

The Presidency

Mr. Russert. Mr. President, a friend of yours told me that you jokingly sometimes refer to life in the White House as “the crown jewel of the Federal penitentiary system.”

The President. That’s right.

Mr. Russert. How confining has it been?

The President. Well, it’s pretty confining. I always say I don’t know whether it’s the finest public housing in America or the crown jewel of the prison system. It’s a very isolating life. And one of the things that frustrates me is that I get more easily out of touch and maybe even out of harmony with the American people—that’s the question you asked me earlier. I also know that every little word I say can be sort of twisted, you know. And again, I don’t fault anybody, but I just have to be careful.

Mr. Russert. We have just a few seconds.

The President. Did you see what Gergen just did? He brought in this thing saying that the headline is now that Clinton accused labor of roughshod tactics. I mean, those guys are my friends. I just don’t agree with them on NAFTA. We’re going to all work together—

Mr. Russert. We have just a few seconds. Is there one thing that, a year ago, you were absolutely certain of that you’re not quite sure about now?

The President. Yes. I was absolutely certain a year ago that I could pursue this aggressive agenda of change and that every step along the way I’d be able to tell the American people what I was doing and convince them that we’re going right. We are pursuing it, we’re making in a way a little more progress than I thought we would, but there’s a big gap between what we’ve done and what I’ve been able to tell the people about. I’ve got to do a better job.

Mr. Russert. Thank you for letting us join you in the Oval Office today. I take it this is the room you’ll invite the Buffalo Bills after they win the Super Bowl?

The President. That’s right. The Buffalo Bills will be here if they win the Super Bowl this year.

Mr. Russert. Mr. President, thank you very much.

Mr. Brokaw. You’ll be in office a long time if that’s the case. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The interview began at 9 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Executive Order 12879—Order of Succession of Officers To Act as Secretary of the Navy

November 8, 1993

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 3347 of title 5, United States Code, it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. Succession to the Authority of the Secretary of the Navy. (a) In the event of the death, permanent disability, or resignation of the Secretary of the Navy, the incumbents holding the positions designated below, in the order indicated, shall act for and exercise the powers of the Secretary of the Navy:

- (1) The Under Secretary of the Navy.
- (2) The Assistant Secretaries and General Counsel of the Navy, in the order fixed by their length of services as permanent appointees in such positions.
- (3) The Chief of Naval Operations.
- (4) The Commandant of the Marine Corps.

(b) In the event of the temporary absence or temporary disability of the Secretary of the Navy, the incumbents holding the Department of the Navy positions designated in paragraph (a) of this section, in the order indicated, shall act for and exercise the powers of the Secretary of the Navy.

(1) In these instances, the designation of an Acting Secretary of the Navy applies only for the duration of the Secretary’s absence or disability, and does not affect the authority of the Secretary to resume the powers of his office upon his return.

(2) In the event that the Secretary of the Navy is merely absent from this position, the Secretary of the Navy may continue to exercise the powers and fulfill the duties of his office during his absence, notwithstanding the provisions of this order.

(c) Precedence among those officers designated in paragraph (a) of this section who have the same date of appointment shall be determined by the Secretary of the Navy at the time that such appointments are made.

(d) Notwithstanding paragraph (a) and (b) of this section, an officer shall not act for or exercise the powers of the Secretary of the Navy under this order if that officer serves only in an acting capacity in the position that would otherwise entitle him to do so.

Sec. 2. Temporary Nature of Succession. Succession to act for and exercise the powers of the Secretary of the Navy pursuant to this order shall be on a temporary or interim basis and shall not have the effect of vacating the statutory appointment held by the successor.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
November 8, 1993.

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NOTE: This Executive order was published in the *Federal Register* on November 10.

Message to the Congress on Rhinos and Tiger Trade by China and Taiwan

November 8, 1993

To the Congress of the United States:

On September 7, 1993, the Secretary of the Interior certified that the People's Republic of China (PRC) and Taiwan are engaging in trade of rhinoceros and tiger parts and products that diminishes the effectiveness of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). Five rhinoceros species and the tiger are listed in Appendix I of CITES, which means that the species are threatened with extinction and no trade for

primarily commercial purposes is allowed. Although recent actions by the PRC and Taiwan show that some progress has been made in addressing their rhinoceros and tiger trade, the record demonstrates that they still fall short of the international conservation standards of CITES. This letter constitutes my report to the Congress pursuant to section 8(b) of the Fisherman's Protective Act of 1967, as amended (Pelly Amendment) (22 U.S.C. 1978(b)).

The population of the world's rhinoceros has declined 90 percent within the last 23 years to the present level of less than 10,000 animals, and the tiger population has declined 95 percent within this century to the present level of about 5,000. Neither the PRC nor Taiwan has fully implemented the international standards established by CITES for controlling the trade in these species, and the poaching of rhinoceroses and tigers continues in their native ranges fueled in part by the market demand in the PRC and Taiwan. These populations will likely be extinct in the next 2 to 5 years if the trade in their parts and products is not eliminated.

To protect the rhinoceros and tiger from extinction, all countries and entities that currently consume their parts and products must implement adequate legislative measures and provide for enforcement that effectively eliminates the trade, including taking actions to comply with the criteria set down by CITES in September 1993 and fully cooperating with all CITES delegations. The PRC and Taiwan have made good faith efforts to stop the trade in rhinoceros and tiger parts and products, and have, since the announcement of Pelly certification, undertaken some positive legislative and administrative steps in this regard. These efforts, however, have yet to yield effective reductions in trade.

I wish to support and build on these good faith efforts undertaken by the PRC and Taiwan. At the same time, I would like to make clear the U.S. position that only effective reductions in the destructive trade in these species will prevent the rhinoceros and tiger from becoming extinct. Accordingly, I have established an Interagency Task Force to coordinate the provision of U.S. technical assistance to the PRC and Taiwan to help them eliminate their illegal wildlife trade. I have