

Mr. Prime Minister, welcome to the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:22 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House, where Prime Minister Chretien was accorded a formal welcome with full military honors. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Chretien's wife, Aline.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Chretien and an Exchange With Reporters

April 8, 1997

The President. Good morning, everybody. I'm delighted to have the Prime Minister here, and we're just about to start a conversation about NATO expansion, which is something of importance to both of us, and about some trade issues and a number of other matters. We have a lot of good agreements that we're going to have signed during this trip, so we're excited about that.

And we're going to have a press conference afterwards, so we'll be able to answer questions about it all.

Chemical Weapons Convention

Q. Jesse Helms called the Chemical Weapons Convention today destructive and defective and dangerous. The hearing is not off to a good start.

The President. Well, I know he's not for it. All I want to do is try to get it on the floor of the Senate and persuade two-thirds of the Senators to be for it.

I think it's obvious that it's the right thing to do for the world and critical for America's leadership that we do it. I do not believe that all those military leaders who were here with us earlier this week and the Republican leaders, including Senator Kassebaum Baker and former Secretary of State Jim Baker, would do something that was dangerous for America. I think it's critically important for America.

If we don't ratify it, then the rest of the world will be compelled to treat us like they treat the rogue states, and it will—just basically to ostracize us and impose trade sanctions on our chemical companies. And we'll

deserve it if we don't ratify it, because we won't be good citizens in the world.

Q. Will you speak with Senator Helms between now and—

The President. We're working with him. We've worked hard with him and we've worked through a lot of his objections and we'll keep working. But I'm going to focus hard on trying to—not only to persuade him but we have to have 67 votes. We've got to get it out of the committee, and then we've got to have 67 votes. That's what we've got to do. We're going to try to do it.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Any further words—[inaudible]—Prime Minister Netanyahu?

The President. No, I don't have anything to add to what I said yesterday. We had a long, thorough, very frank conversation. I want these parties to do what they have to do to get this process up and going again. We've got to have an atmosphere of zero tolerance for terror, but we also have to have the kind of confidence building necessary to make peace. And he's got some good ideas and I think we have some good ideas and we want to talk to the Palestinians this week and see if we can get this going again. But the parties have got to do what it takes to get it going, and I think if we work together we can do it.

Q. Did you ask him to stop building at Har Homa?

The President. I don't want to say any more about what I did or didn't say.

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. The incident in Hebron? Well, all those things are troubling. But the main thing is we can't let them get in the way of moving the path toward peace forward. That's the ultimate resolution of all these things. We've just got to keep going. They have to decide they're going to keep going, and they've got to do it.

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

The President. Let me say again how pleased I am to have the Prime Minister here. We're going to have a chance to talk about our mutual interests in NATO expansion, in Bosnia, in Haiti, and a number of

bilateral issues between us. And of course, we're going to have some good agreements signed on this trip, so I think this will be a very useful and productive trip. I know it will be for me, and I hope it will be for the Prime Minister and for Canada. And again, I want to welcome you.

Prime Minister Chretien. Thank you very much. I'm happy to be here. I think it's going to be a very good meeting.

You know, our relations are—you know, terms of trade, for example—the biggest in the world. And when we look at it, we manage to solve most of the problems in a very nice way. And I hope that if the world were to work the way that Canada and United States manage to work together there would be more prosperity around the world. So you have to keep setting the example. We have to talk to each other to achieve it.

Extraterritorial Impact of Sanctions

Q. Mr. President, what about the issue of Helms-Burton? Do you think there's any common ground to be found there?

The President. Well, I think we have a difference of opinion. I think the real issue is how we manage our differences right now. And we'll talk about that.

The Cuba issue is a difficult issue, but Canada has had a very solid position on human rights, generally. And we just have a different approach here, and we'll try to find a way to manage our differences. I think that's the best way we can do it.

Prime Minister Chretien's Visit

Q. Mr. President, how unusual is it for you to invite a leader from another country to an unscheduled meeting the night before the scheduled meeting?

The President. Well, fairly unusual, but we're friends, and besides that, I owed him a golf match, which I now cannot provide. So I thought, since we couldn't play golf together, we ought to visit and talk about golf and other things together.

[At this point, a question was asked and answered in French, and a translation was not provided.]

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, is there a reason why you didn't want people to know about your first visit to the White House last night?

The President. You're wrong—[laughter].

Prime Minister Chretien. [Inaudible]—called me and said, "Come and have coffee with me," and I went. But he didn't invite you. [Laughter] But Moscovitz [Jason Moscovitz, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation] was there with his crew, and he filmed that and I wave at them. I didn't hide anything. You were not there, where were you?

Q. I was looking for you, sir. [Laughter]

The President. It wasn't his fault—

Prime Minister Chretien. But I was not in a bar downtown; you were at the wrong place. [Laughter]

The President. It was unscheduled, you see.

Q. Have you rescheduled the golf game?

The President. Well, I have about a minimum—a minimum—of 4 months and probably a couple more weeks before I can play golf. So it's a long way away.

Q. Can you tell us, Mr. Prime Minister, what you talked about last night—

Prime Minister Chretien. Oh, we talk about a lot of things. We talk about our relations and, as I mentioned earlier, that we have managed to resolve most of the difficulties. When we started we had 5 percent of our trade involved in dispute, and now it's down to 1 percent. And the fact that we have managed to talk to each other and very good relations, because we know and we believe—and we might discuss that—that the growth in the world will come if we have more free trade around the world.

And we're talking about the progress in APEC. I will be the host of APEC in November. And we're talking about the expansion of free trade in the Americas as we decided, I think, in December '94 to ratify. And now we hope that they will be able to proceed quickly with the fast track, because when we met at that time, we had a goal to have an agreement with all these countries by the year 2005.

But we have to—and Chile was to be the first one, and it was blocked. But now is the time to resume with them. We have signed a bilateral agreement with them. And look at free trade between the two of us—you

know, 45 percent increase in the trade between Canada and United States. So we look at that, and we're both benefiting from that.

And when we look at Asia, we know that this is the market of tomorrow. Imagine, you know, more than a billion—200,000 million people in China and India next door. And so when they start to become consumer, they will buy a lot of goods and services from America and I hope proportionately more from Canada. [*Laughter*] But it's fair competition.

The President. Keep in mind, we'll have a press conference later, too. We'll answer more.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:51 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Chretien

April 8, 1997

The President. Good afternoon. Let me say again that it is a very great pleasure for me to welcome Prime Minister Chretien to the White House. It's an especially important day in his life, because this is the 34th anniversary of Jean Chretien's first election to the Canadian Parliament. In the years since, he has held virtually every high office in the Canadian Government. He has traveled to Washington on countless missions. But this is his first official visit as Prime Minister, and I'm delighted that he's here.

It's fair to say that there has never been a relationship between two nations like the one that exists today between the United States and Canada. We have the most comprehensive ties of any two nations on Earth. Every day, our governments work together to improve the lives of our people in ways no one could have imagined just a few years ago.

We trade goods and services on an unprecedented scale and share ties of friendship that are unique. We've worked hard today and made progress on important issues. We discussed our common efforts to create an open and more competitive trading system

throughout our hemisphere. The benefits of this effort will be tremendous.

Since NAFTA took effect, trade between our nations has grown by more than 40 percent, a remarkable achievement for what was already the world's preeminent trade partnership. United States exports to Canada have grown over \$133 million and now support more than 1½ million jobs in our Nation. As partners in the Summit of the Americas process, our efforts to expand trade in our hemisphere not only increase prosperity, they also reinforce democratic values, which have made such extraordinary progress in the Americas in our time.

Today we've made concrete progress on key issues involving our two nations. We've agreed on new measures to crack down on criminals who use cross-border fraudulent telemarketing schemes to prey on the elderly and others. We're stepping up our cooperation to stop those who would abduct children and transport them across our borders. We agreed to modernize our border crossing so that by the year 2000, 22 pairs of towns will be equipped with remote video systems and new technologies to give them 24-hour service. And residents won't have to drive hours out of their way to the next border crossing. We're streamlining import and export processing, cutting freight costs, reducing truck backups.

We're working together to protect, clean, and manage the natural heritage we share. Twenty-five years ago, our nations signed the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, which has helped to revive the ecosystem of the Great Lakes Basin. Yesterday, Minister Marchi and EPA Administrator Browner signed an agreement to work for the virtual elimination of toxic pollutants in the Great Lakes. This unprecedented environmental effort will involve the public and private sectors at all levels. There are some other areas, like Pacific Salmon Fisheries, where further progress is needed. But we're working on it.

Beyond our borders, we discussed the preparations for the July NATO summit in Madrid, where the Atlantic Alliance will take a major step toward creating security for the 21st century.

I also want to salute the Prime Minister for his government's determination to sup-