NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Thomas S. Foley, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Robert C. Byrd, President pro tempore of the Senate.

Statement on the Withdrawal of Shirley Chisholm's Nomination To Be Ambassador to Jamaica

October 13, 1993

I deeply regret that illness has forced Shirley Chisholm to ask that her nomination to be our country's Ambassador to Jamaica be withdrawn. As I said when I first announced my decision to nominate her, Shirley Chisholm is a true pioneer of American politics. Even before she ran for elective office, she had made her mark through her work teaching the children of New York and through the force of her remarkable personality. As the U.S. Ambassador to Jamaica, she would have been a powerful voice for cooperation and justice.

Hillary and I both wish Shirley Chisholm all the best at this difficult time. She is in our thoughts and in our prayers.

NOTE: The President's statement was included in a White House statement announcing the withdrawal of Shirley Chisholm's nomination to be Ambassador to Jamaica.

The President's News Conference

October 14, 1993

The President. Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I'm sorry I am a little late, but I just finally got through to Ambassador Oakley, and I wanted to have a chance to speak with him directly for a couple of minutes before I came out here.

I also spoke with Mrs. Durant this morning to congratulate her and to wish her well. Obviously, she is very happy. She has now had an extended conversation with her husband. And he is, as you know, in the U.N. field hospital in Mogadishu. But he will be going to Germany as soon as the doctors say that he can travel. And then, as soon as possible, he'll be back home with his family and his friends. I welcome his release, and I want to express my deepest thanks to the African leaders who pressed hard for it and to Bob Oakley, the International Red Cross, and to the United Nations, to all who have worked on this for the last several days.

Over the past week, since the United States announced its intention to strengthen our forces in Somalia, as well as to revitalize the diplomatic initiative and send Bob Oakley back, we have seen some hopeful actions: the release of Michael Durant and the Nigerian peacekeeper, the cessation of attacks on the United States and U.N. peacekeepers. That demonstrates that we are moving in the right direction and that we are making progress.

Our firm position on holding Durant's captors responsible for his well-being and demanding his release, I think, sent a strong message that was obviously heard. Now we have to maintain our commitment to finishing the job we started. It's not our job to rebuild Somalia's society or its political structure. The Somalis have to do that for themselves. And I welcome the help of the African leaders who have expressed their commitment to working with us and with them. But we have to give them enough time to have a chance to do that, to have a chance not to see the situation revert to the way it was before the United States and the United Nations intervened to prevent the tragedy late last year.

I want to also emphasize that we made no deals to secure the release of Chief Warrant Officer Durant. We had strong resolve. We showed that we were willing to support the resumption of the peace process, and we showed that we were determined to protect our soldiers and to react when appropriate by strengthening our position there. I think the policy was plainly right. But there was no deal.

If you have any questions, I'll be glad to try to answer them.

Somalia

Q. Mr. President, there's still a $25,000 bounty on Mr. Aideed. Would you still like to see Mr. Aideed arrested? Do you think that's appropriate? And do you think that the