

[*Laughter*] And so the whole story was about how much fun we were all having.

I hope that it will also be reported that at this meeting we took a strong stand for freedom and human rights in East Timor, and we are going in there, together with our friends from Australia and others in this region, to try to protect the integrity of the referendum for democracy and independence, and save lives. And I thank New Zealand for its leadership in this cause.

We also stood for the proposition that we can best lift the world's fortune by having more free and fair trade. And that, too, was profoundly important.

We celebrated today our partnership in Antarctic and talked about the importance of Antarctica to our whole future. I have mentioned often that, as all of you know probably, when the new millennium dawns, it will dawn first on New Zealand. I will be proud to cross that bridge into the 21st century with you, knowing that we will be partners for peace and prosperity and a more decent and humane future for all our children. And I thank you for that partnership.

I'd like to ask all of you to join me in a toast to the Prime Minister, to her wonderful husband, to her government, and to the people of New Zealand.

[*At this point, the President offered a toast.*]

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:56 p.m. in a hangar at the Wigram Air Museum. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Shipley's husband, Burton. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the Prime Minister. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on House Action on Campaign Finance Reform Legislation

September 15, 1999

I am heartened that the House of Representatives rejected the politics of business as usual by passing real, bipartisan campaign finance reform. Passage of the Shays-Meehan campaign finance reform legislation is

a victory for the American people. Now I urge the Senate Republican leadership to let a majority rule by allowing the Senate to take an up-or-down vote on this historic legislation. The time has come for Congress to redeem the public's faith in the health of our democracy.

Statement on United Nations Security Council Action on East Timor

September 15, 1999

Late last night the U.N. Security Council unanimously approved Resolution 1264, which authorizes a multinational force to restore stability in East Timor, at the invitation of the Indonesian Government. Now we must move with purpose and dispatch to protect the innocent people whose lives are still threatened by those seeking to overturn the results of a fair vote. I welcome the passage of Resolution 1264 and look forward to working with the Government of Australia and others in the international community to put together an effective force. I have just been briefed by Admiral Blair of CINCPAC on our close cooperation with Australia, and I hope the force can deploy in a matter of days. The United States is prepared to contribute to this operation, and we are discussing with our Australian allies and the Congress an appropriate U.S. role.

Remarks on Hurricane Floyd in Honolulu, Hawaii

September 15, 1999

Good morning. Let me first say it's good to be back on American soil after a very good week at the APEC conference in New Zealand. I'm especially anxious to get back to Washington to help to deal with the problems caused by Hurricane Floyd.

I have just had telephone calls with our FEMA Director, James Lee Witt, who has been giving me regular updates. And as you know, the storm currently, in its rain form, is battering Georgia, Florida, North and South Carolina, and is targeting the entire Northeast.

These States are now engaged in the largest peacetime evacuation in our history. Yesterday I announced emergency declarations for Florida and Georgia. Today I am issuing similar declarations for South Carolina and North Carolina. I have just spoken with both Governor Hunt of North Carolina and Governor Hodges of South Carolina. I've assured them that we would do everything we can to help them, and they've given me updates on the problems that they expect to encounter, particularly problems for the farmers in those areas, who, if there is severe flooding, could well lose their entire crops.

Let me commend the efforts of FEMA, the National Weather Service, the National Hurricane Center, and the other Federal agencies and State and local officials who are working around the clock to protect people and property. Their efforts, along with new technologies, have enhanced our ability to predict and prepare for these storms. I hope that every citizen will heed the warnings of the officials and the recommendations to take every action to protect their families and stay out of harm's way. Meanwhile, we will continue to take extraordinary measures to protect lives and property from Hurricane Floyd.

As always, in times of crisis, I am inspired by the way our people come together and work together. It proves that the American spirit is stronger than the force of any storm. We will keep working on this. We're going to leave here in a few minutes, and I'll be getting regular updates. It does seem that the entry point of the storm has moved considerably north from where it was predicted to move. But it is still very, very powerful, and if the present predictions hold clear, there'll be a lot of wind and an enormous amount of water on the coast in South Carolina and North Carolina within the next few hours.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:00 a.m. at Hickam Air Force Base, after crossing the international dateline on his return from New Zealand. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. James B. Hunt, Jr., of North Carolina, and Gov. Jim Hodges of South Carolina.

Proclamation 7221—National POW/MIA Recognition Day, 1999

September 15, 1999

*By the President of the United States
of America*

A Proclamation

As we look back over this century that is swiftly drawing to a close, we recognize that the light of freedom still burns brightly in our world today because of the service and sacrifice of America's men and women in uniform. Through the devastation of two world wars and the brutality of numerous regional conflicts; on peacekeeping assignments and humanitarian missions; from the darkest days of the Cold War to the fall of the Berlin Wall, our Nation's service men and women have fought the forces of tyranny and won signal victories for liberty, human dignity, and the ideals of democracy. On every continent, on the seas, and in the air, gallant young Americans have paid for our future with their own, and many have preserved our freedom by sacrificing their own.

On National POW/MIA Recognition Day, we remember with profound gratitude those who suffered captivity and those whose fate remains unknown. Many American POWs were tortured at the hands of their captors; all experienced the ordeal of being held against their will and the anguish of indefinite separation from their families and their homeland.

Today we also honor the valiant families of our fellow citizens who remain missing—families who have had to suffer not only the absence of their loved ones, but also the uncertainty of their fate. As Americans, we remain unshakable in our resolve to achieve the fullest possible accounting of those missing and to strive to bring home the remains of those who have died. Only by doing so can we begin to acknowledge the debt we owe to these patriots and assuage the grief of the families they left behind for the sake of our Nation.

On September 17, 1999, the flag of the National League of Families of American Prisoners of War and Missing in Southeast Asia, a black and white banner symbolizing