this job done. We'll provide guidance and resources, experts, technical assistance, access to new technology. We'll give that to every State that needs help in developing its plans. At the same time, this, too, should be perfectly clear: Any State without a prisoner and parolee drug testing plan one year from today will lose Federal prison assistance until a plan is submitted. We want to help States build the prison space they need, but we will not help to build prisons that tolerate drugs by turning a blind eye.

The Federal Government and State governments must work together as partners to get this done. It's time to say to inmates, if you stay on drugs, you'll stay in jail; if you want out of jail, you have to get off drugs. It's time to say to parolees, if you go back on drugs, you'll go back to jail; if you want to stay out of jail, stay off drugs.

We must fight drugs on every front, on our streets and in our schools, at our borders and in our homes. Every American must accept this responsibility. There is no more insidious threat to a good future than illegal drugs. I'm counting on all of you to help us win the fight against them.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 4:28 p.m. on February 28 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on March 1.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and an Exchange With Reporters

March 3, 1997

The President. Good morning. I'm glad to welcome Chairman Arafat here. This is our sixth meeting, and I'm hopeful that it will be as productive as our previous ones have. You will remember the last time he was here, last fall, we were facing a very difficult situation with regard to Hebron, and because of the efforts that he made in working with the Israelis, an agreement was reached, a timetable was established, and we're moving forward. And I'm hopeful that we can keep doing that. This is also a difficult moment, but I think we can work through it and go forward and I appreciate his coming to see me.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. Chairman, are the new settlements designed by the Israelis to make the annexation a fait accompli of east Jerusalem?

Chairman Arafat. Not only for Jerusalem but also for Bethlehem, because their target is to squeeze and to isolate Jerusalem but, at the same time, to build the settlements at the entrance of Bethlehem, to replace Har Homa, our capital—in the city of Bethlehem during the 2,000 years of our celebration for our Jesus Christ.

Q. What are you going to do about it?

Chairman Arafat. I am sure that His Excellency will push for—to prevent it.

Q. Mr. President, what do you think about the settlement?

The President. Well, what I think about the settlement is what I think about all these issues. You know, the important thing is for these people on both sides to be building confidence and working together. And so I would prefer the decision not have been made, because I don't think it builds confidence, I think it builds mistrust. And I wish that it had not been made.

Q. Mr. President, the Jerusalem Embassy Act declares that the United States should recognize Jerusalem as Israel's capital. Is Jerusalem Israel's capital, and does Israel have the right to build within the municipal boundaries of Jerusalem?

The President. Well, you know, I've been asked that question a lot, and I'm going to give you the same answer I always give. I do not believe, now that the parties have reached the agreement they reached in 1993 and they have made this the final status issue, that the United States can serve any useful purpose by saying, or especially by doing, anything which seems to prejudge what should be a final status issue between the parties. I think that would be a big mistake.

1996 Campaign Financing

Q. Vice President Gore, did you solicit money in the White House, Mr. Gore, during the campaign?

Vice President Gore. I'll talk with you all later, not during this.

The President. Nice tie, Ron [Ron Fournier, Associated Press].

Q. Thank you. Got that in Arkansas.

Storms in Arkansas

Q. Do you want to say anything about the storms?

Q. Are you going to Arkansas?

The President. I'm going down tomorrow. I'm very concerned about it. I talked over the weekend to—I talked to the Governor twice and the mayor of Little Rock and Representative Malone in Arkadelphia. You know, it's a bad situation. More people were killed in 18 hours than in the 12 years I was Governor, I believe combined, in the tornadoes.

Q. Did you know anybody that was hurt or killed?

The President. Not to my knowledge, although I did recognize a couple of people on television last night who had lost their homes. One man said—did you see that—where he had given away a couch to the Goodwill Industries, and whoever got the couch had their home destroyed and the couch was blown back into his house. [Laughter]

Q. You're going down—

The President. I recognized three or four people on television. But I'm going down there. I'll see tomorrow.

Chelsea Clinton's Birthday

Q. You had a good birthday celebration?

The President. Wonderful. Chelsea had a good birthday. New York was good.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:12 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Mike Huckabee of Arkansas and Mayor Jim Dailey of Little Rock. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at the Unveiling Ceremony for the Coalition for America's Children Public Service Announcement

March 3, 1997

I want to thank all those who have been a part of this. Alex Kroll, thank you for what you said and for reminding us that we're about the business of helping parents, not disrespecting the difficulties they face. Christine Benero, thank you. Eva Kasten, the executive vice president of the Advertising Council, thank you. I thank the Benton Foundation, the AT&T Foundation, the Packard Foundation. I'd like to thank the people in our administration probably most directly involved in helping our children who are here today, Secretary Riley, Secretary Shalala, and Harris Wofford, the head of the Corporation for National Service.

But most of all, I want to thank Bradley Pine and Lonzo Warren for coming here to share their story. Their relationship is a powerful example of what could be done all over America if we move from vague rhetoric to specific action directed at helping and supporting all of our children. Just think of what would happen in this country if every single child who needed a mentor had one. Think of what would happen if every person out there who is willing to volunteer to help, knew where to go and how to do it. The public service message we just saw, that Hillary and I were honored to participate in, is simply designed to remind every American that there are children out there who need our

support and to tell every American who wants to serve that there is a way to serve and we will help you do it.

We know that being a parent is the most difficult and important job in the world. And we know that everyone has to help. Hillary has been working on these children's issues since before I met her, a long time ago now, and I think that the book that she wrote did capture the image of the village raising our children. But it should not be allowed to obscure the fact that what that really means is that each and every one of us has a personal responsibility to do our part. And also, thanks to this effort, it will be easier for people to understand how to exercise that responsibility.

I'm especially fond of the work that we have done in this regard. We've done all we could to encourage citizen service. We now have more than 50,000 young people working in AmeriCorps, earning money to go to college. Many, many of them are helping our children in supportive ways.

Last summer, we launched our America Reads program to try to mobilize one million volunteer tutors in America to make sure that by the year 2000 every single 8-year-old in this country can read independently and will have a chance to make the most of his or her education. Today I am pleased to announce that Scholastic Books is donating one million books to help us reach that goal. We need more companies like Scholastic Books to give more Americans the opportunity to serve.

In January, I was proud to stand right here with President Bush and General Colin Powell and former Secretary of Housing and Urban Development Henry Cisneros to announce that we are convening the first ever President's summit of service in April in Philadelphia, to bring together business, religious, community leaders committed to support citizen service with resources and volunteers. With their help, I hope we can make the plea we make in this public service announcement a reality for tens of thousands of more people in the United States.

This public service announcement is just what it seems to be. It seeks to help in mobilizing a volunteer force of Americans. It reflects the wisdom that no impersonal bu-

reaucracy can ever replace the magic that we saw here between Bradley and Lonzo or the feeling that Lonzo expressed for his own family who are here with him today. What we can do is to make it possible for more things like that to happen and to give our children the basic supports they need to make it happen. But in the end, we must make this vast, big complicated society of ours more of a society in which we all feel that we should volunteer and, like Bradley, we know we're going to be better off for doing it. We'll get more out of it than we give. We have to create the networks to facilitate that kind of voluntarism.

The public service announcement, as you saw, gives people a number to call, a web site to visit, to learn about organizations in their very own communities where they can volunteer their time, to become a reading tutor or a math coach or a mentor to a child in need. Beginning today, anyone visiting the White House home page on the Internet will be able to connect to the coalition's web site with just a click of the mouse and find out what they can do to help.

The more people this message reaches, the more children will be helped. So far, some of our biggest television, cable, and radio networks have committed to air this message during times when it will have the best chance of inspiring the largest number of people. Newsweek, the New York Times, and People magazine will also run the message in their pages. And movie-goers will see it in theaters all over the country, thanks to promotion slide and cinema advertisers. This is a very good start. But let me encourage other media organizations around the country to help to make sure this message is heard by as many people as possible, to help to work with us to encourage the spirit of service in America, to strengthen our families, to improve the lives of our children one at a time.

Whenever you think about what else we can do, just think of Bradley and Lonzo and multiply it by millions and imagine the America we can make together.

Thank you. God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:17 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Alex Kroll, chairman, Advertising Council; Christine Benero, chair, Coalition for

America's Children; Lonzo Warren, a 15-year-old high school student from Hyattsville, MD, and his mentor, Bradley R. Pine.

Proclamation 6975—Women's History Month, 1997

March 3, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Throughout the history of our Nation, women have played a pivotal role in bringing about positive change to every aspect of American life, and their achievements continue to touch the lives of every single citizen. Women's History Month honors the women who made these accomplishments possible, securing their rightful place in history among those who have made our country great. This month, we celebrate these women's lives—and renew our commitment to breaking down the gender barriers that still exist.

Through their courage, foresight, and community spirit over the years, American women have created a world of opportunity for today's heroines and role models—women such as Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, the highest ranking woman to serve in any presidential administration; Dr. Shannon W. Lucid, who has performed five historic and complex Space Shuttle missions during 18 years with NASA and recently broke the American and women's world record for continuous time in space; Oseola McCarty, who in 1995 donated the life savings she had earned as a maid to fund scholarships at the University of Mississippi; and Julie Su, the young attorney who first came to prominence through her efforts to expose illegal exploitation of Thai immigrants in a California sweatshop and who continues to help immigrants to secure proper medical care, employment, and the dignity they deserve. The pioneers in women's history would be proud of today's women pioneers.

As we approach the 21st century, we have reached another significant milestone in our Nation's history: Women have approached an almost equal share in the labor force. Thus, it is more important than ever that we enable

women and men to meet their responsibilities at work and at home.

Women continue to break the glass ceiling, changing their status from employee to employer. Today, women-owned businesses are creating one out of every four jobs in the United States. From the classroom to the board room, women now occupy every part of the work force, building the kinds of lives for themselves and their families that are the heart of the American Dream.

Women's History Month provides Americans with an opportunity to celebrate the contributions of all the women who have enriched our Nation, to honor their legacy, and to reflect upon what we can all do to end discrimination against women. I encourage all Americans to learn from, and share information about, women's history in their workplaces, classrooms, and family rooms. As every family has its own heroes, so does our country. Only by studying the history of America's women can we fully understand the history of America.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 1997, as Women's History Month. I ask educators, Government officials, and all citizens to observe this month with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities, remembering not only this month but also every month the many different contributions that women make every day.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 4, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 5.

Proclamation 6976—Save Your Vision Week, 1997

March 3, 1997

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Our eyes are our windows to the world. They give us the freedom to gaze at a sunset, read a book, or drive a car. Our sight allows us to jog along a garden pathway or enjoy a panoramic view.

All of us need to care for our vision, but older Americans in particular should be aware of their susceptibility to eye disease. As the “baby boom” generation ages, it is critical that these Americans receive regular eye examinations from eye-care professionals.

A thorough exam can lead to early detection and control or cure of eye diseases such as glaucoma, cataract, and diabetic retinopathy. A professional eye exam can also diagnose age-related macular degeneration (AMD), a leading cause of severe visual impairment and blindness in the United States. This common disease affects the retina, the part of the eye that helps to produce sharp, central vision required for activities such as reading and driving. AMD causes a loss of this clear, central vision; in some cases, vision loss is rapid and dramatic. The risk of AMD dramatically increases after age 60. It is estimated that this disease already causes visual impairment in approximately 1.7 million of the 34 million Americans now older than 65. As these numbers continue to grow, researchers are working to find the cause of, and develop treatment for, this debilitating disease.

People with AMD and its accompanying visual impairment often cannot perform daily activities such as reading the newspaper, preparing meals, or recognizing faces of friends. The inability to see well affects routine activities and social interactions and can lead to a loss of independence.

However, low-vision services and devices can greatly improve the quality of life for visually impaired patients and help them maintain their independence. Devices such as hand-held magnifiers, computer monitors

with large type, and large-print newspapers and books can help the visually impaired dramatically improve their quality of life.

To remind Americans of the importance of protecting their eyesight, the Congress, by joint resolution approved December 30, 1963 (77 Stat. 629; 36 U.S.C. 169a), has authorized and requested the President to proclaim the first week in March of each year as “Save Your Vision Week.”

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 2 through March 8, 1997, as Save Your Vision Week. Our eyes play a vital role in our independence and daily living and need to be examined regularly. Let us recognize the work done by vision researchers across our Nation on AMD and other eye diseases and the efforts they are making to enhance and retain our precious sight. Education on good vision starts with us, and we should take progressive steps to protect our eyes.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this third day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 4, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 5.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Second Supplementary Canada-United States Social Security Agreement

March 3, 1997

To the Congress of the United States:

Pursuant to section 233(e)(1) of the Social Security Act (the “Act”), as amended by the Social Security Amendments of 1977 (Public Law 95–216, 42 U.S.C. 433(e)(1)), I transmit herewith the Second Supplementary Agreement Amending the Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Canada with Respect to Social Security (the Second Supple-

mentary Agreement). The Second Supplementary Agreement, signed at Ottawa on May 28, 1996, is intended to modify certain provisions of the original United States-Canada Social Security Agreement signed at Ottawa March 11, 1981, which was amended once before by the Supplementary Agreement of May 10, 1983.

The United States-Canada Social Security Agreement is similar in objective to the social security agreements with Austria, Belgium, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Luxembourg, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Such bilateral agreements provide for limited coordination between the U.S. and foreign social security systems to eliminate dual social security coverage and taxation, and to help prevent the loss of benefit protection that can occur when workers divide their careers between two countries.

The Second Supplementary Agreement provides Canada with a specific basis to enter into a mutual assistance arrangement with the United States. This enables each Governments' Social Security agency to assist the other in enhancing the administration of their respective foreign benefits programs. The Social Security Administration has benefited from a similar mutual assistance arrangement with the United Kingdom. The Second Supplementary Agreement will also make a number of minor revisions in the Agreement to take into account other changes in U.S. and Canadian law that have occurred in recent years.

The United States-Canada Social Security Agreement, as amended, would continue to contain all provisions mandated by section 233 and other provisions that I deem appropriate to carry out the provisions of section 233, pursuant to section 233(c)(4) of the Act.

I also transmit for the information of the Congress a report prepared by the Social Security Administration explaining the key points of the Second Supplementary Agreement, along with a paragraph-by-paragraph explanation of the effect of the amendments on the Agreement. Annexed to this report is the report required by section 233(e)(1) of the Act on the effect of the Agreement, as amended, on income and expenditures of

the U.S. Social Security program and the number of individuals affected by the amended Agreement. The Department of State and the Social Security Administration have recommended the Second Supplementary Agreement and related documents to me.

I commend the United States-Canada Second Supplementary Social Security Agreement and related documents.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 3, 1997.

**Executive Order 13037—
Commission To Study Capital
Budgeting**

March 3, 1997

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. App.), it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Establishment. There is established the Commission to Study Capital Budgeting ("Commission"). The Commission shall be bipartisan and shall be composed of 11 members appointed by the President. The members of the Commission shall be chosen from among individuals with expertise in public and private finance, government officials, and leaders in the labor and business communities. The President shall designate two co-chairs from among the members of the Commission.

Sec. 2. Functions. The Commission shall report on the following:

- (a) Capital budgeting practices in other countries, in State and local governments in this country, and in the private sector; the differences and similarities in their capital budgeting concepts and processes; and the pertinence of their capital budgeting practices for budget decisionmaking and accounting for actual budget outcomes by the Federal Government;
- (b) The appropriate definition of capital for Federal budgeting, including: use of capital for the Federal Government itself or the economy at large; owner-

ship by the Federal Government or some other entity; defense and non-defense capital; physical capital and intangible or human capital; distinctions among investments in and for current, future, and retired workers; distinctions between capital to increase productivity and capital to enhance the quality of life; and existing definitions of capital for budgeting;

- (c) The role of depreciation in capital budgeting, and the concept and measurement of depreciation for purposes of a Federal capital budget; and
- (d) The effect of a Federal capital budget on budgetary choices between capital and noncapital means of achieving public objectives; implications for macroeconomic stability; and potential mechanisms for budgetary discipline.

Sec. 3. Report. The Commission shall adopt its report through majority vote of its full membership. The Commission shall report to the National Economic Council by March 15, 1998, or within 1 year from its first meeting.

Sec 4. Administration. (a) Members of the Commission shall serve without compensation for their work on the Commission. While engaged in the work of the Commission, members appointed from among private citizens of the United States may be allowed travel expenses, including per diem in lieu of subsistence, as authorized by law for persons serving intermittently in the Government service (5 U.S.C. 5701–5707).

(b) The Department of the Treasury shall provide the Commission with funding and administrative support. The Commission may have a paid staff, including detailees from Federal agencies. The Secretary of the Treasury shall perform the functions of the President under the Federal Advisory Committee Act, as amended (5 U.S.C. App.), except that of reporting to the Congress, in accordance with the guidelines and procedures established by the Administrator of General Services.

Sec. 5. General Provisions. The Commission shall terminate 30 days after submitting its report.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 3, 1997.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 5, 1997]

NOTE: This Executive order was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 4, and it was published in the *Federal Register* on March 6.

Remarks Announcing the Prohibition on Federal Funding for Cloning of Human Beings and an Exchange With Reporters

March 4, 1997

The President. Good morning. I'm glad to be joined this morning by the Vice President, Secretary Shalala, Dr. Harold Varmus, the head of NIH; Dr. Harold Shapiro, the president of Princeton and the Chairman of our Bioethics Advisory Commission; and Dr. Jack Gibbons, the President's Adviser on Science and Technology, all of whom know a lot about and care a lot about this issue we are discussing today.

The recent breakthrough in animal cloning is one that could yield enormous benefits, enabling us to reproduce the most productive strains of crop and livestock, holding out the promise of revolutionary new medical treatments and cures, helping to unlock the greatest secrets of the genetic code. But like the splitting of the atom, this is a discovery that carries burdens as well as benefits.

Science often moves faster than our ability to understand its implications. That is why we have a responsibility to move with caution and care to harness the powerful forces of science and technology so that we can reap the benefit while minimizing the potential danger.

This new discovery raises the troubling prospect that it might someday be possible to clone human beings from our own genetic

material. There is much about cloning that we still do not know. But this much we do know: Any discovery that touches upon human creation is not simply a matter of scientific inquiry; it is a matter of morality and spirituality as well.

My own view is that human cloning would have to raise deep concerns, given our most cherished concepts of faith and humanity. Each human life is unique, born of a miracle that reaches beyond laboratory science. I believe we must respect this profound gift and resist the temptation to replicate ourselves.

At the very least, however, we should all agree that we need a better understanding of the scope and implications of this most recent breakthrough. Last week, I asked our National Bioethics Advisory Commission, headed by President Harold Shapiro of Princeton, to conduct a thorough review of the legal and the ethical issues raised by this new cloning discovery and to recommend possible actions to prevent its abuse, reporting back to me by the end of May.

In the meantime, I am taking further steps to prevent human cloning. The Federal Government currently restricts the use of Federal funds for research involving human embryos. After reviewing these restrictions, our administration believes that there are loopholes that could allow the cloning of human beings if the technology were developed. Therefore, today I am issuing a directive that bans the use of any Federal funds for any cloning of human beings.

Effective immediately, no Federal agency may support, fund, or undertake such activity. Of course, a great deal of research and activity in this area is supported by private funds. That is why I am urging the entire scientific and medical community, every foundation, every university, every industry that supports work in this area to heed the Federal Government's example. I'm asking for a voluntary moratorium on the cloning of human beings until our Bioethics Advisory Commission and our entire Nation have had a real chance to understand and debate the profound ethical implications of the latest advances.

As we gain a fuller understanding of this technology, we must proceed not just with caution but also with a conscience. By insist-

ing that not a single taxpayer dollar supports human cloning, and by urging a moratorium on all private research in this area, we can ensure that as we move forward on this issue, we weigh the concerns of faith and family and philosophy and values, not merely of science alone. Thank you very much.

1996 Campaign Financing

Q. Mr. President, how do you think the Vice President did in his rebuttal yesterday, and do you agree with him that you two are in a separate category in terms of fundraising from Federal property?

The President. Well, I agree with—number one, I thought he did very well, and I agree with the statement he made, and I agree that what he did was legal. But I also agree with the decision that he made.

I would remind you that we knew that he had a very stiff challenge. We were fighting a battle not simply for our reelection but over the entire direction of the country for years to come and the most historic philosophical battle we've had in America in quite a long time over the direction of the budget, over our commitment to education, over whether we would dismantle large chunks of our environmental regulations and our public health regulations. It was a significant thing for America, and we knew that we were going to be outspent and outraised, but we knew we had to do everything we could to at least be competitive enough to get our message out.

In fact, that is what happened. We were outspent and outraised by more than \$200 million, but thanks to the Vice President's efforts and those of thousands of others and a million small donors, we were able to get our message out.

Q. But did you overdo it in a sense that now you're regretting, obviously—you must be—all the things that have happened since then?

The President. The only thing I regret—and I regret this very much as I have said—is that a decision was made, which I did not approve of or know about, to stop the rigorous review of checks coming in to the Democratic Committee so that some funds were accepted which should not have been accepted. I regret that very much. And I have said

that I feel—as the titular head of the Democratic Party, I feel responsible for that. I think all of us in the line of command are. And I was very proud of Governor Romer and Mr. Grossman and the entire Democratic Committee. When they made a full accounting, they went over all the checks, they did something as far as I know no party has done in modern history, and they gave back money that was not only clearly illegal but that was questionable, and they're going on. I regret that very much, because that never should have happened in the first place.

For the rest, I think the Vice President said he thought that some changes were in order, but I don't regret the fact that we worked like crazy to raise enough money to keep from being rolled over by the biggest juggernaut this country had seen in a very long time. And I think it would have been a very bad thing for the American people if that budget had passed, if their plans to dramatically dismantle the environmental protections and the public health protections the country had passed, and I am glad we stood up to it. I'm glad we fought the battles of '95 and '96, and I'm glad it came out the way it did. And we had to be aggressive and strong within the law, and I'm very proud of what the Vice President did.

Q. Don't you think it puts the Vice President in a vulnerable—

Human Cloning

Q. Mr. President, what is the extent of your order today? How much funds—do you know how much funds were being spent toward this human cloning, if any?

The President. We attempted previously to have a ban on this, going back to '94, I believe. The nature of the new discovery raised the prospect that the technology was not covered specifically by the nature of the ban. So as far as I know, nothing is going on in Government-funded research. I just want to make sure that we keep it that way, because our research dollars are spread all across the country in different institutions.

With regard to the private sector, let me say that our staff here in the White House has been in touch with a number of people in the biotech industry, and they seem to be glad that we called and anxious to participate

in a moratorium until we think through the implications of this.

I mean, I imagine a lot of you, not as journalists but in your own private homes, have sat around talking about this discovery in the last few days. I know we have in our home. And I just think that we need the best minds that we can bring to bear and the distinguished people on the bioethics advisory committee to think through this, tell us about what we may be missing about if there's anything positive that could come from this, and also think through the other implications.

How can we get the benefits of our deep desire to find any possible cure for any malady that's out there without raising the kind of ethical implications that, in effect, we're in the business where people are trying to play God or to replicate themselves.

1996 Campaign Financing

Q. Mr. President, Democrats and Republicans are bogged down in Congress over whether to conduct hearings on the fundraising issue. Do you want to see that happen, and would you so tell your Democrats, your fellow Democrats up on the Hill?

The President. My understanding is that the Democrats have no objection whatever to the hearings. They just believe that they ought not to go on forever and that they don't need to—they're disputing whether \$6½ million needs to be spent. That's something that they need to work out among themselves.

I certainly have no objection to hearings. I've always assumed that they would occur, but I think that the American people are entitled to know that some prudence will be exercised in how much money is spent, because there's a lot of other things out there to be done, and we have the public's business to get on with as well—a lot of other issues that need to be dealt with. And what I'm hoping that we can do is to just reconcile how this is going to be dealt with and maybe spend some of that money to properly fund the Federal Election Commission so they can do the kind of audits they're supposed to do and do the job that they actually have the power to do on the books right now and get on with the big business, get on with balancing the budget, get on with passing the

education program, get on with doing the other things that are out there for us to do. And so I'm going to do everything I can to facilitate that.

But it is a decision for the Senate and for the House—in the House—to decide how these hearings will proceed and how they will be funded. But I don't think anybody objects to having hearings. We want them to be fair. We want them to be bipartisan. We want them to be balanced. And as I understand it, the big fight in the Senate is, will there be a date certain for ending, and will there be a limit to how much is spent?

And let me say this: Whatever the hearings produce, in the end, the only real question is, will they produce campaign finance reform? Whatever they produce, will they produce campaign finance reform? I still believe that the only way for the Congress to really deal with this and any questions from the past is to change the system. And we have the McCain-Feingold bill out there. It's a good vehicle. I have endorsed it. I would happily sign it the way it is, but they may want to debate that in some way or another. But the main thing that I want to say again is that there is no excuse for not voting on and passing a good bipartisan campaign finance reform bill this year. There is no excuse. That is the main issue.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:25 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Memorandum on the Prohibition on Federal Funding for Cloning of Human Beings

March 4, 1997

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Prohibition on Federal Funding for Cloning of Human Beings

Recent accounts of advances in cloning technology, including the first successful cloning of an adult sheep, raise important questions. They potentially represent enormous scientific breakthroughs that could offer benefits in such areas as medicine and agriculture. But the new technology also

raises profound ethical issues, particularly with respect to its possible use to clone humans. That is why last week I asked our National Bioethics Advisory Commission to thoroughly review the legal and ethical issues associated with the use of this technology and report back to me in 90 days.

Federal funds should not be used for cloning of human beings. The current restrictions on the use of Federal funds for research involving human embryos do not fully assure this result. In December 1994, I directed the National Institutes of Health not to fund the creation of human embryos for research purposes. The Congress extended this prohibition in FY 1996 and FY 1997 appropriations bills, barring the Department of Health and Human Services from supporting certain human embryo research. However, these restrictions do not explicitly cover human embryos created for implantation and do not cover all Federal agencies. I want to make it absolutely clear that no Federal funds will be used for human cloning. Therefore, I hereby direct that no Federal funds shall be allocated for cloning of human beings.

William J. Clinton

Remarks on Surveying Tornado Damage in Arkadelphia, Arkansas, and an Exchange With Reporters

March 4, 1997

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, first let me say that I very much appreciate the work that has been done here. I know this has been a very difficult thing, but I have been so impressed by the local officials, the volunteers, the police and fire personnel, the Army Reserve, the other military people. You've got a lot to be proud of.

I want to thank Governor Huckabee—and I see Mrs. Huckabee over there in a Red Cross jacket—for what they have done, and Congressman Jay Dickey, who came down with me today. I want to thank all the Arkansans who are part of our operation. In addition to James Lee Witt, I know that Mack McLarty and Bruce Lindsey and Craig Smith came down with me today. And we have a lot of people here representing our various agencies. Rodney Slater has been here since

Sunday, and as I was walking up and down the streets, I heard several people say, "Well, I don't want you to fix my building, but I would like a new road in some place or another in Clark County." [Laughter] So we'll do our best to behave on that.

I also have the new Director of the Small Business Administration here, Aida Alvarez, who served in the Housing and Urban Development Department with me. And we're going to be working with Judge Runyan and Mayor Kolb and Senator Ross and Representative Malone and all the other local leaders here to try to help you get back on track.

You know, James Lee said this, but when I became President, one of the things that I wanted to do—and I never thought my native State would need it, but I wanted to make sure that when disaster strikes anywhere in America, the United States Government would do its part and would be there promptly and would stay for the long haul and would be concerned and be able to deal with problems that may look small in Washington but are as big as anything in life to people who face them when a disaster strikes.

And I can't say enough about the work he's done. But I have to tell you, you know—he mentioned this—we've seen 500-year floods in the Middle West like nothing I'd ever seen. We've seen flooding in the Southeast. We've worked on the aftermath of a hurricane in Florida. We saw the Pacific Northwest washed out. We've seen fires and floods and earthquakes in California. But nothing has quite affected me the way this has today, and I think it's because I've been coming to Arkadelphia for more than 40 years.

We flew over College Station in Saline County coming down here, and I spent an enormous amount of time in those places when I was Governor. And I look into the eyes of so many people here today, and I wish there were more I could say and do. But I can tell you this: I'll make you a little prediction, within 2 years, what we're looking at today will look better than it did before the storm hit because of all of you, and we're going to do what we can to help you.

Let me just go over some details here. I've got a few notes—everybody makes fun—when I was Governor I never used notes, but now my memory is failing me, so I need notes. [Laughter] The disaster declaration I signed on Sunday provides for emergency aid, temporary housing, grants, and low interest loans. FEMA has set up an 800 number, and the people that are eligible for financial help will be getting it beginning just in the next couple of days. I think that since James Lee's been there, we've turned these checks around pretty quick. So I think there shouldn't be people in too much of a tight, within a matter of just a few days.

The Department of Defense is already helping, as all of you know, in clearing debris. The SBA can provide long-term, low-interest loans. I know for a lot of small-business people that seems like a losing proposition now, but I think if you look at the terms you will find them very helpful. I also know that the local banks here have gone out of their way to try to be helpful already and have sent very positive signals out in this community.

Let me just mention two other things, mostly for other parts of the State. Today we're making farmers also eligible in the affected counties for emergency low-interest loans. And as I told the Governor coming down, the Labor Department will be providing some funds to the State which will enable people who have lost their jobs temporarily or—I hope not, but if it should happen—permanently because of this tornado, to be hired to help and be part of the cleanup so their families won't be without an income and so we can speed up the cleanup. And I hope that will be helpful.

The third thing I'd like to say is that we're looking here at a long-term process. I am, I must say, terrifically impressed with all the folks I've seen out here cleaning up, all the people from the utilities and the contractors and the football teams. I was walking down the street, I said, "I believe there's more brawn per square inch in this town today than any other place in America." We've got more physical strength here, and I've been very impressed.

But you look around at this destruction. It's going to be a long-term rebuilding process, not only for the individuals who lost their

businesses but for this community. And a lot of thought has to go into this. Each and every person who lost a business will have to decide, "Well, what am I going to do? Am I going to rebuild here or not? Or, if I'm going to rebuild, am I going to do it somewhere else?" And the county has to decide what to do about the courthouse site. A lot of decisions have to be made.

And we have decided that what we should do is to put together a task force representing all the different departments in the Federal Government that could be of any help, that will be able to work with you over the long run. I don't want you to think that the Federal Government comes down here, there's an emergency, sends out a few checks, and then we walk away. So we're going to set up a long-term task force. We will be with you all the way. And again I will say, I predict that within a couple of years, Arkadelphia will be back stronger than ever and you will like what you see here. You will have to plan your own future. You will have to execute it. But we want to stay with you.

Let me also tell you that these storm centers—and you already know this, but I have to say this to people in other States who've been afflicted—if you've been looking at the television you have seen people literally buried in avalanches of water in Ohio, in Kentucky, and in West Virginia. Today I'm declaring a major disaster in Kentucky and Ohio because of the floods that are there, and we will begin to immediately help them. The Vice President and Mr. Witt are going to go to those two States tomorrow to view the damage and to report back to me.

The final thing I'd like to say is that when I heard about this, the first thing that struck me was not only the physical devastation but that the number of people who died here in the space of about 18 hours are equal—almost equal to the number of people who died from tornadoes in the entire 12 years that I had the honor of being Governor of Arkansas. And so Hillary and I said a prayer for those people and their families, and I would just like to ask that all the rest of us who were unscathed by this, keep those folks in mind, as well as those who were injured and those who lost everything they had. They're all going to need our help.

There are people here who have come from other States already to help. And if we keep the right spirit and all of you keep the light in your eyes that I saw today when person after person after person said, "Well, we'll get over this. This is Arkansas. We know how to behave. We know what to do." You do know what to do, and I'll be honored to help you every step of the way. And I thank you for giving me the chance to share this with you today. As difficult as it is, I very much wanted to be here, and I'm glad I came.

Thank you.

1996 Campaign Financing

Q. Mr. President, a couple of questions on other topics. One question, apparently there is some effort on the Hill to get the legislation—Trent Lott and others have called for an independent counsel. Is that appropriate at this time?

The President. It's a legal question.

Q. OK, one other question—

The President. I have nothing else to say.

Q. Did the White House ever get a heads up from DOJ or from the FBI on the Chinese—

The President. I want to refer—ask them. Ask the White House. They're the appropriate person you're supposed to ask.

Q. Did you?

The President. No.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Huckabee's wife, Janet; Clark County Judge Grady Runyan; Mayor Mike Kolb of Arkadelphia; and Arkansas State Senator Mike Ross.

Statement on Senate Action on the Balanced Budget Amendment

March 4, 1997

I am pleased that the Senate has heeded the warnings of eminent economists and constitutional experts from across the political spectrum, and defeated the balanced budget constitutional amendment.

At the same time, let me be clear: While I oppose a constitutional amendment, I am committed to achieving the bipartisan goal of balancing the budget by 2002. Last year,

I sent Congress a plan to balance the budget, and I submitted a balanced budget plan again a few weeks ago.

The constitutional amendment could have caused or worsened recessions, permitted a minority of legislators to hold the Nation's creditworthiness hostage, involved unelected judges in spending and tax policy, and threatened Social Security and other vital benefits.

Now that the amendment vote has taken place, I call on Congress to join me in passing a plan to balance the budget by 2002 while protecting our values, strengthening education, and providing targeted tax relief to working families.

At the end of Congress' last session, we saw several instances of productive bipartisan cooperation. I hope that we can continue this spirit of bipartisanship and make progress for the American people by reaching agreement on a balanced budget plan this year. All it takes is their votes and my signature.

It's time to do the real work of balancing the budget.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Hong Kong-United States Extradition Agreement

March 3, 1997

To the Congress of the United States:

With a view to receiving the advice and consent of the Senate to ratification as a treaty, I transmit herewith the Agreement Between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of Hong Kong for the Surrender of Fugitive Offenders signed at Hong Kong on December 20, 1996 (hereinafter referred to as "the Agreement"). In addition, I transmit for the information of the Senate, the report of the Department of State with respect to the Agreement. As a treaty, this Agreement will not require implementing legislation.

This Agreement will, upon entry into force, enhance cooperation between the law enforcement communities of the United States and Hong Kong, and will provide a framework and basic protections for extraditions after the reversion of Hong Kong to the sovereignty of the People's Republic of China on July 1, 1997. Given the absence

of an extradition treaty with the People's Republic of China, this Treaty would provide the means to continue an extradition relationship with Hong Kong after reversion and avoid a gap in law enforcement. It will thereby make a significant contribution to international law enforcement efforts.

The provisions in this Agreement follow generally the form and content of extradition treaties recently concluded by the United States. In addition, the Agreement contains several provisions specially designed in light of the particular status of Hong Kong. The Agreement's basic protections for fugitives are also made expressly applicable to fugitives surrendered by the two parties before the new treaty enters into force.

I recommend that the Senate give early and favorable consideration to the Agreement and give its advice and consent to its ratification as a treaty.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 3, 1997.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 5.

Remarks on Signing the Memorandum on Child Safety Lock Devices for Handguns and an Exchange With Reporters

March 5, 1997

The President. Good morning. I'd like to welcome here Senators Biden and Boxer, Durbin and Feinstein, Kohl; Congressmen Conyers, Schumer, and Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy; along with Deputy Attorney General Jamie Gorelick, Treasury's Under Secretary for Enforcement Ray Kelly; our friends Jim and Sarah Brady; and members of the law enforcement community. Did I leave anyone from Congress out? Senators? [*Inaudible*] Did I get everybody? Good.

Four years ago, we made a commitment to take our streets back from crime and violence with a comprehensive plan: first, to put 100,000 community police officers on our streets, to put new, tough penalties on the books, to steer young people away from crime and gangs and drugs, to keep guns out

of the hands of criminals with the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill. Last week I announced that the Brady bill has already stopped 186,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers from purchasing handguns.

Repeatedly I have said that fighting the scourge of juvenile crime and violence will be my top law enforcement priority in the next 4 years. Two weeks ago, I submitted to Congress my antigang and youth violence strategy. One of this bill's key provisions will require gun dealers to provide safety locks with every handgun they sell, to prevent unauthorized use by teenage criminals and to protect children too young to know what they're doing.

Today I announced a series of new steps we must take immediately to protect our children, our neighbors, and our police officers from tragedies caused by firearms in the wrong hands. First, we must keep guns out of the hands of children.

The Centers for Disease Control report that nearly 1.2 million children return from school to a home with no adult supervision but with a loaded and unlocked firearm. Easy access means deadly consequences. Children and teenagers cause over 10,000 unintentional shootings every year. Guns cause one in every four deaths of teenagers age 15 to 19. Last month the Centers for Disease Control reported that the rate of children from birth to age 14 who are killed by firearms in America is nearly 12 times higher than in 25 other industrialized countries combined.

America cannot tolerate this. Until Congress makes child safety locks the law of the land, we must do everything we can to prevent unauthorized firearms use.

I want to make sure the Federal Government is doing its part. Each year the Federal Government issues thousands of handguns to law enforcement agents. Unfortunately, we know all too well that even firearms issued to law enforcement are sometimes tragically misused. Today I am directing that every Federal agency shall require child safety locking devices with every handgun issued. The directive I'm about to sign requires every department and every agency to develop a plan to accomplish this commonsense safety measure and to implement it as soon

as possible. And Congress should pass my proposal to require these locks with every handgun in the very near future. If it's good enough for law enforcement, it's good enough for all our citizens.

The second step we're taking today will make it harder for people to come to America, purchase weapons, and commit crimes against Americans. We were all shocked to learn of the foreign gunman who shot seven people on top of the Empire State Building, killing one of them and then killing himself. He apparently bought this gun after living in a Florida motel for just 3 weeks. Federal law requires legal aliens to live at least 90 days in a State before they are allowed to purchase a handgun. But the application to buy a gun does not even ask how long an applicant has lived at his or her current address.

As a first step to reduce illegal handgun purchases by foreigners, today I'm announcing that the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms will immediately require applicants to certify that they have been residents for at least 90 days in the State where they are trying to buy a gun. But this is not enough. I call on Congress to pass the bill sponsored by Senators Kennedy and Durbin and Congressman Schumer that will prohibit all foreign visitors from buying or carrying guns in the United States.

Finally, as we work to make all our people safer, we must never forget our special obligation to police officers, like those who are with me today, who risk their lives to protect us all. It is long past time for Congress to listen to America's law enforcement officers and ban cop-killer bullets once and for all.

I have sent this legislation to Congress twice before, and they failed to act. They should not delay this effort again. We don't need to study this issue any more to determine what specific materials can be used to make armor-piercing bullets. We need a simple test and a straightforward ban. If a bullet can tear through a bulletproof vest like a hot knife through butter, it should be against the law, and that is the bottom line. These bullets are designed for one purpose only, to kill police officers. They have no place on our streets.

Three simple steps to make our children, our streets, and our law enforcement officers safer: Child safety locks on handguns, new rules to prevent foreign criminals from buying guns in the United States, a straightforward ban on cop-killer bullets. I will do my part. I thank the Members of Congress who are here, especially for their leadership, and I ask the Congress to act on this important legislation.

Now, let me sign this order here, and then I'll answer any questions you have.

[At this point, the President signed the memorandum.]

Thank you.

Police Firepower

Q. The police were outgunned in Los Angeles. Do you think there's also a problem with police departments not having enough firepower?

The President. There could be, but I think the real problem is—the way we sought to deal with that is by dealing with the assault weapons ban. I think most police departments will be adequately armed if we can get the assault weapons out of the hands of the criminals and if we have tougher enforcement of the Brady bill. It's—186,000 blocked sales is no small number, even in a big country like ours—186,000. That's pretty impressive.

1996 Campaign Financing

Q. What do you think of the Republicans suggesting they'll vote tomorrow in the Senate on insisting there be an independent counsel on campaign financial fundraising?

The President. Well, I think, you know, there is a law on that. It's a legal question. It shouldn't be a political one.

Cop-Killer Bullet Legislation

Q. Mr. President, why would you think now that things in the Congress would be any different this time around for cop-killer bullets or for some of these other measures than before?

The President. Because of the clear demonstration of public support. Keep in mind that this Congress, which had originally come into office with a commitment to repeal the—I mean, the last Congress, the Congress

of '95-'96, which came to Congress with a commitment to repeal the assault weapons ban and weaken or repeal the Brady bill, actually agreed with me to strengthen the Brady bill at the end of the last session of Congress in late 1996.

So I think there has been a sea change in the shift of attitude in the Congress as the American people have crystallized their opinions on these issues and made it known.

Furthermore, I think there will be broad support—even broader support for the child safety locks. I would be surprised if you don't have a lot of the gunowners groups—if they didn't support this, it would surprise me. I mean, this is consistent with a lot of the things that they have said in the past, so I think we would have a good chance on that. And on the cop-killer bullets, I think that—you asked my hope, my hope is based on the action that this Congress took at the last session where they voted with us to extend the impact of the Brady bill.

Subpoena of Lippo Group Documents

Q. Mr. President, with the new subpoenas coming out on the Lippo connection to the White House, are you satisfied that there's been no undue influence by outside influence on—by outside countries on either your White House or on your former—your very good friend Web Hubbell?

The President. I have no reason to believe that there has been. But I think that everybody should comply with the information, and we have. And you know, Mr. Burton asked us yesterday I think for some information relating to the allegation of an attempt by the Chinese to influence the American election. And when we have made that—when—we said in our letter to the Justice Department that we assumed anything that we got would be given to the House and Senate Intelligence Committees because we didn't want to raise any questions, we just want to get to the bottom of that. And so, they have it, and whatever is appropriate for them to share with Mr. Burton, they can.

I just think we——

Q. Is Burton grandstanding?

The President. I don't want to get into that. But I believe that the House and Senate committees—Intelligence Committees—

have anything that we had. And so they can share it with them as is appropriate.

Q. Do you have any reason to believe there was influence——

The President. No.

Q. ——attempted influence?

The President. I do not, but I think we have to get—you know, there's an investigation. As I said, the charge is serious; we need to get to the bottom of it. But I have no reasons to believe—I have no personal evidence, but that's not the issue. The issue is this charge has been made, it's—anytime you allege that another government attempted to influence an American election, that's a serious thing and has to be looked into. But I have no personal evidence, but I want the investigation to proceed, and I want the Justice Department to get to the bottom of it. And I expect that they will.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:33 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former White House Press Secretary James S. Brady, who was wounded in the 1981 assassination attempt on President Ronald Reagan, and Mr. Brady's wife, Sarah, head of Hand Gun Control, Inc.

Memorandum on Child Safety Lock Devices for Handguns

March 5, 1997

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Child Safety Lock Devices for Handguns

Every day, firearms claim the lives of too many children. Firearms cause 12 percent of fatalities among American children and teens, and one of every four deaths of teenagers ages 15 to 19. These numbers represent not only violent crimes, but also tragic gun accidents. Firearms are now the fourth leading cause of accidental deaths among children ages 5 to 14. Moreover, firearms have become the primary method by which young people commit suicide.

According to a Centers for Disease Control study released earlier this month, the rate of firearm deaths among children up to

14 years old is nearly 12 times higher in the United States than in 25 other industrialized countries combined. The Center also estimates that nearly 1.2 million unsupervised children return from school to a home that has a loaded or unlocked firearm.

Recently, my Administration sent to the Congress our "Anti-Gang and Youth Violence Act of 1997," draft legislation that includes a provision requiring all Federal Firearms Licensed dealers to provide a safety lock device with every firearm sold. Safety lock devices will help to reduce the unauthorized use of handguns by a child at play or a teen who wants to commit a crime. Just as important, safety lock devices can also help deter gun theft.

I have urged the Congress to move this legislation quickly. In the meantime, the Federal Government can serve as an example of gun safety for the Nation by taking an important step to reduce handgun accidents and protect our children from injury and death.

Every year, the Federal Government issues thousands of handguns to our law enforcement agents. While some agencies have already adopted a policy of distributing safety locks for these handguns, this policy should be universally adopted across the Federal Government. That is why I direct you to develop and implement a policy requiring that a safety lock device—as defined in our draft legislation—be provided with any and every handgun issued by your agency to law enforcement officers. You should ensure that all Federal law enforcement officers are informed of this policy and that all issued safety lock devices are accompanied by instructions for their proper use.

All Americans have a responsibility to ensure that guns do not fall into the hands of our children. Your response to this directive will help ensure that this does not happen. Taking this simple step can have a dramatic impact on saving the lives of our children. You should proceed as quickly as possible to carry out this directive.

William J. Clinton

Statement on the Belfast Talks

March 5, 1997

As the Belfast talks on the future of Northern Ireland recess today for the British and local election campaigns, I want to emphasize the strong support of the United States for these historic negotiations. They offer an unparalleled opportunity for the Northern Ireland political parties and the British and Irish Governments to achieve a just and lasting settlement to the conflict that has haunted the people of Northern Ireland for too long. Violence can have no place in this democratic process. For the talks to be inclusive, as they are intended to be, the IRA must declare and implement an unequivocal cease-fire.

Under the skilled chairmanship of Senator George Mitchell and his colleagues, the talks have made useful progress. When the talks reconvene in June, it is important that they move quickly into substantive negotiations. I hope the participants will return to Stormont on June 3 determined to work creatively to make real progress. If they do, they will have my full support for the negotiations and their eventual outcome.

NOTE: The statement referred to George J. Mitchell, Special Assistant to the President for Northern Ireland.

Notice—Continuation of Iran Emergency

March 5, 1997

On March 15, 1995, by Executive Order 12957, I declared a national emergency with respect to Iran pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701–1706) to deal with the threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States constituted by the actions and policies of the Government of Iran, including its support for international terrorism, efforts to undermine the Middle East peace process, and acquisition of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them. On May 6, 1995, I issued Executive Order 12959 imposing more comprehensive sanctions to further respond to this threat.

Because the actions and policies of the Government of Iran continue to threaten the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States, the national emergency declared on March 15, 1995, must continue in effect beyond March 15, 1997. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing the national emergency with respect to Iran. Because the emergency declared by Executive Order 12957 constitutes an emergency separate from that declared on November 14, 1979, by Executive Order 12170, this renewal is distinct from the emergency renewal of October 1996. This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 5, 1997.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:46 a.m., March 5, 1997]

NOTE: This notice was published in the *Federal Register* on March 6.

Message to the Congress on Iran

March 5, 1997

To the Congress of the United States:

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the Iran emergency declared on March 15, 1995, pursuant to the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1701–1706) is to continue in effect beyond March 15, 1997, to the *Federal Register* for publication. This emergency is separate from that declared on November 14, 1979, in connection with the Iranian hostage crisis and therefore requires separate renewal of emergency authorities.

The factors that led me to declare a national emergency with respect to Iran on March 15, 1995, have not been resolved. The actions and policies of the Government of Iran, including its support for international terrorism, efforts to undermine the Middle East peace process, and its acquisition of weapons of mass destruction and the means to deliver them, continue to threaten the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. Accordingly, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in force the broad authorities that are in place by virtue of the March 15, 1995, declaration of emergency.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 5, 1997.

Proclamation 6977—National Poison Prevention Week, 1997

March 5, 1997

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

This year, as we observe National Poison Prevention Week, we highlight two achievements: the effectiveness of child-resistant packaging required by the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission (CPSC) and the lifesaving work of the Nation's poison control centers. These public health efforts have reduced childhood poisoning deaths from 450 deaths in 1961 to 50 deaths in 1993. However, according to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, over one million children each year are exposed to potentially poisonous medicines and household chemicals.

Virtually all poisonings are preventable, and we must continue to inform parents, grandparents, and caregivers how to prevent childhood poisonings. The Poison Prevention Week Council, a coalition of 39 national organizations determined to stop accidental poisonings, distributes valuable information used by poison control centers, pharmacies, public health departments, and others to

conduct poison prevention programs in their communities.

Simple safety measures—such as correctly using child-resistant packaging and keeping potentially harmful substances locked away from children—can save lives. And if a poisoning occurs, a poison control center can offer quick and lifesaving intervention.

The CPSC requires child-resistant packaging for many medicines and household chemicals. A recent CPSC study showed that every year approximately 24 children's lives are saved by child-resistant packaging for oral prescription medicines. The CPSC recently took action to ensure that child-resistant packaging will be easier for adults to use as well. This, in turn, will increase the use of child-resistant packaging, preventing more poisonings.

To encourage Americans to learn more about the dangers of accidental poisonings and to take more preventive measures, the Congress, by joint resolution approved September 26, 1961 (75 Stat. 681), has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation designating the third week of March of each year as "National Poison Prevention Week."

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 16 through March 22, 1997, as National Poison Prevention Week. I call upon all Americans to observe this week by participating in appropriate ceremonies and activities and by learning how to prevent accidental poisonings among children.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this fifth day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William J. Clinton

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Remarks to a Joint Session of the Michigan Legislature in Lansing, Michigan

March 6, 1997

Thank you. Thank you very much, Mr. Speaker, Governor. Thank you all for that wonderful welcome in this magnificent capitol. I'm delighted to be here today with so many of your State officials—Lieutenant Governor Binsfeld; your State board of education president, Kathleen Strauss. I don't know if Frank Kelley met Theodore Roosevelt, but he did meet me when I became attorney general. *[Laughter]* And some days I feel about that old. I want to thank the mayor of Lansing, Mayor Hollister, for meeting me at the airport, and all the other State officials and dignitaries who are here—Representative Sikkema, thank you, sir; and Senator Cherry and Senator Posthumus.

I want to thank the Members of Congress and others who flew down here with me today—your former Governor, Jim Blanchard and his wife, Janet; Congressman Dingell; your Congresswoman from here, Congresswoman Debbie Stabenow; Representative Levin; Representative Kilpatrick; Representative Conyers; Representative Stupak; Representative Camp; and Representative Hoekstra and Representative Barcia. Did I get them all? *[Laughter]* Nine, we only had nine here. I could only muster nine, but that's a quorum—*[laughter]*—even in the State legislature—of the Michigan delegation. I thank them for coming down.

Thank you, Wendell Anthony, for your invocation, and thank you for making me feel so welcome.

When I came in, the Speaker and I were looking up at this magnificent ceiling, and I noticed that the seal of the State of Michigan was right next to the seal of my home State of Arkansas. And maybe one reason for that is that the Congress approved us coming into the Union at the same time.

I was reading also the account of Theodore Roosevelt coming here 90 years ago. I know you have partisan differences today. You might be interested to know that 90 years ago there were 32 Republicans and no Democrats in the Senate. *[Laughter]* If you clap too much, I've got a great closing line—

Governor, you'll get mad at it. *[Laughter]* There were 95 Republicans and 5 Democrats in the House. And it was the aftermath of the Civil War.

I say this because our two States have been entwined in an interesting way over the course of time. We were allowed together into the Union because Michigan was a free State and Arkansas was a Southern slave State, and Michigan became the party—adhering to the party of Abraham Lincoln, of freedom, and the party of Theodore Roosevelt, which the Governor explained. And most of us Democrats are pretty proud of those folks, too. They represent the best in America.

Then, after the Great Depression, Michigan basically became the home of tens of thousands of people from my State who simply could not make a living anymore on the farm, and the factories of Michigan gave people from Arkansas, black and white together, the chance to come up here and build a decent middle class life and educate their children and be a part of what was then America's future. So anybody from my roots must be exceedingly grateful to the people of Michigan and the history and the heritage of Michigan.

When Theodore Roosevelt was here, he was going to Michigan State to address the graduates there, just as I did a couple of years ago. And I might say the president of Michigan State is here, and I told him today that he gave me a picture of Theodore Roosevelt's address to the graduates at Michigan State, and it now hangs on my office wall at the White House at the entrance to my little private office off the Oval Office, and I look up there and see Teddy Roosevelt speaking every day that I go to work.

Before that, he came here, and when he spoke here I suppose the place looked about like it does now, thanks to your magnificent renovation, and I applaud you for doing this. People all over America should remember it's worth investing a little money to protect your roots and your heritage, and the beauty and meaning of what we were, as well as what we hope to be.

In 1907 when Teddy Roosevelt came here we were at the dawn of the industrial era. This building had been wired for electricity

only 2 years before he showed up. And when President Roosevelt left here to go to the college campus, he got in a newfangled contraption called a Reo automobile. I read the newspaper article from your local paper from 1907 this morning, and it said that it was something of a risk for him to get into the car, but it was probably the wave of the future, who knew what would turn out. [*Laughter*]

Then, like a good politician, I read that when he was at Michigan State, at the campus, he learned that there were, in fact, two different car manufacturers competing with one another in Lansing, so he took the other one back. [*Laughter*] He took a Reo out and an Olds back.

That was a rare moment. Just think what happened from that moment to this one. Think about the century that that moment and this one spans—all but 10 years of this century—and why it became the American Century, what a big part of it Michigan was. Building a great middle class, offering a haven to people from all over America and to immigrants who would come here from other lands to work, to make their way. Building an industrial power that could prevail in two World Wars and overcome a Great Depression. Building an ethical power that could live up to the meaning of its Constitution in the civil rights revolution and expanding opportunities to young people to vote and to women to fully participate in the life of America. Just think what has happened in the 20th century.

When Roosevelt was here in 1907, it was a rare moment. We were moving on to the stage as a world power. Everyone recognized it. We had by then been a nation for more than 100 years, and everybody knew there was something unique about America, a free democracy where people could vote and decide and make their judgments. And it was growing and being nourished. We were exceedingly prosperous by the standards of the time.

And Roosevelt knew that you had to make the most of peace and prosperity and leadership, and he did. And so did his successor, Woodrow Wilson. And because of them together and the work they did with like-minded members of both parties, we built an era

that set the framework for America's leadership, growth, and prosperity, and the explosion of people into the middle class, which became the hallmark of Michigan's greatness.

When I was a kid in Arkansas our per capita income was barely half the national average. We all knew if you could find your way up here and got a job, you could still make a good living. That all began at the beginning of this century. It is a very rare thing for a country to have peace and prosperity and the possibility of shaping its own future. Abraham Lincoln said in the Civil War, "My policy is to have no policy. I'm controlled by events." If I said that, I would be ridiculed, rightly so. But he was controlled by events. He did have a policy; it was to keep the Union together and then to liberate us from the scourge of slavery. But he was controlled by events.

When the Depression came on and President Roosevelt called for an era of bold experimentation, he was controlled by events to some extent. He couldn't say, the major issue in America is the climate or even education or anything else. He was controlled by events, and the war did that. And to some extent, the cold war did that for us. When Sputnik went up and we got into the space race and wound up winning it, we were almost forced into it. Now we have peace and prosperity on the edge of an era of unimaginable possibility.

We just finished 4 years where our country, for the first time during one administration, has produced 11½ million jobs. Michigan, the unemployment rate has dropped, and the Governor said your welfare rolls are down 30 percent. You see this kind of progress, this energy, this movement, this possibility in America—dramatic new advances in science and technology occurring. This is a rare time.

What happens to people, usually, when they are prosperous and unthreatened? Well, they usually get complacent, and then they normally find some reason to fall out with one another, usually over something incredibly petty, just in the nature of human events. And I come here to say to you today, we here in America and you here especially in Michigan who have done so much for so

long, we cannot afford to do that. We owe something better to our children. We have been given this unique opportunity, the same sort of opportunity we had when your predecessors were listening to Theodore Roosevelt here 90 years ago, except one on an even grander scale. And we have to make the most of it. We have to build America in the new century. And we also have to know that we have to do it as one America.

I am gratified that Governor Engler said what he did about the education program today. I am gratified that this bipartisan State legislature has given me such a warm welcome, for we have to forge a new partnership for a new time.

While the era of big Government is truly over—the Federal Government now has 285,000 fewer people working for it than it did on the day I took the oath of office—the era of big challenges for our Nation is not over. And now, we know that national leadership can and must point the way, but the real responsibility is one we all share.

Especially, there are two areas I want to discuss today—educational excellence, high standards for all students; and welfare reform, breaking the cycle of dependency for everyone capable of independence in America—for these issues are at the core of what it means to prepare America for the 21st century, giving all Americans not only the opportunity but the tools they need to make the most of their own lives in this new global knowledge economy.

The Governor referred to this in his remarks. When I gave the State of the Union Address, I said that during the cold war, because our national security was threatened by communism, politics stopped at the water's edge. Today, our national security depends upon our ability to develop the capacities of all of our people, so politics should stop at the schoolhouse door.

Between 1992 and 2000—think of this—89 percent of the new jobs created in this economy will require more than high school levels of literacy and math skills. But only half the people entering the work force are prepared for these high-paying jobs, even though about 80 percent of them are high school graduates. Our schools are still turning out millions of young people who simply are

not equipped for the new world of work. That is why our number one priority must be to make our system of public education the best in the world, and you must believe we can do this.

A few years ago, almost 8 years ago now, I had the honor of joining the other Governors then serving with President Bush at the University of Virginia to write the national education goals. I still think they're pretty good goals. If you ask me what the consequences would be if they were implemented, we could say bluntly that it would mean that every 8-year-old would be able to read independently, every 12-year-old could now log on to the Internet, every 18-year-old could go to college, and every adult American could keep on learning for a lifetime. That is what I want to be the reality in this country.

In the State of the Union Address, I laid out a 10-point plan, a call to action for American education that describes the steps I believe we must all take, beginning with the youngest children, expanding and improving early childhood learning. The First Lady and I will be having a conference on early childhood learning and the brain to try to deal with these enormously significant new findings over the last couple of years, what we know about not only when children learn but how they learn and what happens if we don't do for them what they should do.

An enormous percentage of the capacity of the brain to absorb information to operate is developed in the first 4 years. I'll just give you one statistic: The average child that grows up in a family with two parents caring for that child, even if they both work, that have reasonably good educations and deal with the basic developmental tasks, will give that child 700,000 positive interactions in the first 4 years. The average child being raised by a single parent with low self-esteem and low self-confidence and no training in parenting will get 150,000 positive interactions and spend roughly 7 times as much time before a television doing nothing, in the first 4 years. This has enormous consequences for the way we become. So we're going to talk about that.

We have to open the doors of college wider than ever. If 90 percent of the jobs

require more than a high school education and the 1990 census shows that the only group of younger workers whose incomes went up instead of down after you adjust for inflation were those that had at least 2 years of some kind of training after high school, we ought to make the 13th and 14th years of education just as universal by the year 2000 as a high school education is today.

I know that for years Michigan has been in the forefront of that, helping people to save for college. I have a proposal to provide tax credits for the cost of a typical community college for 2 years, and tax deductions up to \$10,000 a year for the tuition cost in any post-high school education, and an expanded IRA that can be used for the same purpose. We have to do this.

We also have to give more of our workers the ability to keep on learning for a lifetime. For 4 years, through a Democratic Congress and a Republican Congress, I have been given equal opportunity to fail to pass the "GI bill" for American workers. But it seems to me to be a simple idea. I just want to take the 70-odd programs that were developed with the best of intentions over the years, for this training program, that training program, and the other one, put them in a big fund, and when a worker becomes eligible for help through unemployment or underemployment, send them a skills grant and let them take it to the local community college or the nearest education institution. They can find out for themselves what they need to do to improve their education. We don't need all that stuff in the middle of them, between them and the money. Send them the money, let them get the education. I hope you will help me pass that in the Congress. I think it is a good thing.

I want to help for the very first time through an innovative program to use Federal funds to lower the interest rates on local bond issues to help schools with enormous building problems to repair their broken infrastructure or build new facilities when they are doing their part. This is a very important thing.

We have the largest number of schoolchildren—as Secretary Riley never lets me forget—we have the largest number of schoolchildren in history in our schools this

year, the first time we've ever had a bigger group than the baby boom generation. I have been to schools where the buildings were falling down. My wife was in a school this week where some of the floors were closed, and the kids were going to school on some floors and couldn't go into other floors or other rooms because they didn't comply with the building codes. I have been into other schools with beautiful old school buildings surrounded by temporary facilities to hold the children.

So I think it's an appropriate thing for us to do, not to try to take over this function and not to try to substitute for people assuming responsibility, but when there's a terrible problem and people are doing their own work, if we can, by a prudent and limited investment, lower the cost of that so that more people can afford to do more construction and repair, I think we should.

I'm also strongly committed—the Vice President and I have been working on this very hard—to getting every classroom and every library in the country hooked up to the Internet by the year 2000. And I want to thank your Congresswoman, Debbie Stabenow, for the work that she's done in supporting that.

Secretary Riley has awarded Michigan a grant of \$8.6 million for the technology literacy challenge to help your classrooms move into the 21st century, and I ask all of you to support that. There is enormous willingness in the private sector to help us get this done, and it can revolutionize—just think of it—if we can hook up every classroom and every library to the Internet by the year 2000, for the first time in the history of the country ever—ever—children in the poorest district, the richest districts, the middle class districts, all of them will have access to the same learning in the same way in the same time.

And those of you who have children or know children who are already proficient in using the Internet, it's a stunning thing. The other day, my daughter picked a topic to do a research paper on, and she said, "Dad, can you get me a couple of books on this out of the library?" I came home with four books, and she had eight citations she had gotten off the Internet—eight articles and things.

So my labors were one-third of her research project.

This is an incredible thing. If we make this available to all children, it will change in a breathtaking way what people can become, what our children can imagine themselves becoming. And I ask you to help us do that.

I thank you, Governor, for what you said about our support for greater discipline and safety and character education in the schools. I have proposed funding 1,000 new community school programs across the country to help our schools stay open after school, on the weekends, in the summertime, to try to give those children who need some positive place to go, some support, some help to stay out of trouble, a place to do that.

I have studied very carefully this problem of rising juvenile crime when overall crime has been going down dramatically in America. And the communities that are reversing that trend, that had juvenile crime going down are the places that make sure that all those kids have something positive to say yes to, even as they're being told to say no to the wrong things. So I want the schools to be able to do that in every community where it's needed in the United States.

We have to make sure that we do everything we can to help our classroom teachers be the best they can be. For years, educators worked to establish nationally accepted credentials for excellence in teaching through the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards, which is headquartered here in Detroit, Michigan.

Now, Michigan has the third highest number of board-certified master teachers in the country, and that's a good thing. But there are still only a few hundred who have been board-certified. My new budget will enable 100,000 teachers all across America to seek certification as master teachers. And our goal should be to have one certified master teacher in every single school in America. That will make more master teachers we need for those schools, and I hope we can do it.

As has already been said today, I do believe that we need a strong system of public education that gives parents and communities more freedom and flexibility. I think we should work together to give parents more choices for what public schools their

children attend all across America. I think we should help teachers, parents, museums, and others to create new public charter schools.

I have proposed to double the budget of the program so that we can increase by tenfold the number of charter schools we have by the year 2000, to create—[*applause*—and I think it's important to emphasize what we want. We want high standards, schools that are open to all children regardless of their backgrounds. We want an example of accountability which will then spread to all other public schools. But we want to say to them, you can stay open only as long as you do a good job. That's what the charter means; that's what a charter is.

Ultimately, what we want to do is to prove that we have a model here that can be used everywhere else. It is simply not true that if you have a few public schools that all the rest of them can't be good, if some of them are good that they all can't be good. That is not true. It is not true that because it's a public institution we can't achieve excellence everywhere. If that were true, we'd have some good Army units and some bad Army units. And we'd be afraid to go to war, and you wouldn't sleep well at night. Isn't that right?

So you do not have to accept the feeling that you know this wonderful principal, and if only everybody else could be that way. That is simply not true. Leadership can be taught, leadership can be trained, and 90 percent of the children in this country plus—99 percent of them—can learn what they need to know to succeed and triumph in the modern world. They can do it, and we have to do it. [*Applause*]

Now that you've clapped, I will say they are capable of it, but they don't know it today. Let's face the fact. The truth is that 40 percent of the fourth graders in this country still cannot read a book on their own. In Germany or Singapore, students learn 15 to 20 math subjects in depth every year. Typically in the United States, we run over 30 or 35 every year in a superficial way. Then we have these comparative tests. They normally win, especially since they stay in school longer than we do, day-in and day-out, year-in and year-out.

But without these skills, children will not be able to develop the capacity to think and to reason and to analyze complex problems. All these skills will be essential to succeeding in the world of the 21st century in jobs that have not been invented or even imagined yet.

Now, what do we have to have? We have got to have high standards, high expectations, and high levels of accountability. That is why I have challenged our Nation to meet these national standards in the basics, not Federal Government standards but national standards, representing what every child, wherever he or she lives, however poor, rich, or middle class he or she is, must know to do well in the world of the 21st century. And I think we should begin by having every State test every fourth grader in reading and every eighth grader in math by 1999 to make sure these basic standards are met.

We already have widely accepted rigorous standards in both reading and math and widely used tests that are based on these standards. They're just not given to everyone or designed to be given to everyone. Michigan and more than 40 other States have participated in a test called the National Assessment of Education Progress. The education committee members in the audience call it the NAEP test. It measures a State's overall performance against a high national standard of excellence.

Just last week we released the annual assessment of math performance and it shows, across the country, that our 4th-, 8th-, and 12th-graders are doing better. And as the Governor said, Michigan's score is among the most improved in the Nation.

Tens of thousands of students across the country have also taken the Third International Math and Science Survey, a test that reflects world-class standards our children must meet in math and science. The headquarters for that test is just down the road at Michigan State. And I want to thank Dr. William Schmidt at Michigan State for his leadership of this important study. I think he's here with us today. Where are you, Dr. Schmidt? He's here somewhere. Thank you very much, sir.

If you saw the State of the Union Address, you know there are a group of children in northern Illinois that took this test in 20

school districts north of Chicago, and they finished tied for first in science and tied for second in math, I think. Very impressive.

Unfortunately, these tests also don't provide scores for individuals, they simply measure how an entire area or group of people are doing. What we need are exams that will literally measure the performance of each and every student in each and every school. That way, parents and teachers will know how every child is doing compared to other students in other schools, other States, and other countries. And most important of all, they will know how the child is doing compared to what you need to know to go forward.

And I want to make it clear what the difference is. It doesn't matter if your child makes the highest grade in the class if nobody gets over the standards bar. Conversely, in this sense it doesn't matter if your child makes the lowest grade in the class if everybody gets over the standards bar. That's the difference. We have a lot of these standardized tests. We need tests that test to the standards, that say whether you have crossed the threshold of what you must know to do well in the world of tomorrow.

That's why I'm presenting a plan to help the States meet and measure these standards. Over the next 2 years, the Department of Education will support the development of new tests for the fourth grade reading and the eighth grade math, to show how every student measures up to high and widely accepted standards. They'll be developed by independent experts in consultation with leading math and reading teachers. The Federal Government will not require them, but these tests will be made available to every State that chooses to administer them. That is the significance of the announcement that the Governor made. I want to create a climate in which no one can say no, in which it's voluntary but you are ashamed if you don't give your kids the chance to do this.

Together, we are saying this. This is not a partisan issue. There is no Democratic or Republican way to teach. There is no Maryland or Michigan way to learn. Reading is reading; math is math. No school board or State legislature can rewrite the rules of algebra in Alaska to make them different than

they are in Arkansas. It cannot be done. Every State must put politics aside, work in a bipartisan fashion, test our children in the same rigorous way. Politics should stop at the schoolhouse door.

This will not be easy. Some of our children won't do very well at first. We don't need to make them feel like failures; we need to make them understand we're doing this so we can know how to measure their success. If they don't do very well at first, it's probably more our fault than theirs. And a lot of it, I will say again, is because when we see people in difficult circumstances, sometimes out of the goodness of our heart, we exercise our compassion by expecting less of them. And we are selling their future right down the drain every time we do it.

I can tell you, over the last several years—you know, I was a Governor a long time—I served with Governor Engler; I served with Governor Blanchard; I served with Governor Milliken. I have been all over this country to schools. I have seen schools in areas with high murder rates, where it was unsafe to get in the school, where there were no guns, no knives, no dope, no dropout, and test scores were above the State average. I could go through example after example after example. And every time I see one, I get more hopeful and more angry, because if you can have one good school where the kids are learning against all the odds and all the obstacles, then you know when you leave that school there is no excuse for that not happening everywhere. This will help that happen everywhere. This will help that happen everywhere.

Let me make a comment now about one other part of this education program that I think is very important, and that's our America Reads program. We announced it here in Michigan last August in Wyandotte, when I was there on my train trip. And I did it with the help of two elementary school students, Justin Whitney and Elizabeth Schweyen. We announced the America Reads challenge. We set a goal mobilizing a million volunteer tutors to help every 8-year-old learn to read independently. We're going to use 11,000 of our AmeriCorps volunteers to mobilize and train the army, we're going to get at least 100,000 college students

to help, and I might say in the last budget we added 200,000 more work-study slots, and there's another 100,000 in this budget, so we'll go to a million kids on work-study, and I want 100,000 of that extra 300,000 to help teach our children to read. And I'm pleased that 16 Michigan college presidents have already pledged to provide their fair share of those students.

I don't know if you remember what we did that hot August day, but Elizabeth and Justin read "The Little Engine That Could" to me, and I said I want every child to be able to do this and say, "Here's this book, and I can read this all by myself."

Today Elizabeth and Justin are here with us, and I would like to ask them to stand up. Where are they? They're out there. There they are. Thank you. I will do what I can to help your young people be ready to be tested. I am asking the Department of Education and the National Science Foundation to identify and coordinate resources throughout the Federal Government and through the nonprofit sector that can be used to help students to meet the math standards. I want to help young people learn more science as well and to make the Government a resource.

The Federal Government has some of the world's most esteemed laboratories and research institutions. We ought to make sure every high school math and science teacher has easy access to the work of these laboratories and the experts there through the Internet, and we're going to do our best to set up that kind of system and make it available to all of your teachers so they can in turn make it available to your students. We can do this. We can do this.

We can also meet the challenge of welfare reform, and I can't leave here without talking to you about it for a couple of minutes, because I want to make it clear where we are now, and this is something else we've got to do together. In the last 4 years, the welfare rolls went down by 2½ million people, the largest drop in the history of the country. Now, how did that happen? And Michigan had a reduction of 30 percent, above the national average. How did that happen?

We know that about half the drop was the result of the economy producing 11½ million

jobs. We know about 30 percent to a third of it was the result of the fact that 43 of our States had vigorous welfare reform experiments, and the ones that were statewide, like yours, had better results. We know that there were some result from the fact that we increased child support collections, working together to get really tough within the States and across State lines. Child support collections went up by 50 percent in the last 4 years, and we know that helped some people to get off welfare.

Now we have a new law, and the new law says there should be time limits for how long a person could be on welfare; there should be time limits for how long a person could be on welfare consecutively—2 years before getting a job. There are tough work requirements. We leave the medical aid and food aid to poor children and their families in place. We increased the aid going in child care at the Federal level, and then we give the States the flexibility to decide how to design the program to move people from welfare to work and support them at an appropriate level in the meantime.

Now, that's what it does. I signed the bill, and I thought it was the right thing to do. But I also want you to know that we have to do now something else; we have to make it work. That law was not the end of welfare reform; it was the beginning. It gave this problem to you. You remember what that old country musician Chet Atkins said: "You got to be careful what you ask for in this old life, you might get it." And so now you have it.

Now, we have been telling poor people they have to be more responsible. "If you can work, you have to work. You've got to succeed at home as parents and in the work force." Now we have a responsibility. You're telling people they've got to go to work; we've got to make sure there's a job there for them if they go to work.

Let me say precisely what this means, because I want to be precise. I think it's very important that since the States have responsibility here, every State needs to know exactly how many jobs have we got to create in Michigan only for people to move from welfare to work, how many jobs in Arkansas, how many jobs in Arizona, how many jobs.

And how many jobs would that mean we'd have to do by county, and how are we going to do this.

Basically, if you look at the law's requirements and the fact that it's phased in, the requirement for States to put a certain number of people at work, you will have to—as a nation, we will have to create about another million, a little bit less, maybe 900,000 jobs for welfare recipients only, and move approximately another 2½ million people off welfare in the next 4 years to meet the requirements of the law.

Now, in the last 4 years, we did it with 43 of the 50 States having welfare reform experiments but only some of them were statewide. But we also had 11½ million jobs. We never had that many before. Maybe we'll do it again. I'd like that a lot, and I'll work on it hard. But no one can predict with any certainty what will happen.

So you must imagine, how will we make it more attractive—and we don't have the money to have big public service employment. I do have some money in my budget to give to the urban areas especially and to isolated rural areas with high impact unemployment to help them do work that needs to be done anyway in their cities. But that won't get the job done. Most of this will have to be done by private employers.

Our plan will give tax credits of up to 50 percent of the salary up to \$10,000 a year for people that hire people right off the welfare roll and do not replace someone else, they hire them for a real new job. It will give other incentives for businesses to hire people off welfare, and incentives for job placement firms and for States to create more jobs for welfare recipients. You'll get more money if you create more jobs for them. And if your past is any indication, you'll be one of those that will be claiming the incentives, and that's a good thing. And it does provide more money for training and for child care and in our budget for the new transportation bill, more money for transportation, because that's a big issue in a lot of places for moving people from welfare to work.

But you are going to have to get help. And the private employer community and the community nonprofits community and the

religious community, they're all going to have to help. You also have the option to do something else: You can, totally at your own discretion, let people take some or all of the welfare check and you can give it to the employer as an employment and training subsidy. And some States are going to have to do that because their training dollars are inadequate so they're going to have to depend on on-the-job training. Missouri is doing this now in the Kansas City area; Florida has adopted a version of it; a number of other States have. I urge you to look at that. I think it's a legitimate thing to give a private employer, for a limited period of time, a subsidy for training and for hiring people who are otherwise very hard to hire.

That's another point I want to make. Keep in mind, about half the welfare caseload gets off on their own. It's the other half that we have to liberate from permanent dependency, and it's harder for them to get into the work force and harder for them to stay and harder for them to learn the basic things. And so we're going to have to go out to our employers and say, "Hey, we want to help you." Or in the case of the churches and the non-profits, the tax credit is not worth anything to them because they don't pay taxes anyway. But the wage subsidy would be worth something to them to get them to enlist.

So, you know, I have really collected—how many employers are there in America with more than 100 employees? How many non-profits are there? How many religious institutions are there with more than 100 members in the congregation or more than 200 members? Every State needs this information. Every community needs this information, and those folks need to be hit up to do their part, especially if you ever heard anybody in your local neighborhood cussing the welfare system who works people. Go back and say, "Okay, we got rid of it. Now what are you going to do? What are you going to do? We need your help."

The last thing I wanted to say is—and this may be a moderate problem in Michigan, will be a huge problem in some States—I signed the welfare reform bill, but I said when I signed it I thought we made a mistake to eliminate all aid to legal immigrants. Now, when an immigrant comes to America, they

say—they have to promise that they won't try to get on welfare, and they won't take any public money. That is true. But it's also true it takes 5 years to become a citizen; meanwhile you work and you pay taxes. And in a country like ours that lets in a significant number of immigrants—in your largest country now, you have people from over 140 different racial and ethnic groups—bad things are going to happen to good people just when they show up every day. There will be car wrecks; there will be serious illnesses; there will be crime victims; and I personally think it's wrong to either dump that problem on the door of the State legislature or, in the alternative, just tell them to do without. And this is a great nation of immigrants. I think this is unworthy of us, and I'm going to try to change it, and I hope that you will support that. It would be good for you if you do.

Thank you for making me feel so welcome today. Let me say again, you ought to go back and get the local paper and read the article about Teddy Roosevelt. You ought to think about what happened in the intervening 90 years. You ought to realize that we have an even greater opportunity now, and with it a greater responsibility to forge a new partnership to deal with the new possibilities of this bright new era. And if we seize this responsibility of ours, there is no telling what can happen—good and wonderful and positive for America.

So it is our duty, but it is our good fortune. You ought to go home tonight and thank God that you got a chance to serve the public at this moment in time. It is a rare time. And you ought to wake up tomorrow determined to do it with greater energy and enthusiasm and dedication than ever before.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:36 a.m. in the House of Representatives Chamber at the State Capitol. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. John Engler, Lt. Gov. Connie Binsfeld, Attorney General Frank J. Kelley, and former Gov. William Milliken of Michigan; Curtis Hertel, Speaker of the House; Mayor Dick Hollister of Lansing; House Majority Leader Ken Sikkema; Senate Minority Leader John Cherry; Senate Majority Leader Dick Posthumus; Rev. Wendell Anthony, Fellowship Chapel, Detroit, MI, who gave the invocation; William Schmidt, professor, Michigan State

University; and James J. Blanchard, Ambassador to Canada and former Governor of Michigan.

Statement by the President on the Death of President Cheddi Jagan of Guyana

March 6, 1997

It was with deep regret that I learned of the death early today of President Cheddi Jagan of the Co-operative Republic of Guyana. President Jagan was a respected statesman in our hemisphere of democracies. He was one of the founders of the People's Progressive Party and for over 45 years played an active role in his country's political life. I remember warmly our meeting at the Miami Summit of the Americas in December 1994. President Jagan was a champion of the poor who devoted himself to alleviating poverty in his country and throughout the Caribbean.

On behalf of the American people, I extend my deepest sympathies to the Jagan family and the people of Guyana.

Memorandum on Educational Excellence in Math and Science

March 6, 1997

Memorandum for the Secretary of Education, the Director of the National Science Foundation

Subject: Preparing Students to Meet National Standards of Excellence in Eighth Grade Math and Improving Math and Science Education

Since the early 1980s, U.S. elementary and secondary school students have begun taking tougher courses, and we are starting to see the results. National Assessment of Educational Progress scores have improved in math and science, with gains in mathematics equal to at least one grade level. On the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT), average math scores are at their highest in 25 years, even as the number and diversity of test-takers have increased. However, the eighth-grade results of the 41-Nation Third International Math and Science Study (TIMSS), released last fall, show that the United States

is below average in math and just above average in science. That isn't acceptable; in this technology-rich information era, our students need to perform much better in both subjects, but especially in math, if they are to excel at higher-level math and science courses that are critical to college admission and success and to citizenship, productive employment, and lifelong learning.

The first step in raising achievement is lifting expectations and setting high standards for what students should know and be able to do. Our National Assessment of Educational Progress, TIMSS, and the standards developed by the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics give us a solid framework to build on. Last month, to help parents and teachers learn who needs help, what changes in teaching to make, and which schools need to improve, I asked the Secretary of Education to develop a voluntary national test for individual eighth-grade students based on widely accepted, challenging national standards in mathematics. The national test will be available to States and local school districts to give to their students in the spring of 1999, and will measure whether students have reached a high level of mathematics proficiency.

The primary responsibility for achieving high standards rests with students, teachers, parents, and schools in local communities across America. However, it is imperative that we work to ensure that Federal resources support student success as well. We must ensure that Federal programs, research, and human resources are used as effectively as possible to help improve teaching and learning.

Therefore, I direct the Secretary of Education and the Director of the National Science Foundation to form an interagency working group and to develop an action strategy for using Federal resources to assist States and local school systems to prepare students to meet challenging math standards in eighth grade, and for involving the mathematics, scientific, and technical communities in support of these efforts.

The action strategy should include recommendations for the use of Federal resources to help States, local school districts, and schools to improve teaching, upgrade

curriculum, and integrate technology and high-quality instructional materials into the classroom, as well as motivate students and help them understand how math concepts are applied in the real world. The strategy should identify significant Federal programs, activities, and partnerships available to improve teaching and learning, ensure that these resources are appropriately focused on helping students reach challenging math standards, and determine how these resources can best support State and local reforms. In developing this strategy, the inter-agency group should review the current status of improvements in math education and identify and address critical areas of need, drawing on research and input from educators and professional organizations.

Because teaching and learning in math and science are so integrally related, and because success in both subjects is vitally important in this information era, the working group should also review how Federal resources and partnerships with other organizations can help improve student achievement in science.

The working group should make its recommendations and submit its action strategy to me within 90 days.

William J. Clinton

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on International Agreements

March 6, 1997

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Pursuant to subsection (b) of the Case-Zablocki Act (1 U.S.C. 112b(b)), I hereby transmit a report prepared by the Department of State concerning international agreements.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Jesse Helms, chairman, Senate Committee on Foreign Relations.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the Trade Agreements Program

March 6, 1997

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 163 of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2213), I transmit herewith the 1997 Trade Policy Agenda and 1996 Annual Report on the Trade Agreements Program.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
March 6, 1997.

The President's News Conference March 7, 1997

The President. Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Today we learned some very good news about the American economy. Our Nation has created almost 600,000 new jobs in the first 2 months of 1997, almost 12 million since January of 1992. At the same time, the deficit has been reduced by 63 percent; investment in our people has increased; inflation remains low. Our economy is on the right track. But to stay on that right track, we have to balance the budget while we go forward with the work that leads to continued growth and low inflation. That's what our balanced budget will do, eliminating the deficit in 5 years and strengthening critical investments for the future of all of our people.

Last week the Congressional Budget Office certified that even under its assumptions, because of the protections we built into the budget, it would be balanced by 2002. So I am hopeful, and I want to say again that the talks we have been continually having with congressional leaders in both parties will produce a balanced budget agreement this year and in the not too distant future.

I also want to talk a moment about our commitments to our Gulf war veterans. And I thank Secretary Brown and the other veterans leaders who are here, including Elaine Larson from the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Illnesses, the leadership of the Veterans of Foreign Wars and other veterans organizations, and the Persian Gulf veterans who join with us here today.

Two months ago, when I accepted the final report of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Illnesses, I pledged to the Committee and to all America's veterans that we would match their efforts with action. Today I am announcing three important steps to meet that pledge and our debt to our veterans.

First, I have approved Secretary Brown's recommendation for the new regulations to extend the eligibility period for compensation for Persian Gulf veterans with undiagnosed illnesses. We aim to raise significantly the window for Gulf veterans to claim the compensation they have earned. Under current regulations, veterans with undiagnosed illnesses must prove their disabilities emerged within 2 years of their return from the Gulf in order to be eligible for benefits. Experience has shown that many disabled veterans have had their claims denied because they fall outside that 2 year timeframe. The proposed new regulations would extend the timeframe through the year 2001. That is 10 years after the cessation of hostilities in the Gulf war. Gulf war veterans who became ill as a result of their service should receive the compensation they deserve even if science cannot yet pinpoint the cause of their illnesses.

Second, I have accepted from the Secretaries of Defense, Health and Human Services, and Veterans Affairs a comprehensive action plan to implement the recommendations of the Presidential Advisory Committee's final report. I asked for this plan within 60 days, and they delivered. The plan addresses outreach, medical and clinical issues, research, coordination, investigations, and chemical and biological weapons. It will help us to do an even better job of caring for Gulf war veterans and finding out why they're sick.

Third and finally, as the Committee recommended, I have initiated a Presidential review directive process to make sure that in any future troop deployments we act on lessons learned in the Gulf to better protect the health of our service men and women and their families. We need to focus on better communication, better data, and better service.

The Committee's work and a massive, intensive, ongoing review of millions of pages of documents by the Department of Defense and the CIA continues to bring new information to light, including recently released documents about possible exposure of our troops to chemical agents. The scope of the efforts is substantial, and if there is additional information, it will be found and released. We will be asking two very important questions about any such new information. First, should it change the research or health care programs we have in place to care for our veterans? And second, how will it help us to make the policy changes we need to better protect our forces in future deployments?

What is most important is that we remain relentless in our search for the facts and that as we do get new information, we share it with our veterans, with Congress, and with the American people and that we act on any information we uncover. That is what we have done and what we must continue to do. I will not stop until we've done everything we can to provide the care and to find the answers for Gulf war veterans that they need and deserve.

And again let me say, I thank all of you for your work and for being with us here today.

Now I'll be glad to take your questions, and I think, Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press], you're the first.

The Vice President and Maggie Williams

Q. Yes, sir, Mr. President. We learned this week that the Vice President solicited campaign contributions in the White House and that the First Lady's Chief of Staff accepted a \$50,000 campaign contribution in the White House. This comes on the heels of news about White House sleepovers and White House coffees for big-money donors. You, sir, promised to have the most ethical administration in history. How does all of this square with that?

The President. Well, first of all, let's take them one by one. I don't believe that they undermine the case. But let me begin by saying, there were problems in the fundraising in 1996 which have been well-identified. And the Democratic Party commissioned its own audit, did a review, made the results public,

and took appropriate action. I think that is very important, and I'm proud of that.

The second thing I want to say is, I thought the Vice President did a good job of explaining what he did and why, and explaining exactly what he intended to do in the future.

With regard to Maggie Williams, I'd like to make a comment about that. She is an honorable person. She was put in a rather unusual circumstance, and as a courtesy, she agreed to do what the relevant regulation plainly provides for, which is to forward the check on to the Democratic National Committee.

Now, in retrospect, with all of the publicity that's attended the whole contribution issue, would it have been better if Maggie Williams had said, "Look, I can do this under the regulations, but I decided I shouldn't do it. And I want you to go mail it in yourself or take it over there yourself"—that would have been a better thing to do. And in the future, I expect that the White House will follow that course should such an occasion ever arise again.

But finally, I want to make the point I have been trying to make to the American people. We had to work hard within the law to raise a lot of money, to be competitive. We did work hard, and I'm glad we did, because the stakes were high and the divisions between us in Washington at that time were very great. We still fell over \$200 million short of the money raised by the committees of the Republican Party.

The real problem and the reason you have some of the questions you have, I think—unless you just believe that all transactions between contributors and politicians are inherently suspect, which I don't believe and I think is wrong for either party—the real problem is these campaigns cost too much money, they take too much time, and they will continue to do so until we pass campaign finance reform. If we pass campaign finance reform, as I've asked, by July 4th, then the situation will get better. If we don't, we will still be raising too much money, and it will take too much time and effort on the part of everyone involved. So I'm hopeful that we can.

But I believe that both the Vice President and Maggie Williams are highly ethical peo-

ple, and I do not believe that either one would knowingly do anything wrong.

This business of raising money takes a lot of time, and if you have to do too much of it, it will take too much time and raise too many questions. But I do not agree with the inherent premise that some have advanced that there is somehow something intrinsically wrong with a person that wants to give money to a person running for office and that if you accept it, that something bad has happened. I don't agree with that. I don't think there is something intrinsically bad. But the system is out of whack, and I think we all know it and we all know it's not going to get better until and unless we pass a reasonable campaign finance reform law.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

Q. Mr. President, Governor Romer said that Maggie Williams was wrong to accept the check, and you obviously seem to agree in retrospect. But—

The President. No, no, I'm not going to say Maggie Williams did anything wrong. And I don't want to be—you all will have to deal with this as best you can, but I want to be clear. She is an honorable person. There is a regulation that deals with this which explicitly says that when something—if you receive a contribution and all you do is just pass it on and you've been involved in no way in any solicitation on public property and you're just passing it through, that that is what the regulation provides for. It is explicit and clear.

What I said was, I think that she would say in retrospect and I would say, given the extreme sensitivity now everyone has to all these contribution issues, that she should have said to the gentleman in question, "Look, I can do this legally, but I don't want to do it because I think we should remove all question, all doubt. I think you ought to go mail it yourself. Go take it down there yourself." And that's what I think the White House should do in the future if someone physically is present in the White House and attempts to do that.

Q. Mr. President, in your zeal for funds during the last campaign, didn't you put the Vice President and Maggie and all the others

in your administration topside in a very vulnerable position?

The President. I disagree with that. How are we vulnerable, because—only vulnerable if you think it is inherently bad to raise funds and you believe that these transactions are between people who are almost craven. I mean, that's how—I don't agree with that. Maggie Williams, in this case, was completely passive. She didn't ask someone to come in and give her a check. And she had no reason to believe there was anything wrong with it, with the check involved. She just simply did what the regulation explicitly provides for, which is to pass it on.

Now, in the case of the Vice President, he can speak for himself, but I have to tell you, we knew what we were facing. We knew no matter what happened we would be badly outspent. We believed in what we stood for. And we were, frankly—from time to time, we were surprised we had as many folks who were willing to stick with us as there were. But we are proud of the fact that, within the limits of the law, we worked hard to raise money so that we could get our message out there and we would not be buried, literally buried, by the amount of money that the other side had at their disposal.

There were the problems that we identified, which we've been very forthright about. We got an external auditor to come into the Democratic Party. They have taken the steps to correct them. But it was—we had never faced anything like that before in American politics. And we did the very best we could with it. And I don't think we were compromised by fighting for what we believed in within the limits of the law.

I do believe that this system is not good now. It is so expensive. It requires too much time, too much energy. And the more effort you put into it, the more opportunity you have for some sort of—something going wrong. So what I think has to be done is we have to reform the law. But until we get some energy behind an effort to reform the law, you know, if it's just me and Senator McCain and Senator Feingold and a few others who support us for it, we can't pass it, and you will be left with the same system next time and the time after that and the time after that. And because of the expo-

nential rise in the cost of buying air time and other means of communication, we'll have all these questions all over again, time and time and time again.

Go ahead—Rita [Rita Braver, CBS News] first, and then Wolf [Wolf Blitzer, Cable News Network]. I'll just do it that way.

White House Access

Q. I'm going to ask your forbearance, because this question is a little bit long. But this is about Johnny Chung, the person who gave the check to Maggie Williams. In April of '95, about a month after he gave that check, he came in here to the White House; he brought in five Chinese officials. Someone on your staff sent a memo to the National Security Council saying that you were not certain you'd want photos of you with these people floating around. I wanted to ask you why you were worried about that, and also why, after a highly knowledgeable NSC official wrote back that he was a hustler who will continue to make efforts to bring in his friends into contact with the President and First Lady and whose clients might not always be in favor of business ventures the President would support—why did he keep getting back in here? What was your relationship to him? And he now says that it was at least implicit, if not explicit, that he would get this access for the money he gave.

The President. Well, first of all, you asked me two questions really.

Q. Four. [Laughter]

The President. Why did I—well, I'll answer the two I can remember, then if I don't suit you, you can ask again. [Laughter]

I just had—as I have said before on this question of White House access, we did not have an adequate system here. I assumed, wrongly as it turned out, that there were kind of established procedures which were sort of handed on from administration to administration that had nothing to do with whoever happened to be here about the control and developed access. And I was wrong about that. So that's what I assumed generally was in place until we became aware that they weren't.

But on this particular day, I just had an instinct that maybe whatever the rules were, that we didn't maybe know enough about

these folks to know whether there should be a picture there. I didn't assume anything negative about them; I just thought that we just didn't know.

Now, with regard to the memo about Mr. Chung, I can't answer that question because I never saw it, and no one ever told me it had been written, and I don't know who did see it. So I really can't answer that whole cluster of questions because the first I ever knew such a memo had been written was when it was discussed in the public domain. I did not know that. I had no reason to believe that there was any problem there.

Q. And what was your relationship with Mr. Chung? How did you come to know him? How did he get into your office and write you letters that you replied to? There is lots of record of that.

The President. Well, I like to think we're pretty good about replying to our letters, and I don't think there is anything wrong with that. I don't remember how I met him, but I think I met him at some Democratic Party event. I'm sure that's where I met him. I didn't have a relationship with him prior to my becoming President, to the best of my knowledge.

Wolf.

Decision on an Independent Counsel

Q. Mr. President, early in your administration, when you were faced with a similar round of pressure for a special prosecutor to investigate Whitewater, you made it easy on Janet Reno by preempting her and saying, "Yes, it's time for a special prosecutor"—Robert Fiske, in that particular case—"to go forward." And ever since—you know, the history of Whitewater. Why not make it easy for Janet Reno this time and similarly preempt her and say, "Yes, there's enough of a threshold, enough of the law has been met to go forward and get to the bottom of this"?

The President. For one thing, there was no law at the time. And I might point out that if there had been a law, either the previous law or this law, there would have been no special prosecutor because the threshold of the law was not met. And you know, the American people will have to make a judgment about whether all of this has been worth it when the facts come out. But the

threshold of the law was not met, and I doubt very seriously if one ever would have been called if any law had been in place.

Now there is a law in place. It is a legal question. I do not think it should become a political question. And I have been very rigorous in dealing with this and saying it in just that way, and I'm going to stick with my position.

Peter [Peter Maer, NBC Mutual Radio].

Appearance of Impropriety

Q. Mr. President, you again today, Vice President Gore the other day, and your staffs have repeatedly told us that no laws were broken in the Lincoln Bedroom issue, in the phone calls for donations, in Maggie Williams accepting and then passing along the donation to the DNC. But cumulatively, Mr. President, what are your thoughts on the propriety and the appearance of all of these various actions?

The President. Well, let's take them one at a time. The Vice President has said that he believes he should—if he makes further fundraising calls as opposed to attending fundraising events, he should not make them from his office even if it is paid for with a political credit card.

I have said that I believe Maggie Williams thinks, in view of the environment in which we now are, that even though there is an explicit regulation on this—right on point on this—that what she probably wishes she had said and what I expect future employees to say is, "Look, I can take this; it is legal. But we're not going to do it this way. You have to mail it in, or you have to take it in yourself."

On the third thing, I just have a different view of this than you do. We have—I have done something no President has ever done. I have—I mean, I gave you a list of the people that spent the night in the White House. And it shows that a relatively small percentage of them, about one in nine, were people that I met in the course of running for President, who supported me for President, who either gave me contributions or also helped to raise money for me.

The people that did that, I'm grateful to them for doing that. I appreciate the fact that they helped me in the campaign in '92. And

the document which was released, which most of you reported on, which showed the note I had sent back to Nancy Hernreich makes it clear that I wanted to get back in touch with those people. I appreciated what they had done. I didn't want them to feel estranged from me. And I don't think there is anything wrong with a President—me or anyone else—reaching out to his supporters.

And some of them, including—let me just give you—I mean, I can give you lots of examples, but there have been a lot of different kinds of people who spent the night here. But one of the newspapers made an issue of B. Rapoport from Texas. Well, he was my friend 25 years ago. When I was a defeated candidate for Congress with a campaign debt that was almost twice my annual salary, he was my friend. When I was the youngest former Governor in the history of the Republic and nobody felt I had any political future, he was my personal friend. I don't think there is anything wrong with having people like that spend the night with you.

So you can make your own judgments about this. But I have tried to be very forthright with you about this. I've given you all of this information, and you can make your own judgments. But I just simply disagree that it is wrong for a President to ask his friends and supporters to spend time with him.

And let me remind you of one problem. A lot of you who have to travel around with me are acutely aware of this. This job, even when you're traveling, can be a very isolating job. Usually when you travel someplace, you go someplace; you stay a little while; you turn around and leave. If you go to these fundraiser—on the coffees, for example, I'm the one that's most responsible—or for the dinners out, the fundraising dinners—I get frustrated going to meetings and going where all you do is shake hands with somebody or you take a picture, no words ever change. You never know what somebody's got on their mind, or they never get a chance to talk to you. You never have any real human contact. I look for ways to have genuine conversations with people. I learn things when I listen to people.

But I can tell you this: I don't believe you can find any evidence of the fact that I have

changed Government policy solely because of a contribution. It's just that I don't think I should refuse to listen to people who supported me or refuse to be around them or tell people, "Well, you contributed to the campaign. Therefore, even though I'd love to have you come see me at the White House, I can't do it anymore." And you will just have to sort through that and evaluate whether you agree with that or not. But that's how I feel.

Q. Are those who question the propriety off base? Is that what you're saying?

The President. Well, no, I'm saying that I do not believe that inviting people to spend the night with me at the White House, the overwhelming majority of whom were personal friends of mine of long standing, family members, friends of family members, friends of my daughter's, dignitaries, public officials, former public officials—some of whose connection with me really did begin in 1991 when I started running for President and that involved their willingness to give me money or to raise money for me—I don't think that that is a bad thing.

What I think is a bad thing is to say—and again, this may not be illegal either, and you know the documents also show that I stopped this—I don't think a political party should say, "If you give this amount of money, we'll guarantee you this specific access. If you give that amount of money, we'll guarantee you that specific access." I don't think that a political party should say or a President should say, "If you want access to us, you have to contribute. And if you want access to us, you not only have to contribute to us, you can't contribute to them." I never did any of that.

As I have said before, one of the most important meetings I had about China policy was one organized by Republicans; as far as I know, none of them had ever done anything in my behalf before. But it was important.

I just don't think you should eliminate contacts with your supporters. And I don't think that anyone else—if you really think about it, I don't think you will think that, either.

John [John Donovan, ABC News].

Q. Mr. President, in listening to many of your supporters and aides respond to these questions over the last several weeks, one

note that I think I hear is one of frustration, a sense that these questions are unfair and the focus on the Democrats is unfair. But I also find something unsatisfactory in that response, and my question to you as somebody who has enormous power to lead by example, is it good enough to say that everybody else does it?

The President. No. No, and I'm not trying to say that. I'm going to try to get through this whole press conference and never talk about the practices of the Republicans. [Laughter] I'm going to do my best to get all the way—I don't think that's a good example.

And I also don't think it's good enough to say it is legal. I think we should be held to a higher standard than just, "It is legal." But what I do want you to know is, when it is obvious that we have a disagreement—when I read reports or see them on television and I think, you see this in a certain way, and I just honestly see it in a different way—I think it's helpful to the American people and to you and to me for me to tell you how I see it, that's all.

But I think there are things that when we see them in the light of day, even if we've been given guidance about what the limits of what the law are, it seems that it's not a prudent thing to do. I was—I thought the Vice President gave a very up-front and forthright statement about that the other day. So I don't believe it's enough to say everybody does it.

On the other hand, I don't believe either that we can afford to run the risk of having one party just kind of disappear from the scene because they don't do what—they're unwilling to do what is necessary to be competitive in raising funds in the system that exists, which is why I say to you, in the end, we should set a high standard. But if I honestly disagree with you about what's right and wrong, I should be free to say that. But in the end, the answer to this is to pass a reasonable campaign finance reform bill this year. That's what I really believe.

Yes, go ahead.

Telephone Solicitations From the White House

Q. Mr. President, you have—you and your officials have given us a number of explanations over the past several months about what you thought was legal. You said you got clear legal advice and gave us the impression that the dividing line on solicitations for contributions—that the dividing line between right and wrong was whether or not that solicitation took place at the White House. But when we learned that the Vice President did just that, then we were told that that wasn't the standard after all. Which is right?

The President. Well, let me just say on the—I think that's one the Vice President—first of all, I think they're both right, and let me explain why. Because it's clear that what the law is on this, going back a long time, is that it's as if he'd written a letter to somebody from the White House. Did the solicitation occur when he wrote the letter or when the letter is received? And the law is clearly that the solicitation is consummated, if you will, when the person is solicited and where the person is solicited.

But the—and the Vice President thought that as long as he was not using taxpayer money to make the call, that it was legal. I think he was right about that. He also thought about it and said, "If I ever do this again"—in terms of calls—"I'm not going to do it in my office because it doesn't look right. We ought to have a higher standard." And I was proud of him for saying that.

But I think that's what—that goes back to the question that John said. There is a difference between—sometimes there is a difference between what is legal and what ought to be done, and this is a place where I think there is a difference, and I think we've made that clear. And I was proud of the statement that he made.

Q. Mr. President, your Press Secretary this week left open the possibility that you, too, had made calls like the Vice President did. Did you ever make those calls?

The President. I told him to leave that possibility open because I'm not sure, frankly. I don't like to raise funds in that way. I never have liked it very much. I prefer to

meet with people face to face, talk to them, deal with them in that way. And I also, frankly, was very busy most of the times that it's been raised with me. But I can't say, over all the hundreds and hundreds and maybe thousands of phone calls I've made in the last 4 years, that I never said to anybody while I was talking to them, "Well, we need your help," or "I hope you'll help us."

So I told him not to flat out say that I'd never done it because I simply can't say that I've never done it. But it's not what I like to do, and it wasn't a practice of mine. And once I remember in particular, I was asked to do it, and I just never got around to doing it.

But I don't believe the Vice President did anything wrong in making the calls. I know some people have advanced the proposition that the Vice President should not ever ask anybody for funds, at least unless he's looking at them face to face as opposed to on the telephone. I just disagree with that. I do think he made the right decision about not doing it in the office.

So I asked that that be—that Mike McCurry do it in that way, not to mislead you or to be cute but just simply because I don't want to flat out say I never did something that I might, in fact, have done, just because I don't remember it.

Susan [Susan Feeney, Dallas Morning News].

White House Coffees

Q. You said that you've operated within the parameter of the laws, but in retrospect, do you have any regret about the quantity of campaign activity that happened in the White House?

The President. You mean—I do not regret the friends that I have asked to come and stay with me here. And in terms of the coffees, based on what I knew the facts to be and what I still believe they were, that no one was going to be solicited at the meeting and that there was no specific price tag on coming to the coffees, which is what my understanding was, I don't regret doing that.

As I said—again, this is a matter of perception. I really was—I mean, I think I was more upset maybe than some of you were when I found out that my party was not checking

the checks that were coming in. I was livid and stunned that in 1996, after all we'd been through in the last 20 years, that could have happened. It took my breath away. I was upset when I saw a proposed brochure that says, "This is the access you get to the President in the White House if you have this amount of money. If you give that amount of money you get guaranteed a certain amount of other access." I thought that was wrong.

But on the other hand, I have a different take on some of this than you do. I am, as I said—I want to take personal responsibility for this. If you find the coffees offensive—I can't say if somebody did something around the coffees they shouldn't have done, but if you find the fact of the President having coffee at the White House with people who either have supported him in the past or who he hopes will support him in the future—I am personally responsible for that, and I take full responsibility for it, because I enjoyed them enormously. I found them interesting. I found them valuable. I found that all these people, many of whom had been active in elections for years and they'd done all kinds of different things with their lives, were given the first chance they'd ever had to just sort of say, "Here's my idea, and I hope you'll consider it," or "Here's what I think you should do," or "Here's where I think you're wrong." And I genuinely enjoyed them, and I did not believe they were improper.

And I still believe as long as there was no specific price tag put on those coffees, just the fact that they would later be asked to help the President or the party does not render them improper. That's what I believe.

Mara [Mara Liasson, National Public Radio].

Q. My question really was, if you had it to do all over again, would you have moved these things outside of the White House or had stricter standards about what political things would be done in the White House?

The President. Well, if I had it to do all over again, we would fix what we have now fixed. We would have stricter standards about admission to the White House. And the answer to your other question—I hesitate to give you a general answer because there may

be some facts about a particular coffee or another that I don't know. All I'm saying is that based on what I thought the facts were, which is these were people that we hoped would help us, some of whom had helped us in the past, some of whom had never helped us, and they were going to be invited here, and I was going to have coffee with them, and we're going to talk about things, after which some or all of them—not all of them, as it turned out, but many of them would be solicited to help in the campaign—I do not believe that was wrong, and I feel comfortable about what I did there.

I wish—I've said this a million times—I almost wish that one of you had been in all of these coffees, because they were, frankly, fairly pedestrian events in the sense that nothing very juicy was discussed but people got to come out with their ideas, state their convictions. And maybe there ought to be some way of dealing with that. Maybe at least you ought to have some assurance that, if these sort of things were done like this on a regular basis, at least, that you ought to have some knowledge of what goes on in them, and that might make you feel better about it.

Mr. Cannon [Carl Cannon, Baltimore Sun].

Participation by Contributors

Q. Mr. President, you said a moment ago that no decision or policy made here was solely because of a contributor. But should that be a factor at all in U.S. foreign policy and who gets Government contracts and who goes on trade missions? Should that even be considered at all?

The President. Well, what I think should—let me just say this. This is the nub; this is the difficulty. Every public official—this is a problem or an issue that the President, Members of Congress, Governors, mayors all face. People who help you, people who try to help you put your program in, you try to stay in touch with them, so you're more likely to know if they want to do something than you are people who didn't help you and people who weren't involved in it. The instructions that I gave were, if someone who helped us wants to be considered for an appointment, they ought to be considered

for the appointment, but they shouldn't get it unless they're qualified for it. They shouldn't be disqualified because they have been a supporter of ours.

That's the way I felt about the trade missions. If someone wanted to go on a trade mission and was qualified and could make a contribution, then they ought to get to go. But if they would never get to go in a thousand years, that no one would think they should have any business on the trade mission and the only reason they were going to get to go was because they contributed to us, I didn't think they should go.

But I think it's disingenuous for anybody in public life to say that it doesn't help you to be considered for these things if you help the person who happens to win an election, because you have to stay in touch with the people that helped you. And it is a good thing to do. That's the way the political system works. That's the way—I would expect that of a Republican or a Democrat or an independent who got elected to any office, that people that helped you and people that you know, people you have confidence in, you ought to listen to them. But you should never make a decision and do something solely because they have helped you before or solely in anticipation of something they might do for you in the future.

And what we have to do is to have our decisions open enough and transparent enough that the American people can see that that is being done. And I can tell you, people come to you in all different kinds of ways. For example—let me just give you one example. It's not a trade mission, but I'll just give you one example. There was a huge amount of money at stake in the private sector in the legislation involving the telecommunications reform. It was the first time we had reformed telecommunications in 60 years. You all are in it. You know better than I do how much it's changing—all the competition issues, massive amounts of money.

The Vice President has been interested in this issue forever. We spent—in our weekly lunches, we spent endless amounts of time talking about the telecommunications act, what it should look like, and we took a position. We then found we had all these people who came to us and supported us, many of

whom had been Republicans their whole lives, who were independent long distance telephone operators. And they came to us because the majority party had decided to take a position favored by the larger telephone companies.

We had a clear public position beforehand. Should we not have accepted their contribution? Should we not have accepted their support and help? I think we did the right thing. Now, flip it around. If they had been helping us all along, but we agreed with them, should we have weakened in our advocacy just because they were supporting us?

In other words, I think the whole reason for the first round of campaign reform—let's go back to that—is that all these contributions should be made public and you should be free to evaluate them and you should be free to determine and to speculate and to probe about whether the money we received from such and such a group has affected a decision we made and does it undermine or support the public interest. You should be free to do that. That's why full disclosure is important. But I think that unless we're going to a completely publicly financed system, contributors will always have access to public officials, then other kinds of people will who helped them. That's the way it is.

Mara, go ahead.

Access and Economic Interests

Q. Mr. President, you say that there is no evidence that you've ever changed a policy because of someone you met with. But what does appear to have occurred is that certain people traded on their access. In other words, access to you became a valuable business commodity to get new clients or impress their current clients. Do you think that that meets the higher standard that you want the White House to adhere to?

The President. Well, what I think about that is that we need to evaluate whether we did anything which would give the impression that we were trying to help someone get business. In other words, I can't say who, beyond the reach of our personal contacts, would be impressed with people who had their picture taken with me. After today, it may be that everybody will go broke unless

they take the pictures off the wall. I don't know. But I can't say that.

What I can say is that the White House should not knowingly permit the White House or the Presidency or the Vice Presidency to be used to advance some private economic interest. And that—you've put your finger on something that is troubling to me, and we have to evaluate that more. And it's one of the reasons that I wanted to make sure that we had a system in place on access and on all of these things that will meet that standard in the future, and I believe we've done that. But I think that's a legitimate problem.

Jim [Jim Miklaszewski, NBC News].

Q. Mr. President—

The President. Just a minute, I'll come back to you.

Maggie Williams

Q. Mr. President, when you vetoed the ban on partial birth abortion, you said you did so to protect the lives of the mothers and because they were fairly rare. Well, it's since been revealed that there are approximately 5,000 of these so-called partial birth abortions performed every year, 90 percent of them in the 5th and 6th month. Would you now support a ban if it included provisions to protect the mother but would ban the procedure also in the 5th and 6th month?

And one second unrelated question, did the White House discover if there were any other checks or money passed besides the \$50,000 to Maggie Williams? [Laughter]

The President. That's fair. No, that's a fair question. As far as I know, that did not happen. As far as I know, any other checks that came in, we really didn't—were things that came in the mail and were just routinely referred. And I don't even know if there were any of those or how many there were. But as far as I know, there was no other instance like the one involving Maggie.

Partial Birth Abortion

Now, let me answer the other question as clearly as I can. The admission by the gentleman in question, that, you know, he thought he was misrepresenting the facts to the Congress in the last debate, has caused a lot of stir here. But I believe—and I tried

to be clear about this at the time—I was under the impression that the facts are just as we all said they were, more or less what you've said. I don't know that we have exact numbers.

What I said before was, and let me restate it, I sought to get a bill I could sign that would ban this procedure when it was inappropriate, because there would be other avenues available if an abortion was otherwise legal. What I was concerned about again—and you said 500, I think, so let's just take your number. We don't really know.

Q. Actually, I think it's 5,000.

The President. Five thousand total, of whom a small proportion, maybe 10 percent or so, are like those five women that I had in the White House. I will say again, they are my concern. They are my only concern. And I would remind you that three of those five women identified themselves to me as pro-life voters. And they were told that unless they had a procedure which would be banned under the law that I vetoed, after it was over, the babies they would be carrying would be dead and their bodies would never be able to have another baby. That is my only concern. I have made that as clear as I can.

So I can't answer the question that you asked me any clearer than that because I want to see the language of any proposed bill. I think you can make a very compelling case that for the small number of people I'm trying to protect, this is the biggest issue in their entire lives and that for them my position is the pro-life position. And I believe that it would be a mistake for us to pass this bill one more time without taking care of those folks. When—because, as you just pointed out Mr. Miklaszewski, because anybody that's in the first two trimesters that has an elective procedure will still have access to another one in a different way after the bill passes.

So, in a funny way, this might not work to reduce the overall number of abortions at all. But in the end, what it could do is every year to take a few hundred women and wreck their lives and wreck the possibility that they could have further children. That's why I was working on this. And if we can solve that problem, I will happily sign this

bill. This thing is a real—it has hurt the American people, dealing with this. And I don't mean it's harmed physically; I mean, this has been a great emotional trauma for the American people trying to come to grips with this issue and deal with it. It's a deep thing out there around the country, and it goes way beyond the traditional pro-life/pro-choice fight or disagreement.

I would like to see us bring some harmony to this and put it behind us. But every time anybody mentions this, I remember so vividly the faces of those five women and their life stories and what happened to them afterward. And a few hundred people a year, they don't have much votes or influence, but they're the people I'm concerned about, and they're the people I'm going to try to protect right down to the end.

Let's take one from Sarah [Sarah McClendon, McClendon News Service]. And then I've got to take one from Jill Dougherty [Cable News Network] because she's about to go to Moscow, and she needs to have her parting shot. Go ahead.

American Sovereignty

Q. Sir, this is on another subject. We have a very great problem in this country today, and I wonder if you would use your leadership to counteract the rumormongers that are abroad in the land who are spreading all these rumors that are scaring people to death—large segments of our citizens believe that the United Nations is taking over whole blocks of counties in Kentucky and Tennessee. [Laughter]

The President. Yes.

Q. And some of them, they believe that—

The President. Now, you all are laughing, but—

Q. —you're going to put us in a concentration camp and you're going to give our Army to Russia and all that baloney. Could you do something about this, because it's hurting the unity of the United States.

The President. I don't know, because the people who believe that think I'm the problem. [Laughter] We're all laughing about it, but there is not an insubstantial number of people who believe that there is a plan out there for world domination and I'm trying

to give American sovereignty over to the U.N. There was a—I read in our local Arkansas newspaper, one of them the other day had a letter to the editor saying that, there I go again; there's Clinton out there trying to give American sovereignty over to the United Nations.

Let me just say this: For people that are worried about it, I would say, there is a serious issue here that every American has to come to grips with—including Americans that don't much think about foreign policy until some great problem occurs—and that is, how can we be an independent, sovereign nation leading the world in a world that is increasingly interdependent, that requires us to cooperate with other people and then to deal with very difficult circumstances in trying to determine how best to cooperate?

That's the issue that you will all be reporting on for the next week in the Mexico certification issue. Did I do the right thing to certify Mexico? Are the Members of Congress who disagree with me right when they say we should have decertified Mexico and then given a national interest waiver so we could continue to cooperate economically and in others ways?

I strongly believe I was right. But we don't—if you want to go into that, we can later, but the issue is, we live in an interdependent world. We have to cooperate with people. We're better off when we do. We're better off with NATO. We're better off with the United Nations. We're better off when these countries can work together. So I just think for folks that are worried about this out in the country, they need to be thinking about how—we're not going to give up our freedom, our independence, but we're not going to go it alone into the 21st century either. We're going to work together, and we have to.

Jill?

Russia and NATO Expansion

Q. Thank you very much, Mr. President. Speaking of Russia and NATO, yesterday we heard President Boris Yeltsin saying that the purpose of the motivation by the West for NATO expansion is to squeeze Russia out of Europe and politically marginalize it. And in a couple of weeks, you'll be sitting down

with Mr. Yeltsin again. We've heard similar things from the Russians many times. Are you making any progress in changing the Russians' position on this?

The President. Well, I hope so. Let me answer the—I'd like to make two points about it. First of all, this meeting that we're going to have in Helsinki, President Yeltsin and I, it will be very important. And yet it's important to recognize that it's part of a regular pattern of meetings over the last several years which have changed the nature of U.S.-Russian relations forever, I hope, so that it will be a meeting that will be extremely candid, extremely straightforward, and I hope it will deal with not only the question of Russia's relationship to Europe but also what we can do with the Russians to continue to reduce the nuclear threat and what we can do with the Russians to help them to build their economy, because I'm convinced that they have the capacity, if they can make certain changes, to enjoy a phenomenal amount of economic growth in a relatively short time, which I think would help a lot of things in their country.

Now, on the merits, I have said since 1993 that one of my dreams for the 21st century world is a Europe that for the first time is united, democratic, and free. Since the dawn of nation-states, about the beginning of the last millennium in Europe, it has never been so. There has never been a single time when Europe was united, democratic, and free. The final capstone to that, I think, is working out a security relationship with NATO, a European Union that is expanding and still tied—a Europe still tied to the United States and to Canada, to North America, not only economically and politically but also in terms of our security alliance but also has a special relationship with Russia and does not rule out even Russian membership in a common security alliance.

The best answer I can give to President Yeltsin is, what are we doing with NATO today and with whom are we doing it? What we are doing today is Bosnia. We together ended the bloodiest war in Europe since World War II, and we are doing it with Russia. And there are lots of other things we can do with Russia.

The final point I want to make is, among the great questions—there are five or six great questions which will determine what the world will look like 30 or 40 years from now. One of those great questions is, how will Russia and China, the two great former Communist powers, define their greatness in the next century? Will they define their greatness as we try to do, in terms of the achievements of our people, our ability to protect ourselves, and our ability to relate to other people? Or will they define—and I think that's a more modern definition, if you will—or will they define their greatness in terms of their ability to influence, if not outright dominate, the people that live around them as well as to control the political debate of people who live within their borders to a degree that I think is not helpful?

If that debate is resolved in the proper way, the 21st century is going to be a very good time for the American people. And I think when you hear all this stuff about NATO, you have to understand that there's two things going on. The Russians want to know, are we aggressive in NATO expansion or defensive, and looking at other targets like Bosnia? Then they're having to define in themselves, "Where do we want to be 25 or 30 years from now?"

And when they say things that we find offensive, I would ask the American people to understand their sensitivities. We were never invaded by Napoleon or Hitler, and they were. So they're a little sensitive about the prospects of their borders. And we're trying to work together for a better, brighter world.

I think that we're going to get there. I expect that the Helsinki meeting will be positive. But you should understand, this is a tough debate and that they have reasons in their own psyche and circumstances that make it a difficult one.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 137th news conference began at 2:02 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Nancy Hennreich, Deputy Assistant to the President and Director of Oval Office Operations, and Bernard Rapoport, member, Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations.

Statement on the National Economy *March 7, 1997*

Today we learned that the economy is continuing to generate good jobs, almost 600,000 jobs in the first 2 months of this year alone. That's good news for American workers and their families. The American economy has now created nearly 12 million new jobs since I took office. Now it's time to keep this American job engine on the move by passing a balanced budget plan that invests in education and our future.

Our 1993 economic plan has helped spur this strong job growth, while cutting the deficit by 63 percent, from \$290 billion in 1992 to \$107 billion in 1996. Now we must cut the deficit to zero while investing in our people. My budget will do just that. I look forward to working with the Congress to get the job done by passing a balanced budget plan.

Proclamation 6978—National Older Workers Employment Week, 1997 *March 7, 1997*

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

American workers age 55 and older represent one of our country's richest resources, and the value of their potential contribution to our society is immense. An estimated 70 percent of all Americans age 55 and older already actively contribute to our common good—by working, by volunteering, and by caring for sick and disabled relatives, friends, and neighbors.

Despite their qualifications, however, many of these Americans experience serious difficulty finding work if they lose a job or desire new employment. Their search for employment can become increasingly challenging as they grow older.

Our laws and government agencies can—and do—offer protections, programs, and services for older workers. The Age Discrimination Act, the Older Americans Act, and the Age Discrimination in Employment Act all recognize the unique rights of such employees, and the Department of Labor alone

helps thousands of workers each year through efforts such as the Senior Community Service Employment Program.

But it is up to employers also to recognize the potential of older Americans as employees—to recognize that by every common measure of job performance, older workers are as effective as younger people because of their unique skills, experiences, and judgment. And, it is appropriate that we designate a week to acknowledge that all workers should be judged and employed on the basis of their individual ability to do a job, regardless of age.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim March 9 through March 15, 1997, as National Older Workers Employment Week, and I urge all employers when they hire new workers to consider carefully the skills and other qualifications of men and women age 55 and older. I also encourage public officials responsible for job placement, training, and related services to intensify their efforts throughout the year to help older workers locate available jobs and training.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this seventh day of March, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 8:45 a.m., March 10, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on March 11.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on Iraq

March 7, 1997

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102-1) and as part of my effort to keep the Congress fully informed, I am reporting on the status of efforts to obtain

Iraq's compliance with the resolutions adopted by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC). This report covers the period from January 7 to the present.

Saddam Hussein remains a threat to his people and the region. The United States successfully responded to the increased threat resulting from Saddam's attack on Irbil in late August 1996, but he continues to try to manipulate local rivalries in northern Iraq to his advantage. The United States and our coalition partners continue uninterrupted enforcement of the no-fly zone over northern Iraq under Operation Northern Watch, the successor mission to Operation Provide Comfort. France chose not to participate in Operation Northern Watch, but the United Kingdom and Turkey remain committed to the same enforcement of the no-fly zone above the 36th parallel that existed under Operation Provide Comfort. Enforcement of the southern no-fly zone also continues, and France remains engaged with our other coalition partners in conducting Operation Southern Watch.

Besides our air operations, we will continue to maintain a strong U.S. presence in the region in order to deter Saddam. U.S. force levels have returned to approximate pre-Operation Desert Strike levels, with land- and carrier-based aircraft, surface warships, a Marine amphibious task force, a Patriot missile battalion, and a mechanized battalion task force deployed in support of USCINCENT operations. On February 20, 1997, an air expeditionary force consisting of 30 F-16s and F-15s deployed to Doha, Qatar, to further strengthen the U.S. deterrent in the region. On February 22, an F-117 squadron deployed to Kuwait since last autumn was redeployed to the United States upon the completion of its mission. USCINCENT has completed the initial phases of Operation Desert Focus, with the relocation and consolidation of all combatant forces in Saudi Arabia into more secure facilities throughout Saudi Arabia. To enhance force protection throughout the region, additional military security personnel have been deployed for continuous rotation. USCINCENT continues to closely monitor the security situation in the region to ensure

adequate force protection is provided for all deployed forces.

United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 949, adopted in October 1994, demands that Iraq not utilize its military forces to threaten its neighbors or U.N. operations in Iraq and that it not redeploy troops or enhance its military capacity in southern Iraq. In view of Saddam's reinforced record of unreliability, it is prudent to retain a significant U.S. force presence in the region in order to maintain the capability to respond rapidly to possible Iraqi aggression or threats against its neighbors.

Regarding northern Iraq, we have conducted three rounds of talks, along with our British and Turkish partners, with the major Kurdish parties in northern Iraq—the Kurdistan Democratic Party (KDP) and the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan (PUK). Our immediate goal is to strengthen the U.S.-brokered cease-fire of October 23, which continues to hold, and to encourage political reconciliation between the PUK and KDP. This Administration continues to warn all concerned that internecine warfare in the north can only work to the advantage of Saddam Hussein and Iran, which we believe has no role to play in the area. In this connection, we remain concerned about Iraqi Kurd contacts with either Baghdad or Tehran.

The United States is providing political, financial, and logistical support for a neutral, indigenous Peace Monitoring Force (PMF) in northern Iraq that has demarcated the cease-fire line and will monitor the cease-fire. The PMF likely will be fully deployed in the next few weeks. Our support is being provided in the form of commodities and services in accordance with a drawdown directed by me on December 11, 1996, and in the form of funds to be used to provide other non-lethal assistance in accordance with a separate determination made by former Secretary of State Christopher on November 10, 1996.

We also are encouraging both Kurdish groups to take steps toward reconciliation. At the latest round of higher-level talks in Ankara on January 15, the Iraqi Kurds agreed to establish joint committees to cooperate in such areas as education, health, and transportation. Local representatives of the two Kurd

groups, the three countries and the PNF continue to meet biweekly in Ankara and move forward on other confidence-building measures. All our efforts under the Ankara process, like all our efforts concerning Iraq, maintain support for the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq.

The United States, working through the United Nations and humanitarian relief organizations, continues to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of northern Iraq. We have contributed more than \$15 million this fiscal year to programs in the north administered by the United Nations International Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the World Food Program (WFP). Security conditions in northern Iraq remain tenuous at best, with Iranian and Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) activity adding to the ever-present threat from Baghdad.

The oil-related provisions of UNSCR 986, which authorized Iraq to sell up to \$2 billion of oil during an initial 180-day period (with the possibility of UNSC renewal of subsequent 180-day periods), went into effect on December 10, 1996. This resolution requires that the proceeds of this limited oil sale, all of which must be deposited in a U.N. escrow account, will be used to purchase food, medicine, and other materials and supplies for essential civilian needs for all Iraqi citizens and to fund vital U.N. activities regarding Iraq. Critical to the success of UNSCR 986 is Iraq's willingness to follow through on its commitments under 986 to allow the U.N. to monitor the distribution of food and medical supplies to the Iraqi people. While Iraq has already sold nearly 80 percent of the oil allowed for the first 90-day period, Iraqi efforts to impose restrictions on the access and freedom of movement of the U.N. monitors tasked with overseeing the equitable distribution of humanitarian supplies have slowed such distribution.

Since my last report, the Government of Iraq has continued to flout its obligations under UNSC resolutions in other ways. Under the terms of relevant UNSC resolutions, Iraq must grant the United Nations Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) inspectors immediate, unconditional, and unrestricted access to any location in Iraq they wish to examine, and access to any Iraqi offi-

cial whom they wish to interview, so that UNSCOM may fully discharge its mandate to ensure that Iraq's weapons of mass destruction program has been eliminated. Iraq continues, as it has for the past 5 years, to fail to live up either to the letter or the spirit of this commitment.

On February 23, UNSCOM Chairman Rolf Ekeus obtained permission from the Iraqi regime to remove more than 130 SCUD motors from Iraq for extensive testing in the United States and France. Iraq agreed to this action after 3 months of stalling, and only after a December 30 Security Council Presidential Statement deplored Iraq's failure to comply with its obligation to cooperate with UNSCOM. Ekeus continues to believe that Iraq maintains significant numbers of operational SCUD missiles, possibly with CBW warheads. As long as Saddam refuses to cooperate fully with U.N. weapons inspectors, UNSCOM will be impeded in its efforts to fulfill its mandate. We will continue to fully support the mandate and the efforts of UNSCOM to obtain Iraqi compliance with all relevant U.N. resolutions.

Implementation of UNSCR 1051 continues. It provides for a mechanism to monitor Iraq's efforts to reacquire proscribed weapons capabilities by requiring that Iraq notify a joint unit of UNSCOM and the International Atomic Energy Agency in advance of any imports of dual-use items. Similarly, countries must provide timely notification of exports to Iraq of dual-use items.

Iraq continues to stall and obfuscate rather than work in good faith toward accounting for the hundreds of Kuwaitis and third-country nationals who disappeared at the hands of Iraqi authorities during the occupation. It has also failed to return all of the stolen Kuwaiti military equipment and the priceless Kuwaiti cultural and historical artifacts, which were looted during the occupation.

Iraq's repression of its Shi'a population continues with policies that are destroying the Marsh Arabs' way of life in southern Iraq as well as the ecology of the southern marshes. The human rights situation throughout Iraq remains unchanged. Saddam Hussein shows no signs of complying with UNSCR 688, which demands that Iraq cease the repression of its own people.

The Multinational Interception Force (MIF) has been increasingly challenged in the last few months. In the first 6 weeks of the year, 12 merchant vessels were diverted for sanctions violations. This represents the highest volume of smuggler traffic we have seen since maritime sanctions enforcement began. Most of these smugglers take gas oil illegally from Iraq via the Shatt Al Arab waterway and sell it on the spot market for enormous profit. As I have noted in previous reports, these smugglers use the territorial waters of Iran to avoid the MIF inspection in the Northern Gulf. With the help of the Iranian government, which profits from these activities by charging protection fees, these smugglers are able to export between 40,000 and 65,000 metric tons of gas oil through the Gulf each month.

To counter the efforts of those who engage in illegal trade with Iraq, we have taken a number of steps to minimize the smuggling activity. We have adjusted the positioning of our naval forces to take maximum advantage of known trade routes. We are working closely with our friends in the Gulf Cooperation Council to develop greater cooperation in border patrol and customs inspection procedures. We have publicized the involvement of the Iranian government at the United Nations and in press reports.

It is important to remember that these sanctions violations not only aid Saddam and his policy of resisting U.N. mandates, but also slow the flow of humanitarian aid to the Iraqi people who are in such great need. Committing scarce MIF assets to counter the smuggling trade results in fewer ships available to process the legal humanitarian shipments that bring food to Iraq under the provisions of UNSCR 986 and the humanitarian exceptions to sanctions.

We continue to work closely with our maritime partners in the MIF. Recently, The Netherlands informed us that they will send a frigate and an aircraft to join the MIF in the near future. Canada will also soon be sending a ship to join the MIF. The continuing support of the international community is critical to the success of this multinational operation.

Since the implementation of UNSCR 986 in December, the MIF has not encountered

any serious problems in processing the maritime traffic involved in lifting oil from the Mina Al Bakr offshore terminal. While it is still too early to tell if the inbound shipments will go as smoothly, we are hopeful that our advance planning and preparation in this area will pay off.

The United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC), established pursuant to UNSCR 687, continues to resolve claims against Iraq arising from Iraq's unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait. The UNCC has issued over 1 million awards worth approximately \$5.2 billion. The UNCC has authorized to date only limited payments for fixed awards for serious personal injury or death because additional funds to pay awards have been unavailable due to Iraq's refusal to comply with all relevant UNSC resolutions. With the advent of oil sales under UNSCR 986, however, 30 percent of the proceeds will be allocated to the Compensation Fund. These proceeds will be used to make installment payments on awards already made and to finance operations of the UNCC.

To conclude, Iraq remains a serious threat to regional peace and stability. I remain determined to see Iraq comply fully with all of its obligations under United Nations Security Council resolutions. My Administration will continue to oppose any relaxation of sanctions until Iraq demonstrates its peaceful intentions through such compliance.

I appreciate the support of the Congress for our efforts and shall continue to keep the Congress informed about this important issue.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

March 1

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to New York City.

March 2

In the morning, the President and Hillary Clinton returned to Washington, DC. In the evening, they attended a gala at Ford's Theatre.

The President declared a major disaster in Arkansas and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and tornadoes March 1 and continuing.

March 3

In the afternoon, the President met with Senators Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Jesse Helms and Representatives Lee H. Hamilton and Larry Combest in the Oval Office to discuss Government classification issues.

March 4

In the morning, the President traveled to Little Rock, AR. In the afternoon, he traveled to Arkadelphia and College Station, AR. In the evening, the President returned to Washington, DC.

The President announced his intention to appoint John R. Phillips to be a member of the President's Commission on White House Fellows.

The President declared a major disaster in Kentucky and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms, tornadoes, and flooding beginning March 1 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Ohio and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding beginning February 28 and continuing.

March 5

In the morning, the President had a telephone interview from the Oval Office with James A. Barnes of the National Journal.

March 6

In the morning, the President traveled to Lansing, MI. In the evening, he returned to Washington, DC.

The President declared a major disaster in Indiana and ordered Federal funds to sup-

plement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding February 28 and continuing.

March 7

The President announced his intention to appoint Dianne Welsh Bleck to be a member of the Board of Visitors to the U.S. Air Force Academy.

The White House announced that the Russia-U.S. summit in Helsinki, Finland, will begin with an informal dinner hosted by President Martti Ahtisaari at the Presidential Palace on March 19. The summit will continue with meetings between the President and President Boris Yeltsin of Russia on March 20. The President will depart for Copenhagen, Denmark, on the evening of March 20.

The President declared a major disaster in Tennessee and ordered Federal aid, including individual assistance, to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the areas affected by severe storms, flooding, and tornadoes that began on February 28.

The President declared a major disaster in West Virginia and ordered Federal aid, including individual assistance, to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the areas affected by severe storms, heavy rains, and high winds that began on February 28.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Submitted March 3

Joel I. Klein,
of the District of Columbia, to be an Assistant Attorney General, vice Anne Bingaman, resigned.

Robert S. LaRussa,
of Maryland, to be an Assistant Secretary of Commerce, vice Susan G. Esserman.

Submitted March 6

James B. King,
of Massachusetts, to be Director of the Office of Personnel Management for a term of 4 years (reappointment).

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released March 3

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Transcript of a press briefing by Vice President Al Gore on 1996 campaign financing

Response to a question asked at Press Secretary Mike McCurry's press briefing

Released March 5

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Released March 6

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Released March 7

Statement by Press Secretary Mike McCurry on U.S.-Russian summit dates

Statement by Press Secretary Mike McCurry announcing Thomas F. (Mack) McLarty's upcoming visit to Guatemala

Fact sheet on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses:
Ongoing Initiatives

Approved March 3

H.R. 499 / Public Law 105-4

To designate the facility of the United States
Postal Service under construction at 7411
Barlite Boulevard in San Antonio, Texas, as
the "Frank M. Tejeda Post Office Building"

**Acts Approved
by the President**

**United States
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