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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, March 25, 1994

Statement by the Director of Communications on United Nations Security Council Action on the Hebron Massacre

March 18, 1994

The United Nations Security Council has today adopted a resolution condemning the Hebron mosque massacre and calling for measures to safeguard the security of the Palestinians.

President Clinton expressed the horror of the American people at the time of the tragic Hebron murders. The President said, ''The enemies of peace must not be allowed to triumph. Prompt resumption of negotiations to begin implementation of the Israel-Palestinian Declaration of Principles is the only answer to extremist violence on both sides.''

The President's decision to allow passage of the resolution was made in the context of the agreement today by Syria, Jordan, and Lebanon to return to negotiations in April and the high-level contacts between Israel and the PLO that will take place in coming days.

The President endorses the call made by the Security Council today for Israel and the PLO to redouble their efforts to realize this goal as soon as possible. The United States stands ready to do all it can to help the parties, but with passage of this resolution it is time for them to return to the negotiating table.

The United States abstained on two paragraphs in the preamble to the resolution because of our strong objections to references made there to ''occupied Palestinian territory'' and to Jerusalem. The President said that his position on these matters has not changed. As Israel and the PLO have agreed, these are issues which can be decided only in negotiations on the final status of the territories. He does not believe references which could prejudice the outcome of these negotiations are helpful. The parties alone must make the decisions necessary to realize the promise of peace.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

March 19, 1994

Good morning. Last week I saw American democracy at its best at an old-fashioned town hall meeting in Nashua, New Hampshire. We were in the Elm Street Junior High School, and people were asking me questions about all kinds of issues but most of them about health care reform. And then when the town meeting was over, a woman came up to me and showed me why it's so important for so many Americans that we fix what's wrong with our health insurance system. She gave me a photograph of her 7-year-old son whom she loves very much. She told me he's had serious health problems, and now she's afraid that he'll never be able to get any health insurance because he has what insurance companies call a preexisting condition.

Everywhere I go, families come up and tell me we're got to do something about health care, and they're right. Here are the facts: Even if you have health insurance today, you can lose it tomorrow. The terrible truth is that 2 million Americans a month lose their health insurance, 58 million Americans find themselves without insurance at some point during the year, and about 100,000 Americans a month lose their health insurance for good.

The fine print in your insurance policy can cost you your coverage. Eighty-one million Americans have those preexisting conditions, just like the little boy in Nashua, that insurance companies can use to raise rates or deny coverage, and that as a practical matter, prevent many, many people from changing jobs because they know they'll lose their coverage. And three out of four insurance policies—

that covers 133 million Americans—have lifetime limits that cut off your benefits when you need them most. In other words, chances are your insurance plan is great unless you get really sick.

Too many of you who do have insurance are paying more, getting less; your choices are more limited every year; your worries are increased, worries about losing the right to choose your doctor, increasing copatient deductibles, or losing insurance altogether. If we don't do something, we face a future of less choice, lower quality care, and larger bills. That's why we've got to build on what works and fix what's wrong with our health care system. And when you come down to it, America faces three choices: Government insurance for everybody, no guarantee of coverage for anybody, or guaranteed private insurance for everybody.

Everywhere I go people tell me they support the idea that is at the core of our health reform plan: guaranteed private insurance for everybody, insurance that can never be taken away. Here's how our health reform plan works. First, we'll guarantee every American private health insurance with a comprehensive package of benefits that can never be taken away. Everyone will get a health security card that will guarantee these benefits as good as America's biggest companies offer and as good as your Members of Congress and your President get. Your benefits will include prescription drugs and prevention care, things that often aren't covered today. It's common sense to pay to keep people healthy, not just treat them after they get sick and when care is more expensive.

Second, you'll have choices. That's the American way. You'll have the right to choose your own doctor and your own health care plan. You'll make that choice—you'll make it, not your boss and not your insurance company. We trust you to make the best choices to improve the quality of your health care.

Third, we're going to crack down on abuses in insurance practices. No more dropping coverage or cutting benefits, no more raising rates just because you or someone in your family has been sick, no more using lifetime limits to cut off your benefits, and no more charging older people more than younger people. These are unfair practices, and we'll make them illegal. We'll make sure you can get affordable insurance you can depend on.

Fourth, and this is important, we'll preserve and strengthen Medicare. Older Americans must be able to count on Medicare and to keep their doctors. We also want to cover prescription drugs under Medicare and to give people of all ages new choices for long-term care at home or in their community. There are so many people with disabilities, so many Americans who are in their elderly years who do not need institutionalized care but who can't get anything less expensive and more helpful because it's not covered today.

Finally, we want your health benefits to be guaranteed at work. Most jobs come with health benefits, and all jobs should. Over two-thirds of the small businesses in this country provide health insurance to their employees. But 8 of 10 Americans who have no insurance are in working families. These Americans deserve better. And our health reform plan will guarantee health benefits at work. Small businesses will get these health insurance premiums at a discount. And we in the Government will help to cover the unemployed.

The defenders of the status quo are trying to confuse this issue by making it sound complicated. Well, the present system is complicated, and so there are a lot of details to deal with. But the basic principles of health reform are really pretty simple. You'll get a health security card; you'll pick any doctor you want; you'll fill out one simple form when you need care; you'll know exactly what's covered; and you'll have peace of mind for a change, because your health security and that of your family can never be taken away.

A few weeks ago, the Wall Street Journal explained our health reform to some citizens of York, Pennsylvania, without telling them whose plan it is. The great majority of that group strongly supported our health reform principles over all the competing plans. And the headline in the Wall Street Journal reads: "Many Don't Realize It's Clinton's Plan They Like."

Next week and in the months ahead, I'm going to tell people all across America about our health reform plan and what it really

means: guaranteed private insurance, a choice of doctors and health plans, outlawing unfair insurance practices, preserving Medicare, guaranteeing health benefits at work. It's that simple.

I want to cut through the complexity, the confusion, and downright distortions. This issue should be decided by informed citizens, not by special interests spending millions of dollars to prevent progress and to promote their own narrow interest.

Let's face the facts, debate our choices, and make an historic decision to build on what's best and fix what's worst in our health care system. That's democracy at its best, just like the old-fashioned American town meeting I attended in New Hampshire last week. And the lesson of history is that when the American people have the information they need, they do make the right decision.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks at a Children's Town Meeting

March 19, 1994

Mr. Peter Jennings. Good morning, everybody. Good morning, especially, boys and girls, and welcome back to the White House really. This is the second time that President Clinton has invited us back to the White House so that he and a group of children we've invited from around the country can exchange ideas about the state of the country and the state of the world. It's a chance for him and for them to talk about their dreams. So we hope you'll stay with us this morning.

If our timing is right, the President is just coming down from upstairs, in a house which we all know he loves very much.

Good morning, Mr. President.

The President. Good morning, Peter.

Mr. Jennings. Thank you for having us back, sir.

The President. I'm glad you're back.

Mr. Jennings. You really have spent a lot of time studying this house, haven't you?

The President. I have. Every President but George Washington has lived here. And so it's really the story of America. And it's a great honor to live here. So I like to know the history of it, and I like to know the things that happened to the people who lived here and what happened in which rooms and things. I've kept up with it pretty well.

Mr. Jennings. You all know there are a lot of kids in the East Room waiting to see us. But surprising, to me at least, a number of them asked us whether or not the President had to live here. [*Laughter*] And I just asked you that a moment ago.

The President. I don't know.

Mr. Jennings. We'll have to find that——

The President. Isn't that funny, I don't know. I don't think anyone's ever volunteered to live anywhere else, except once when there was a big renovation of the White House when President Truman was President, I think he had to spend more than 2 years out of here, across the street.

Mr. Jennings. We have actually a little—we're going to go into the East Room now, but we have just to introduce you or reintroduce you in many cases to what this is like, a little history package while you and I walk it. Ready?

[*At this point, a short film about the history of the White House was shown.*]

Mr. Jennings. And there is the White House, on a very sunny, lovely day here in Washington here. And we are, of course, in the East Room, which has its own great sense of history. And here all these boys and girls have joined us from around the country.

You notice the President's tie, everybody?

Audience members. Yes.

The President. This tie was designed by a 13-year-old named Kelly. It's called "Save the Children," and it's part of a series of ties designed by children for the Save the Children Foundation. It's a group that works on the problems of children in poor communities and poor neighborhoods around America. And my wife and I have been involved in it for a long time. So they take the drawings of children, turn them into ties, and then sell the ties to raise funds. It's great; I have a lot of them.

Mr. Jennings. I bet people send you ties every day of the year, don't they?

The President. Every day of the year, just about. I especially love these. I bet I've had 20 of these ties; they're great.

Mr. Jennings. We have a lot of questions for you this morning, Mr. President, so we're going to go away for just one second. And then we'll have you and all these youngsters from around the country talk to one another.

We'll be right back.

[*At this point, the television stations took a commercial break.*]

Mr. Jennings. Mr. President, I said a lot of these kids had questions. How many of you have got questions for the President? We're going to be here for several days. You don't mind that, do you?

The President. No.

Mr. Jennings. Let's get right to it. Kevin, how about you?

Education and Employment

Q. My first question is for those children who wish to pursue a college education: What are you going to do to guarantee that there are jobs for them when they get out of college? Today, many adults have graduate degrees, bachelors—they have a hard time finding jobs. They have as good a chance as those who are straight out of high school. What are you going to do to guarantee that when I get out of college, I have a job waiting for me?

The President. I don't know that I can guarantee it, but I think we can make it more likely. But perhaps the main reason I ran for President was to try to restore the economic health of the country. And what I am trying to do is to follow policies that will generate more jobs in America. I have tried to bring our deficit down, get interest rates down to create more jobs. I've tried to open more markets to our products and sell more American products overseas. I've tried to train people to do the jobs of tomorrow, and I've tried to take the technologies that we developed when we had a big defense budget and turn them into jobs in the peacetime economy. And in the last 13 months, since we had this meeting last, we created over 2 million new jobs in this economy.

And let me also say, I know it's tough for college graduates, but let me tell everyone of you one thing: Your chances of getting a good job are still much, much better if you first graduate from high school, then get at least 2 years of further training, and finally, if you get a college degree. The unemployment rate in America for college graduates is 3.5 percent. The unemployment rate for high school dropouts is 11.5 percent.

Mr. Jennings. So the answer is, stay in school.

The President. So the answer is, even though it's tougher than it has been for college graduates, you still have a much better chance if you stay in school to have higher incomes and to have a job.

Mr. Jennings. Let's go over to the other side, here. Who's got a question there? Yes, go ahead.

Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, why are you fighting a war in another country when you have a war right here?

The President. Which war?

Q. The war in Bosnia.

The President. We're not fighting a war there. We're trying to help them bring the war to an end because many people are being killed and because the war could spread and because we have an obligation to try to support that. But we don't have soldiers on the ground there. I am trying to fight the war right here at home. There's a bill in the Congress now that I am supporting, which would put another 100,000 police officers on the street to make the streets and the schools safer, that would give more money for young people for programs to help them resolve their differences peacefully, would take semiautomatic weapons off the street, and would help us to fight the war here at home. I agree that the war here at home is killing more people than a lot of wars overseas, and we're trying to fight that one. And you're right, we should be fighting it.

Mr. Jennings. Right here in the front row. What's your name.

Race Relations

Q. Gary.

I was wondering, with all the racial problems going on, such as people not treating

each other the same way, do you have any plans for solving that problem?

Mr. Jennings. A lot of people worked hard on their questions here.

The President. Yes, they're great. There is a lot of racial tension in this country today. And I think there are two things that we have to do about it. First of all, we have to remind the American people that we have always been a multiethnic, multiracial country. We've always been a country with a lot of different racial and ethnic groups. And every time a new group came along, they've often been subject to prejudice. But what's made our country great is that we have been able to successfully blend in people of different races and religions and ethnic groups, let them respect what's different about them, and still live together. And I spend a lot of time working on that, talking to young people, talking to groups, trying to bring people together. I brought more diverse people into my Government than any President has in the past.

The second thing we have to do is to try to give a future back to all of our people. A lot of times people fight with one another if they think they don't have any opportunity. If we had more jobs and better education and a better climate in America, less crime, then people would be more relaxed and better able to appreciate one another.

I don't know if anybody's here from Los Angeles, but just for example, Los Angeles County alone has people from 150 different racial and ethnic groups. In Bosnia, you mentioned Bosnia, people from basically three different groups have been fighting and killing each other. So we've been, with all of our problems, we've been pretty successful. But we've got to know that our differences—look around this room—our differences in America are our strength. We live in a global economy, a smaller and smaller world. And the fact that we have so many different races and religions and ethnic groups is a good thing for America, and we have to learn to like it.

Mr. Jennings. Mr. President, you—Gary, are you happy with that answer, by the way?

Q. Yes.

Mr. Jennings. You are, are you? If you're not, you're entitled to tell him.

We know a lot of these kids, Mr. President, because we went out and we looked around the country to find kids who were sort of representative of various ideas in the country. One of them is Tanya up there. Hi, Tanya. Show the President just a little bit about you on the monitor here, and then we'll get you to talk to him.

[*At this point, a videotape of Tanya talking with the Vice President at Dunbar High School was shown.*]

Mr. Jennings. This is Tanya. Tanya sort of came to our attention when she met your Vice President at a meeting.

The President. At Dunbar. Are you a student at Dunbar? Good, I recognize the film.

Mr. Jennings. All right, so let's come out of the film now. All right Tanya, your turn.

Urban Youth

Q. Good afternoon. My question is going towards inner city kids. We feel as though the baby boomers have forgotten that the chaos that we create was given to us by you all. We want the problem to be stopped, but we need help. A lot of us are tired of hearing that we are a lost generation when we are not. We are a generation of renewal. And we want to know, what steps are you going to take to give us the hope, the pride, and the strength that we need to succeed in the future and to become strong, black, white, Chinese, African-American people in the society, 10 and 30 and 20 years in the future?

Mr. Jennings. Tanya, can I ask you a question before the President answers? Do you think the President can do a lot about that? Do you think he makes a really enormous difference here?

Q. He makes a very enormous difference, but one thing a lot of people fail to realize, if you don't come into the communities on positive notes, when you come for negative notes, it really angers a lot of people. It's angered me a lot. And I want the media and you, also, to know that I wanted to leave Mr. Gore very baffled, and I'm glad I left him baffled because I want him to understand that you need to come when positive things happen and not just come when negative things happen.

The President. I agree with that. Let me just make two comments about that, and then I'll try to answer your question.

We, at least, do come. I mean, he and I have been out there. My wife has been out there. We have been in inner city communities. We have walked streets that you don't normally see the President walking. We have been to places you don't normally see the President go. And I agree that we should support success stories.

I was in Detroit last week, and sure, Detroit has a lot of inner city problems. They also have, perhaps, the best job training program of its kind in America for inner city kids, putting them in very high wage, high-tech jobs. So I visited that program because it's a success story. It proves that all children can learn. So I agree with that. We shouldn't just show up when something terrible happens.

The second thing I want to say to you is that, essentially, everything that I do is designed to try to give young people like you some hope and some structure and some opportunity back. I agree that generations ahead of you have left you a pretty lousy situation. You've got all these kids that are born into families where there was never a marriage. You've got all these neighborhoods where the jobs have disappeared. You've got all these places where the schools have, in effect, been given up on. And that's not your fault. You just showed up. I mean, you're a child; you shouldn't have to deal with that, except to do your best. So what we're trying to do is to find ways to rebuild communities, rebuild schools, and bring the jobs back into the community and, at the same time, to follow policies which strengthen the family unit instead of undermine it, which encourage people to take responsibility for their children and reward them if they do it.

Let me just give you an example. The welfare system has often encouraged families to break up. We're supporting a welfare reform program that will encourage families to stay together as well as to get jobs. We've got a tax system that we've changed so that when taxes are due this year, 16 and a half percent of the American taxpayers, working parents with very modest wages, are going to get a tax cut to help them raise their children better, to strengthen them. We've got school reform bills going through Congress now to try to help strengthen schools to have more uniform excellence.

Now, those are things we're doing. I also have to tell you though, when kids get in trouble, they get in trouble one by one, and they have to be saved one by one. So we also need—the President needs soldiers, common workers in this battle. And that's why what people do in every school, in every neighborhood and every family and every church is important.

Mr. Jennings. Probably got some potential soldiers here.

The President. You bet, a lot of them.

But you're right, we owe you a better deal than you're getting, and I'm trying to give it to you. But you all are going to have to do your part, too.

The President's Schedule

Mr. Jennings. Now, there are a lot of serious questions, I know, here. But somebody had a question about the White House itself and about the President's day. They've all got shy and serious on me. A lot of them wanted to know whether or not you find this too big a job sometimes and wonder how you get everything done in one day.

The President. Sometimes I don't, and sometimes it is too big a job. But I have a lot of help, for one thing. A lot of good people work here, and we work hard to try to organize the day well. So I try to get up in the morning, go run, see my daughter before she goes off to school. And then I come in and I start every day with a briefing on national security, has anything happened in the rest of the world that could affect the United States, that we have to be concerned about? Then I get briefings on what's happened in the United States, and I read clippings from newspapers around the country to see what's happened. And then we start work, and we just work through these problems. And normally I finish at about 7 p.m. at night, sometimes a little later.

Mr. Jennings. You work every day?

The President. Yes.

Mr. Jennings. Don't take a day off every week?

The President. Sunday. I try to take Sunday off, but I don't always make it. But I try to work a half day on Saturday, take Sunday off, but Monday through Friday I work until pretty late at night.

Mr. Jennings. I think some of us know that.

The President. And sometimes until 12 a.m. or 1 a.m. at home when I read.

Children and Violence

Mr. Jennings. Now, there have been some pretty trying events on your watch in the year and a bit since you've been President. And one of them occurred in California. And we have a young lady here this morning.

Hi, Annie. You're getting tired, aren't you?

Q. Not really.

Mr. Jennings. Oh, you're not. Oh, good, good. I want the President to take a look at the television monitor here so he knows a little bit more about you.

[*At this point, a videotape was shown in which Annie Nichol explained that since her sister, Polly Klaas, was kidnapped and murdered, she no longer feels safe. She also explained that she keeps items such as loud bells and ropes in her bedroom because they help her to feel safe at night.*]

Mr. Jennings. Well, of course, that is Annie Nichol who is the sister of Polly Klaas, who, as you know, was kidnapped in northern California, became enormous news in the country. We asked Annie to come partly because she wanted to, but partly because when we talked to kids around the country, enormous numbers of them are concerned about their safety.

So Annie, away you go.

Q. Well, the other day when I was on the plane coming here, I asked my Mom, do you think I'm going to live to grow up? And my sister, Polly, didn't live to grow up, so I didn't feel that safe. And my question is, I just don't feel very safe, and I want America to be safer for children.

Mr. Jennings. And you think the President can do something, don't you?

The President. I agree. I think I could. Let me say, first of all, you're a brave girl to come here and let us see your story. As you probably know, I talked to some of your family members. And I'm doing what I can to change some laws.

Let's talk about it a little bit. First of all, there are people who get paroled out of prison who have serious problems and who are very likely to repeat them who should not be released. That's one thing that your sister's case has made people sensitive to. And that's why we're working on some laws to identify people who are serious threats to society who will likely repeat their crimes and not let them out.

The second thing we have to do is to try to make our communities and our streets safer. That's why I'm trying to pass a bill to take these assault weapons off the street and to put more police officers on the street to make the streets safer.

And then there's a lot of violence against children that occur in their own homes from family members and in schools, and we are trying to start programs now all across America where people learn to resolve their differences in nonviolent ways, to stop hurting each other and shooting each other and acting on impulse.

You do live in a country that's too dangerous. And we have to make it less dangerous. And it is a huge obligation that I feel, and I think about it every day. You know, I have a little girl, too. I want the children of this country to be able to grow up on safe streets and safe schools and safer homes. And I think that there are some very specific things we can all do about it.

We also need to change our attitudes. You may see pretty soon a public service announcement I did with a young woman from Washington, DC, a 14-year-old girl named Alicia Brown. She went to the sixth funeral of a friend of hers just yesterday. Six of her friends have been shot. So we did this public service announcement together—it's going to be on television—talking to young people and asking them to help us turn America away from violence.

Mr. Jennings. When you were young, Mr. President, do you ever remember being in a room with kids and people asked you if you felt safe?

The President. Never. When I was a kid, people beat each other up. I mean, the only thing you ever worried about was somebody

coming up to you on the street or in an alley or something and jumping you and beating you up. Nobody ever shot anybody, there were none of this—I mean, to speak of—there was very little of this, the kidnappings, the kind of thing that happened to your sister—much more rare then. It's much worse today.

Mr. Jennings. What do you think. Annie?

Q. Well, for one thing, that I think is that I think that other people shouldn't be released from jail, and they shouldn't be stealing as much children as they have been stealing.

Mr. Jennings. I was looking at some figures; 4,600 kids were abducted last year.

That stuff you put in your bedroom, did you really feel the need for that?

Q. I did feel the need.

The President. Did it make you feel better when you did it, that you were taking charge of your life and you were trying to protect yourself?

Q. Yes.

Mr. Jennings. You think the President's on the right track, though?

Q. I think so.

The President. I'll try, Annie. I think about your sister and the children like her all the time. I'm working hard on it.

Mr. Jennings. Okay, let's go over here. Thanks, Annie, my dear. Annie's had such a good time in the White House today. Where's your dolphin? He's had a tour of the White House, hasn't he?

The President. Good for you.

Mr. Jennings. Yes, this was a very rewarding morning for her.

Yes, love.

Q. Well, Mr. President Clinton, I know you get a lot of questions, but this is just a little thing about you. I think you're such a decent and honest person, and I really believe in you in trying to make everybody happy. And I think we kids have to take the responsibility, because we should know who's bringing in the drugs, the guns. And if we just report it in, that would really make a difference. And also that would make a really big difference is that most of the criminals and people who sell drugs, they don't feel loved. And so I think from the moment you're born you have to feel loved. You should tell your child that you love them very much.

Mr. Jennings. What a nice idea.

The President. Let me just say two things. First of all, remember what I said, no matter what I do, the President has to have partners all over America. Everybody's got a role to play. Everybody is important. In most schools where there are drugs and guns, some other kids who don't do drugs and don't have guns known about it. They could report it; they could help to get it done; they could organize themselves into groups in each school and say, ''We don't want drugs in our schools, we don't want guns, we don't want knives, we don't want violence in our schools.'' That could make a bigger difference in that school than anything the President could do.

On the other question, I think you're right. One of the things that we have to do is to find young people who are likely to get in trouble and try to reach them before they get to the point where they are hurting other people, because a lot of young people never felt like they were loved. That's obvious to me; I see it all the time.

Mr. Jennings. Do you know a lot of people who work here in the White House have children? And one of the things—this is a nice treat for you, Mr. President, perhaps—we asked several members of your staff to show us different rooms in the White House with their kids. And if we look at the monitors here now, we can see Henry Cisneros, one of your members of your Cabinet, showing his kids the Cabinet Room.

We'll be right back.

[*At this point, the videotape was shown, and then the television stations took a commercial break.*]

Mr. Jennings. Welcome back to our morning in the White House.

Physical Fitness Test

Q. I had a fun question to ask you, and I was wondering, Mr. President, in elementary school we had to pass a physical fitness test to pretty much get an A, and you got a President's award or a certificate. And I was wondering if you've ever tried or ever thought of passing the test, or if you've even looked at the test that we have to pass?

The President. I haven't, but I probably should. I imagine that I could pass it since I jog every day and do a little work on my weights and do some other things. I probably could, but I'll do it. I'll check on it. If I don't make it then I'll have to get myself in shape.

Socks the Cat

Q. I read a book called "Socks in the White House," and it said that Socks had a bulletproof case. Does he really?

The President. He can stand behind something that's bulletproof, but most of the time he's just out in the open. That's just a funny thing to say. It was a joke.

Mr. Jennings. We have a couple questions from around the country. Remember last year, sir, we had some people on the telephone. Well, this year—that was kind of difficult so we've asked some people out around the country to ask you questions they've wanted to, and here's one on tape.

Education

Q. My name is Jessica Jones. I'm 11 years old. I am from Red Bank, Tennessee. My question is, what are you planning for the improvement of public education?

Mr. Jennings. That's pretty general. That should keep you going for a while.

The President. Well, very briefly, we've got two bills in to design to help the public schools. One encourages schools to try all kinds of new and different experiments to improve education but gives them some real standards so we know whether kids are learning or not no matter where they live.

The other one gives opportunities for kids to move from school to further training if they don't go on to college. So young kids that don't go to college still have a chance to get a good education and make a good living.

Mr. Jennings. Now, we have a guest from overseas. Somebody mentioned Bosnia this morning. Right over here to your right, sir, is Zlata Filpovic, who comes from Sarajevo. And a lot of the kids in here last night, Zlata, knew all about you because of your diary. Perhaps we should show people at home a little bit first about your recent history.

[*At this point, a videotape was shown in which Zlata described the horrors children face living in war-torn Bosnia.*]

Mr. Jennings. Welcome to Washington again, Zlata. Your question for the President.

Bosnia

Q. Usually people when they start war they say with this war we will get things. But I think usually they—all of them lose things. And I think it's really big stupidity. And I would like to ask you, is it war—is it end of that stupidity close? Is it closer?

The President. I think it is closer. And I agree with you. These people started fighting in your country because they wanted territory for people who were just in their own ethnic group. And yet as you pointed out, people who lived in Sarajevo, they had friends—they didn't know if they were Serbs or Croats or Muslims. They lived together. But people from outside brought this war on to try to divide the country up. I think it is closer.

Yesterday we signed an agreement here in Washington between the Croats and the Government of Bosnia, which is mostly Muslim but not entirely. And now the question is, will the Serbs agree to sign on? Will they agree to give up some of the territory they took so that everybody can live with a fair piece of land and we can stop killing the adults and the children? I think we're closer, and we're working very hard on it.

Mr. Jennings. Okay. You've been very determined back there. Ram, is that your name? Mustaq, I'm sorry, Mustaq. I apologize.

Health Care Reform

Q. Do you like to be known as the President of the health care program?

The President. Be known? Yes.

Mr. Jennings. Sounds a bit like a set-up, doesn't it, sir?

The President. Yes, I do. Because I want every American family to have health care. And a lot of them don't now, and millions who have it can lose it. And every other major country in the world with a good economy like ours, gives all the families health care. We don't, and it's not right.

Mr. Jennings. Has anybody else got a question about health care, because—oh goodness, lots of them.

Q. My name's Mickey. I was on welfare. And you say you encourage people to get jobs when they are on welfare. But as soon as I started working, they took away all my benefits, including my medical benefits. I was better living off welfare than I am now working, because I'm not receiving any medical benefits anymore.

The President. I talked about you and people like you in my State of the Union Address. I pointed out—you asked a health care question—if you're on welfare in America today and if you have children or if you're just yourself on welfare, you get covered by a medical program paid for by the Government. If you get off welfare and you go to work in a job that has no health insurance, you start working and paying your taxes so that someone who stayed on welfare can still get health care and you don't get it anymore. It's not fair. And you're right, the best thing we could do to end welfare as we know it is to give everybody health coverage so people would never be encouraged to stay on welfare.

Good for you. Thank you for saying that.

Public Expectations

Mr. Jennings. Mr. President, do you think the people have too high expectations of what you can really accomplish?

The President. Well, sometimes. That's why I always try to say, here's what I can do, here's what I can't do, and remind the American people that in a democracy, the people have to do a lot of things. We have to change this country from the grassroots, and a lot of the changes we have to make have to happen inside us: our attitudes about violence and our attitudes about young people, without regard to their race and what they can do. We've got to change our whole way of thinking about things.

Mr. Jennings. Okay, here's a question right over here.

Education

Q. My name is Ebony. My major concern is education. My question to you is, why is it necessary to bus children out of their neighborhoods, to get a, quote, unquote, "equal education"? Shouldn't all schools offer the same programs, since we're all being taxed?

The President. The answer is yes, all schools should offer the same programs and should achieve the same high standards of excellence. One real problem we've had in America—let me just say this real quick, I don't want to get into a long answer—but in America, our school system has usually been a local school system, run community by community, paid for by the State and local governments and a little money from us at the national level. What we're trying to do now is to move toward greater equality. The State of Michigan just voted in a historic vote to take most of the property taxes away from schools and give State taxes so everybody could get a more equal education. And it's going to be one of the great crusades of the next 10 years, giving all kids, no matter where they live, a decent education.

Q. Thank you.

Mr. Jennings. Mr. President, I'm going to follow that up, if you don't mind, because we have a young man here more than determined to ask you a question about education. Reginald, right? Reginald, we've got a piece of tape of you at your school. Before you ask the President your question, let's take a look at that.

[*At this point, a videotape was shown in which Reginald explained how his school building had deteriorated over the years.*]

Mr. Jennings. Somebody observed, Reginald, you're at least going to make an investigative reporter when you grow up. You've got all the moves there.

The President. Didn't he do a great job? Give him a hand. He was good. [*Applause*] Good job.

Mr. Jennings. What's your question for the President?

Q. A lot of the students are drawing away from their education. And one thing, a lot of kids are talking about Super Nintendo and things like that. What do you think about video games? And do you know that you are on a video game?

The President. No, am I?

Q. Yes, you are. I'd just like to tell you this. On Super Nintendo it's a basketball called "NBA Jam." And it's a code for Bill Clinton and Al Gore, and you have your own sort of slam-dunk and everything.

Mr. Jennings. You're kidding.

The President. I have to confess, the Vice President's a better basketball player than I am, but I like the sport, I think, even more than he does.

Let me tell you something about this. What happened was in the last 12, 15 years, a lot of the schools got in financial problems, and it was easier to put off repairing the buildings and taking care of the buildings, instead of laying off personnel or other things. And it's a terrible problem. And I think there's going to have to be a real effort in every State in the country to fix these schools up. A lot of these old school buildings are better structurally than newer buildings, but nobody's taking care of them. And I appreciate your bringing that to public attention.

Mr. Jennings. Mr. President, somebody asked a little while ago what the difference was like between having this and meeting the press. Do you like to go to meet the press in the press briefing room?

The President. I do. I do that there—sometimes I meet the press here when we have foreign leaders here and when I have press conferences, we do it here sometimes.

Mr. Jennings. We've asked David Dreyer, your Deputy Communications Director, to give us a tour of the press briefing room. We'll be right back.

The President. This is where they ask me hard questions.

[*At this point, a videotape was shown, and then the television stations took a commercial break.*]

Mr. Jennings. We have another question on tape from across the country. I'll be curious to know what you think of this one.

The Media

Q. Hello, my name is Michael Marcus. I'm 17 years old, and I live in Palm Beach Gardens, Florida. My question to you, Mr. President, is with all the unfavorable press that you have been receiving, how are you able to focus and concentrate on the policies that you wish to pass through Congress?

The President. Well, what I do is I answer the questions the best I can. And I recognize that the press is like a herd of cattle sometimes, they just get swarming on some issue and they become obsessed with it. But the American people are obsessed with their own lives. Look at the questions I've been asked today. I try to focus on those things. I try to respond to the press, deal with the negative questions, and then keep my time and my attention devoted to the things I was elected to deal with: the crime problem, the health care problem, the jobs problem, the education problem, the things that I've been asked about today.

Mr. Jennings. Is that hard sometimes, though?

The President. Sometimes it's very hard, but that's a big part of the test. I mean, this whole job is like a character test, you're always being measured and tested and pushed. And I believe it is my job to keep focused on the things I was elected to do. So that's what I have to do. And no matter how hard it is, in the end that's how I'll be judged in history, and that's how I'll judge myself.

Mr. Jennings. All of these questions, you're perfectly right, are very much on the news. In fact, you mentioned cattle. This is Cotton over here, Cotton who is from Boulder, Wyoming.

The President. Wyoming?

Mr. Jennings. I know you have a question about cattle. Where's the microphone for Cotton there, guys? First of all, hold it, let's show the President a little bit about where you come from.

[*At this point, a videotape was shown in which Cotton explained that an increase in grazing fees could be detrimental to his family's cattle ranch.*]

Mr. Jennings. Okay, Cotton, what's your question?

Cattle Grazing Fees

Q. Mr. President, my family are ranchers and so are many of my neighbors. Part of the year, we graze our cattle on the BLM and U.S. Forest Service lands. I know a lot about ranching, and I know a lot about taking

good care of the environment. Mr. Babbitt and your administration's new plan is to double the grazing fees. This will really hurt my family, and our business cannot afford it. But it won't just hurt our family, it will hurt all of our neighbors and all the businesses in our town.

Mr. Jennings. What's your question, Cotton?

Q. The grazing fees is not the total cost of grazing on public lands. So, Mr. President, I want to know, do you understand what it actually costs to graze on public lands? Because there are a lot of nonfee costs. And if you don't understand that, I'd like to explain them to you.

The President. After the program, I'll be glad to talk to you more about it. But let me briefly say to all of you what this issue is about.

A lot of the land in the West belongs to the Federal Government but has to be used and should be used by farmers and ranchers out there. The fees they pay are about one-fourth the fees they pay to graze on private land, much less. So there's a big push in the Congress, and has been for years, to ask them to pay more fees.

On the other hand, if you charge them too much, they can't stay in business. Your Governor, Mike Sullivan, basically told Secretary Babbitt and me that the original plan that we proposed was too burdensome. And he went out there and started having meetings with the farmers and ranchers and basically changed that plan.

While this plan would call for the doubling of the fees over 3 years, it would also give farmers like you, who take good care of the land, a rebate, that is, the fees wouldn't go up that much if people are actually proving that they're doing their best to maintain the land.

So the real purpose of the fee increase is not to get more money for the Government—it's not that much money—it is to encourage us to keep the land, maintain it, and make sure people will be able to graze it for generations to come.

So it's a question of how to strike the right balance, and I'll be glad to talk to you about it after the program.

Mr. Jennings. Another very contentious subject, right in front here. Brodie.

The President. We'll talk some more after the program.

Go ahead. Brodie, you're up.

Smoking

Q. As you know, Mr. President, this has been concerning me for years, but as you know, all the illegal drugs, we get told how these can really hurt your body, they can mess you up, not to smoke marijuana or sniff cocaine, or anything like that. But there's one drug that kills a lot more people than all those illegal ones combined. This drug is legal, and it's a cigarette. And every day, about 1,000 Americans die from smoking. I have a three-part question here. The first part is why are cigarettes still legal? The second part is what is your administration doing to try to help—oh, God——

The President. Discourage people from smoking?

Q. No, it's not that. It's to prevent smoking—cigarette companies from targeting their ads at children, with Joe Camel and all those other people?

Mr. Jennings. Brodie, why don't you just hang on there for a second—there's a third part. Brodie works—I just met him a few minutes ago—he worked so hard on this question over night. You've done terrific. It's a subject that every kid here is interested in.

The President. The truth is, the reason cigarettes have not been declared illegal is because most Americans don't believe it should be illegal. They know that it's dangerous, the warnings are printed there. But most people believe that it's not as immoral as using drugs or as destructive to the fabric of society. And so there's not much sentiment to make cigarette smoking illegal. It's a deeply embedded part of our culture.

On the other hand, for many years, cigarette smoking was declining, thank goodness, among Americans. Now we see some evidence that smoking is increasing among some people, particularly younger women, which I'm very concerned about. So our Surgeon General, Dr. Elders, who's responsible for talking to the American people about their health, has really launched a real aggressive initiative against cigarette smoking

and especially against the second thing you talked about, which is targeting ads to young people, which I think is so wrong. I think it is really, really wrong. And we have to speak out against it and try to get people to change their practices. And I will keep doing that. I also favor increased taxes on cigarettes to discourage people from using them. The people in Michigan just voted for a 50-cent-a-pack tax on cigarettes and to give all the money to the schools. And we need to see more initiatives like that.

Mr. Jennings. How old are you, Brodie?

Q. Ten.

The President. Let me just make one other comment. Just like what Cotton said, there are a lot of good people in America who still raise tobacco. And we should have funds set aside for them in the cigarettes tax to help them convert away from raising tobacco to doing other kinds of farming so they can actually make a living. There are an awful lot of good people who do that work in States in our country, and we can move them, help them to do other things, and we should.

Mr. Jennings. Brodie, let's pass the mike down, just two down on your left there, okay? Oh, it's that third part.

The President. What's your third part?

Q. And I've got the third part to this.

Mr. Jennings. Is what?

Q. And it is, will you commit you and your administration to making the secret list of ingredients on cigarettes public, because food companies have to publish theirs?

The President. Oh, well, you know, we've been making a big deal out of that, about the fact that more nicotine has been put into some cigarettes. And we're going to try to get to the bottom of that and tell all of you what's going on. And I really appreciate your bringing that up. That really bothered me when I heard that there was more nicotine going in to make sure that people were really hooked on them.

The President's Wish

Q. I have a fun question. If you had one wish, what would it be?

The President. If I had one wish, what would it be?

Q. Yes.

The President. I would wish for a safe and secure childhood for all of our people, all of our children.

Mr. Jennings. Are you happy with that answer?

The President. That's what I want. I mean, I think if all the families in this country could give their children a safe and happy childhood, a lot of our other problems would be solved. Now, there's a lot of elements in that, but that's what I want. I mean, I think that would be my wish.

Mr. Jennings. Now, if my recollection is correct from a year ago, when the President meets with his staff tomorrow morning, he's going to tell them about a lot of the questions that you have raised. So, how would you like to see the room, now, where the President has his staff meetings every morning? This is the Roosevelt Room, and this is the Deputy Chief of Staff, Phil Lader, showing it to his kids.

[*At this point, the videotape was shown, and then the television stations took a commercial break.*]

Mr. Jennings. Welcome back to the East Room, and we're joined again—nice to have you back Purnell. Purnell Brewer is 13 years old from Gary, Louisiana. Did the President keep his word to you pretty much?

[*At this point, Purnell, who believes his brother's death from cancer was a result of environmental pollution, explained that, while more work needs to be done, environmental pollution has decreased since his appearance on the first ABC children's town meeting in February 1993.*]

Mr. Jennings. All right, Purnell, hang on a second there and let the President maybe talk to that point.

The President. Well, first, I'm glad things are getting better. We can now give people like your families all over America information about what kinds of chemicals are being produced in their areas so they can use it to work at the grassroots level to try to reduce it. We're also trying to reduce air pollution by 90 percent in toxic chemicals. And we're trying to protect poorer communities. You know, a lot of the worst pollution in this

country is in poorer communities, in rural areas and cities.

And so those are the things we are doing. We will stay on it; we'll keep talking about it. The Vice President, especially, and I have talked about it a lot. We'll keep doing that, and I'm glad to know it's better than it was.

Mr. Jennings. This is another issue that I know is on a lot of kids' minds.

Kimberly.

Prayer in School

Q. President Clinton, earlier you said that when you were in high school, went to school, you felt safe. And a lot of times I hear my parents and grandparents say the exact same thing. And I keep wondering—at that time, prayer was mandated in schools, and since the prayer was taken away from public education and public schools, the crime rate in schools has really gone up. I was wondering if you felt there was a connection, and what is your opinion of prayer in school?

The President. I don't know that you can say that there is a connection. I do believe that 30 years ago, you had more coherent families, you had less violence, you had less unemployment, and values were taught in our schools more explicitly. The reason the Supreme Court made the decision on prayer is that they said that no Government should order people to pray or should say exactly what prayer they should give. And I agree with that. I mean, that's the first amendment. That's what we were founded on.

On the other hand, I think schools should be available to religious groups. I think it's okay to have moments where people pray in silence. I don't think that prayer at sporting events or graduations is wrong, in my opinion. And I think that the most important thing is that we ought to start talking openly about what we need to do in our schools to promote values, truthfulness, law-abidingness, respect for others, and to lift those things up and talk about why kids shouldn't have kids, why people should not practice violence. I think those things should be put out there.

I think that we could waste a lot of energy trying to revisit the extent to which the Government could order people to be involved in prayer or order prayer services. But I think that it's okay for schools to permit moments where people can pray on their own if that's what they want to do. But the main thing is, the schools ought to be teaching values. I think they should be, and when they got out of it, it was a big mistake.

Abortion

Q. Mr. President, I was wondering, why do you think that abortions of teenagers and any women should be able to stay legal in America? And what about it makes you think this way?

The President. I believe that it should be—I think that until the child—the present law is that until a baby can live outside his mother's womb on its own, it is up to the mother to make the decision. And that's what I think the law should be because in America there is a huge difference of opinion. The American people are divided deeply on it, about when the soul goes into the body, when a person becomes a human being. And not everybody agrees that all abortion is murder. Not everybody agrees that every abortion, under any circumstances, is wrong. Therefore, I don't think that all the mothers should be made criminal.

I think that abortion should be safe. It should be legal, but it should be rare. I think we should liberalize the adoption laws. I think we should encourage people to adopt children. I think we should make it easier for people to adopt children across racial lines. But I don't believe—in my own view, I support the decision of the Supreme Court that this decision ought to be a matter between women and their doctors. I don't think everybody else in society can say with absolute certainty that they know that.

And there's even big differences in the religious community over it. So I don't think that one view should be imposed on everybody when there's so much difference of opinion about it.

Mr. Jennings. Patience, why don't you give the mike to the young woman next to you, Jamie. Right beside you. Jamie.

Child Support

Q. I think there is a big problem in America about fathers not taking care of their chil-

ren, not paying child support. And I'm wondering if there's anything you could do to help.

The President. It's a huge problem, billions of dollars a year. There are a lot of children who are forced onto welfare because their absent fathers don't pay child support. And one of the things that we are trying to do is to make it easier to collect that child support, if fathers cross the State line, if they run away from their responsibility, to be able to have their paychecks have the child support taken out on the front end, to be able to deny the father certain credit privileges and other privileges until they pay the child support that they owe. I think we need a tough national system of child support enforcement and collection. That would do a lot to help families grow up with dignity and children without poverty.

Mr. Jennings. Jamie, you asked that question for a reason, did you?

Q. Yes.

Mr. Jennings. What is it?

Q. My dad is very wealthy. They got divorced about 6 years ago, and he is not paying the amount he should be paying. And we've been going to court for a very long time, and nothing has come out of it at all.

The President. Do you live in a different State from your father?

Q. Yes, he lives in California.

The President. See, that's a big problem because most of the child support laws are State-by-State laws. If the father lives in a different State from the child, it's easier to get out of. What we're trying to do is to set up some national standards so the children of this country will be protected and be taken care of.

Mr. Jennings. Do you think you're getting any closer? This is a question that seems to come up every year.

The President. Well, it's better than it used to be, and it's going to get better. If we pass our welfare reform proposal, it will be better because people should not be able to bring children into the world and just walk off and leave them. They ought to take responsibility for the children that they bring into the world. And we ought to do what we can. And yes, we're making some progress.

Mr. Jennings. Okay. Right here.

Q. Hello.

Mr. Jennings. What's your name, dear?

Q. Sara.

Health Care Reform

Mr. Clinton, I am very concerned that it is very hard to get health care in America. And one of those reasons is because not all doctors take Medicaid. And if you're on Medicaid, then sometimes the people in my area, the doctors, would not see me. For 4 months I could not get medication for asthma and I missed a month of school. And my school decided to penalize me, withhold all my credits for that semester, because they have a State law in Texas that says that you have to go to school a certain amount of days. And my school is not in compliance with that law. And I was wondering, what can you do to help this problem of, first of all, doctors—more incentive for doctors to take Medicaid, to see the people that need to be seen? And another one is, to help the schools understand that when a person is sick they should be more helpful instead of penalizing that student.

Mr. Jennings. Double-barreled.

The President. Well, let me say, first of all, I can do more about the first than the second. The schools, it depends upon whether the people who run the schools are sensitive, whether the counselors and the teachers really know what the kids' lives are like. And I think that that's something we have to keep working on, and that's beyond what the President can do.

But I can do something about the first. A lot of doctors don't take—I don't think it's right for doctors not to see Medicaid patients, but the reason a lot of them don't is because in many States, Medicaid, the Government health program for poor people, doesn't reimburse the doctors at the real costs of providing the service. And it's a lot of paperwork headache. One of the things that our health care will do is to put Medicaid folks in with other people in the same sort of health care plans. So we'll provide health care coverage for everybody, for the employed, for the unemployed, and people will be able to go into common health care plans so that doctors won't, in many cases, might not even know in the beginning whether they

have a Medicaid patient or somebody who works at the store down the street. And Medicaid people will be treated with the same, by the same coverage and have access to the same kind of dignified treatment that others do. And it will really make a huge difference.

Presidential Powers

Mr. Jennings. Put your hands down for just one second. How many of you think that when you bring up a problem to the President that he can actually go and solve it? They're fairly practical about that, because there are only so many problems a President can——

The President. Yes. Some things I can do. Some things I can't do. Some things I can do if other people will help me. And it's very—that's why I try to tell you what I can do and what I can't when you ask these questions.

Mr. Jennings. We'll be right back.

The President. We ought to say one thing about that when we come back.

Mr. Jennings. Which is?

The President. Which is what Purnell said, that—Teddy Roosevelt, who was President at the early—the first President of the 20th century—McKinley until 1901. Teddy Roosevelt said once that the greatest power of the Presidency was the bully pulpit, the ability to talk about these problems and to give other people the chance to be heard. Some of you, like Cotton, want me to change a Government policy here. But because of the bully pulpit of the Presidency, because Peter came here, he can be heard by people who never saw a cattle ranch before and may not understand that problem. And you get to ask me all kinds of questions. You got to—Patience got to ask me the question she wanted to ask about abortion. Sara got to ask the question she wanted to ask about health care. That's because this is a bully pulpit. So even some things that I don't have legal authority over, it's still important for the President to talk about and to let others talk about and even disagree with the President on because that's the way America learns and grows and debates.

So I think it's very important. Like you asked—you said the question about welfare. It's important for the American people to know that the reason most people don't get off welfare is because they or their children lose health care, not because they like being on welfare, not because they want a check from the Government. Most everybody would rather be out working. But when you go to work and you lose the health care, then you wonder what you're going to do if your kids get sick. That's a real pain. So these are important things.

Mr. Jennings. We'll be right back.

The President. Is it time to go?

Mr. Jennings. Yes. We'll be right back.

[*At this point, the television stations took a commercial break.*]

Mr. Jennings. Welcome back to our answering children's questions with the President here in the East Room. As it used to look, President Adams and Abigail Adams, the first inhabitants here, hanging up the laundry in those days, I bet it was not as much fun around here then.

The President. That's right.

Mr. Jennings. Such a precious room now that everybody's very, very self-conscience about what happens in here.

The President. Oh, yes.

Electromagnetic Fields and Cancer

Mr. Jennings. We had invited a young boy here today named Kevin Larm, who very much wanted to ask you a question, sir. Unfortunately, last night, here in Washington, he got sick, and he's in the hospital. But his brother has come. And before you meet his brother, Patrick, perhaps you'd like to see the problem which he has around the country. This is a problem that has come up in the news on several occasions about the kind of environmental problem that you may or may not be able to do something about.

Here's Kevin Larm.

[*At this point, a videotape was shown in which Kevin explained that many children, including himself, are suffering from cancer because of the electromagnetic fields near their homes.*]

Mr. Jennings. Well, Kevin comes from Omaha, and as I said, he's in the hospital here this morning, sir, but his brother, Patrick, is here.

Patrick, do you want to talk to the President?

Q. I want to ask you his question. I have heard that recent studies have linked EMF's to childhood cancers. Other countries, such as Sweden, are passing laws to set standards. As our President, can you help lower EMF's, so hopefully some childhood cancers can be prevented?

The President. That's something that we can do something about. We had a study in 1990 which was inconclusive about it. But you're right, Sweden has concluded that EMF's do lead to higher rates of cancer. So I have asked the person who runs the Environmental Protection Agency for our Government to do a review of this and to make a report to me in the near future to try to make a decision about what we should do.

I think we've got to see what the best available evidence is. But I, frankly, was somewhat impressed by the arguments made by the Swedes. We just have to look into it and see whether we think there's honestly evidence there. And if there is, then we have to take action. And we're looking into it. And you tell your brother to hang in there.

Mr. Jennings. You can probably tell him yourself, sir. I have a suspicion he's watching.

The President. Kevin, I hope you're watching this, and we're praying for you and pulling for you.

Keeping in Touch

Mr. Jennings. Mr. President, you know, it occurs to me at least, listening to all these kids ask their questions today, that they're in touch with problems that you may be out of touch with sometimes. Here you are in the White House, you're surrounded by an enormous entourage all the time. Do you ever feel out of touch?

The President. Yes, but that's one reason I really work hard to get out into the country and to walk the streets. I went to New Hampshire last week, had a town meeting in Nashua, and then I walked the streets in Keene, New Hampshire, and just shook hands with people and talked to them and listened to them. When people come to see me in the White House, I always ask them what the cab drivers are talking about. Because it's so easy for the President to get out of touch with what real people are thinking. I mean, it's a wonderful life, but you can see it's not a normal life. So you get really isolated, and you have to work to avoid it.

Mr. Jennings. One other thing I cannot help but to have noticed, there hasn't been a question this morning about Whitewater. We'll be right back. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, the television stations took a commercial break.*]

Mr. Jennings. Well, we've got about a minute left, Mr. President.

The President. I want to talk to you more about the prayer question.

Mr. Jennings. Okay. I must say that this year's group is incredibly eager and determined to ask their question. We've only got a minute or so left. Do you want to try to say something to them all?

The President. Well, do you want to take one more question?

Mr. Jennings. I don't think we have time, to be perfectly honest.

The President. And then I'll try to answer everyone who didn't get to ask a question. When you go through the line or when we go visit, then I'll try to answer your question.

Mr. Jennings. One thing I can tell you about the President, once you get him, when the broadcast is over, grab him. He'll be here all afternoon, driving his staff crazy.

Go ahead, sir. Final comments?

The President. Well, first I want to thank all of you for coming. I want to thank you for your questions. And I want to thank you for caring enough about all the things you raised. And I just want to encourage you in your lives. You know, we've got a big job to do in this country. And I have a big job to do to try to create more jobs and more opportunity. But we also have to have more people like you who really care about their friends and neighbors and family members. We have to rebuild our country from the ground up, safe streets, strong families, better schools, and a better chance. And I owe that to you to do my best, but I need you to do your best, too.

Heather, what were you going to say?

Mr. Jennings. Yes I was going to say, I just suddenly remembered, somebody told me, Heather has a handleable question.

McDonald's

Q. Well, I have a fun question for you. And I know you used to run in Arkansas, so I think you will like it. My favorite restaurant is McDonald's too. What do you get when you go there? [*Laughter*]

The President. What do I get when I go there? Normally, an Egg McMuffin or something for breakfast. Those are the big meals that I eat at McDonald's. My daughter and I used to go there sometimes on Sunday morning before Sunday school, and then Hillary and I would go and pick her up and we'd go to church. But we love to have McDonald's Egg McMuffins on Sunday morning.

Mr. Jennings. I must say, that's the first smile I've seen on Heather's face all morning.

The President. I'm glad you smiled, Heather. You've made me smile, too. You have a wonderful smile.

Mr. Jennings. Thank you, Mr. President, for having us in. And thank you all for coming. You can all come and say hello to him in person now.

The President. Thanks.

NOTE: The town meeting began at 11:30 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. Peter Jennings, ABC News, was the moderator for the program.

Statement by the Director of Communications on the President's Meeting With President Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia

March 19, 1994

Following the signing ceremony yesterday, the President met with President Izetbegovic of Bosnia-Herzegovina. The two leaders discussed next steps following yesterday's agreements. The President told President Izetbegovic that the United States will work with the European Union and other states to provide economic assistance for the rehabilitation and reconstruction of Bosnia. The President also told the Bosnian President that the United States is prepared to sign a bilateral assistance agreement establishing a framework for future technical and economic assistance.

The President confirmed that the United States would reopen our Embassy in Sarajevo in the near future. Ambassador Victor Jackovich has been resident in Vienna since last fall because of the security situation in Sarajevo. Our decision to reopen the Embassy underscores our commitment to Bosnia's security and stability. The President reaffirmed the intention of the United States to participate in the implementation of a viable peace agreement among the parties in Bosnia.

The President also met with President Tudjman of Croatia. The two leaders discussed Croatia's role in helping make the agreements signed today succeed. The United States will work with Croatia and the Bosniac-Croat Federation toward their full integration in Western political, economic, and security arrangements. The President announced that the United States is ready to sign a bilateral aid agreement to establish a framework for future technical and economic assistance for Croatia. The United States also is prepared to sign a science and technology agreement and to open negotiations on a bilateral investment treaty and a double taxation treaty.

To help alleviate the humanitarian situation and to assist Croatia to care for refugees and persons displaced as a result of the conflict, the United States will provide $2 million for the "Hospital Partnership" and $1.5 million for medical supplies.

The President announced that Croatia would be allowed to open consulates in New York, Cleveland, Pittsburgh, and Los Angeles. To further advance the contacts between our nations, the United States will double the Fulbright program and donate $50,000 worth of American studies books to the recently rebuilt American Studies Library in Dubrovnik.

The President reaffirmed United States support for the territorial integrity and sovereignty of Croatia and committed to help secure the peaceful solution to the problems of the UN Protected Areas (UNPA's). To this end, the United States will continue to use sanctions and other economic pressure against Serbia in the most effective way possible. We also intend to play an active diplomatic role in assisting Croatia in resolving its dispute with the Krajina Serbs.

The United States firmly believes that adherence to the highest standards of human and civil rights for Croatia's Serb community is an essential condition for the reintegration of the UNPA's. President Tudjman's stated commitments in this regard are constructive; his proposals for autonomy for Serb-majority areas provide a good basis for beginning negotiations.

Exchange With Reporters in Miami, Florida

March 20, 1994

North Korea

Q. Anything new on North Korea, Mr. President?

The President. As you know the Board of Governors of the IAEA is meeting tomorrow. Our goals remain the same. We haven't changed our policy. We did do quite a bit of work yesterday, spent a good deal of time discussing this. But I really don't have anything else to say at this time. I'm talking to our allies. And we're working through this and what our options are.

Q. Is there any possibility that sanctions can be avoided at this point?

The President. Is there what?

Q. Do you have any reason to believe that sanctions can be avoided at this point?

The President. Well, of course, they can. They can—that really is a decision that's up to the North Koreans as much as anything else. But there are—we also have some hope that they will go forward. They did let the inspectors in; then they didn't; they did. There seems to be a difference of opinion within their country about how to proceed. So to some extent the ball is still clearly in their court. But we are proceeding to consider all of our options and to talk with our allies about it.

Q. What is your hope based on, that they might allow full inspections, sir?

The President. I didn't say I hope. He didn't ask me if I hoped they would.

Q. You said that there's still a hope, you said?

The President. Well, of course, there is. There appear to be people within North Korea that want to proceed to normalize the relations of their country with the international community and people who don't. And we'll just have to see what they do now, where we go from here. But our objectives remain what they have always been. We have been entirely reasonable and forthcoming. And we have also worked very closely with not only our strong allies in South Korea but with the Japanese, the Chinese, and others who share many, or if not all of our objectives. So we're going to keep going forward, see what happens in the next few days. But the next step is to see what happens at the Board of Governors meeting.

Q. Are tensions ratcheting up so high—there appears to be some concern that this may evolve into some kind of armed conflict, given the height of the rhetoric?

The President. Well, I have done everything I could to avoid ratcheting up the tensions while being firm in the objectives of our policy and what I think are in the interests of not just the United States but the people of that part of the world and Asia. So we're just working ahead.

I'm not trying to ratchet up the tensions, I'm just trying to work through this in a very deliberate but very firm and disciplined way, and that's what we'll continue to do.

Thank you.

[*At this point, the President moved from White House reporters to a group of Miami reporters and continued answering questions. His remarks are joined in progress.*]

Health Care

The President. ——have a system of comprehensive benefits, leave Medicare alone—it works—but add prescription drugs, and phase in over time options other than nursing homes for long-term care, and cover people who work through the workplace. Nine out of ten people who have private insurance are already covered through the workplace. This is a very, very big deal. And it is imperative if we're ever going to do what we ought to do to give security to the American people.

We've got to reform the insurance system. You can't have in any given time 39 million people without health insurance. You can't have 113 million—30 million Americans with lifetime limits on their policies. You can't

have 81 million Americans with preexisting conditions so that they can't change jobs or they're paying insurance premiums that are too high. You can't have rates that discriminate against older Americans when older Americans are the fastest growing group of our population, and more and more of them want to work. So these are all things that have to be dealt with. And I think that the Congress is going to face up to their responsibilities this year. We've got the economy turned around. We're going in the right direction with the economy. We're going to have welfare reform—got some very important school reforms going. But we have to face the obligation to deal with health care reform.

Cuba and Crime Legislation

Q. ——rule out the possibility to talk with Fidel Castro in the near future?

The President. Yes, I have no plans to do that.

The other thing I want to emphasize to you, that before we get to health care—this is a very important issue here in Florida, and I talked with the Attorney General about it in some length just yesterday—that Congress must move quickly to pass the crime bill. In addition to all the interest groups trying to kill health care reform, delay on the crime bill could cause us significant problems. So that's the other big objective. Next week when Congress meets, or this week now, we've got to go ahead and pass that crime bill. I feel very good about where we are on that.

Q. ——any change in the current policy?

The President. My policy is clear, and I have no plans to change it.

Immigration

Q. Mr. President, on immigration, the State of Florida is talking about a lawsuit against the Federal Government to recoup the monies that this State pays on incoming refugees. Should the Federal Government help pay for that?

The President. We should pay more. And under my administration we are paying more than ever before. This situation has been allowed to develop, in my judgment, to a very severe degree when I became President only a little over a year ago. Since that time, we have moved aggressively to try to alleviate the health, the education, and the welfare costs that States bear because of immigration. The States that have the biggest burdens, California, Florida, and Texas, to some extent New York, have not been fully reimbursed. But I'm moving ahead to try to alleviate this burden. It isn't fair. National policies, or lack of policies, and the inability of our country to control our borders in the face of illegal immigration, are not the fault of any particular State. And it is a national responsibility. But we are moving in the Congress to try to alleviate these burdens. I worked hard—we made some real progress last year. We're going to make some more this year. And I think Florida should do what they can to keep the pressure on us. But they need to know that I'm on the side of the Florida officials on this one. It's just going to take some time to work ourselves out of a very big hole that I found when I came here.

Thank you all.

Q. Welcome to Florida, Mr. President.

The President. Glad to be back.

NOTE: The exchange began at approximately 3:30 p.m. at Miami International Airport. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Memorandum on Sanctions Against Serbia and Montenegro

March 20, 1994

Presidential Determination No. 94–17

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Provision of Assistance for Enforcement of Sanctions Against Serbia and Montenegro

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by section 614(a)(1) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, 22 U.S.C. 2364(a)(1) (the "Act"), I hereby determine that it is important to the security interests of the United States to furnish $6.923 million in funds made available under chapter 6 of part II of the Act for fiscal year 1994 to furnish assistance for sanctions enforcement

against Serbia and Montenegro without regard to any provision of law within the scope of section 614(a)(1), including section 660 of the Act. I hereby authorize the furnishing of such assistance.

You are hereby authorized and directed to transmit this determination to the Congress and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on March 21.

Exchange With Reporters in Deerfield Beach, Florida

March 21, 1994

North Korea

Q. Anything new on North Korea, Mr. President?

The President. Let me just say, about North Korea, the IAEA has made their judgment; now there will be consultations at the U.N.

I think you know—I think President Kim has confirmed that I sent him a letter at the end of last week. And we have agreed that it is in our national interest and the interest of the security of the people of South Korea and the security of our armed forces there to proceed with the *Patriot* deployment, so we will do that.

As to the next issues, I think we have to just wait and see what will happen. I can't say more today. We're going to have to work on this on a day-to-day basis. I will say again, I want to emphasize this decision on the *Patriots* is purely defensive in nature. But it is appropriate—General Luck has said he thinks it's necessary as the continuing modernization of our forces proceeds. What happens now is still in the court of the North Koreans, and we must hope that they will do the right thing.

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:47 p.m. at Century Village East. In his remarks, he referred to President Kim Yong-sam of South Korea and Gen. Gary E. Luck, senior U.S. commander in South Korea. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks in a Health Care Forum in Deerfield Beach

March 21, 1994

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Thank you for that sign back there. Can you hear me in the back? Good. Everybody sit down and relax now.

Hillary and I are delighted to be back here at Century Village. We liked it the first time; we like it better this time.

I want to thank Larry Smedley for that introduction; Joanne Pepper for her support of health care; your fine, fine Congressman Harry Johnston for his leadership and support of our efforts in Congress; and my good friend Governor Lawton Chiles for his kind remarks and his strong leadership. I also want to note the presence here in the audience today of Congressman Peter Deutsch and Congressman Alcee Hastings; a host of State officials, including your Lieutenant Governor Buddy MacKay, Attorney General Bob Butterworth, and many others, legislators and other State officials. I want to thank the mayor, Mayor Albert Capellini, for giving me a cap. If I put it on in a few minutes, I'll be just like most of you, protecting myself from the sun. I want to thank Mr. and Mrs. Levy for having us here at Century Village and recognize my good friends Michael and Kitty Dukakis who are here with us today. Thank you for being here.

Ladies and gentleman, 2 years ago Hillary and I came here when I was running for President. We sought the support of the people of Broward County and south Florida and all of this State. We did extremely well here on Super Tuesday, much better than anyone predicted that we would. And we nearly carried this heavily Republican State in November, and I haven't given up on it for next time.

I believe it happened because Americans were sick and tired of their politics and their headlines being dominated every day by distraction, by division, by destruction. I said that I wanted to get away from distraction and focus the American people on the real problems that we face and our real opportunities, that I wanted to go beyond division to bring our people back together again

across the lines of race and age and region and income and party, and that I was tired of destruction. I thought it was time we started building again. Americans are real good when we work on building things and getting together and moving forward. We're absolutely unstoppable.

Even though I'm kind of a mediocre golfer and not a very good baseball player at all, I'm glad I'm here in Florida for spring training, because while the baseball players are working on their swings, I came to tell you that I'm still in Washington going to bat for you, and I will every day I am the President of the United States.

You heard the Congressman mention a little of this, but I want to take just a minute to give you a progress report. When I took office, we had seen the 4 slowest years of economic growth since the Great Depression, almost no job growth. People said our deficit was going to be over $300 billion a year. It is now commonly agreed that the first year of this administration was the most productive in a generation: 2.1 million new jobs in 13 months; the highest growth rate in 10 years in the fourth quarter of last year; dramatic increases in sales of cars and homes; an economic program that led to lower interest rates and higher investments and more jobs and opportunity.

We have done something for your grandchildren and your children. We've reformed the college loan program to lower the interest rates and make the repayment terms better. We passed the national service program that this year will provide 20,000 young Americans and 2 years from now 100,000 young Americans a chance to earn their way through college by serving their communities at the grassroots level to make our streets safer, our people healthier, our people smarter and stronger. We finally passed the family leave bill after 7 years of trying to make sure that people don't lose their jobs if they have to take time off from work when a baby's born or a parent is sick and needs the help of a child. And after 7 years we passed the Brady bill, to begin the work of making our streets safer.

This year the Congress is up there right now working on a comprehensive crime bill to put another 100,000 police officers on the street, to take automatic weapons and semiautomatic weapons off the street, to provide alternative punishment to young people and drug treatment for people who need it, and a ''three strikes and you're out'' law so we don't parole people who are serious dangers to society.

They're working on a welfare reform law to make welfare a second chance not a way of life. They're working on a campaign finance reform law that Governor Chiles worked his heart out on as a Senator. We're finally going to get it this year. And most important, we are working on doing something that started 60 years ago, finally, finally providing health care security for all Americans that can never be taken away.

Many of you in this audience remember when Franklin Roosevelt led the struggle to create Social Security. You were there when John Kennedy and Lyndon Johnson fought to create Medicare, a solemn pact with our senior citizens. Many of you also remember, I hope, that Franklin Roosevelt and Harry Truman and Lyndon Johnson and Jimmy Carter, and yes, even President Nixon all tried and failed in the face of special interest opposition to guarantee health security for all Americans. But we can do it this year, and we must.

There are those who say there is no health care crisis. Well, as always happens when we get up to the brink on health reform, inflation has dropped a little in the cost of health care. That's one thing our health care reform has already done, brought the rising cost of health care into the point where it's rising more slowly. But you let them kill it this time, and it'll go right back to the way it was for the last 12 years, going up at 2 and 3 times the rate of inflation.

Even now, 2 million Americans lose their health insurance every month, 100,000 of them for good, forever. Fifty-eight million Americans are without health insurance at some time during every year in a country of 255 million. Eighty-one million Americans have a preexisting condition in their family so that they can never change the job they have because they couldn't get new insurance, or they have to pay higher rates for the insurance they have, or they can't get insurance at all. And 133 million Americans,

a majority of us, have lifetime limits on our health coverage so that when we need it the most, we can run out of health insurance.

Now, I believe that qualifies as a crisis. I also know that everybody in this country who is still working for a living, who does not work for the Federal Government or a very big and completely secure corporation, can lose their health insurance even if they've got it. I also know that because of the cost of health care going up at 2 and 3 times the rate of the inflation, there are other plans in the Congress that seek to cut Medicare or cut Medicaid increases without doing one thing to try to help our senior citizens and without proposing a comprehensive plan that guarantees you that Medicare services will not be cut. I am here to tell you that we're not going to mess up what's right about American health care. Medicare works. Our doctors, our nurses, our hospitals, our medical research works, and we're going to keep them intact and improve our support for them. That's what we ought to do.

My fellow Americans, if we want everybody in this country to have health care, we've only got three choices: We can guarantee coverage through the workplace through private insurance; we can pass a tax and cover everyone; or we can decide what a lot of the special interest groups and the Congress, people in the Congress hope we'll decide, which is one more time, we just can't figure out how to do it.

Every other advanced country with which we are competing for the future has figured out how to give all their people health care security. We have not been able to figure out how to do it. You know why? It's because the people who are making a killing on the financing of the system don't want us to figure it out. I say, give it to the people.

I want to tell you what I think we should do: We ought to have guaranteed private insurance; we ought to keep the choice of doctors and health care plans in the hands of consumers, people who are actually having to deal with the care, not their employers or the insurance companies; we ought to outlaw insurance abuses like charging older people more than younger people for their insurance or eliminating people with preexisting conditions; we ought to guarantee those health benefits at work; and we ought to protect Medicare and improve it.

First, I believe that guaranteed health coverage is important because if you don't do it, you're never going to bring costs under control, and all the rest of us will be suffering from medical inflation from now until Kingdom come. And a lot of you are going to deal with the fact that your children and grandchildren are facing bankruptcy because they don't have the kind of security you have under Medicare.

I also believe the benefits package has to be a good one. If it doesn't include primary and preventive care, you will have children who are sicker than they ought to be; you'll have women who ought to have access to mammographies and men who ought to have cholesterol tests and things of that kind that you won't have. This is very important. And people have got to know that this is going to be there and can never be taken away.

The second thing—I want to be very clear on this—the second thing that our plan does is to preserve, indeed to expand, the right of the American people to choose their doctor or their health care plan. Now, if you're on Medicare, you can choose your doctor. But slightly more than half the people in the country who are insured at work already today have lost their right to choose their health care plan and their doctor. They don't have it today. And if we don't do anything, the rising cost of medical care will force more and more employers to take from their employees the right to choose their doctor or their health care plan.

Under our system, every American in the work force will get three choices: They can choose their doctor individually; they can choose a given health care plan; or they can choose another plan. They'll have at least three choices. And if they don't like the choice they made, every year they get to make another one. That's the way we ought to do it. That will guarantee the highest quality. It will protect the interest of our doctors and nurses. It will be the right thing to do.

The third thing we've got to do is stop some of these insurance company abuses. We have got to stop people from dropping their insured people. We've got to stop people from cutting benefits to the bone. We can't

have people with their rates going up just because they get sick. After all, you have insurance because you might get sick. So when you get sick, which is the reason you bought the insurance in the first place, should you have to have higher rates? Of course not. We shouldn't have lifetime limits. Insurance ought to mean what it used to mean back when it was started by Blue Cross during the Depression: Pay a fair price for security, and when you're sick, your health care benefits are there for you. That's what insurance used to mean, and it can mean that again.

Now, I think the easiest way to do this is just to expand coverage at the workplace. Why? Because 8 out of 10 Americans who have no insurance are working or are in working families. And 9 out of 10 Americans who have private insurance get it at the workplace. So the simplest way is to say that employers and employees who aren't covered should purchase insurance and to provide discounts for small businesses who can't afford it otherwise. That is the simplest way to do it.

The Government should provide the discounts for the small business and cover the unemployed. This approach builds on what works. It's easy, it's simple, it will make sure that everyone is covered.

Why are some people fighting it? They say it's bad for small business. Let me tell you something folks, 70 percent of the small business people in this country cover their employees. What about them? They're at an unfair competitive disadvantage to those people in the same business they're in who don't cover their employees. And I'll tell you something else, I meet small business person after small business person who says, "I'm embarrassed that every year I have to raise the copay and the deductible because my rates are 35 or 40 percent more expensive than the people in the Government are paying or the people from big business are paying." We are going to change that. That's what Governor Chiles has tried to do here in Florida; that's what we're going to do for America.

And let me say finally that no health care reform can pass any true test unless it is good for older Americans. Dr. Arthur Flemming, a former U.S. Commissioner of Aging and a fighter for older Americans in the tradition of Claude Pepper, has called my proposal, and I quote, "The best thing for older Americans since Medicare." That's why so many senior groups have said that our approach is the best option for senior citizens and why I was so proud that Larry Smedley of the National Council of Senior Citizens would come here today to endorse our efforts and give you all those caps to keep you from expiring in this heat.

Under our approach, if you get Medicare, you keep it. Your choice of doctor is protected. I know that's important, because every older American deserves the security of quality health care. But under our approach you get more. I want to expand benefits. We want to have coverage for prescription drugs which costs older Americans more than anything today.

Since I started running for President, the number one complaint I have heard from people who are on Medicare is that they are not poor enough to be on Medicaid; they don't want to be that poor, but they are not rich enough to pay their outrageous drug bills. We want to do something about it, and that's why our plan covers prescription medicine for senior citizens.

We also begin to provide coverage for long-term care where you want it, at home or in your community. I want to thank the wonderful "We Care" volunteers for greeting us today and for walking Hillary and me in here. I understand they help many of you get medicine or get a little bit of help to stay at home. But not everybody is lucky enough to have a "We Care." Believe me, I know. I meet people who don't every week. That's why we need to make a start in helping people to afford care where they prefer it, in their homes or in communities like this one. It's not right to force people into nursing homes when they could do just fine at home if they had a little help from their friends.

Let me also say that I know we can strengthen Medicare and make some savings in the Medicare program, but only—listen to me—only if we cover everybody and if everyone has medical inflation go down. Under our plan we still expect Medicare spending to go up at twice the rate of inflation, not 3 times the rate of inflation, which is what's going to happen if we don't do

something to change. Medicare goes up at 3 times the rate of inflation, your premiums under Medicare go up more for the same health care, under our plan, less inflation, and we use the savings for prescription drugs and for health care at home or in the community. It is a good deal for the senior citizens of America.

Let me make one other point. We must also invest more and more, not less and less, in medical research into all kinds of problems but especially one which I know concerns many of you in this audience today and that's Alzheimer's disease and the new drug therapies to treat Alzheimer's, into things which cause cancer and to the causes of osteoporosis, into what we can do to prevent heart disease. America leads the world in cutting-edge research. And under our plan we actually increase the funds going to medical research.

The opponents of our plan have tried to confuse the issue by making it seem complicated. They ignore the fact that the system we have today is the most complicated on the face of the Earth. The principles of our plan are simple: Guarantee private insurance to every American; let you choose your doctor and your health plan; outlaw insurance company abuses; guarantee health benefits at work for everyone who works; preserve and strengthen Medicare for older Americans by adding the prescription drugs and long-term care benefits. That's our approach, and that's our opportunities.

But let me say this, there are a lot of people who are making money out of this system today who don't want it to change, even though we can change it and improve, not weaken, health care. One group of health insurers has already spent 14 million on health care ads to scare you about the cause of health care reform.

And what are the special interests saying? Led by the extreme right of the Republican Party, they are warning of a grim future. I say that because we do have some good Republicans who want health care reform, and we hope they'll be at least free to vote with us in the Congress as we work toward it. That's a message to their leaders.

These guys that—no kidding, they're up there saying all over again, they say, this is socialized medicine; this is rationing. This is private health insurance. This is what every other economy with an advanced standard of living in the world has done but the United States; that's what it is. It's the same old thing they said when Roosevelt tried to do health care reform, when Kennedy fought for Medicare.

Listen to this, when Kennedy fought for Medicare back in 1962, a movie actor in California who later became the Governor of his State and the leader of our country—listen to this—urged listeners to oppose Medicare. He said, ''If you don't do this, one of these days you and I are going to spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in America when men were free.''

Now, to his credit, by the time he became President, Mr. Reagan didn't try to totally dismantle the Medicare system. But they're using the same rhetoric today. Once we've put it in, they won't try to take it out. They'll try to take credit for it just like they do with Social Security and everything else.

Make no mistake about it, the guardians of gridlock, the people who liked our national politics when it was about distraction, division, and destruction, are doing everything they can to stop health care reform. If you will help me, it will be good for your health because we won't let them, if we stay together.

My fellow Americans, I cannot outspend the opponents of health care reform. They have more money than I can possibly raise, especially if I'm working for you every day. But I can fight, and you can fight with me. And we can keep working, and we can support Congressmen like your Congressman who believe that the time has long since passed when America should be able to continue making excuses for no prescription drugs, no long-term care in the home or in the community, and not even providing decent, basic coverage to the working families of this country. We can do better, and with your help, we will.

Thank you very much, and God bless you all.

[*At this point, Hillary Clinton spoke about the personal dimensions of the health care reform battle and then asked for questions.*]

Q. [*Inaudible*]—about the 28 million veterans in this—what about—can you hear me?

Hillary Clinton. Let me repeat this gentleman's question. His question is, what about the 28 million veterans?

Well, the President's still visiting. Let me say that the President's health care reform has been endorsed by all of the major veterans' service organizations because it is the only one that tries to preserve and strengthen the veterans health system. And there's a very specific way we offer to do that. Those of you who are veterans, and I imagine there are many of you in this crowd—if you are like my father was, that was one of the most important parts of your life. And he never could understand as he got older why he could not take his Medicare and go to a VA hospital, as he chose to do so. And we've heard that from many veterans.

Under the President's health care reform plan, if you're a veteran with Medicare or Medigap or other insurance, you can use the VA system. You will no longer be locked out of the system that is there for veterans.

Now, veterans with service-connected disabilities and low-income veterans will always retain their preference, because we have to take care of them first. But there are many facilities around our country that can accommodate millions of our veterans who can bring their Medicare and insurance dollars. So we are going to take care of our veterans.

Thank you.

Q. Mrs. Clinton, if this program is put into effect, this reformed health plan, will the Congressmen and Senators assume the same payments as we do?

Mrs. Clinton. Yes, and the President, too. We are going to have one health care system for everybody, including Congress and the President.

Q. I'm president of the Florida Nurses Association. And you have made it clear that you will veto any health care reform bill that does not guarantee coverage for all Americans. Will you make a commitment to veto any bill that doesn't also include tough and effective cost controls? And could you comment on the role of advanced-practice nurses in the health care reform?

The President. She said that—this lady is from the nurses association here in Florida. Give her a hand. [*Applause*] And the American Nurses Association have been among the strongest supporters of our plan. I appreciate that. She said I said that I would veto any bill that didn't provide universal coverage; would I also veto a bill that didn't have cost controls? And would I comment on the role of advanced practice nursing?

Let me answer the second question first. We have achieved so much support among nurses in part because our plan permits the widest possible use of nurses to do things that they are properly trained to do anywhere in the country. And secondly, it's not as easy to say yes or no on that. I think there have to be cost controls in the plan. If there aren't some guarantees of controlling costs, we won't be able to prove to the Congressional Budget Office how much the plan costs, and we won't be able to pass it. So as a practical matter, no plan will pass and come to my desk unless there are clear, disciplined measures to make sure that costs are held down. It can't happen. But I don't want to get into a fight about what kinds of measures we'll accept or not accept.

Q. I want you to know that we love you. And the reason we love you is because you've shown by words and more important by deeds that you love us, too.

The President. Thank you.

Q. I have two questions. Why do we need those parasites known as the insurance business? And I have one more question, and the other question is, can we end up with 50 alliances instead of say, 5,000? If you want real competition, why not one alliance or two for the more populous States? That should be the real competition, because we'll show the industry where we come from.

The President. Let me answer the insurance question, and I'll let Hillary answer the alliance question. Okay? We'll split it up, because a lot of you have single-payer signs up, and I want to talk abut that.

There are basically, obviously, two ways to get universal coverage. You can do it through a single-payer system, or you can do it through an employer-employee shared cost system for private insurance.

Here is why I think our plan is better and why I wouldn't eliminate all the insurance companies. First of all, I feel compelled to

tell you, sir, that there are some insurance companies, believe it or not, who have not contributed to that television ad campaign against our plan, because they do favor universal control—I mean, universal coverage for all Americans.

Now, here's why I think it's—our plan is better. First of all, I think that it's clear that some of the insurance companies, particularly bigger ones, do a good job of trying to manage the health care system and manage costs. And if you have enough people in a big insurance pool, they can get their administrative costs down almost as low as you have in the Medicare program if the pools are big enough. That's the second question you asked. And they really have acquired quite a lot of expertise.

Secondly, as a practical matter, there are a lot of awfully good people who are working in this industry. And I don't think we should throw them all out of work. The problem is that in our system you've got 1,500 separate companies writing thousands of different policies, so you have to hire all these people to figure out who's not covered. If we had a rational private insurance system, the insurance companies can make a valuable contribution without bankrupting the system.

I also believe, as a practical matter, based on—we have Members of Congress here who may have a different opinion, but my reading of the Congress is that we have a better chance to pass guaranteed private insurance than the single-payer system, because I think it's simpler, easier, and less disruptive. But I also think, on the merits, it's the right thing to do.

Now, let me let Hillary answer the question about the alliances.

Mrs. Clinton. Well, I think that if you have the States making the decisions, some States will only have one; some will only have two; some of the larger ones may need more than two. But it's not going to be thousands. It will only be probably 100 or 120 at the most, the way we look at the population. So I don't think that will be a problem.

And the other thing about single payer is in the President's plan, each State has the right to be a single-payer State if they so choose. And so that is something we want local people to make a decision about.

Q. Hillary and Mr. President, to quote you about ''we'll watch it.'' That happened to my wife. She died because a doctor said, ''We'll watch it.''

Now, as a little aside, Mr. President, our honorable Governor will concur, we do have the best health care in the world right here in Florida. Our number two industry is citrus, oranges and grapefruit—has the best health care for Florida at the moment. Thank you.

The President. Go ahead.

[*A participant asked about health care coverage for mental illness.*]

Mrs. Clinton. I wish that this gentleman had the microphone so you could have heard. He made the point that a third of the people who are homeless have mental health problems. Many people in our prisons have mental health problems. And many Americans have mental health and substance abuse problems. We want to begin covering mental health problems. And in the benefits package the President has proposed, that will begin because it is not fair to turn our backs on mental illness like schizophrenia or clinical depression and not treat it like a disease. And in fact, if we began to treat it, it will actually help more people and save us all money. And so we're going to start doing that and beginning to treat mental health right.

Q. ——Mr. President. And to Hillary—Hillary, I know you've been pushing the primary physician. And even though I'm on a board with a lot of hospitals and doctors, how are you going to get rid of all these specialists who charge millions and millions of dollars for IRS, salary, MRI's, and scans? We need primary health care. Will you push that, please?

Mrs. Clinton. Yes, we do need more primary health care physicians, and we're going to try to create more and also advanced-practice nurses and physician assistants because we really need a team of doctors and nurses and other health care professionals to work together on primary care so that our specialists, then, can get the good referrals that they need to take care of people.

The President. Don't let—let me just say this: Don't let anybody tell you, scare you, into saying that we are for undermining the American people having enough specialists.

That's a load of hooey. Right now we've got enough specialists for 30 years, but we don't have enough primary-care physicians in most States in the country. So we'll take care of the specialists, but we have to have our primary physicians first.

Q. Mr. President, I realize that you're trying to redo the medical program. The problem that I'm facing, and I might be the youngest one in the crowd, is I have somebody at home who has applied for Medicare disability and should be eligible. And what is happening to this person is over a year ago or a year and half ago, this person was denied it twice. It has gone to Federal court. We have an honorable lawyer, and the judges are writing one thing and saying another. And what I'd like to do—and I made myself a promise I was going to do this today, I'll be glad to pass it on to you—I would like you to look at—may I come forward?

The President. I'll have somebody come get it.

Q. Well, I could come forward.

And I have to say to you, that while you are fixing or redoing a new prescription for medicine, I think you need to look at this documentation and talk to—I'm very disappointed, but I know Senator Graham who I have been working with on this has the whole file. And I think there are a lot of disabled people, I might be one of them next, that need help and need a system that's ethical and moral.

And I thank you for listening to me, and I wish you good luck because we need it.

The President. Thank you very much.

Q. Mr. President, I'd like to tell you what happened to my mother. She needed a operation and was told to go to a doctor to get this operation. The doctor said, "Yes, you need a gallstone operation, but my price is $5,000." My father says, "I can give you my life savings of $1,000; I don't have $5,000." He said, "Mr. Segal, if you don't have money to go in a taxi, you ride in a subway." And he left.

The President. I think what you said speaks for itself. And thank you for having the courage to tell us. Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, a lot of people here know me. I've been coordinating your health care plan for south Florida since the Inauguration. And I just want to comment that it's really a pleasure to do so. But I'd like to ask you what's asked of me when I give speeches around. They say, "Mr. Brodin, how does this lower or lessen their bureaucracy? If anything, you're going to create another level of bureaucracy." Could they hear it from your lips, that I prize your words greatly, and explain to them as I have tried, how it will not only not multiply it, but it will actually significantly lessen it. And by the way, it's a pleasure to work with you, too.

The President. Here's why it will lessen the bureaucracy. Look what—what runs the bureaucracy up today? Talk to any doctor or nurse. Talk to these nurses here. You have 1,500 separate health insurance companies writing thousands and thousands of different policies, each of them with different coverages or different copays or different deductibles. Once you standardize the benefit package and standardize the coverage, then you make it possible for every person to fill out one form. The insured person can fill out one form, a simple form. The nurse at the hospital or the clinic can fill out one form. You will drastically cut the paperwork, the insurance people will be processing one form.

So I want to—the people—you will need fewer jobs in clerical work in hospitals, clinics, and insurance companies. You will need more jobs in providing home health care, community-based health care, and doing other things. But it will be, from a pure paperwork point of view, it will be much simpler because of the reform of the insurance packages.

Now, what that means is the little insurance companies will either have to resort to selling supplemental policies or go into cooperative arrangements so they can insure people in big pools and make money the way grocery stores do, a little bit of money on a lot of people instead of a lot of money on a few people.

But that's why it will be much simpler. The central benefit package in the common system—and everybody carries a little card around like that card up there and just files for the health care.

Q. Thank you. That's my most frequently asked question——

Q. [*Inaudible*]—dedicated State employee. My name is—and I've been deprived of all my State benefits for the past two years. My dad in Cleveland has had to pay for my Blue Cross-Blue Shield for me. And I just—[*inaudible*]—grave injustice. And I'm just asking for help from you and also from the Governor, because I've been calling his office for the last 2 years to help me, and no one has helped me. And I was a devoted State employee and the only girl in my office in Broward County, and I don't deserve it—the division of hotels and restaurants.

Mrs. Clinton. Thank you. We will look into that. But your concern and your feeling obviously goes far beyond your own case because people lose their jobs, then they lose their health care benefits.

Q. But I was a loyal——

Mrs. Clinton. And they can be loyal, hard-working people. And you don't deserve it. And when I think about that——

Q. [*Inaudible*]—and they crucified me for no reason.

Mrs. Clinton. We'll look into that, thank you.

But what we are going to try to do is eliminate the problem. The problem should be eliminated so that when you lose your job, you still have insurance. You don't have to worry about it anymore.

Q. [*Inaudible*].

The President. Medical overbilling—there's a special provision in the plan that will enable us to do that.

Again, if you have everybody covered in the uniform system, it will be much easier to see whether there is overbilling than there is now.

Q. Your health care plan is great, great for people who have existing problems, also, good for my grandma and her contemporaries. But what about my generation and my mom's? Will there still be enough money for these funds for our security?

The President. Absolutely. Here's the thing. If we don't do something now, then there may not be enough money for adequate health care because we can't have another 10 years when the cost of health care goes up at 2 and 3 times the rate of inflation, so people pay more money for the same health care.

And also, keep in mind, our plan covers things for your generation that aren't covered now like medicine and preventive care and mental health coverage, things that aren't covered now. So the answer to your question is your generation has a lot better chance if you pass a plan and we slow the growth of health care cost.

We could stay here tomorrow at dawn. You've been great being out here in all this hot weather.

Thank you so much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:23 p.m. at Century Village East. In his remarks, he referred to Lawrence Smedley, executive director, National Council of Senior Citizens; Joanne Pepper, cousin of the late Congressman and senior citizen advocate, Claude Pepper, and; Michael Dukakis, former Presidential candidate, and his wife Kitty. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a Presidential Dinner in Miami, Florida

March 21, 1994

Thank you, Governor, for your kind remarks. And thank you, my fellow Americans, for that wonderful, wonderful reception that you gave to Hillary and to me tonight, not only for the phenomenal amount of funds which you have given and raised but for the spirit in which you have done it and for the reasons for which you have done it.

I want to thank my good friend Bob Graham for what he said and for the guidance that he used to give me when we were seatmates in the Governors' conference. Lieutenant Governor Buddy MacKay and all the Members of Congress who are here and the other officials. If I might say, one former Congressman who's here that I think the world of, Dante Fascell, I'm glad to see you, sir. I know you have the Speaker of the House here and many State legislators but too many for me to mention, I suppose, and I'm glad to see all of you here. I have always loved coming to Florida and working with you. And I want to say a special word of thanks to Chuck Mangione for playing such wonderful music to us tonight. I want to thank all the dinner chairs, Bud and Marvin and Mitch Berger and Larry Hawkins and

Jorge Perez and Monte Friedkin and Howard Glicken and everybody else that worked so hard on this.

This is an amazing dinner. It reminds me of why we got into this in the first place, what you have said to me and to Hillary tonight. I also want to thank those of you who saw us on television as Harry and Louise and thought we were better than the first ad.

I thank David Wilhelm for the fine work that he has done. And I thank all of you for making this a wonderful, very brief stop for us. And today, as Hillary said, I played a little golf with Bud Stack and Bob Farmer and Arnold Friedman and my brother-in-law, Hugh Rodham, and Raymond Floyd, who, needless to say, was slightly better than the rest of us. [*Laughter*] And I thought to myself—we played this one short par-four hole that had big bunkers in the front of it, and this is the kind of thing that keeps people doing things they shouldn't do, like trying to be good golfers when you know it's never going to happen. [*Laughter*] But at the end of one stroke, my brother-in-law, Hugh, and I and Raymond Floyd were on the green in one. So I thought to myself, I never get to putt for an eagle; I'll keep coming for years now. [*Laughter*]

I say that because the spark of hope is what keeps us all going. I say it because don't you ever forget that when our opponents have nothing else to offer, when they don't have a health care plan, and they don't have an economic plan, and they don't want to vote for any tough decisions to reduce the deficit, and they are mad because the Democrats are now the engine of change on issues like welfare reform and crime, then they resort to the politics of division and distraction and destruction, almost like angry people that want to bring the house down instead of help to build it up. Well, my friends, we aim to keep on building it up, and you've helped us to do it tonight.

We've got a lot of help in Washington from Floridians, and starting with your wonderful Attorney General Janet Reno, and our EPA Administrator Carol Browner. But we also see the example of what we want to do in the work that is being done here by your leaders in Florida.

In 1992, when Al and Tipper Gore and Hillary and I campaigned all across this country, we did it because we really wanted to change this country. I was having as much fun as I had ever had in my life being Governor. I wasn't tired of doing it, even though I'd been doing it for 12 years. I was just sort of getting warmed up, about to get the hang of it. I got into the race for President for the reasons that Lawton Chiles mentioned. I believed our country was adrift, that we were coming apart when we ought to be coming together, that because it was painful politically, no one really wanted to face the hard issues and take the tough decisions that needed to be made to move the country forward.

I always thought that public life at best was about bringing people together and bringing out the best in people, and actually getting things done so that next year you could talk about a new set of problems. You wouldn't have to keep on talking about the same old thing over and over again. And people could have the sense that they were moving their lives forward and that together we were doing that. And yet, in Washington, we were treated to the sort of endless orgy of posturing and political rhetoric and obsession with who had power not what was being done with power.

For in the end, in this country, the power belongs to you. It doesn't belong to the President; it doesn't belong to the Congress; even though they don't like to admit it, sometimes; it doesn't even belong to our friends in the press. It belongs to you. The rest of us are all—[*applause*]—the rest of us in various ways are all your hired hands. And we serve for a little while to do our anointed tasks, and then our time is over.

So I say to you tonight, I want you to think about what it would take for you to get your money's worth out of this dinner. What is it that we would have to do to make it worth the investment of time and effort, as well as money, to move America forward?

You know, I really admire a lot of the things that my longtime friend Lawton and Buddy MacKay have done here in Florida because they knew if they did some of the things that needed to be done, their popularity would go down. They proved that you

can govern in an austere fiscal climate, that you could have diversity in government and still have excellence. They reformed workers' compensation and increased the technological capabilities of this State. They've been tough and smart on crime. And they passed a remarkable health reform plan. But if you look at the struggles that they went through and the beatings they took, and you look at what I've been through last year, and what I'm facing this year in Congress, just to do the work I got hired to do, never mind the sideshows, it's like old Yogi Berra saying, ''It's *deja vu* all over again.''

Look at the health care plan. Florida adopted a fascinating health care plan. It may not be perfect, but it's a whole lot better than just letting things drift. And there is no such thing as a perfect plan.

When we were putting together our national health program, we looked very closely at what Florida had done, especially the idea of bringing people together, small business people and self-employed people, school districts and others, in large purchasing co-ops called alliances so that they can get lower costs.

Florida is on the frontline of this effort to reform health care. And as you have found in Florida, change is hard. If it were easy, the Republicans would have done it, and they'd still have the White House.

What I want to say to you is, I did not run for President to hold the office, to live in the White House, although it is a magnificent place and it still gives me chills every time I walk in the door and realize that every President since John Adams has lived there. I was perfectly happy in my family life and my work life doing what we were doing before. And I ran because I thought that we ought to change the country. In health care, I thought we ought to keep what's good about our system and change what's wrong: the crazy financing system; get rid of unfair insurance practices; and do it in a way that wouldn't make the insurance companies go broke. That's why we need big buyers groups.

If you want to say don't discriminate against people because they're older, don't discriminate against people because they have had an illness in their family, don't discriminate against people because they're small business people or self-employed people, and you want to be fair and say how are you going to do that with insurance without bankrupting people, you have to have them in big pools.

I think we ought to keep the right to choose doctors. People are losing the right to choose their doctor rapidly today. Fewer than half the people insured in the work force have it. Our plan increases choice, not decreases choice. That's the ultimate mockery of a lot of these ads that are being run.

I think we ought to keep Medicare. It works. But we ought to strengthen it. We ought to cover prescription medicine, and we ought to cover long-term care in the home and in the community so that people aren't forced to go into a nursing home when it costs more money if they can have some alternative care first.

And if we do it right, we'll improve the quality of care and moderate cost increases. How do I know that? Look at Florida's purchasing alliances. The bids are coming in for health care from 5 to 40 percent below current costs. Why? Because when you put people together in larger groups, you can afford to insure them at a lower cost per person without bankrupting the insurers.

The same thing is happening here in a number of other areas—in the crime area, where I perceive you're trying to be tough and smart. You know, it's easy when people are scared to death—and Lord knows they are all over the country today—to say things that excite crowds about crime. But let me tell you, the first job I ever had as a public servant was the attorney general of my State. And I was very close to and very involved with law enforcement during my entire public career, before I ever became President. And one thing I know is, it's one thing to talk about crime in a way that gets a crowd to stand on their feet and shout and ventilate and another thing to do something about it. And I think we, all of us, should be intent on doing something to make our streets and our schools and our homes safer places for our children to grow up in and our people to live in.

So, you saw the movie. That's what we did last year. That's what you hired me to do.

Let's talk about this year. This year we need to pass health care reform. We don't need to do it next year or the year after or the year after that. Every other advanced economy in the world has found a way to provide high quality health care to all its citizens. Only the United States has not done it. It is time for us to stop making excuses and start making progress. We can do it.

The Congress has before it today a crime bill, which would put another 100,000 police officers on the street, well-trained, community policing, knowing the neighbors, knowing the folks on the block, not only catching criminals but preventing crime. I know it will work. I know it will work. I saw it happen in Houston, a city with a very high murder rate, where, in a matter of 15 months, the crime rate went down over 20 percent, the murder rate went down over 20 percent, and the mayor got reelected with 91 percent of the vote—because lives changed. This will work. And our bill bans 28 kinds of semiautomatic assault weapons that are not necessary for sporting or hunting and are used to kill. And it's the right thing to do.

The bill is smart and tough. It gives drug treatment for people who need it. It provides for innovations like the drug court you have here in Miami that Janet Reno and my brother-in-law and so many other people worked to make very, very important and nationally recognized. It provides funds for our young people to have recreations in school, before and after school. It provides something to say yes to as well as to say no to, and yes, it's tougher. It says if you commit three violent crimes that threaten people's safety, you can never be paroled; "three strikes and you're out"; smart and tough. That's what we ought to do, and we have to pass it.

We're going to give the Congress a welfare reform bill that gives a genuine chance for people to escape the trap of welfare dependency. Make it a second chance, not a way of life; say we'll give you education and training and child support, and then after 2 years, if you haven't found a job, you must go to work even if it's in a public service job. [*Applause*]

But let me say—I'm glad you're clapping for it, but let me make the point. We can only do that if we also provide health care. You know, I met a woman just this week, just this week, who said, "I got off welfare and I went to work. I didn't have a lot of education; I didn't get a great job, but I went to work because I wanted to work. I was proud. But do you know, I didn't have health care coverage at my job, but when I was on welfare I had health care through the Medicaid program. So by going to work, I gave up my child's health care so that I could pay taxes to pay for the health care for people on welfare."

Now, you don't have to be as bright as a tree full of owls to know that doesn't make a lot of sense. [*Laughter*] So don't listen to our adversaries. There will be, ultimately, no real welfare reform until there is health care reform, because people are not going to put their kids at risk in this country. You must do both.

We have a whole passel of education bills up there. Your education commissioner is here; he told me tonight that all the State education commissioners have endorsed our education reforms, world-class standards, grassroots reforms, innovative things we're encouraging that for too long the National Government has not encouraged local school systems to try, but still saying the ultimate test is what are the kids learning? And we're going to say, here's what they should know by world-class standards—judge every school, every district, see what the children are learning. But encourage people to try new and different and innovative things. If they're not working, try something else.

We're going to have a system which will provide an opportunity to move from school to work with further training for all people who don't go on to 4-year colleges. You know that the unemployment rate for high school dropouts in this country is 11.5 percent; for high school graduates, it's 7.2 percent; for people with 2 years of further training after high school, it's 5.4 percent; and people with 4 years of college, it's 3.5 percent.

And the average annual earnings by category go up about $4,000 a category. We have got to find a way to give the young people who aren't going to finish 4-year colleges at least some sort of further training in school and on the job while they're working. We have to abolish this notion that there's a real

difference between what's vocational and what's academic in education and move to the future. And we have to do it, not just for those folks but for people in the work force, no matter what their age. The average person will change work eight times in a lifetime. I meet people in their fifties now all the time that lost their jobs, had to get retrained, had to get new jobs in different lines of work—all the time.

We've got an unemployment system—we've got a lot of employers here—you all are paying that unemployment tax into a system that's flat busted. It was established for a time that no longer exists, when people who were unemployed were called back to their jobs after what the economists called a ''cyclical recession'' passed. Today, most of the changes in this economy are structural. Most people who lose their jobs do not get called back to their old jobs. We don't need an unemployment system in which employers pay that unemployment tax for people to live on a lower wage until their benefits run out, and they still don't have any place to go. We need to have a reemployment system where the day people lose their jobs, they are immediately eligible for retraining so that they can go back to work quicker, put less burden on the unemployment tax, and become productive, taxpaying citizens again. That's what we need in this country.

Now, this is what I thought public life was about, and this is what I think the Presidency is about, and this is what I think the Congress ought to be about and what I think the American people really care about: How are we going to get together; how are we going to get things done; how are we going to lift up the human potential of the American people? That's why I ran for President, and that's what's going to make this dinner worth your investment tonight, if we do what we're supposed to do.

Last year we passed the NAFTA treaty, and it was a good first step. But we knew we had to do more. The Vice President is in Latin America, even as we speak, and we are going to have the Summit of the Americas here in Miami in December. And we're going to do it because we know that Latin America is the second fastest growing region of the world, economically. They are our neighbors, and we are bound up together in a common future. We must share our democracy; we must share trade and investment; we must share a common commitment to building each other up. And we will win if we do it. Miami is the right place to do it because you are, I believe, committed to building the kind of multi-racial, multi-ethnic, harmonious, successful democracy that the world will look to in the 21st century. And so we will work on that at the summit. Then I hope the next time we have a summit, we'll be joined by a democratically elected leader from a free Cuba.

Now, until that happens, this administration will support the act which Senator Graham sponsored, which requires us to maintain a strong economic embargo as leverage for democratic reform. We will also continue to make it clear that we want to reach out to the Cuban people, as is provided in the act, with private humanitarian aid and more information. We have no quarrel with the Cuban people. We want them to be part of our common destiny. We want them to go into the 21st century a people in partnership with us.

Let me say this, we want the same thing for the people of Haiti, too, and they deserve it as well. As long as the dictators who have prevented President Aristide from returning and who continue to thwart democracy and continue to abuse human rights and continue to kill innocent people persist in trying to hold on to power, we will maintain the economic sanctions which are standing up against their clouding of international law and their own agreements. These are things we must do in our own backyard.

Now, let me say that Lawton Chiles described to you the Democratic Leadership Council group that he and I got together through again, as a group that tried to go beyond the partisan politics that paralyzed us in the eighties. We tried to find new ideas and new solutions, and we have reached out to all people who wanted a change, without regard to their party label. We had Republicans for Clinton-Gore organizations in many States in this country, and they played a decisive role in our victory in some States. And I have done my best to reach out to Republicans in the Congress, and I will con-

tinue to do so. I have been, frankly, dismayed at the level of intense partisan opposition present on so many issues. And when that has dissipated, I have been hopeful, and the country has been better off for it.

The Republican Party has not always been against change or unity. It has not always been obsessed with personal power and just in a snit because they didn't have the White House. The Republican Party, after all, gave us Abraham Lincoln, without whom we would not be here tonight. The Republican Party gave us Theodore Roosevelt who taught us to save our natural resources and spoke out against the dangers of too much concentrated power in public or private life. Even President Nixon signed the Environmental Protection Agency bill and first proposed that employers ought to contribute to their employees' health insurance so we could have universal health coverage for everybody.

Today, instead of that, they don't offer a lot of new ideas, and they often offer blatant, blind, partisan opposition. Last summer, we were fighting for a budget to cut the deficit, get the economy moving again, hold interest rates down. You know what they said? One Republican Senator said, "If this plan passes, we're buying a one-way ticket to a recession." Another one said, "This plan will cost American jobs, no doubt about it." In the entire House and Senate, there was not a single, solitary vote from the other party for the economic plan, not one.

What did they vote against? They voted against $500 billion in deficit reduction; tax cuts for almost 17 percent of the working families in this country who hover at the poverty line and who are raising their children so that we could lift them beyond the poverty line and take away any incentive they would have to go on welfare and quit work; tax cuts for 90 percent of the small businesses in this country; increased capital gains for investment in new business and small business; a reform of the college loan system which cut the interest rates and strung out the repayment terms. That's what they voted against in that bill. Yes, and also raised most of your taxes in this room—1.2 percent of the American people—and every last red cent of that tax money will go to reduce the deficit, not a penny to any new program. Every cent of it goes to reduce the deficit. And what did it produce? It produced low interest rates, low inflation, high investment, 2.1 million new jobs in 13 months, more than the entire previous 4 years; the fastest rate of growth in years; in the last quarter of last year, the fastest rate of growth in a decade; over 5 million Americans have refinanced their homes; the budget is at the lowest percentage of our gross domestic product that it's been since 1979; the deficit is going to be a third lower than it was projected to be under my predecessor. And if Congress adopts this years budget, we'll have 3 years of declining Federal deficits for the first time since Harry Truman was the President of the United States.

In the House of Representatives, we had staunch opposition from the other party, not only to the budget but to the Brady bill, to the Family and Medical Leave Act. And I applaud the Republicans who voted for that. In the Senate, filibuster after filibuster, or threats of filibuster on family and medical leave, motor voter, the budget acts, which they couldn't filibuster but didn't vote for, the Brady bill which finally, the public opinion of the country just shouted from the rafters of the Congress, and they had to give up on the filibuster for.

These are the kinds of things that we are facing. Now we move to health care. In the Senate, there are some Republicans who genuinely want to provide health care to all Americans. And they have been forthcoming in talking to us. They have said they do not want to be part of just saying no. In the House there are people who say we want to talk to you, but if we do, we won't have any influence in our party anymore. We haven't been given permission.

So we've got to decide, my fellow Americans, whether we are going to let partisan politics and obsession with destruction and division and distraction get in the way of why you made this investment and why Hillary and I ran, why Al Gore ran, why most of my Cabinet people left other lives and served.

And I say to you, this year we ought to say, look, let's just do something for America. Let's keep our eye on the ball. Let's not de-

mean the political process anymore by being so intensely partisan and so obsessed with who's got power and so obsessed with hurting somebody who's got it instead of somebody who doesn't that we forget that it's all going to be gone before you know it. And all that really matters is what you do with the time you have when you have it. That's all that counts.

When it's all said and done, the people of this country are going to have health care, or they're not. We're going to reform this welfare system, or we're not. We're going to do something to make our kids safer on the streets and in their homes and the schools, or we're not. We either are, or we aren't. When it's all said and done, we're going to be closer together as an American family without regard to our race or our age or our gender or where we live or what our party is, or we're not. That is what this is about, not who's in but what we're doing while we're there. And I say to you, I will do everything I can, every day I have that job, to remember that your investment is for your children and your children's children.

Larry Hawkins gave me this picture of his granddaughter tonight at dinner, and he said, "I like you a lot, but I didn't raise all this money because I like you. I raised all this money because this is my granddaughter, and I want her to have a better future." Praise God that he thinks that, and I hope we can do it.

Thank you very much, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 p.m. in the Sheraton Bal Harbour Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Senator Bob Graham and David Wilhelm, chairman, Democratic National Committee. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on Emergency Assistance to the Northeast Fishing Industry

March 21, 1994

New England's fisheries are experiencing a virtual collapse, threatening the livelihoods of thousands of New Englanders. The first step to recovery is to restore the supply of fish, and we are working to do that by restricting fishing. But we must address the economic impact that is being felt by individuals, businesses, and communities. These resources are targeted to specific programs that will help the industry, help people, and help communities get back on their feet.

NOTE: This statement was part of a White House press release on emergency supplemental appropriations to assist the Northeast fishing industry and communities affected by the collapse of Northeast commercial fisheries.

Remarks in a Health Care Roundtable With Small Business Leaders

March 22, 1994

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, first let me thank all of you for coming here. We have several Members of the United States Congress up here in the front. We're very glad to see all of them, and we thank them for their presence. And we have small business people here from all over America, and we thank you for your presence. We're here primarily to hear from the small business people who are here on the panel, and perhaps some others if time permits.

I just want to make a couple of comments. First of all, I very much appreciate the work that Erskine Bowles has done as Director of the Small Business Administration. I am proud of the fact that I was able to appoint someone to this job who was not just someone who had run unsuccessfully for office or was otherwise looking for a patronage appointment. This man has spent 20 years helping to finance small business creations and expansions. And therefore, he has a clearer understanding and grasp of what small businesses are really up against and the difference between the rhetoric of supporting small business and the reality of it than perhaps anyone who has held this job in a very long time. Secondly, I want to thank my good friend Congressman LaFalce for his leadership on small business issues.

Finally, let me say that everybody, I think, understands that one of the reasons that the United States has not succeeded in providing health security for all its people while every other advanced economy has done so is the

difficulty posed by the greatest strength of our economy, which is that an inordinate percentage of our workers work for small business people, very small business, and increasingly, more and more of the new jobs are created by small businesses.

So that presents us with a dilemma. However, we also know if we look at the real facts that almost all the job creators among small business are making some effort to provide health insurance, and that those which do tend to have more stable work forces and higher productivity and greater success.

Just this week I had a good friend of mine up here with his family. He's a car dealer in my home State, and he was talking about how he'd always insured all of his employees and none of his competitors had. And in the last 20 years, three of them had come and gone, and he was still there. And one reason was, he never had any employee turnover because he always took care of his employees and their health care problems, but the struggle to get a bigger pool of insured people so that he could get his insurance cost down was a continuing one for him.

Anyway, that just brings me to this point: This administration could not in good conscience have advocated, and I could not support a plan that I thought would be, on balance, bad for small business. I believe this plan is, on balance, good for small business. If I didn't I wouldn't be supporting it. And I will not sign any bill passed by the Congress that I do not believe is good for the small business economy, because we have to create more jobs in this country.

Our plan builds on the system we have now, guaranteed private insurance. It provides more choices to employees than they now have under most health care plans, at least three a year, every year. It contains real insurance reforms that are very important to small businesses—no discrimination for preexisting conditions, or based on the age of the work force. It protects Medicare. It does provide both for Medicare people and for the work force and their families, prescription medicine benefit and a phased-in, long-term care benefit for service at home, for example, for disabled people or elderly people, as well as in institutional settings. And it does have an employer mandate, but with strong discounts for small businesses with modest payrolls and modest profit margins.

Now, there will be countless discussions about what the proper details of that should be, but it seems to me that that is the only approach that has a reasonable chance of being successful in this environment. And as I said, there are people who will propose variations on it, but that, it seems to me, is what we ought to be doing.

My purpose today is to show that there is a great difference in the rhetorical pronouncements of some organized groups and the real life experiences of a lot of business people. And we have here people who have been affected by the present health conditions. And I am frank to say that while most of the people who are on this panel who are providing health insurance today would actually pay less under our plan, some would pay more, and they know it. But they also know that for the first time their competitors would as well, putting them on a more even footing.

So let's get in to the panelists, hear their stories, and give them a chance to comment.

I'd like to start with Mona Castillo who founded Monarch Graphics, a trophy and plaque manufacturer in Chicago and who was the Chamber of Commerce national minority entrepreneur of the year award winner in 1993. And I'd like to ask Mona to talk a little bit about her difficulties in providing coverage for her employees and finding an insurance company who will do it.

Mona.

[*At this point, Mona Castillo, chief executive officer, Monarch Graphics, Chicago, IL, discussed difficulties presented by having uninsurable employees; Betty Hall, owner, Hall Manufacturing Co., Inc., Brookline, NH, discussed loss of coverage by Blue Cross/Blue Shield, limiting her company's options for health care coverage; and Spence Putnam, chief operating officer, Vermont Teddy Bear Co., Shelburne, VT, discussed difficulties providing coverage for employees.*]

The President. Thank you very much.

Let me just try to emphasize a couple of the points that were made here, because they are different issues. Mr. Putnam wants to insure all of his employees; today can only insure about two-thirds of them. So he would

actually pay more if our plan passed, but he'd get to insure all of his employees and they would also have more primary and preventive care than they have now and lower deductibles. But he would be, again, on an even scale with his competitors.

Betty Hall talked about—I wanted to make sure you understand what she meant when she talked about her situation in New Hampshire, because she doesn't have Blue Cross options for her business but does have the matching Thornton option. She has an HMO option. And the HMO has a very good reputation in New Hampshire and throughout New England; I think everybody would admit that. But the individuals who work for her now don't have the choice that, if our plan passed, every year her employees would get to choose either the HMO or one of two other options. And under our plan, she would pay the same no matter what. But if the employee wanted to pay a little more for fee-for-service medicine, the employee would have that right. So that's how that would work.

If you go back to what Mona said about two of her employees being uninsurable, it's important here, I think, to recognize a certain truth about the insurance business itself. While certainly I have been critical of insurance practices of which I do not approve, I think it is also important for us to understand that given the organization of the insurance business today, it is economically impossible for a lot of these health insurance companies to do other than they do because they are dealing with a very small pool of people.

So if you insure, let's say, an employee unit the size of her company and two of them are really sick or they have two kids who have been really sick, then that can double the cost of whatever your annual premiums are in a year which is why we have worked so hard to find a mechanism—and I'll say more about this in a minute—to let insurance companies insure people the way grocery stores make money, a little bit of money on a lot of people. And that's what all this—and I'm going to say more about this toward the end of the hour because I don't want to interrupt the flow of the people talking, but that's the dilemma we face about whether there should or should not be a health alliance, a buyer's co-op or something.

You've got to have these folks able to go into big enough pools so that the insurance companies themselves do not go broke. They're in business, too. And the economics have to work out. And the only way the economics can work out is if the risks which all small businesses are subject to can be widely spread over a bigger pool. So we'll come back to that.

I want to introduce now Murray Horowitz who currently covers his employees today but has had to take some pretty strong steps to keep covering them. Murray would you like to speak about that?

Murray Horowitz. As a pawnbroker, I represent one of the most misunderstood industries in the country.

The President. Want to come to work up here? [*Laughter*]

[*Murray Horowitz, owner, City Pawn Shop, Baton Rouge, LA, discussed increasing costs, increasing deductibles, and employees who are uninsurable because of preexisting conditions.*]

The President. Same thing—81 million Americans have preexisting conditions of some kind or other. This is not a small problem; this is a big problem. Those who are in families that are insured through government or larger employers are okay now except that most of them couldn't change jobs and go to work for any of you or couldn't start their own business. You know, a lot of people, that's a lifetime dream to start their own business. It takes enough courage, as all of you know, to do that if you don't have to worry about this.

So you've got 81 million Americans, some in the situation of your employee who can't get insurance, others who pay very much higher rates, and millions and millions—no one knows exactly how many, but literally tens of millions—who are locked in the jobs they are now in because they can't afford to give them up and lose in coverage. So it's a significant issue. Congressman, would you like to say something about any of this? I haven't heard from you since the beginning.

[*Representative John J. LaFalce, discussed town hall meetings in which constituents de-*

scribed dramatic cost increases, increasingly limited choice, and increases in deductibles and copayments.]

The President. We have someone here from your home State, Elaine Stone, of American Aviation in New York, who has gone to extraordinary efforts to cover her employees at very high cost. I'd like to ask her to explain her situation and what the consequences have been.

[*Elaine Stone, owner, American Aviation International Corp., New York, NY, discussed her desire to provide coverage for all employees and described her current self-insured plan which splits funding between the corporation and the insurance company.*]

The President. Thank you very much.

Let me say because of the unique, sort of, semi-self-insured system that Elaine has, and because she's had some significant illnesses in her work force, she would actually, at least based on the last year or two's experience, pay considerably less than she is paying because of the self insurance schemes kicked in. It works, again, like everything else—it may work very well for large employers, but for someone with a couple of dozen employees, it is a very high-risk strategy that can work real well until it doesn't anymore.

I'd like to now talk about people who are kind of the other side of that equation, people who would like to cover all their employees but can't, and therefore, only cover a portion of them, or have had to give up coverage. And I'd like to begin with Judith Wicks who owns the White Dog Cafe in Philadelphia. Because, as I'm sure all of you know, the people in the restaurant business have been among those most concerned about this health care plan because there are so many people who work for restaurants and delis and other eating establishments who are young, who are single, who don't have health insurance, and who are still willing workers there. But there are an awful lot of people who very much want to cover folks.

And the press will remember, we were in an establishment in Columbus, Ohio, just a couple of weeks ago, where by accident—we didn't plan to go there for health care, but where we had a whole health care seminar because only half the employees were covered, and the person covering them wanted to cover them all.

So Judith, why don't you talk a little bit about your situation?

[*Judith Ann Wicks, owner, White Dog Cafe, Philadelphia, PA, discussed her ability to provide insurance coverage for only a small percentage of her employees and indicated that the health care plan would provide full coverage for only a small increase in cost and place all restaurants on an equal competitive footing. Representative LaFalce discussed sources of opposition to the health care plan indicating that instituting the plan would place all restaurants in the same competitive positions.*]

The President. Do you think he feels strongly about that? [*Laughter*]

Thank you.

Erskine Bowles. Mr. President, we also have another restauranteur here, who runs the Burrito Brothers chain here. They're three Mexican fast food restaurants. Eric's also experienced some of these same problems that small businesses face in trying to provide health care coverage. And Eric, you might want to comment on how you would react if it was a level playing field and you could provide reasonable coverage at reasonable cost.

Eric Sklar. First let me say that, what Judy said notwithstanding, I hope jobs are lost to Mexican food. [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, if I'm setting the pace, you've got a good chance of achieving that objective. [*Laughter*]

[*Mr. Sklar, owner, Burrito Brothers, Washington, DC, discussed how the health care plan would be good for the restaurant business, citing the advantage to businesses of having employees with health care coverage, and indicated a willingness to pay more to secure health care for employees.*]

The President. Thank you. I just want to say that Eric and Judy represent an interesting thing that we have seen basically around the country with people who really are trying to do the right thing by their employees. If you are in the restaurant business and you insure part of your employees, you are in the worst of all worlds. You're still at a competi-

tive disadvantage to people who don't insure anybody, and you feel terrible that you can't insure everybody. That's basically what they face.

Administrator Bowles. Mr. President, unfortunately some of the small businesses in this country have experienced such absolutely skyrocketing costs and the cost of health care, experiencing these 20 to 50 percent annual rises in health care, that they simply just no longer can afford it. Garth Sheriff is here from Los Angeles. I know Garth has had to drop his coverage a couple of years ago when the cost just went so high you couldn't afford it.

[*Garth Sheriff, owner, Sheriff Associates, Los Angeles, CA, discussed the dilemma he confronted of having to choose between keeping an employee or keeping health insurance for his firm, the difficulties presented by an aging group of workers in terms of insurance costs, and concluded with a strong endorsement of the health care plan.*]

The President. Thank you. Thank you very much.

I'd like to, first of all, thank you and thank your group and thank you for sharing your painful experience with us. I'd like to go on and sort of pursue this theme a little more and call on Brian McCarthy, who owns the McCarthy Flowers, a large florist in Scranton, and ask him to tell us a little about his situation.

Brian.

[*Brian McCarthy, owner, McCarthy Flowers, Scranton, PA, discussed the problem of attracting unskilled workers from welfare when the workers would lose health care coverage from Medicaid for their families and also attracting skilled managers who would not take positions without adequate health care coverage.*]

The President. Thank you very much. I just want to emphasize one comment Brian made, and if I might go back to what our restauranteurs also said there. One of the arguments that the Restaurant Association makes against our doing this is they say, "Well, you know we have a lot of young single workers that are healthy. They're strapping. They don't want insurance, or if they do have it, they ought to be able to get it much more cheaply than older workers," because young single workers will pay higher per person premiums under our plan. That's what community rating is all about. If you put people in large pools with older people and with families with a lot of kids and the kids have been sick, you average it out. So they will pay a modestly greater amount, and therefore, the employer contribution for them will be modestly greater.

I'd like to make two arguments in response to that. One is one Brian made. A lot of the young single people we want to be workers in this country are on welfare. They all have health insurance for themselves or their children through the Medicaid program which is as generous as most health insurance programs. And yet, we want them to move from welfare to work and take jobs in our small businesses and give up health insurance for their children so they can then start paying taxes to pay for the health care of people who made the other decision to stay on welfare.

I mean, it's just a—we cannot reform this welfare system unless we fix this problem. So there are a lot of young single potential workers out there we cannot even get in the workplace unless we deal with this.

The second point that I'd like to make is that the fastest growing group of people in America are older Americans. And people are going to be working later and later and later in their lives. Indeed, the gradual phase-up of the Social Security retirement age starts in a couple of years as a result of the Social Security Reform Act of 1983, raising retirement age by a month a year over several years to go up to 67. And if you don't want discrimination, if we need older people, if we know they're very good employees and they're very reliable and you don't want discrimination against them in the workplace, one sure way to avoid it is to make sure that their health insurance premiums are not discriminatory.

I see a lot of older people who work in eating establishments, too, So this thing, I think, will balance out and is ultimately fair. I especially thank Brian for his statement because he does cover all his employees today.

And it shows you, I think he really is thinking towards the future.

Administrator Bowles. Mr. President, we also have here Chris Maas, who has experienced some of these same problems of trying to compete for labor with absolutely skyrocketing costs in health care.

Chris, do you want to talk about it a second?

Chris Maas. We're a small computer consulting firm here in Washington. We do most of our work with Washington area lawyers, and we need professional help. And the one competitive advantage that we have as a little firm—[*laughter*].

The President. Every one of you has a one-liner for that, don't you? [*Laughter*]

[*Mr. Maas, owner, Potomac Consulting Group, Arlington, VA, discussed the problems he confronted in hiring older employees because of the health insurance issues that arise. He concluded by stating that his associates see the health care issue as a business issue rather than a political issue.*]

The President. Good for you. Believe you me, nothing would make me happier than to do exactly what you've said. It should not be a partisan political issue. And if you get beyond the fog of rhetoric to the hard facts of what people's actual individual circumstances are, it's very much easier for it not to be a political issue.

Thank you very much. That was very impressive.

I want to talk a little bit—by giving these folks a chance to talk about how we give small business people the ability to have competitive prices in the insurance market.

And I'd like to start with Stephen Hightower of the Hi-Mark Corporation in Franklin, Ohio, and talk about how the absence of that has affected his business and his family.

Stephen.

[*Stephen Hightower, president, Hi-Mark Corp., discussed the difficulty keeping employees with the corporation without offering health care benefits and emphasized the link between welfare reform and health care reform.*]

The President. I'd like to now to go to a small family business.

Kathleen Piper who owns the Pied Piper Flower Shop in Yankton, South Dakota.

I first met her a little over a year ago when she represented small business at the economic conference we held in Little Rock shortly before I assumed the Presidency. I'd never met her before, and I didn't know anything about her, but I was deeply impressed by the comments she had to make, and we asked her to come back here today because of her own experience on health care.

Kathleen.

[*Ms. Piper discussed how she was no longer able to provide health care insurance for her employees. She thanked the Small Business Administration for its work in educating small business owners on the health care plan.*]

The President. Yesterday when I was in Miami, I met, as I often do when I'm traveling around the country, with some children and their families from these Make-A-Wish programs, where the kids are desperately ill and one of the things they want to do is meet the President. And I met with a family, a very impressive family of three children, two sons and a daughter, where both sons had a very rare and apparently genetically transmitted propensity to have a very rare form of cancer. And this family has a lifetime limit on their policy, as three out of four Americans do. Three out of four Americans have lifetime limits. And they're in a real pickle, because they are going to run up against the limit long before the second child—assuming that both the boys survive, and they've done pretty well so far, but if they do both survive their illness and they're plugging along—then they'll run up against their limit long before the second child is out of the house. And then they have a third, youngest child and, thank goodness, the young child so far has not contracted the disease, and of course, they hope she won't. But if she does, then you can just double whatever their problem is.

Again, I would say—I want to emphasize, though, the only way this works with the private health insurance business is that you have to find a way not to bankrupt private

health insurance. And a lot of these things—I've had a lot of employers—I had a restaurant owner I mentioned in Columbus, Ohio, who was very complimentary of her personal health insurers. She said, ''These people are doing the best they can for me under the circumstances given the way their business is organized and the way the market is organized.'' That's why you have to reorganize the market and put people into larger units and insure people on a community basis.

One of the most controversial things—I just want to mention this—one of the most controversial aspects of our plan has been the provision for small and medium sized businesses to be in these big buying alliances. People have treated it as if it were some big new Government bureaucracy.

I have seen it, quite the contrary, as a way of enforcing community rating. That is, there are some States—New York State has a law mandating community rating. But if you don't have the system within which the little guys can buy together, the law itself won't guarantee community rating.

And yesterday—I just want to read you something—yesterday in the Los Angeles Times, there is this article, ''State Alliance Gives Workers Health Clout. Forty thousand workers at small California businesses will get an extraordinary piece of good news on Tuesday.'' That's today. ''At a time when health insurance costs in the country are climbing at 6 to 8 percent a year, their premiums will actually be reduced, starting July 1st. These fortunate few are members of the State's unheralded health alliance, a purchasing agency that gives companies with between 5 and 50 workers an opportunity to band together and achieve the same buying clout the health care market gives to giant corporations. Even as President Clinton's proposal for alliances is being denounced in Washington as a blueprint for a menacing new bureaucracy, a staff of just 13 State workers in Sacramento has put together a working alliance, the first in the Nation, and the customers seem delighted.''

And in Florida they've got now buying pools of small businesses—Congressman Gibbons is here. And the Governor told me last night that most small businesses that joined these alliances had experienced declines in premium costs of between 5 and 40 percent.

So I say this not to be combative, but just to ask this question: As this bill moves through the Congress, if they don't like the way we structured the alliances, you've got to find some ways to give the little guys big buying power.

Administrator Bowles. Mr. President, all these buying groups do—and I wish to goodness we'd called them buying groups instead of alliances, but all these buying groups do——

The President. I do, too. They liked it when we called NATO an alliance. [*Laughter*]

Administrator Bowles. ——is, truly, they shift the power of the marketplace. They change that supply and demand equation from favoring the supplier of health care to favoring us, the consumer and the small business owner. It's just identical to what Mr. McCarthy was here saying about what happens in the flower business. It gives us, the small business owner, some market muscle so that we can cut a good deal for our employees. That's what it does.

Q. Could I ask a question? One of the big arguments that I have heard in talking to other businesses is that everybody is concerned about the quality of health care, what's going to happen. They're afraid. Right now they may have choices; they have certain choices, and that's sort of the unknown out there. How is the quality of health care going to change?

The President. I think there are two concerns about the quality of health care that I've heard. One is, are you going to cut down on how much you spend on health care so much that there won't be enough for medical research, for technology, for things to progress? The other is, if you deprive people of choices, isn't that a backdoor way of undermining quality?

I mean, in America I think people equate—we all like to make our own decisions. So people equate choice with quality. To that I would respond in two ways: Number one, if you don't do anything, if we just let this alone, if we walk away from here and don't do anything, you will see dramatic re-

ductions in choice. And many of you in this room will contribute to that because you will have no choice.

That's what happened to our friend from New Hampshire here. She wished to give her employees the choice between being in the HMO or insuring with fee-for-service medicine through Blue Cross. Now she has only the HMO option. She is now in the majority of employers in America who cover their employees. Now, a slight majority does not provide any choice for the employee but, in fact, makes the choice for the employee because they have no choice. You know, Mr. Sheriff here, if he were able to get back into the health insurance market, probably would have to just make the best deal he could, and the employees would have to take it or leave it.

So on the question of quality in terms of choice, under our plan, again because of marketing power, we would give— your obligation as an employer would be constant. You would pay the same no matter what. But your employees every year, because of the cooperative buying power, would be able to choose from among at least three programs.

And we estimate that in most places they would always have access to an HMO. And as I said, many of them are very good, but they'll be better if they have competitive pressure. Then, probably there would be a PPO—that is a professional group where doctors get together and they organize health care delivery, and normally those have many more doctors and sometimes let people in who are willing to provide the service for an approved price, so you get even more choice—and the fee-for-service medicine. And that would come up every year. So that's my answer.

And the second thing is, if you do nothing, you will continue to see a squeeze on the quality of medicine in terms of what goes into the teaching hospitals and medical research. Why do I say that? I was in Boston last week, and I met with the heads of all the teaching hospitals after which they came out and endorsed our plan. And they said—every one of them said, ''If we don't do anything, we're going to get less and less money because the people who come into our hospitals are increasingly in managed care plans where they put the squeeze on us, and they cut down on the money we get for patient care.'' So under our plan, we increase medical research; we increase support for teaching hospitals, and that's what we have to do.

So my argument is quality will suffer if we do nothing. Choice will be restricted if we do nothing. If we move, we can increase quality and choice in a fair and balanced way.

I know we've got to wrap up. We have one more person to hear from, and the Congressman wants to make a comment.

[*Representative LaFalce indicated that the health care plan offered better quality care with its emphasis on preventive medicine and pointed to the Hawaii system as a model of success.*]

The President. I'd like to hammer that home because a lot of people say, ''Well, Bill, everybody goes to Hawaii on vacation. It's a rich State.'' Hawaii has a very, very large percentage of people in its health care system who are low income people, native islanders, people come in from surrounding islands, about a 20 percent load there, quite a high load. So the health outcomes for Hawaii include a very large number of people who have to be paid for in traditional ways who aren't even in the employment system. So you just can't make that argument. I'm just trying to reinforce what he said.

Our last speaker is John Sorenson, from the WECO Supply Company, in Fresno, California. He wrote to me about one of his employees. And I thought it would be good to kind of let him close because of the concern that this employer had for his employee and how it affected his business.

[*John Sorenson, owner, WECO Supply Co., Fresno, CA, told the story of an employee who, because of job changes and changes in the WECO company insurance plan, was not covered for the birth of two premature children, incurred the full cost of their treatment, and ultimately suffered bankruptcy, loss of credit rating, loss of his job, and separation from his wife. He concluded that the preexisting conditions caused the problem.*]

The President. It was.

Q. And if you can accomplish that, you've got my vote for the next 20 times.

The President. Well, let me tell you, the votes that really matter here—first of all, let's give him a hand. I think that was quite a moving thing. [*Applause*]

I wanted to end with that because I was so moved by the letter that he wrote to Hillary. And it seemed to sort of capture so many of these things that we talk about in kind of esoteric terms: preexisting conditions; people falling in between the gaps; why you can't change jobs; all that kind of stuff. And you hear a story and you realize that this is the business of America.

But the votes that really matter here are the votes of the Members of Congress. So before we leave, I'd like to ask the Members of Congress who sat through this entire panel to please stand and be recognized. I see Congresswoman DeLauro there and Congresswoman Eshoo there, who are standing, so they can't stand; and Congressman Serrano's in the back. Would all the Members of Congress who are here please stand so you can see them?

Thank you, Mr. Bowles. Thank you, Congressman. And thank you most of all to these fine members of our small business family in America.

Thank you. We're adjourned.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:46 a.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building.

Memorandum on Assistance to Certain States of the Former Soviet Union

March 22, 1994

Presidential Determination No. 94–18

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Eligibility of Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Romania To Be Furnished Defense Articles and Services Under the Foreign Assistance Act and the Arms Export Control Act

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by section 503(a) of the Foreign Assistance Act of 1961, as amended, and section 3(a)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, I hereby find that the furnishing of defense articles and services to the Governments of Albania, Bulgaria, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania, and Romania will strengthen the security of the United States and promote world peace.

You are authorized and directed to report this funding to the Congress and to publish it in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

Nomination for Ambassador to the United Kingdom

March 22, 1994

The President today announced his intent to nominate Admiral William Crowe, Jr., as Ambassador to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

In announcing this nomination, President Clinton said, "Admiral Crowe has distinguished himself throughout four decades of dedicated public service. I am very pleased that he will continue his service to this Nation and that I will be able to rely on his wise counsel in this very important position."

NOTE: A biography of the nominee was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Nomination for Seven Federal Judges

March 22, 1994

The President announced the nominations today of seven individuals to serve on the Federal bench. The President nominated Theodore A. McKee to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Third Circuit. He also announced six U.S. District Court nominees: Paul L. Friedman, Gladys Kessler, Emmet G. Sullivan and Ricardo M. Urbina for the District of Columbia; Vanessa D. Gilmore for the Southern District of Texas; and Raymond L. Finch for the District of the Virgin Islands.

"These seven men and women have outstanding records of achievement in the legal profession and in public service," the President said today. "I am proud to nominate these distinguished individuals to serve as Federal judges."

NOTE: Biographies of the nominees were made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Nomination for Chief Financial Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service

March 22, 1994

The President today announced his intent to nominate Larry Wilson to be Chief Financial Officer of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

"Larry Wilson is an innovative and dynamic financial manager," the President said. "His leadership at USDA proves that he will be a strong addition to the National Service team. I look forward to working with him and the AmeriCorps participants on getting things done in communities throughout America this year."

NOTE: A biography of the nominee was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Teleconference Announcing a Defense Diversification Grant for Charleston, South Carolina

March 23, 1994

The President. Mayor?

Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Mr. President.

The President. How are you doing, Mayor?

Mayor Riley. Well, I'm doing fine. How are you?

The President. I'm great. Nice to hear your voice.

Mayor Riley. Well, it's great to hear yours. And we're pulling for you and just keep trying and working hard. We're in your corner. And thanks for all the tremendous cooperation we've been getting from the administration with our reconversion efforts. It's been terrific.

The President. Well, thank you. As you know, I'm calling you with some good news today. The Secretary of Labor Bob Reich is awarding $15 million in defense diversification program funds to the Charleston County Employment and Training Administration.

Mayor Riley. Well, that's wonderful.

The President. We hope it will help to retrain about 1,920 people who are being laid off from your naval complex there.

Mayor Riley. Well, Mr. President, that's great news. And it will be a huge help. We've got great workers with great skills. They will be making a career change, and to get the training to move from one career to another is essential. And this is terrific news for the Charleston community; it really is.

The President. Well, I just want to say again to you what you and I have already talked about so many times privately, and that is that I'm committed not just to training and preparing those folks for other careers but seeing to it that the base facilities themselves are successfully redeveloped. And I know that your Best committee is aggressively moving forward with redevelopment planning. And I commend you for that, and I just want to tell you so you can tell them that I am personally, and this whole administration is, committed to working with them and making the best use of those enormously important facilities there.

Mayor Riley. Well, that's wonderful. Thank you, Mr. President. We have a great committee. They've done a terrific job and I want you to know, from your people in your White House, Secretary Perry on down, the response couldn't be better and more enthusiastic and supportive. And as I told you in our private conversation, our goal—and told Secretary Perry—is to make Charleston a model that you can point to of where a major reconversion occurred and occurred successfully.

The President. Well, I know Secretary Perry and the Navy Secretary John Dalton have been down there, and I know that the Department of Defense Office of Economic Adjustment has already provided about $2 million in planning grants. But we want to keep going, and we want to assist those workers as they begin their transition to new careers. And I think you've already got a transition assistance center open on the base.

Mayor Riley. We do, yes, sir. A very fine one.

The President. So we now will be able to provide with today's grant the full array of services through that one-stop career center there, including counseling and basic skills remediation and occupational skills training and other kinds of things that we believe will really help to get people new jobs

in, hopefully, as good or better than the ones they're losing. We're going to do the very best we can on that.

Mayor Riley. It's going to be a huge help, and we are going to make Charleston a model, one that you can proudly point to.

The President. You can do it. I know you can. We'll do whatever we can to work with you.

Mayor Riley. Well, thank you. Thanks for everything.

The President. Tell everybody in Charleston I said hello. I always love coming there, and I hope I get to come again soon.

Mayor Riley. Well, I will. Somebody just a couple of weeks ago gave me a picture of you and I talking on January the 1st, 1992.

The President. The first stop I made in the new year, 1992.

Mayor Riley. That's right. Well, I've got to—it's been marvelous chatting. I was doing the talking, and they subtitled it, "Low country advice." [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, it was pretty highbrow advice from the low country, I'll tell you that.

Mayor Riley. Well, it was heartfelt, and we're very proud of you.

The President. Good luck to you.

Mayor Riley. Thanks for all your help.

The President. Bye.

NOTE: The teleconference began at 10:44 a.m. The President spoke from the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Teleconference With the California Medical Association

March 23, 1994

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you, Dr. Holley for that kind introduction and for your good work and the good work of all the physicians whom you represent now in dealing with these very difficult and complex and profoundly important issues. I regret not being able to join you in person today, but I am glad that Ira Magaziner is able to be there with you. I'm glad I had a chance to visit with you, Dr. Holley, and your past president, Dr. Richard Corlin, in Washington recently, following another health care forum. And I'm grateful for many reasons for your continued good counsel and for this invitation to address you.

Each of you has, in the most personal way, been part of the excellence in American medicine simply by caring for the families in your communities. And I'm grateful that you understand that our health care system needs dramatic reform. You know costs are rising too fast, that paperwork is mounting too much, that every day more constraints are placed on your patients and your ability to practice medicine the way you know it should be practiced.

But unlike so many others in the debate who will only tell us what they don't want to change, long ago you left the sidelines and became advocates for responsible, comprehensive reforms. I appreciate the early and continued support you have shown for the objectives we are trying to achieve: providing Americans guaranteed private insurance, preserving the right of everyone to choose his or her own doctor and their own health care plans, outlawing unfair insurance practices, protecting and strengthening Medicare, and linking these health benefits to the workplace, where most people get their insurance today.

These reforms are entirely consistent with many of the things that you have tried to do in California. Your health care providers have been innovators in improving quality and controlling costs and, judging from today's headlines, the new California purchasing pool is certainly a step in the right direction, offering consumers a wide choice of plans, a comprehensive benefit package, and lower rates. That kind of competition between insurers, combined with more choices for consumers, is what my plan is all about.

At a national level, I think the first step we must take is clear. The best way to preserve what's right about our health care system is to guarantee private insurance to every American. That's the foundation of our health reform plan. We'll provide every American with a health security card that will guarantee them a comprehensive package of benefits that can never be taken away. The benefits will include for the first time for many Americans prescription drugs and preventive care. All of you know that the best

way to keep people healthy is to promote wellness in addition to treating sickness. Retaining choice of doctors and health plans is also critically important to Americans and to American medicine. And this, too, is central to our approach.

Today, only about half of American employers offer their employees more than two choices of insurance plans; 90 percent of the businesses that have 25 workers or less offer no choice at all. And even for those who have some choice today, there's no guarantee they'll have it tomorrow if they change jobs or lose their job or if their employer has difficulty meeting the costs. This is a tremendous restraint on most Americans.

My proposal will guarantee the great majority of Americans far more choice of both doctors and insurance plans than they have now. Under this approach, people will be able to join a traditional fee-for-service plan, a network plan, or a plan sponsored by a health maintenance organization. But in all cases it will be families, not employers or insurance companies, that make the health care choices.

The people who are telling you we don't offer enough choice, which is clearly not so on its face, are the same who for decades have been pushing you out of the way and limiting your choices. You don't believe their arguments and neither do we.

That's why, among other things, we're going to insist upon different insurance practices: no more preexisting conditions, no more lifetime limits, no more higher rates for those who have had someone in their family sick or those who are older, no more overcharging of small employers or dropping them because one person in the workplace has a medical problem, no more avoiding people that might cost some money.

The fact is, increasingly insurance companies set your fees. They second-guess your clinical decisions. More and more they make you get prior approval from someone who's thousands of miles away who's never seen your patient and doesn't have a clue about what really ought to be done. They all pay according to their own fee schedules, requiring different forms for different people under different circumstances. The forms are drowning the health care system in paper.

I have a doctor friend who calls me about every 3 months to tell me another horror story. Recently he told me, "We've got all these people doing paperwork. Now we've hired somebody who doesn't even fill out forms, just spends all day on the telephone beating up on the insurance companies about the forms we've already sent in." He's told me, he said, "I went to medical school to practice medicine, but I'm getting lost in the fun house instead." Well, he's right, and I know a lot of you agree with him and identify with that story. But this year we can escape that fun house.

The fourth element of our approach is to preserve and protect Medicare. Older Americans will continue to choose their doctor and their plan. And in addition, we want to cover prescription drugs under Medicare and provide new options for long-term care in the home and community, which most people prefer and which will become increasingly important as our population continues to age rapidly.

Finally, let me say again, we should guarantee these health benefits at work; that's how most people are insured now. And 8 of 10 uninsured Americans have a family member who works. This is the fairest and most efficient approach to covering everyone. And so no one gets hurt by the needed reforms, we'll provide discounts for small businesses and breaks for self-employed people and their families.

This is the proposal; it's pretty straightforward. All Americans will get a card that guarantees with it the security of private insurance and comprehensive benefits, then they can pick the doctor they want. They'll know that they're always covered by what is said to be covered, and it won't be subject to change by anyone.

Before taking your questions now, let me again just express my deep thanks for your continued support and encouragement. After 60 years, I think this is the year we're going to provide every American health security that can't be taken away. I'm optimistic because of what's already been done. This Congress has been willing to act and to work with me to pass an economic plan that's helped

to produce low interest rates and high [low] [1] inflation and more than 2 million new jobs. After 7 years, this Congress passed and I signed the Brady bill and the family and medical leave bill, things that people had given up on getting done.

The point is not that we have been able to do so much but that is evidence that we can still do what we have to do. The American people have demanded that we make a great deal happen. They want their dreams back, and they want this problem fixed. A big part of the American dream has always been knowing that you can care for your children or your family if they become sick; that's what you do. You're a part of every American family's dream. I've seen the magic you perform all over the country. You care, and the American people know it. And our challenge now is to do everything possible to keep and protect the bond that you've worked a lifetime to establish. Our challenge is to provide every American health care that's always there. With your help, we can do that and we can make history.

I thank you for the leadership you've already shown. And if you have questions, I'll be glad to try to answer them. Thank you very much.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. I wonder if you have a contract with Coca-Cola. [*Laughter*]

The President. I forgot to put it in a cup. There goes my Pepsi voters. [*Laughter*]

Q. Well, Mr. President, as you acknowledged, the California Medical Association has been deeply involved working for health system reform. You know, I think you have to realize that we had Harry and Louise opposing us when they were only engaged. [*Laughter*]

The members of this house, representing 40,000 practicing California physicians, are vitally concerned about what is contained in any proposal for health system reform. We will, after all, be caring for our patients within whatever structure is created by those changes. We want to be as certain as possible that it's going to work. We have some questions for you that will address some of those physician concerns. And I'm going to take the opportunity to ask the first one.

Mr. President, in your State of the Union Address, you said that you would sign a health reform bill if it met the test of universal coverage. In addition to universal coverage, what other elements do you believe critical to a reform package, and what must be included to secure your signature?

The President. Well, I want to be very careful about how I answer that because I don't want to be throwing down gauntlets that may mean more than I wish to say. But let me say, to have a system that works, you not only have to have universal coverage, but it seems to me that the benefits ought to include primary and preventive care. There ought to be a comprehensive set of benefits.

Then there ought to be a clear outlawing of insurance practices which have caused so much misery and caused so many Americans to fall between the cracks. I think there should be an end to lifetime limits. I think there should be an end to preexisting conditions. I think there ought to be an end to discriminatory rate-setting based on age.

In order to do this, I think we have to find some way of not only legislating community rating but actually having community rating. And we need a device that guarantees that small businesses and self-employed people will have access to insurance at competitive rates with people who are insured through big business and Government. I think that's very, very important. So these are the things that I think are critical.

Now, if you're going to cover everybody, you have to either do it through a tax or through some device by which people pay into an insurance pool. I think the employer mandate, so-called, is the best way to do it by providing guaranteed private insurance at the workplace because that's the way most Americans get their insurance today.

I know there are some small businesses for whom this would create difficulties, so we developed a system of small business discounts paid for from tax proceeds. And the taxpayers would pay to cover those who are unemployed and uninsured. That's basically the way I think the system would have to work.

[1] White House correction.

There are lots of other things I think ought to be in it, but I think it's very important for the President, in the middle of a congressional process that is just not getting its sea legs and getting underway, not to be too specific in talking about vetoes.

If we can begin with a good comprehensive system of universal coverage, we can go a long way to dealing with a lot of the other problems. As you know, my plan does deal with a number of your concerns, and I know you have more questions on that, so maybe we should get to the other questions.

Q. Well, thank you very much, Mr. President. You're now going to have an opportunity to field questions from a group of pretty nervous California physicians.

Q. Thank you. Good morning, Mr. President. I'm a family physician in San Bernardino. I have a unique opportunity here to ask you a question, particularly because I was a graduate from the University of Arkansas for medical sciences.

The President. Good for you.

Q. Thank you very much. And I had an opportunity to campaign for you in 1982 when you made your comeback election for the Governorship. So what I would like to ask you, Mr. President, is that physicians are concerned that in the current marketplace and under your proposed model, insurers and businesses are encouraged to collectively purchase health care services. However, antitrust laws prohibit physicians from collectively selling their services. It's like requiring individual autoworkers to negotiate their salaries separately with General Motors.

In light of the strong opposition of the Federal Trade Commission to any changes in antitrust laws, what would you propose to provide a more balanced and fair environment in which these negotiations can occur between physicians and insurers?

The President. I think we have to change the antitrust laws to allow you to organize to provide your services and more comprehensive professional groups. And let me say that one of the things that has concerned me most about this is that there is a development in American health care which I like, which has a consequence that I don't like. What I like: the fact that people are getting together in competitive buying groups and trying to get a better deal and trying to squeeze some of the excess cost out of our system. I think we all agree there are some there. I don't like the fact that an inevitable consequence of that has been that so many Americans have lost the right to choose their own doctor. We try to address this in two ways, one of which directly addresses your question. But let me try to put the two ways together so they'll fit.

Under our plan, each American consumer, once a year, would have the right to choose from at least three plans, including a fee-for-service plan, an HMO, and hopefully some sort of provider plan that will be provided by providers who get together and who may allow all doctors in a State, for example, to participate if they agree to observe the fee schedule that the plan bargains for. So, I think you ought to be able to do that. We also think that the HMO's should have to have a fee-for-service option that would allow people who are covered under the HMO the option to choose another doctor if it seemed appropriate. And if the fee-for-service option were elected at the beginning of the year, the HMO would have to contribute to that.

So I think that this will help. But I agree that there must be some changes in the antitrust laws so that you can clearly get together without fear of legal repercussions. Otherwise, you are consigned to dealing with a middleman that will only add to the cost of your providing your services and undermine the choice that the consumer gets.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Good morning, Mr. President. I'm an oncologist practicing in Redwood City in northern California. My question is about budgets and living within our means for health care. We recognize the need for controlling health care costs, there's no debate about that. However, we are concerned that your proposal and others may limit the rise of the health care budget to the cost of living or other artificial indexes that may have little to do with actual health care costs. Rising health care costs may be more related to human factors such as our aging population, tobacco consumption, new technologies, new diseases such as AIDS. How can these factors be taken into account when arriving at or when developing a health care budget?

The President. Well, first let me say that I basically agree with you on that. I have tried not without complete success—or not with complete success—but I've really tried hard since I started thinking about this issue seriously 4 or 5 years ago, when I was still a Governor, to identify the elements of disparity between, let's say, the 14.5 percent of their GDP that Americans spend on health care, the 10 percent that Canadians spend, the 9 percent or less that the Germans and the Japanese spend. There's no question that a lot of it is due to good factors like we invest more in medical research and technology, and that's good. And there's no question that some of it is due to bad factors that you can't do anything about, at least in your role as a doctor, which is higher AIDS rates, higher rates of violence which lead to enormous medical costs.

What we believe is that in the beginning, at least, there are many, many savings which can accrue from a rational system, far, far lower administrative and bureaucratic paperwork costs, significant reductions in unnecessary costs that are in the system and that after that, in the years ahead, when we measure how much costs can increase, we're not only—consider population growth and inflation, we will also have to consider the burdens of the American system if the rate of AIDS, for example, continues to go up instead of going down, if the rate of violence goes up instead of going down, if the aging population imposes greater burdens rather than fewer because we don't succeed in doing a lot of the preventive things that we're going to do.

Those things will all have to be calculated in the rate at which medical costs go up. We can't ignore real-world factors that make the CPI and health care different from the overall rate of inflation. And I think those things should be taken into account.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Q. Good morning, Mr. President.

The President. Good morning, sir.

Q. I'm a pediatrician from San Luis Obispo. My question to you this morning relates to the power of insurance companies. Yourself, Mrs. Clinton, and Mr. Magaziner have repeatedly stated that one of your goals is to return the control of medical practice back to physicians and hospitals. We obviously agree with that. Unfortunately, however, many of the current managed care plans in California are moving away from that goal. Mr. President, does your plan contain features which would achieve that goal?

The President. It does. I think there are some that would help indirectly and one or two that would help directly. Let me just mention them.

First, giving every consumer three choices will make a big difference, saying that every consumer has to have at least three choices and that one of those choices must always be fee-for-service. We'll put all these plans in competition with one another, and that will make a difference.

Secondly, making it easier for physicians to provide these services directly will dramatically minimize the ability of the insurance companies to add to the cost and delay and undermine the quality of health care by second-guessing everything the doctors want to do in the HMO's that they're promoting—[*inaudible*]—in our plan that the insurance companies disclose what's in their utilization review protocol in advance so people can evaluate that and know what's going on and argue against it. And competing plans, including competing physicians groups can say, here's why this is a bad deal for you and why you shouldn't take it and why it is going to add to the cost and undermine the quality of health care.

Now, all these are things, I think, that will really make a difference. Most doctors I know recognize that from time to time, there are certain things that ought to be subject to some kind of review. But basically, it's gone crazy now. It's become an instrument of denying service when it's needed. So what we've tried to do is strike the right balance here, and I hope we have.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

The President. I must say that Bravo is a wonderful name for a pediatrician to have. A lot of times you can just say that to your kids and they'll get better. [*Laughter*]

Q. Mr. President, I think the medical profession really believes that that issue is so important that if we win everything else but lose on that one, none of the other matters.

The President. It's absolutely clear to me that the whole HMO movement has taken the utilization review to an extreme and that it has to be backed off of. Forget about the HMO, just the whole insurance—it's the insurance companies that are driving this. And I think the more we can put doctors into the management decisions of the HMO and the more choice we can give to the people who themselves will be patients, who have personal contact with their doctors—keep in mind, this is a huge deal, letting the employees themselves make this choice instead of their employers, means that somebody will be choosing, every plan will be chosen by someone who has had a personal relationship with a physician who has doubtless discussed this with him or her. I mean, that's going to make a big difference in this. And I agree with you, it's a very important issue.

Q. Good morning, Mr. President. I am a trauma surgeon in San Bernardino, California. Medical malpractice concerns and the practice of defensive medicine are serious issues associated with the—[*inaudible*]—of care to the trauma patient. Mr. President, we are very pleased that you believe that the tort reform should be an essential part of the health care reform and have adopted some of—[*inaudible*]—provisions in your plan. But sir, would you be willing to add to your plan the most essential part of the—[*inaudible*]—that is, a $250,000 cap on noneconomic damages? And sir, if you just say yes, I would be happy.

The President. As you might imagine, we debated that thing for a long time before we presented our plan to the Congress, because we didn't want the whole health care plan to come a cropper on a debate over tort reform. We thought there had to be some. We knew that the States were taking up this issue to some extent, but we thought we ought to do something nationally, even though tort law historically has been completely within the purview of State government, not the National Government. So we agreed that there ought to be a limitation on lawyer fees, contingency fees. And we did some other things that were recommended by you and were in the model work that was done in California.

Something else we did that I think has been insufficiently noticed is we agreed to include medical practice guidelines developed by professional groups as raising a presumption that there was no negligence on the part of doctors. This offers an enormous opportunity to dramatically reduce the number of medical malpractice suits, the number of recoveries, and therefore the malpractice rates.

My own view is that based on the research I've seen in a couple of places where this has been tried on a limited basis, is it may offer the best hope of all of protecting doctors from frivolous lawsuits by simply raising a presumption that the doctor was not negligent if the practice guidelines developed by the professional groups themselves were in fact followed. So I think that that has been not sufficiently noticed. That is a very, very big step, in addition to the other things I mentioned.

My own judgment is that we will not include the national cap because there will be so much difference among the various congressional delegations from different States about what the caps should be and whether it should change with inflation over time. And in fact you might wind up in California with a situation different from the one you have now if it were to be done. For example, if there were a debate on the national cap, then the immediate thing would be, what should the cap be, and if States have a lower one, should it be required to be raised? Because all those things were involved, we decided that we would leave the cap issue itself to State law and deal with these other matters.

I urge you to look at what we have done, because I think we've taken a long step toward trying to relieve doctors of the burden of frivolous lawsuits and trying to control the cost of malpractice insurance.

Q. Thank you, sir.

Q. Good morning, Mr. President. I'm a practicing family physician in Modesto, California. I'm also the current California Academy of Family Physicians president and past president of the Stanislaus County Medical Society.

Mr. President, when I entered medical school, I was led to believe that I would spend my career practicing health care. I find that an enormous part of my day is spent

battling with health insurance clerks to get authorization for my patients to have some of the even most basic of health care. Obviously, it would be better for me to spend that time seeing patients. What will your plan do to prevent or to limit the use of these managed health care organizations from providing these, or throwing up these artificial barriers in the name of managed care, but in reality these things prevent us from providing that care?

The President. Let me try to restate what I said before. I believe that the micromanagement of medicine by insurance companies has reached an excessive point. And what we have tried to do to reduce it, since we can't—you don't want the Federal Government exactly passing laws saying what decisions can or cannot be made by physicians and others working with them. What we've tried to do is to change the whole system so that it would be much less likely.

And I will mention two things again. Number one, we make it easier for people like you to join with like-minded physicians in providing services directly or to join together and to tell people if you're going to work with them, you don't want those kinds of utilization reviews. And we require the insurance companies to disclose their utilization review protocols in advance. And they will be under much more pressure than they are now because now they won't have the same shot at business XYZ's employees because the employees themselves will be deciding whether they want an HMO, do they want a PPO, do they want some other kind of organization, or do they want to have fee-for-service medicine. Under each case the employer's liability is the same—responsibility is the same. So I think that we are changing the environment in ways that will really permit you, working with your fellow physicians and your patients, to cut down dramatically on the number of these abuses.

I also want to point out that if there is a single card which we envision which entitles a person to health care and which enables them to hook into a computer which says that they are covered and all of that, and if there is a single form related to the comprehensive benefit package which can be filled out in every doctor's office and hospital in the country and then processed by every insurance company in the country, then that is going to dramatically reduce the paperwork burden, too. I have many, many doctors complain to me that the time they have to spend and the money they have to spend in their clinics on post facto paperwork has exploded in recent years. And I think that is also very important, cutting down on that burden, not only the time, but the money is critically important. So I believe that we will make it better.

If you have further suggestions, I'd be glad to hear them. But this is an area in which it is difficult to legislate directly and in which many physicians are reluctant to have us legislate directly. It seems to me if you change the economics and change the distribution of the power of decisionmaking in this whole process, giving more to the doctors and to patients through the workplace and less to the insurance companies, that the practices will inevitably change because the shift of decisionmaking has occurred.

Q. Thank you very much. Mr. President, we know that your time is very tight. If you could spare us a few minutes, we have some other questions that we would hope to be able to put before you.

The President. Please do, because I know we've got one or two other issues that I think should be dealt with.

Q. Thank you, sir.

Q. Mr. President, I practice anesthesiology in San Diego. And I want to thank you for the opportunity to ask you a question today. Two years ago, right here in California, in this State, with the support of this organization, we passed a law that created voluntary health insurance purchasing cooperatives. In fact, you just alluded to them a few moments ago. And as you said, they so far have been enormously successful, both in extending access and in eliminating costs.

My concern is that there are some reform proposals that would cause these purchasing pools or alliances to become so large and thus so inflexible that they would in fact limit rather than enhance the competition that you yourself state, and I agree with you, that we want to see in the marketplace. So to make these entities work the way I think we both wish them to, the alliances and the purchas-

ing pools, I believe that we need to limit their size. So my question for you this morning is what would you propose to control the size of the purchasing pools and alliances so that they would fulfill their primary purpose of providing affordable, accessible care and not become a large, inflexible bureaucracy?

The President. Well, let me first say that I agree that we shouldn't have them become large, inflexible bureaucracies. Under our plan, the alliances would be much larger and the membership would be mandatory. But that's because we're trying to achieve something with our plan that is beyond what the alliances do. I think it will all be debated in the Congress, and I'm certainly flexible on it.

But let me explain why we recommended larger alliances and offer you, not just you individually, sir, but your group there the opportunity to suggest to me—either to Ira Magaziner who's there or to us through a letter later—how we could achieve the same objective. Because I know a lot of people say, "Well these alliances are too big or the work units—you don't—people with several thousand employees in them." And at one level, I think that's right, but at another level, I'm not sure, and let me explain why.

The purchasing co-op that you have in California, which has worked real well, is designed primarily to give small businesses bargaining power so that they can, in effect, have the same access to health care at the same cost that people in large units like big corporations and Government do. You can do that with smaller alliances, let's say with people with a few hundred employees or 100 or whatever it is in California, 50 and down, you can do that. The same thing is now happening in Florida where they're seeing these results.

What we wanted to do with the alliances were three other things that it still seems have to be done somehow under the plan. First of all, through the alliances, we were going to distribute the small business discounts. We can find another way to do that, but that was going to be done.

Secondly, we were going to provide certain handling services basically to bring together and reduce the paperwork burdens of the physicians, the employers, and the insurance companies. We were going to do a lot of the paperwork there. That can probably be done some other place.

The other thing, though, which I think is very important, and which all of you clapped when I mentioned earlier, is the alliances as large units were going to be used to make it financially possible for the insurance companies to observe community ratings. And I'd like to talk about that a minute.

There are two issues here on discriminatory rates. One is, how do you get small businesses and self-employed people access to the same rate structure presently available to big business and Government? The other is, how do you, as a practical matter, eliminate unfair billing practices without bankrupting the insurance companies that are still in the market? That is, how do you eliminate preexisting conditions? How can you afford to do away with lifetime limits? How can you eliminate rate discrimination against people with preexisting conditions in their families or against workers who are older at a time when older workers are having to change jobs a lot in their life, too?

Now, you can pass a law and say, we'll have community rating. But New York did that, and yet they still don't have it. And the reason is, they don't have any mechanism within which community rating can be practically made to work in a State where you have a lot of different insurance companies. And the insurance companies simply cannot solvently—can't stay solvent and do that unless people are insured in very large pools where insurance companies can make money the way grocery stores do, a little bit of money on a lot of people.

So the fundamental difference in what California has done, which is very good, and what we are seeking to achieve is that I'm not sure that, unless we have everybody below a certain substantial size in one of these alliances, we can achieve community rating. We can get better breaks within the present system for small businesses, but I am not sure we can get community rating. That's the rub. If we can solve that, I'm very flexible on the rest of this. I mean, I'm just trying to achieve an objective that we all agree is necessary.

Q. Mr. President, I practice emergency medicine in inner-city Los Angeles. Every day I see the impact of undocumented immigrants on our health care system. Mr. President, I'm grateful to you for making health system reform a top national priority. Your proposal provides health security for all citizens and $1 billion to cover noncitizens.

However, in some of California's largest counties, up to 25 percent of the population are noncitizens, both legal and undocumented. Currently, Federal law and our own ethics as physicians require that we provide care. But the reality is that these costs are putting an enormous strain on our State's health care delivery system and the entire California economy. We are spending close to $1 billion in Los Angeles County alone to deliver health care to undocumented immigrants. How do you feel we can better address this problem?

The President. It's a difficult one, as you know. Let me make a couple of observations, and then say where I think we are practically.

Obviously, no State or local government should be required to shoulder the cost of immigration or the lack of an immigration policy or the inability to enforce the policy we have now at the national levels. But as a practical matter, as we all know, it happens all the time. Now, in my last two budgets, I have tried to provide more funds to California, especially in the areas of health and education, for dealing with the extra costs of immigration because I think it's not your fault.

Now, in this health care plan, we provide a billion dollars in extra money. Is it enough? Of course it's not but it's a good step in the right direction. Let me say that if you look at the States with the big immigrant health care burden, California, Florida, Texas, New York, although there are five or six others with substantial burdens as well, our plan will save the States enormous amounts of money that they would have paid otherwise in out-of-pocket Medicaid match costs, long-term care costs, and other health-related costs related to running public health facilities, for example. In other words, our plan—we estimate that California will save, if our plan goes into effect in 1996 or we begin to put it into effect in 1996, phasing it in, we estimate California will save about $6 billion or more between that year and the end of the decade, new money that would not have been there otherwise in this budget. That will also allow the State to divert some of those resources to health care as well as to dealing with some of your long-deferred education and other problems out there.

So I believe that, between the savings that will occur from the State of California and the funds that we can put into immigrant health care—migrant health care—directly, I think that will make a big difference. Now, let me say, this fund will start at a billion dollars, but obviously, based on the evidence and based on our ability to secure savings in other aspects of the system, Congress will be free to supplement this fund every year from now on. That's where we're going to start.

I realize it doesn't solve the whole problem. I think it's frankly all we can afford to do at the moment. And I think the savings which will flow to the State from passing this plan will be so great that they in turn will be able to do more and still have money left over to address other needs of Californians. So I hope they'll stick with it, because I think it's the best we can do right now.

Q. Mr. President, you really need to know that over half the hospitals in California are currently operating in the red. It is an urgent problem, and I hope that the solution to the problem would not be tied to the whole health system reform.

Thank you.

The President. I certainly agree with that. Let me just say one other thing. I agree that we cannot hold this problem hostage to health care. We're just trying to use the health care reform which will free up billions of dollars to put more into medical research, more into undocumented alien health care, and other things. But I agree that we have to deal with it.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. Do you have time for one last question?

The President. Sure.

Q. Thank you very much, Mr. President. I practice internal medicine in Los Angeles. I also drink Diet Coke. And I'm delighted to be here this morning as president of the California Hispanic-American Medical Association. Mr. President, in California, our

managed care system has evolved from what started as a not-for-profit market into one which today is dominated by large for-profit publicly traded HMO's. This evolution has also caused the profits and administrative costs of these HMO's to soar, while health care services to patients has plummeted. While the CEO's of these corporations make millions, I have to argue with these same companies who insure my patients to approve immunizations, pap smears, and mammograms. The CMA is sponsoring legislation in California to limit the administrative costs and profits of these companies. How do you feel about this situation, and how would your plan protect other States from this trend?

The President. In two or three ways. First of all, under our plan those plans will have to offer pap smears, mammograms, and other preventive and primary services. They won't be able to cut them out. Secondly, these companies will be under much more pressure to provide quality service and to siphon less money off to bureaucracy and profits than they are now because they won't be able to make a deal with employers which can then be enforced on employees. Every employee—that is, every patient you see will be able to make a new choice of plan every year. So if they get abused in year one, then in year two, the next year, they'll be able to make the same choice they made last year all over again and choose a different plan or fee-for-service medicine or a group of physicians who are providing health care.

So this will fundamentally change the whole incentives of the system. They simply will not be able to use the fact that they have a preexisting relationship with an employer to undermine the delivery of quality of care between the doctor and the patient, because the patient will be making a decision and every year can make another decision. And that will have a profound impact on it. And they will not be able to eliminate primary and preventive services from their package. That has to be involved. So that's going to change it.

Then we will make—when we make some of the changes in the antitrust laws, which will make it even easier for physicians to get together and deliver health care directly. So these HMO's are going to be under a whole different kind of competition. It won't be competition from somebody else providing less service at lower costs, it will be competition from somebody else providing more services and higher quality with more choices for the same costs or sometimes less.

So I think this will really change things and put you and your patients much more in the driver's seat than you are now. That's perhaps the most critical element of my plan that has not been really noted. We are not restricting choice, we're expanding it. And we're putting the decision—we're moving the decision from the employer to the employee about who makes the choice, which means you're moving it to the patient. And that should be, I think, something that will make a profound difference, particularly after you all get through talking to all of them.

Q. Mr. President, everyone in this room and all the people we represent would like to thank you for taking the time from your busy schedule to meet with us today. We want you to know that we're with you in this fight and we'll join with you in working with Congress in a joint effort to guarantee all Americans private health insurance that can never be taken away.

The President. Thank you. And let me just say in closing, if I could ask you one thing, it would be to impress upon the Congress the importance of acting and acting this year. This is a very complex issue. No one has all the answers. We'll be improving on what we do from now until kingdom come. But you know, more uniquely than most people do, what the consequences of not doing anything are, and that's more restricted managed care, more people without any insurance at all, more of the headaches that you have already complained about today. So you are in a unique position to embrace the fundamental principles here, work with me on the details, and impress upon your very large congressional delegation that the time to act is now, not next year, not 5 years from now, but now.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The teleconference began at 11:47 a.m. The President spoke from Room 459 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Dr. David Holley, president, California

Medical Association. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks to Health Care Providers

March 23, 1994

Thank you very much. It's a great honor for the Vice President and Mrs. Gore and for Hillary and me to have all of you here today. I want to especially thank Dr. Haggerty for his moving account, and Marva Wade for having the courage not only to tell us the story of her work but the story of her family, and Sister Bernice Coreil for her stout-hearted defense of our continuing efforts.

I was sitting there thinking when she was speaking, I wonder how many nuns have ever given a speech and quoted Machiavelli? Well, I suppose he was a Catholic. [*Laughter*] And he certainly was right about a lot of things.

I want to say to all of you how important it is for us to have you here to validate our common efforts because of your work, your life, and your experience. We've been seeking out a lot of that lately. Hillary and I went to Florida the first of the week and met with thousands of senior citizens, some of whom have been frightened by claims that we were trying to do something to Medicare instead of to protect Medicare and to extend its benefits to prescription medicine and to long-term care options in the home and in the community.

I met yesterday with a very, very moving group of a couple of hundred small business people, and 12 or 13 of them talked. About half of them, by the way, in endorsing our program, acknowledged that they would pay more if our plan passed, but for the first time they'd be able to insure all their employees instead of just a few of them and insure them with good benefits. And for a change their competitors would be on an even field with them because they would have to do the same thing, and they'd all make out all right.

This morning I met by teleconference with the California Medical Association, the biggest affiliate of the AMA in the country, and they were extremely supportive of this plan and what we are trying to do.

And of course, now I'm meeting with you. And along the way, I have had encounters with people that we didn't plan that have made the same points all of you have made. I was in Florida and as I often do when I'm traveling, I agree to meet with children who are part of the Make-A-Wish network around the country, desperately ill children. And I met a family with two boys with a rare form of cancer which they believe must be genetically related because both their sons have it, and they have a daughter who is the youngest child and who has not yet been diagnosed. And we all hope she won't be.

But this family was living in mortal terror because they had a lifetime limit on their insurance policy, and they thought, well, maybe one of their sons would become an adult. They're both surviving and maintaining it, but if they have good success with the treatment and both the boys are able to live and go on and do well, they'll certainly outrun their lifetime limits while the younger son is still at home and needing care.

I was in Columbus, Ohio, the other day campaigning for our crime bill, and I stopped in a delicatessen where the owner of the delicatessen, who wound up being one of our small business people here yesterday by the way, came to me and said, ''I am in the worst of all worlds. I have 20 employees that are full-time, 20 that are part-time. I had cancer 5 years ago. I'm about to be declared cancer free. Because of my preexisting conditions, our deductibles went up, our copay went up, our premium went up. But I still cover my 20 employees. I'm proud of that because it's the right thing to do, but I'm at a competitive disadvantage to everybody who doesn't, and I feel guilty that I don't cover my part-time employees.''

So I hear these stories always. And those of you who are on the frontlines of medical care must wonder from time to time when you hear people make these speeches or you see these television ads, what planet they came from—[*laughter*]—because it's so inconsistent with the personal experience you've had.

Hillary and I have gone to extraordinary lengths to try to get people to look at this anew. We even made our own Harry and Louise ad for the national press the other

day. Someone said after it was over, ''Have you no shame left?'' And I said, ''Not very much after the last year.'' [*Laughter*]

The purpose of all of this to me is to give the American people who are looking at this from their own perspective, as every person should, a sense of how the real world operates, how incredibly complex and counterproductive the present financing system is, how it encourages people like you to spend more time on paperwork instead of patient care, and how it leaves millions of our fellow citizens rife with insecurity that they either are going to lose their health insurance or have it priced out of their reach, or that the policy they have doesn't cover something they need.

What we are genuinely trying to do in good faith and with the consultation of thousands of people like you all across the country is to fix what's wrong with this system and keep what's right. We believe we have to have guaranteed insurance for all Americans, otherwise we'll never have security for all Americans; we'll never be able to have a rational system; we'll never stop all the cost-shifting; but most important of all, we'll never do the right thing.

And we think that guaranteed insurance should cover comprehensive benefits that include primary and preventive care, that include prescription medicine, that builds in mental health coverage. And we think over the long run these things will give us a more cost-efficient system and a much healthier and happier and more secure country, and a more productive American work force.

We believe in order to have the kind of system we need, we have to find a way to capitalize on the managed competition and those competitive forces that we've seen taking root in health care over the last couple of years but to do it in a way that preserves rather than undermines people's choices of providers and therefore the quality of our health care system.

Fewer and fewer Americans have choice in their health care system today. I was glad to hear somebody mention that earlier. I hear all these things, saying, well, if you vote for the President's plan, you will lose your choices. The truth is that more than half of the employers who are carrying insurance for their employees today provide less than two or more choices. In other words, fewer than half of them say to their employees, here's two choices, here's three, here's more choices, you make a decision. Under our plan, people would be able to choose not just once but every year of fee-for-service approach, a network plan, or a network plan that has a point-of-service option so they could always decide that they wanted to go outside the plan and get other health care. And if they chose that option, the employer would still be obliged to pay his or her portion of the cost of care.

In other words, we'll have more competition. We'll have more managed care. But we'll have more choice, and the choice will be made by the patients, the people who are going to get the care based on an informed set of information. And they'll be able to make the choice anew every year. I think that is very, very important.

The next thing we want to do is to have real insurance reform. That means that we're going to have to have an end to the preexisting condition problems that you all know very well. People cannot be denied coverage or have their rates raised just because someone in their family has been sick. We should have an end to the lifetime limits policy. And we should not charge older people more than younger people for their health insurance.

Let me say there are sound economic reasons quite apart from health care to do this. The average American 18-year-old's going to change work eight times in a lifetime. We are now regularly seeing people in their sixties lose their old job and have to find a new job. We are up here this year, this administration is, trying to redesign the entire unemployment system of the country to make it a continuous reemployment system. What good is that if for reasons having nothing to do with your family's health condition or your own age, you lose your job, and then you can't get another one with health insurance because your child's been sick or because you happen to be over 60 years old? This is a very serious issue.

We also have to find ways for small business people and self-employed people to buy the kind of good insurance that people like me who work for the Government have or

people who work for big companies have, at the same competitive prices. So you want a break for small business and the self-employed to get what the rest of us take for granted. And we have to have broadbased community rating. I will say this, you cannot expect the insurance industry under the present circumstance to provide these services because a lot of the smaller companies will absolutely go broke. They cannot afford community rating. They cannot disregard these things, because we're all insured in tiny little groups where a lot of those folks have to make money—a lot of money on a few people.

The only way we can do this in a way that is fair and humane and practical is to have each other insured in ways that permit the insurance folks to make money the way grocery stores do, a little bit of money on a lot of people where you spread the risk. And that is what we are trying to do. It is what we must do.

And we have to change the system. It is no good just railing against something that will not work economically. We can change it and make it work economically. I simply refuse to believe, by the way, that we are the only advanced country in the world that can't figure out how to do this. It's like being told—every time I see one of these ads saying we can't do this; we can't do this; we don't need to do this; I feel like someone telling me right now, not as President, but as an American citizen that there is some inherent defect in my country, and we're all just consumed with the dummies, and we can't figure out how to do this. That's not true. If we have the will to do it, we can do it.

And people who really care about the quality of care, like you, know we can do it. We can do it, and we can still preserve Medicare. We can preserve the things that work, and we can do it. I think we ought to do it at work. I think that people ought to be insured at work who are working. Eighty percent of the uninsured people in America today have someone in their family with a job. So the simplest, clearest, least bureaucratically, least threatening way to do this is to extend the requirement that employers should pay for a portion of their employees' insurance; the employee should pay for a portion of that as well. Yes, we have a very vital small business job market. Interestingly enough, most of the job-creating small businesses in this country provide insurance for their employees right now.

Just this week, to give you another personal story, Hillary and I had a family staying with us here from our home State, a man who is in the car business, has been for 20 years. He said, ''You know, I've always thought about what a competitive disadvantage I face because I've always covered all my employees in my automobile place, and none of my competitors ever had. And I just moaned about it all the time. And then I realized, I'm in business after 20 years and doing better than I ever have and three of my competitors have gone broke even though they didn't cover their employees, and I did. And it's because I've still got the same people working for me that started with me 20 years ago taking care of our customers, doing a good job, providing quality service and a good product.''

There is a real lesson there. We cannot let people who always tell us about the problems beat this thing and make it worse. Yes, there are problems. You name me a problem that's not going to get worse if we do nothing. If we do nothing, next year we'll have more uninsured people than we had this year. If we do nothing, next year we'll have more cost-shifting than we do this year. If we do nothing, next year we'll have more families with Marva stories than we do this year. If we do nothing, you as doctors and nurses will face more restrictions on your practice than you have this year. Isn't that right? If we do nothing, the patients that you deal with will have fewer choices than they do this year. If we do nothing, all the competitive forces will allow some bigger businesses and government to get a better deal next year, but the consequence of that will be, there will be more financial trouble for hospitals than there are this year.

Everything we're complaining about this year will get worse if the people who tell us that we can't do anything because there are problems with anything we want to do prevail. The only certainty is the problems will be aggravated if we put this off another year.

So if you believe in these principles, let me say this: We need to take it out to the American people and tell them what we're trying to do. Let me tell you—this is the most interesting thing I've read recently—that wouldn't be too hard. A couple of weeks ago, the Wall Street Journal, which is hardly the house organ of the Clinton administration, conducted a little forum, and they explained our health care program to some citizens of York, Pennsylvania, without telling them anything about our plan. It turned out that the great majority of the group thought everything about our plan was great. But they didn't like our plan very much because of what they had heard on the paid ads, and they'd heard organized groups run against it. Then when they told them what was in it, they thought it was peachy.

What does that mean? Well, it means that we need people like you to go out and talk about the basic principles. Of course, there's a congressional process. Of course, there have to be amendments made. Of course, we have to work through this the way all laws are made. But it is very, very important that the Congress understands that you, as people who have put your lives, your heart and soul into health care, are for this, and that the people with whom you work, the people who are the patients of America, want it to be done.

Congress will go on recess soon, but democracy won't go on recess. It will pick up because the people will go out and talk to their Congressmen and Senators. So I implore you, as we look at this Easter recess, go tell your patients, your colleagues, your friends, your neighbors, and most important, your Senators and Representatives that the time to do this is now, that delaying it will make it just like a hangnail or an ingrown toenail; it's just going to get worse.

And one of the things—it's almost like sometimes when a country has to face these big problems—it's like when you're trying to raise your kids, sooner or later, you have to get across to people that when you've got a big problem, you might as well deal with it, because if you delay it, it will just get worse.

We have this momentous opportunity. Machiavelli was right. There is nothing too difficult as to change the established order of things. But remember this, if it hadn't happened over and over and over again, since he wrote that, there would be no civilized society, and America would not be the oldest democracy on the face of the Earth. We can do this, and with your help, we will.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:14 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Jesse C. Haggerty III, MD, chairman and program director of a family medicine residency program, Topeka, KS; Marva Wade, RN, president-elect, New York State Nurses Association, New York, NY; Sister Bernice Coreil, DC, senior vice president, System Integration, Daughters of Charity National Health System, St. Louis, MO. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Proclamation 6658—Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A., 1994

March 23, 1994

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

America's success in the years to come requires a national commitment to providing excellence in education. Our ability to seize the opportunities before us depends on the strength of our scholarship. We must build an educational system that offers our country's vast promise to every citizen. Only when we know that all of our students are receiving the best care and training possible can we say that we are prepared for the challenges of the future.

New innovations in teaching methods and curricula, combined with traditional lessons of ethics and morality, afford students a comprehensive education that will serve them well their entire lives. By sharing our experiences and our beliefs with the next generation of Americans, we can prepare our Nation for the awesome responsibilities and opportunities that lie ahead.

Rabbi Menachem Mendel Schneerson, the leader of the Lubavitch movement, has contributed a great deal to this important endeavor, advancing the ideals of sharing and education over the course of his long and rich life. As Rabbi Schneerson celebrates his 92nd birthday, it is fitting and appropriate

that the people of the United States honor his gifts to education and rededicate themselves to the teaching of ethics and morality.

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, do hereby proclaim March 23, 1994, as Education and Sharing Day, U.S.A. I call upon the people of the United States, Government officials, educators, and volunteers to observe the day with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities.

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

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 2:40 p.m., March 24, 1994]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 28.

Statement on the Air Collision at Pope Air Force Base

March 23, 1994

I am deeply saddened to learn of the tragic air collision at Pope Air Force Base in North Carolina and the resultant loss of life and injuries. Hillary and I join all Americans in expressing our condolences to the families and friends of those killed and wish a speedy recovery to those injured. This tragedy is a reminder that all those who serve in the military at home and abroad put their lives at risk in the service of their Nation and deserve the thanks of all Americans for doing so.

Statement Announcing a Meeting With Native Americans

March 23, 1994

I look forward to this historic meeting and to affirming our commitment to strengthening the nation-to-nation relationship we have with tribal governments.

NOTE: This statement was part of a White House press release announcing a meeting with American Indian and Alaska Native tribal leaders at the White House on April 29.

Statement on Denying Executive Clemency to Jonathan Pollard

March 23, 1994

After personally reviewing the Jonathan Pollard matter, I have decided to deny his application for executive clemency. I make this decision taking into account the recommendation of the Attorney General and the unanimous views of the law enforcement and national security agencies. My decision is based upon the grave nature of his offense and the considerable damage that his actions caused our Nation.

Mr. Pollard's crime is one of the most serious crimes against our country, placing national security secrets of the United States in the hands of another country. I have considered Mr. Pollard's argument that he is deserving of a shorter prison sentence because he spied for a friendly nation. I nevertheless believe that the enormity of Mr. Pollard's crime, the harm his actions caused to our country, and the need to deter every person who might even consider such actions, warrant his continued incarceration.

Remarks on Departure for Capitol Hill and an Exchange With Reporters

March 24, 1994

Air Collision at Pope Air Force Base

The President. Hello. I just wanted to make a brief statement. This morning, I called General Shelton at Fort Bragg and General Floyd at Pope Air Force Base to personally express my sorrow and condolences because of the tragedy yesterday, and to thank them, and through them, the members of our armed services who do the work that they do.

As I said in my statement yesterday, it's sometimes easy for those of us who enjoy the protection of the United States military to forget that it is a dangerous business, even in peace time, because of the training which must be carried out. And I think the hearts

and thoughts and prayers of all Americans go out to the families of those who were killed yesterday, those who were injured, and all of those who were involved in this tragedy. We wish them only the best, and we are all thinking of them.

Assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio

I'd also like to say a brief word about the tragic murder of Mr. Colosio in Mexico yesterday. As you know, I called President Salinas last night, and we had a conversation about it which was entirely personal. And again, the United States, all of us, particularly the Vice President and I and Secretary Cisneros and others who had met Mr. Colosio, feel a great sense of loss and feel the pain of the Mexican people and the pain of his family.

The United States has done what we could do today to try to support the people of Mexico and the Government by making it clear that we think that the country's institutions are fundamentally strong. There was a brief delay in the trading of Mexican securities today to give the investors the opportunity to find out the facts in the hope that we would avoid any undue movement there. That delay lasted somewhere around 30 minutes or an hour. And I think it did have a good, salutary effect to make, just to make sure that the investors have all the facts and were not under any misapprehension about what had occurred. And it appears that things are proceeding normally there. So our best wishes go out to the Mexican people and our grief and our condolences and our prayers to them in this terrible time of loss.

Mexico

Q. Mr. President, are there steps the United States Government can or should take to try to make sure that there's stability in Mexico?

The President. Well, what we can do, and what I think we should have done, first of all, is to take the steps we took on the trading. Secondly, I did talk to Secretary Bentsen last night to make sure that if there was serious trading in Mexican currencies, that we could try to help to stabilize that.

But, as you know, their financial institutions were all closed down today. So they took that step, and we'll just have to see whether anything else happens on that regard tomorrow. But I think things will settle down here. And I think fundamentally they are in sound shape. And I hope that will be the case. We'll have to wait and see what happens tomorrow.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, what did you tell the American Jewish leaders today about the status of a united Jerusalem?

The President. I told them that the position—I told them what I've always told you in public. I'll tell you the exact words I used. I said, "My position has not changed on that issue. But my position is also that the United States and other countries should refrain from intervening in these peace talks between the parties themselves. And part of the Declaration of Principles between Israel and the PLO was that the disposition of that issue would be a so-called final status issue to be resolved at the end of the talks. And I have respected that process." So I have made it clear that the United States has not changed it's position. The way we handled the resolution on the Hebron massacre in the U.N. gave us the opportunity to make that clear again. But we are trying to get these peace talks going, and we are going to let the parties make their decisions for the future of the Middle East on their own, and we are going to do everything we can to facilitate it.

News Conference

Q. What do you hope to accomplish in your press conference tonight?

The President. Basically, I'm going to make a report to the American people about what we're trying to do up here, about the work we're doing on the crime bill, on health care, on a number of other important issues. And if I don't get to the Hill now, I'll be behind the curve on health care. So I've got to go.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:06 p.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Gen. Henry H. Shelton, USA, Commanding General, 18th Air Borne Corps, Fort Bragg; and Brig. Gen. Bobby O. Floyd, USAF, 23d Wing Commander, Pope Air Force

Base. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's News Conference
March 24, 1994

The President. Good evening, ladies and gentlemen. Yesterday we were reminded that protecting our democracy and expanding its promise around the world can be costly and dangerous. Here at home we mourn the loss of the servicemen in the tragic aircraft accident at Pope Air Force Base, and we pray for a speedy recovery for those who were injured. This tragedy reminds us that the men and women who serve in the military put their lives at risk in the service of our Nation.

In Mexico, an assassin killed Luis Donaldo Colosio, the Presidential candidate of the Institutional Revolutionary Party. We send our condolences and our prayers to his family. And I urge the Mexican people at this difficult time to continue their strides toward economic and political reform and progress.

With the Congress beginning its Easter recess tomorrow, this is a good time to assess the real work we are getting done on behalf of the American people. We're moving forward on our economic plan. The budget now moving through Congress, when passed, will give us 3 consecutive years of deficit reduction for the first time since Harry Truman was President. In 1995, we'll have the lowest budget deficit as a percentage of our annual income of any of the major industrialized countries. A recovering economy produced 2 million jobs last year, and we're on track to create 2 million more in '94.

Around the world America's efforts have helped to bring much needed calm to Sarajevo and led to an important political accord between the Bosnian Muslims and Croats. Our call for restraint has helped to start talks again the Middle East. We will continue our efforts to stop North Korea's nuclear program and to seek progress on human rights in China, working to build a more positive relationship with that very important nation.

This Friday, a week ahead of schedule, our troops will return home from Somalia. Because of their courageous efforts, Somalia can now build its own future, a step it made in the right direction today with the accord between the leaders of the two largest factions in that country.

Since we came here, our country has been moving in the right direction. Just today, the House of Representatives passed our legislation to limit the influence of lobbyists. Our administration is completing work on a comprehensive welfare reform proposal. We have presented to the Congress our very important reemployment proposal, to change the unemployment system to provide immediate retraining to those who lose their jobs. In a few days, with bipartisan support, the country will have an education reform law that sets national standards for our public schools. In a few weeks, Congress will pass a crime bill and put more police on the street, tougher gun laws on the books, and make "three strikes and you're out" the law of the land.

Speaker Foley assured me last night that the crime bill will be item number one on the agenda of the House when it returns to work. And in a few months we will succeed in passing health care reform. Just yesterday, the House Subcommittee on Health passed legislation to provide health security for every American. And while there will be lots of twists and turns in the legislative process, this year Congress will pass and I will sign a health reform which guarantees health care security to every American that can never be taken away, with the right to choose a doctor, with a plan that outlaws insurance abuses: no more dropping coverage or cutting benefits; no more lifetime limits; no more raising rates just because someone in your family has been sick or some are older than others. We want to preserve and strengthen Medicare, and we believe in this administration that those health benefits should be guaranteed through the workplace, building on what works today.

I know that many people around America must believe that Washington is overwhelmingly preoccupied with the Whitewater matter. But our administration is preoccupied with the business we were sent here to do for the American people. The investigation of Whitewater is being handled by an independent Special Counsel whose appointment I supported. Our cooperation with that counsel has been total. We have supplied over 14,000 documents, my tax returns dating

back to 1978, and made available every administration witness he has sought.

I support the actions of the House and the Senate clearing the way for hearings at an appropriate time that does not interfere with Mr. Fiske's responsibilities. And I will fully cooperate with their work as well. Tomorrow I will make available my tax returns dating back to 1977 when I first held public office. Cooperation, disclosure, and doing the people's business are the order of the day.

This is the best moment we have had in decades to do the hard work on so many issues that affect not only our own progress and prosperity, but the very way we think about ourselves as a nation. The American people should know that I and my administration will not be distracted. We are committed to taking advantage of this rare moment and achieving these important goals.

Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Whitewater

Q. Mr. President, you just said that you would release your tax returns back to 1977. Questions also have been raised about whether you made money or lost money in your Whitewater investment. Do you still believe that you lost about $70,000? And do you have any reason to believe that you owe any back taxes?

The President. I am certain that we lost money. I do not believe we owe any back taxes. If it is determined that we do, of course, we will pay. I am now sure that we lost something less than $70,000, based on an interview I heard on television, or I heard about on television, with Jim McDougal with one of the networks, where he said that he felt that one of the loans I had taken from a bank where we also borrowed money for the land development corporation, he said he thought one of those was a personal loan.

And so I started racking my brain to try to remember what that might have been, and by coincidence, I was also rereading the galleys of my mother's autobiography, just fact checking it, and I noticed that she mentioned there something that I had genuinely forgotten, which is that I helped her to purchase the property and what was then a cabin on the place that she and her husband, Dick Kelley, lived back in 1981, and that I was a co-owner of that property with her for just a few months. After they married, he bought my interest out.

So that's where that—I borrowed the money to go into that investment. I paid the money back with interest. That was unrelated to Whitewater. All the other losses that we have documented to date we believe clearly are tied to the investment Hillary and I made in Whitewater. So we, in fact, lost some $20,700 less than the Lyon's report indicated because that loan came from a different place or came for different purposes. And there was another $1,500 payment I made on it. So whatever the total in the Lyon's report was, you should subtract from that $20,700 and another $1,500. And we believe we can document that clearly.

Tomorrow, my counsel, David Kendall, will brief the press on the evidence that we have, what's in the tax returns. You will see when you see the tax returns that those losses were clearly there. And he will be glad to support it with other information as well.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

Q. Mr. President, do you know of any funds, any money—Whitewater seems to be about money—having gone into any of your gubernatorial campaigns or into Whitewater, particularly federally insured money? Do you know of any money that could have gone in?

The President. No. I have no knowledge of that. I have absolutely no knowledge of that.

Rita [Rita Braver, CBS News].

Q. President Clinton, you just mentioned James McDougal, your former business partner. A lot of questions have been raised about his business practices. Can you tell us what drew you to him to begin with, and whether or not you still have faith now that he was—that he is an honest businessman?

The President. Well, I can tell you that when I entered my relationship with him—let's go back to then and not now—I knew Mr. McDougal and had known him for many years. I met him in the late sixties when he was running Senator Fulbright's office in Arkansas. I knew that sometime around that time, perhaps later, he got into the real estate business. When I entered into this investment, it was with a person I had known many

years who was in the real estate business who had never been in the S&L business or the banking business. That all happened at a later time. He had done quite well.

The reason we lost money on Whitewater is not surprising; a lot of people did at that time. Interest rates, as you'll remember, went through the roof in the early eighties. People stopped immigrating to my State to retire at least in the numbers they had all during the seventies; and the market simply changed. So we didn't sell as many lots, and the venture was not successful. So we lost the money. Principally, the money I lost was on the interest payments I had to make on the loans, which were never reimbursed because of the venture never turned a profit.

Q. Do you still believe in his honesty now and do you think that he——

The President. All I can tell you, to the best of my knowledge, he was honest in his dealings with me. And that's all I can comment on. As I said, when I heard about his comments on television, since he had—he's always told you that I had nothing to do with the management of Whitewater, that Hillary had nothing to do with it; we didn't keep the books or the records; that this investment was made, as you know, back in 1978; and that we were essentially passive investors; that none of our money was borrowed from savings and loans, and we had nothing to do with a savings and loan. So that's what he has always said. So when he said he didn't think this note, where I borrowed money from a bank not an S&L in 1981 had anything to do with Whitewater, I started thinking about it. We talked about it. We couldn't remember what else it could have been until I literally just happened to cross that in reading my mother's autobiography.

Andrea [Andrea Mitchell, NBC News].

Q. Mr. President, Congressman Leach made some very dramatic charges today. He said that Whitewater is really about the arrogance of power, and he didn't just mean back in Arkansas. He said that Federal regulators tried to stop investigators for the Resolution Trust Corporation in Kansas City from putting Whitewater into their criminal referrals. That would amount to a coverup and possibly obstruction of justice. Do you have any knowledge of that?

The President. Absolutely not. And it is my understanding——

Q. And are you looking into it?

The President. Let me just say this, it's my understanding that Mr. Leach was rather careful in the words that he used, and apparently he didn't even charge that any political appointee of our administration had any knowledge of this. So he may be talking about an internal dispute within the RTC from career Republican appointees for all I know.

Keep in mind, until I came here, all the appointees of the RTC were hired under previous, Republican administrations. There has never been a Democratic President since there's been an RTC. And I can tell you categorically I had no knowledge of this and was not involved in it in any way, shape, or form.

Q. Well, in light of all that's happened so far, Mr. President, do you think you made any mistakes in the initial investment and in the way the White House has handled this?

The President. I certainly don't think I made a mistake in the initial investment. It was a perfectly honorable thing to do, and it was a perfectly legal thing to do. And I didn't make any money, I lost money. I paid my debts. And then later on, as you know, Hillary and I tried to make sure that the corporation was closed down in an appropriate way and paid any obligations that it owed after we were asked to get involved at a very late stage and after Mr. McDougal had left the S&L. So I don't think that we did anything wrong in that at all. And I think we handled it in an appropriate way. We were like a lot of people; we invested money, and we lost.

I'd be the last person in the world to be able to defend everything we've done here in the sense that whatever we did or didn't do has sparked an inordinate amount of interest in a 16-year-old business venture that lost money. But to suggest—let me just say again, I have had absolutely nothing to do, and would have nothing to do, with any attempt to influence an RTC regulatory matter. And I think if you look at the actions of the RTC just since I've been President and you examine the facts that everybody that works there was appointed by a previous,

Republican administration, the evidence is clear that I have not done that.

Yes.

Q. Mr. President, you've been kind of tough at times on people you felt made out during the eighties and didn't pay their fair share. Can you tell us, sir, tonight that you have abided by the very high ethical standards——

The President. Absolutely.

Q. ——to which you've sought to hold others? And also, sir, if it turns out that you do owe something in back taxes, will you be prepared perhaps to revise some of those judgments you've made about others?

The President. No, not at all. I ask you to tell the American people what percentage of my income I paid in taxes in every year where I reported my tax returns. And let me tell you what my wife and I spent the eighties doing: I was the lowest paid Governor of any State in the country. I don't complain about it. I was proud of that. I didn't do it for the money. I worked on creating jobs and improving education for the children of my State. Every year I was Governor, my wife worked in a law firm that had always done business with the State. She never took any money for any work she did for the State. And indeed, she gave up her portion of partnership income that otherwise came to the firm, and instead every year gave an enormous percentage of her time to public service work, helping children and helping education, and doing a lot of other things, giving up a lot of income.

Now, we did that because we wanted to. The fact that we made investments, some of which we lost money on, some of which we made money on, has nothing to do whatever with the indictment that I made about the excesses of the eighties. And we always made every effort to pay our taxes. I would remind you that we, like most middle class folks, we turned our records over to an accountant. I always told the accountant to resolve all doubts in favor of the Government. I never wanted any question raised about our taxes.

When it turned out in our own investigation of this Whitewater business that one year we had inadvertently taken a tax deduction for interest payments when, in fact, it was principal payment, even though the statute of limitations had run, we went back and voluntarily paid what we owed to the Federal Government. And if it turns out we've made some mistake inadvertently, we will do that again. But I have always tried to pay my taxes. And you will see when you look at all the returns that we've always paid quite a considerable percentage of our income in taxes.

Yes.

Q. Mr. President, during the campaign you said your administration would set a higher standard. Yet, in the travel office case last year, your own Chief of Staff found some of your aides used their official position to advance their personal interests. While recently, we've seen a senior White House official delinquent in Social Security taxes that disqualified others from serving in your administration and others in the White House neglecting until recently to undergo a security clearance required of other Government officials handling classified information. Why, sir, do you think it's so difficult for members of your staff to live up to your campaign promise?

The President. First of all, let's deal with those things, each in turn. Now, the finding was not that anybody who worked for me sought to advance themselves personally, financially in the travel office issue. That was not the finding. We found that the issue had not been well handled. And I might say, unlike other White Houses that stonewalled, denied, or delayed, we did our own internal investigation and admitted what mistakes we made and made some changes there. I'm proud of that.

Secondly, no one was barred from serving in our administration because they hadn't paid Social Security taxes, but people were barred from serving in Presidential-appointed positions that required Senate confirmation unless they complied with administration policy. Mr. Kennedy did not do that entirely, and he has been reassigned. He has had a difficult time, and I am convinced that he has done a lot of work that's been very valuable for us. But I think that he should not have done what he did, and I think he should fully pay. He has done that. I think that's what he should have done.

Now, on the White House passes thing, let's just talk about what the facts are. About

90 percent of the people who work here have been through all the clearances. The others are going through the clearances. I learned when I read about this that apparently previous administrations had had some of the same problems. That is, they'd been lax because of the cumbersome nature of the process. So we've now basically put in rules that say that anybody who comes to work here now has to get all this done in 30 days or is immediately on leave without pay. They can't get paid unless they do it. I asked Mr. McLarty and Mr. Cutler to fix this and make sure it never happens again. So I feel confident that we have.

But since you raised the issue, let me also ask you to report to the American people that we have and we have enforced higher standards against ethical conflicts than any previous administration. When people leave the White House, they can't lobby the White House. If they're in certain positions, they can't lobby the White House for a long time. If they're in certain positions now, they can never lobby on behalf of a foreign government.

I have supported a campaign finance reform bill that I am hoping the Congress will pass, and I believe they will, which will change the nature of financing political campaigns. I have supported a very tough lobby reform bill which will require more disclosure and more restraint on the part of lobbyists and public officials than ever before. And we will comply with those laws.

So I think our record on balance is quite good here. And when we make mistakes, we try to admit them, something that has not been the order of the day in the past.

Peter [Peter Maer, NBC Mutual Radio].

Q. Thank you, Mr. President. So many things have happened since this Whitewater story broke or resurfaced, depending on your point of view, your Counsel has resigned, a number of your top aides have been subpoenaed because of their contacts with Treasury officials in on the investigation. I'm curious, who do you blame more than anything else for the Whitewater mess that the administration in is now?

The President. Well, I don't think it's useful to get into blame. I think what's important is that I answer the questions that you have that are legitimate questions, that I fully cooperate with the Special Counsel, which was requested widely by the press and by the members of the Republican Party, and who is himself a Republican, that we fully cooperate. And we've done that. Senator Inouye from Hawaii pointed out today, he said, "I've been experienced in these investigations." He said, "You folks have claimed no executive privilege. You've fully cooperated. No one can quarrel with that." And then I get back to the work of getting unemployment down, jobs up, passing a health care bill, passing the crime bill, moving this country forward. I think the worst thing that can happen is for me to sort of labor over who should be blamed for this. There will probably be enough blame to go around. I'm just not concerned about it.

Q. To follow up, sir, do you feel ill served in any way by your staff?

The President. I think on the—I've told you what I think about these meetings. Now, let's go back to the facts of the meetings. We now know that Mr. Altman's counsel checked with the ethics officer in Treasury before he came over and gave the briefings to the White House. But I have said—so it appears at least that the counsel thought that Mr. Altman had an ethical clearance to come and do this briefing. We certainly know that no one in the White House, at least to the best of my knowledge, has tried to use any information to in any way improperly influence the RTC or any Federal agency.

Would it have been better if those had not occurred? Yes, I think it would have been. Do we have people here who wouldn't do anything wrong but perhaps weren't sensitive enough to how something could look in retrospect by people who are used to having problems in a Presidency or used to having people not telling the truth? I think that we weren't as sensitive as we should have been. And I've said before, it would have been better if that hadn't occurred.

But I think the one thing you have to say is, you learn things as you go along in this business. None of this, in the light of history, will be as remotely important as the fact that by common consensus we had the most productive first year of a Presidency last year of anyone in a generation. That's what mat-

ters, that we're changing people's lives. That's what counts. And I'm just going to keep working on it.

Yes.

Q. Mr. President, you and your wife have both used the phrase, ''bewildered, confused about why all the interest in Whitewater.'' Yet, in the Arkansas savings and loan business, your wife represented Madison Savings and Loan before the Arkansas Savings and Loan Board, whose head was a former lawyer who had done work for Madison Savings and Loan. Do you not see any conflicts of interest in your action, or your wife's actions, which would appear to contradict what you just said about her not doing any work before the State, that would cause people to question your actions?

The President. No, that's not what I said. I did not say—I said that when my wife did business, when her law firm represented some State agency itself—State agencies all over America use private lawyers—if she did any work for the State, she never took any pay for it. And when the firm got income from State work, she didn't take her partnership share of that income. She gave that up because she wanted to bend over backwards to avoid the appearance of conflict.

Was there anything wrong with her representing a client before a State agency? And if you go back and look at the facts, basically the firm wrote the securities commissioner a letter saying, is it permissible under Arkansas law to raise money for this S&L in this way? And it showed that she was one of the contacts on it, and the securities commissioner wrote her back and said it's not against the law. That was basically the extent of her representation.

Now, all I can do is tell you that she believed there was nothing unethical about it. And today, in an interview, Professor Steven Geller, of New York University, who is a widely respected national expert on legal ethics, once again said there was nothing at all unethical in doing this. These kinds of things happen when you have married couples who have professions. And the most important thing there is disclosure. There was no sneaking around about this. This was full disclosure. Professor Geller—I brought the quote here—said, ''I think this is a bum rap on Mrs. Clinton, and I'm amazed that it keeps getting recirculated.'' Now, there's a person who doesn't work for us whose job it is to know what the code of professional responsibility requires.

Yes.

Q. Mr. President, one thing that puzzled a lot of people is why, if you did nothing wrong, did you act for so long as if you had something to hide. And now that you're about to release these documents to the public, your tax records and other things, do you think it would have helped if you had released these documents to the public earlier? Would it have stopped this issue from reaching the proportions that it has?

The President. I don't have any idea. But I don't think I acted as if I had anything to hide. After all, I did volunteer—I had already given out my tax returns going back to 1980. And then keep in mind, when the furor arose at the request for the Special Counsel—even though everybody at the time said, ''Well, we don't think he's done anything wrong; there's no evidence that either he or the First Lady have done anything wrong; we still think there ought to be a Special Counsel''—I said we would give all this over to the Special Counsel. It was only after the Special Counsel had all the information that the people who first wanted the Special Counsel then decided they wanted the documents as well. So we're making them available.

Perhaps I should have done it earlier, but you will see essentially what I've told you and things that you basically already know.

Yes, Gwen [Gwen Ifill, New York Times].

Q. Mr. President, you said a few minutes ago that the people in the RTC who are involved in Congressman Leach's allegations are all career Republican officials. But aren't they members of your administration? And do you plan to take any action in speaking to either Mr. Bentsen or Mr. Altman about taking action and investigation of Mr. Leach's charges?

The President. I think the last thing in the world I should do is talk to the Treasury Department about the RTC. [*Laughter*] You all have told me that that creates the appearance of impropriety. I don't think we can have a—it's not just a one-way street; it's a two-way street. Mr. Leach will see that what-

ever should be done is done. But I can tell you, I have had no contact with the RTC. I've made no attempt to influence them. And you can see by some of the decisions that they have made that that is the furthest thing, it seems to me, that ought to be on your mind.

Q. Do you abandon all responsibility for a department, a Cabinet Department in your Government?

The President. I haven't abandoned all responsibility. You can't have it both ways. Either we can talk to them or we can't. I just think this is a matter of public record now. And Mr. Leach will certainly see to it that it's looked into. He's already said that that's his job, and I'm sure he will see that it is.

Yes.

Q. With so many questions swirling around Whitewater and the Rose law firm, there's some concern that the moral authority of the First Lady is eroding as well. Are you reconsidering her role as the point person for health care reform?

The President. Absolutely not. Absolutely not. People should not be able to raise questions and erode people's moral authority in this country. There ought to have to be evidence and proof. We live in a time when there is a great deal of question-raising. It seems to be the order of the day. But I know what the facts are, and I'm giving you the facts on this.

Here we just had—all these questions were raised about whether she was properly or improperly representing a client before a State agency—to do something, I might add, that the Federal Government had asked savings and loans to do, that is, go out and raise more capital to become more solvent. So that's what she was doing in the full light of day in full disclosure.

Now we have, even in retrospect, an eminent national expert saying that she is getting a bum rap. When people ask questions that don't have any basis—I think you should ask whatever questions you want to ask, and I think that we should do our best to answer them. But I think that the 20-year record she made as a lawyer, never before having her ethics questioned, never before having her ability questioned, when everybody who knew her knew that every year she was giving up a whole lot of income to do public business, to advance the cause of children and to advance the cause of our State. No, I don't think so. I think in the end when all these questions get asked and answered, her moral authority will be stronger than it has ever been, because we will have gone through this process and been very forthcoming, as we are, to the Special Counsel. And then in the end, people will compare how we did this with how previous administrations under fire handled their business. And I think it will come out quite well.

Mexico

Q. Mr. President, the assassination of Mr. Colosio today has shaken the financial markets in this country, created doubt about the stability of Mexico. Mexico opens its stock market and banks tomorrow. You said you would help Mexico in this. What can the United States do to help Mexico in these trying times?

The President. Well, first of all, let me say, Mexico is a very great country that has made enormous progress economically and politically. There is a lot of ferment and change going on there that is inevitable and that can be very positive. What I think the United States can do, first of all, is to tell the rest of the world that we know this about Mexico. They're our neighbors, and we think they have a great future. And we don't expect any long-term damage to come from this terrible personal tragedy and political setback.

Secondly, the only business I did last night on this—and I called President Salinas as a friend, as well as the President of the United States, to express my sorrow—the only business I did was to talk to the Secretary of the Treasury about what we might be able to do in the event there was some sort of unusual trading against the Mexican currency. And there may be something we can do to step in and stabilize that. As you know, there have been times in the past when our friends have had to come to our aid. The Germans, the Japanese and others have come to our aid when there was unusual trading against the dollar. And we are prepared to try to help the Mexicans if that is necessary. But we hope it won't be.

Today, we did just a little bit on Mexican securities when we suspended trading here in the United States for a very short time so that the American who would be interested in this would at least be able to verify what the facts were and what they were not about the terrible incident last night. And I think that helped a bit. I certainly hope that it did.

Whitewater

Q. Increasingly polls are showing that more and more Americans are unsure whether you acted properly in Whitewater, that maybe you did something wrong. Does that concern you? And when do you think it would be proper for the First Lady to answer questions about Whitewater?

The President. Well, first of all, does it concern me? Only a little bit. The truth is, I am amazed. When I read in the New York Times or someplace that there have been 3 times as much coverage of Whitewater as there had been of health care, I'm amazed that there hasn't been more change in the polls. I think what the American people are really upset about is the thought that this investment that we made 16 years ago that lost money, that did not involve savings and loans, might somehow divert any of us from doing the work of the country, getting the economy going and dealing with health care and crime and the other issues.

So, in that sense, I think people are right to be concerned. And they want to know that I'm going to answer the questions. A lot of people don't even know, I don't think, that there is a Special Counsel, that we have fully cooperated, that he has said we have, that the Watergate prosecutor, Sam Dash, contrasted our conduct with previous Presidents and said we'd been highly ethical. And we're moving forward.

Now, the First Lady has done several interviews. She was out in three different places last week answering questions exhaustively from the press. I think she will continue to do that. And if you have questions you want to ask her about this, I think you ought to ask the questions.

Deb [Deborah Mathis, Gannett News Service].

Q. Mr. President, you and the First Lady have several times said that you've been amazed and dismayed by the intensity of both the opposition and the scrutiny surrounding Whitewater in particular. Has any of this been instructive for you? Have you taken any lessons from this ordeal, whether it's about the Presidency, about the process, about the city, or anything?

The President. Oh, I think I've learned a lot about it. I think one of the things I've learned about it is that it's very important to try to decide what the legitimate responsibility of the President is, to be as forthcoming as possible, and to do it.

It's important for me to understand that there is a level here—and this is not a blame, this is just an observation—because of the experiences of the last several decades, of which I was not a part in this city, I think there is a level of suspicion here that is greater than that which I have been used to in the past—and I don't complain about it, but I've learned a lot about it—and that my job is to try to answer whatever questions are out there so I can get on with the business of the country.

And I think I've learned a lot about how to handle that. I've also learned here that there may or may not be a different standard than I had seen in the past, not of right and wrong, that doesn't change, but of what may appear to be right or wrong. And I think that you'll see that, like everything else, this administration learns and goes on. We always learn from our mistakes, and we have proven that.

Yes, sir, in the back.

International Affairs

Q. I wonder if you realize the situation that is developing in Korea, what is expected? What will be the situation in South Africa next month? And do you believe that the former Soviet Union, Russia, has—[*inaudible*]—that will contribute to peace in the world? How do you respond?

The President. That's the quickest anybody ever asked me three questions at once. [*Laughter*] First of all, the situation in Korea is serious, and we have responded in a serious way. The North Koreans themselves have said they are committed to a nonnuclear Ko-

rean Peninsula. We want that. We want a good, normal relationship with them. They have terminated the IAEA inspections. We are examining what we can do. We are talking to our South Korean partners as well as to the Chinese, the Japanese, the Russians, and others.

We still hope that this can be resolved, and we believe it can be. But the choice is really up to North Korea. Will they be isolated from the world community, or will they be a full partner? They could have a very bright future indeed. They have many contributions to make, indeed, to a united Korea. And we hope that it will work out. But I did decide to deploy the Patriots on the recommendation of General Luck as a purely defensive measure in the wake of the difficulties we've had, and we'll make further decisions as we go along.

With regard to South Africa, I am immensely hopeful. I have tried once to encourage Chief Buthelezi to join in the political process. And I still have some hope that he will. It is not too late, and they have made real efforts to try to accommodate the conflicts between national and local interests. But I think we will be celebrating in late April a great triumph of democracy of the first nonracial or multiracial democratic process in South Africa.

With regard to Russia, I think that on balance, our relationship is still sound. It is based on our perception and their perception of our shared interests, and when we disagree, we will say so. And we will act accordingly. But I do think that the Russians have made a constructive contribution to our efforts in Bosnia which have had a lot of success. We've got a long way to go, but we've had some real success. And I'm hopeful that they will elsewhere. I know they made a suggestion on Korea today, and we'll see what happens there.

Press Secretary Myers. Last question.

Health Care

Q. Mr. President, Congressman Stark's health care bill doesn't do everything that you have proposed. Would you veto it if it reaches your desk?

The President. No, because it does what I ask. It doesn't solve all the problems. But it does provide universal coverage. It emphasizes the workplace. That is, there is no tax on people unless they elect not to take out insurance. And it provides comprehensive benefits, which I think are very important. And it leaves Medicare alone with the integrity of Medicare.

There are things that it doesn't do that I wish it did. I don't think it's as successful or would be as successful in holding down costs and expanding opportunity as our plan, but certainly if it were to be enacted by the United States Congress I would sign it, because it meets the fundamental criteria I set out of covering all Americans with health care.

One more, then I guess we've got to go. Everybody wants to be watching these ball games, I think. [*Laughter*] You know, I'm going to make—nobody's asked me if we're going to tax gambling or anything. [*Laughter*] Go ahead.

Q. Mr. President——

The President. This is a set-up; it's my joke. Only people who bet against my team in the NCAA. [*Laughter*]

Whitewater

Q. Mr. President, I take it that the tax returns you're putting out tomorrow are the ones that have already gone to the Special Counsel. If the Special Counsel wanted to question you about that, would you answer a subpoena? Would Mrs. Clinton? And what about congressional hearings, what would be the protocol on going before Congress to explain it to them?

The President. Let me answer the first question first. We decided in addition to putting out the '78 and '79 returns, we should go ahead and put out the '77 returns, that that would be an appropriate starting point, because that's the year I first entered public life. I know there's—it's kind of a moving bar here. None of us are quite sure how far back anybody should go anymore about anything. But we thought that we would do that. And at least you would then have a complete record of the money we earned and the taxes we paid, Hillary and I together did, as long as I've been in public life.

In terms of the information, I expect that the Special Counsel will want to question me

and will want to question the First Lady. It's my understanding that typically in the past it's been done in a different way. I mean, I will cooperate with him in whatever way he decides is appropriate.

Similarly, if Congress wants any information direct from us, we will, of course, provide it to them in whatever way seems most appropriate. Again, I understand there are certain protocols which have been followed in the past which I would expect would be followed here. But I intend to be fully cooperative so that I can go back to work doing what I was hired to do.

Thank you very much.

Welfare Reform

Q. [*Inaudible*]—welfare reform?

The President. What did you say about——

Q. What about welfare reform?

The President. What about it?

Q. [*Inaudible*]—going to tax——

The President. No. What I said, I made a joke about that. I said I was going to try to tax anybody who bet against my team in the basketball finals.

But I have made no decision on the financing of welfare reform. I can tell you this, it's a tough issue because we have to pay for anything we do. And there are all kinds of proposals out there. I know that the Republican welfare reform proposal has a lot of things in it that I like. But I think it's way too hard on financing things from savings from immigrants. I think it goes too far there. So there are no real easy answers.

But I can say categorically that I have been briefed on a very wide range of options and that nobody in this administration has made any decision, and no one will make a decision except me, about how to fund it. That decision has not been made. We will come forward with that plan. We do think it offers the real promise of ending welfare as we know it, of moving people from welfare to work if we can also guarantee these welfare parents that when they go to work their children will not lose the health care that they have on welfare, so they won't be punished for going to work. That's the key issue.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 54th news conference began at 7:30 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he refered to Lt. Gen. Gary E. Luck, USA, Commanding General, XVIII Corps, and Mangosuthu Buthelezi, leader of the South African Inkatha Freedom Party.

Statement on the Assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio

March 24, 1994

I am profoundly saddened to learn of the brutal assassination of Luis Donaldo Colosio, the Presidential candidate of the Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) in Mexico. I deeply deplore this senseless act of violence and have conveyed my deepest sympathies to the Mexican people and to the family of Mr. Colosio, his wife, and two young children.

Mr. Colosio dedicated his life to public service and to the betterment of his nation. It is particularly tragic when an assassin's bullet slays a man who still had so much to contribute to history. It is a great loss not only for Mexico but for all of North America.

I telephoned President Carlos Salinas de Gortari shortly after midnight last night to express my sorrow and that of the American people and to offer my condolences to the Colosio family. I told President Salinas that the United States stands ready to assist Mexico in the coming days in any way we can.

Exchange With Reporters on Departure for Fort Bragg, North Carolina

March 25, 1994

Air Collision at Pope Air Force Base

Q. Mr. President, why are you going to Fort Bragg?

The President. I'm going down there because it was a very, very serious accident. A lot of our service people lost their lives; many, many others were quite seriously injured. And I just want to go down there and visit the hospital and express my concerns to the people who are still hospitalized and to their families and all the people at Fort Bragg for the losses they suffered. I think it's an appropriate thing to do.

Whitewater

Q. How do you feel about last night, Mr. President? Do you think you put some of this Whitewater business behind you?

The President. I just tried to answer the questions, and I felt good about it. I did my best to answer the questions. I feel good about it.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—Mr. President, how you could have forgotten about a $20,000 loan and check to your mother to buy a——

The President. Well, I think what happened was—keep in mind, all this happened in the heat of the '92 campaign. And they just said is there any way any of these checks from Madison could have come from some—been about something else. I said, I don't think so. And what happened was, when I read my mother's autobiography, I said, "You know, that's right, I did help her buy that place." And then—so Hillary and I were talking, so we asked for the checks. And when I saw the check, then I realized that that's where it had come from.

But when Jim McDougal said that, that he was sure that it didn't have anything to do with Madison, that's what got me to thinking about it. Then I saw it in the book. Then we asked for the check stub. That's how we verified it. So it just happened that way.

You know, keep in mind, keep in mind, when I was first asked about this back in '92, just off the top of my head, I said we lost money, but I don't think it was a great deal. I thought—I think I'm quoted in '92 saying I thought we'd lost about $25,000, just from memory. So apparently, we lost quite a bit more than that.

Q. Are you positive the tax returns that are being released today will clear the air on this matter?

The President. Well, they certainly ought to. Like I said, I always did what I think most Americans do, I gave all my records every year to my accountant. They were normally very simple returns. I didn't have a lot of complicated things on them. And we've given them out, all the way back to '77 now. So you guys have got them. You can do what you want to with them.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:30 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters at Womack Army Medical Center, Fort Bragg

March 25, 1994

Air Collision at Pope Air Force Base

The President. First of all, I'd like to thank General Shelton and General Steele and General Davis for welcoming me here and for giving me an opportunity not only to review the site of the crash but also to go into this hospital and to see, not only a good number of the soldiers who were injured but also the people who have been up virtually non-stop for the last 2 days caring for them.

I found it deeply moving. In the first place, the morale of the people who have been burned and injured is high. Their pride in their work and in their country is very strong. And what everybody said about the quality of care they've gotten and the outpouring of effort that has been made to help them deal with their problem has been very moving. Person after person after person said, "You know, I just can't wait to get back to my work. I'm ready to serve again."

It was a deeply moving thing. I'm very grateful to them for their service, and to all of those who have cared so well for them.

Q. Mr. President, can you tell us what you talked about or what you said to some of those who you saw today?

Mr. President. A lot of times we just made small talk. I asked them where they were from, how long they had been in the Army, what happened. They talked about it a little bit.

I was especially moved—I met a man and his wife who were both in the incident, both in the service, both injured. The man was injured because he was putting the fire out on his wife. And a lot of these young people were injured because they, instead of taking themselves to safety, were tying to help others who were being burned.

It was a very—I wish everyone in America could have seen the faces, the eyes, the spirit of these people. They would realize how fortunate we are to be served by men and

women like this who are both brave and selfless and with no concern other than just to get back to their lives and to their duty. I mean, it is very, very moving. I'm very glad I came. I'm glad I had the opportunity to see this, and again, profoundly grateful to the people in this fine hospital who are taking such good care of them.

Q. Is this one of the worst incidents you've seen?

Mr. President. It was a serious problem, but they've handled it magnificently, I think.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:36 p.m. at the medical center. In his remarks, he referred to Maj. Gen. William M. Steele, USA, Commanding General, 82d Air Borne Division, Fort Bragg; Maj. Gen. Richard E. Davis, USA, Deputy Commanding, 18th Air Borne Corps, Fort Bragg. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Message on the Observance of Passover

March 25, 1994

Heartfelt greetings to all who are gathered to celebrate Passover.

This joyous festival of liberation reminds all of us of the importance of freedom. The Passover seder, filled with its symbols of confinement and liberty, of pain and joy, has served as a means of teaching each new generation the story of the Jews' liberation from slavery in Egypt. As children learn the ancient account, they understand that freedom is something for which we must continuously struggle and that we must always cherish.

Human history is filled with chronicles of peoples throwing off the shackles of their oppressors to embrace the causes of justice and equality. As new nations begin their journeys to a "promised land," the lessons of Passover echo in every corner of the Earth. They teach us that while we must be thankful for the freedom we have, we must also remember all those in the world who still yearn to know its many gifts. This year, let us rededicate ourselves to extending the blessings of liberty to all who seek it.

During this historic season of renewal and peace, Hillary and I extend warm wishes for a memorable and meaningful Passover.

Bill Clinton

Proclamation 6659—Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy, 1994

March 25, 1994

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

In voicing support of the Greek battle for independence, President Monroe expressed the American sense of fellowship that endures to this day, "A strong hope has been entertained, founded on the heroic struggle of the Greeks . . . that Greece will become again an independent nation. That she may obtain that rank is the object of our most ardent wishes."

Throughout the history of our sovereign nations, the unique bond that exists between the peoples of the United States and Greece has grown from the knowledge that we share a common cause—our profound devotion to advancing the ideals of democracy. Drawing on the wisdom of Hellenic philosophy, America's Founding Fathers crafted a Nation that realizes the early promise of representative government. From the gleaming white columns of ancient Athens to the shining monuments of Washington, DC, the spirits and symbols of our capital cities reflect our deeply-held commitment to promoting individual freedom and human dignity.

This year, as Americans and Greeks rejoice in witnessing the formation of new democracies where old adversaries once stood, the traditional celebration of Greek Independence Day reveals the true legacy of Greek and American liberty. To mark both the triumph of freedom and the coming of spring in their rich land, one custom prescribes that Greek children remove the "March-thread" they have worn on their wrists throughout the month. As the swallows return from their winter in the South, the children hang the threads on a tree, an offering to the birds for their nests. These ties, once a reminder of the bleakness of winter, become the seeds of springtime's rebirth.

In much the same way, brave young nations around the world are throwing off the last vestiges of authoritarian rule and awak-

ening to the rich possibilities of freedom's spring. They are emerging from their own fierce campaigns for independence and modeling their governments on the steady examples we have set. Encouraged by the triumphs of our histories and the continuity of our friendship, Greeks and Americans everywhere join today in wishing the world's newest democracies a future worthy of our past—one of great prosperity and lasting peace.

In recognition of the close bond that has been forged between the nations of the United States and Greece, and to reaffirm the democratic principles from which they draw their strength, the Congress, by Senate Joint Resolution 162, has designated March 25, 1994, as "Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy" and has authorized and requested the President to issue a proclamation in observance of this day.

Now, Therefore, I , William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim March 25, 1994, as Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy. I call upon all Americans to observe this day, the 173rd anniversary of the beginning of the Greek revolution against the Ottoman Empire, with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities in honor of the Greek people and Greek independence.

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

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 4:47 p.m., March 25, 1994]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on March 29.

Executive Order 12905—Trade and Environment Policy Advisory Committee

March 25, 1994

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.), and section 135(c)(1) of the Trade Act of 1974, as amended (19 U.S.C. 2155(c)(1)) ("Act"), it is hereby ordered as follows:

Section 1. *Establishment.* There is established in the Office of the United States Trade Representative ("Trade Representative") the "Trade and Environment Policy Advisory Committee" ("Committee").

Sec. 2. *Membership.* (a) The Committee shall consist of not more than 35 members, including, but not limited to, representatives from environmental interest groups, industry (including the environmental technology and environmental services industries), agriculture, services, non-Federal government, and consumer interests. The Committee should be broadly representative of the key sectors and groups of the economy with an interest in trade and environmental policy issues.

(b) The Chairman of the Committee shall be elected by the Committee from among its members. Members of the Committee shall be appointed by the Trade Representative, in consultation with the Cabinet secretaries described in section 2155(c)(1) of title 19, United States Code, for a term of 2 years and may be reappointed for any number of terms. Appointments to the Committee shall be made without regard to political affiliation. Any member may be removed at the discretion of the Trade Representative.

Sec. 3. *Functions.* (a) The Committee shall provide the Trade Representative with policy advice on issues involving trade and the environment.

(b) The Committee shall submit a report to the President, to the Congress, and to the Trade Representative at the conclusion of negotiations for each trade agreement referred to in section 102 of the Act. The report shall include an advisory opinion on whether and to what extent the agreement promotes the interests of the United States.

(c) The Committee may establish such subcommittees of its members as it deems necessary, subject to the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act and the approval of the Trade Representative, or his designee.

(d) The Committee shall report its activities to the Trade Representative, or his designee.

Sec. 4. *Administration.* (a) The Trade Representative, or his designee, with the advice of the Chairman, shall be responsible for prior approval of the agendas for all Committee meetings.

(b) The Trade Representative, or his designee, shall be responsible for determinations, filings, and other administrative requirements of the Federal Advisory Committee Act.

(c)(1) The Trade Representative shall provide funding and administrative and staff support for the Committee.

(2) The Committee shall have an Executive Director who shall be a Federal officer or employee designated by the Trade Representative.

(d) Members of the Committee shall serve without either compensation or reimbursement of expenses.

(e) The Committee shall meet as needed at the call of the Trade Representative or his designee, depending on various factors such as the level of activity of trade negotiations and the needs of the Trade Representative, or at the call of two-thirds of the members of the Committee.

Sec. 5. *General.* The Committee shall function for such period as may be necessary. In accordance with the Federal Advisory Committee Act, the Committee shall terminate after 2 years from the date of this order unless otherwise extended.

William J. Clinton

The White House,

March 25, 1994.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 10:52 a.m., March 28, 1994]

NOTE: This Executive order will be published in the *Federal Register* on March 29.

Memorandum on the Purchase of Highly Enriched Uranium From Russia

March 25, 1994

Presidential Determination No. 94–19

Memorandum for the Secretary of the Treasury, the Chair of the Board of Directors of the United States Enrichment Corporation

Subject: Authorization to Make an Advance Payment for the Purchase of Highly Enriched Uranium from Russia

On February 18, 1993, the Government of the United States and the Government of the Russian Federation entered into an agreement to arrange the safe and prompt disposition for peaceful purposes of highly enriched uranium extracted from nuclear weapons as a result of the reduction of nuclear weapons in accordance with existing agreements in the area of arms control and disarmament. On January 14, 1994, the United States Enrichment Corporation, as Executive Agent of the United States, entered into the initial implementing contract pursuant to the February 18, 1993, agreement for the purchase of low-enriched uranium derived from highly enriched uranium extracted from nuclear weapons.

Pursuant to the authority vested in me by the Constitution and section 3324(b) (2) of title 31 of the United States Code, and having decided that an advance of public money is necessary to carry out both the duties of the disbursing official promptly and faithfully and the obligation of the United States Government pursuant to the initial implementing contract executed on January 14, 1994, I authorize an advance of public money to be made to the disbursing official for the purpose of providing payment to the Government of the Russian Federation or its designated agent, pursuant to the terms and conditions of the initial implementing contract.

The Secretary of the Treasury is authorized and directed to publish this determination in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: An original was not available for the verification of the content of this memorandum.

Nomination for Three District Court Judges

March 25, 1994

The President has nominated three individuals to serve on the U.S. District Court. They are: R. Samuel Paz for the Central District of California; Paul D. Borman for the Eastern District of Michigan; and Denny Chin for the Southern District of New York.

"I am pleased to nominate these distinguished individuals to serve on the Federal bench," the President said. "Each has demonstrated a strong commitment to equal justice for all Americans."

NOTE: Biographies of the nominees were made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

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 19

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton attended the Gridiron Dinner at the Capitol Hilton.

The White House announced that the Emperor and Empress of Japan have accepted the President's invitation to visit the United States beginning June 10.

March 20

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Fisher Island, FL.

March 21

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton went to Deerfield Beach, FL. Later that afternoon, they went to Bal Harbour, FL.

In the evening, the President and Hillary Clinton returned to the White House.

March 23

The President nominated Roger Hilsman, Stanley Sheinbaum, and Robert Shamansky to the National Security Education Board.

The President announced his intent to nominate Jeffrey Rush, Jr., to be the Inspector General of the U.S. Agency for International Development, U.S. International Development Cooperation Agency.

The President announced the appointment of William Arceneaux as the Chairman of the Student Loan Marketing Association (Sallie Mae). In addition, he announced his intent to appoint the following members:

—Mitchell Berger;
—Kris Durmer;
—Diane Gilleland;
—Regina Montoya;
—James Moore;
—Irene Natividad;
—Ronald Thayer.

The President announced the appointment of Thomas W. Hoog and Y.C.L. Susan Woo to the Advisory Board for the National Air and Space Museum.

The President announced his intention to nominate Thomasina "Tommy" Rogers as the Chair of the Administrative Conference of the United States.

March 24

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton went to Capitol Hill where they attended a meeting with the Senate Democratic Policy Committee.

March 25

In the morning, the President traveled to Pope Air Force Base/Fort Bragg, North Carolina.

In the afternoon, the President returned to Andrews Air Force Base, MD, and then traveled with Hillary and Chelsea Clinton to Dallas, TX.

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 22

William J. Crowe,
of Virginia, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland.

Theodore Alexander McKee,
of Pennsylvania, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Third Circuit, vice A. Leon Higginbotham, Jr., retired.

Raymond L. Finch,
of the Virgin Islands, to be a Judge for the District Court of the Virgin Islands for a term of 10 years, vice David V. O'Brien, deceased.

Paul L. Friedman,
of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Columbia, vice Gerhard A. Gesell, retired.

Vanessa D. Gilmore,
of Texas, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of Texas, a new position.

Gladys Kessler,
of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Columbia, vice Michael Boudin, resigned.

Emmet G. Sullivan,
of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Columbia, vice Louis F. Oberdorfer, retired.

Ricardo M. Urbina,
of the District of Columbia, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Columbia, vice Aubrey E. Robinson, Jr., retired.

Roger Hilsman,
of New York, to be a member of the National Security Education Board for a term of 4 years (new position).

Robert N. Shamansky,
of Ohio, to be member of the National Security Education Board for a term of 4 years (new position).

Stanley K. Sheinbaum,
of California, to be a member of the National Security Education Board for a term of 4 years, vice John P. Roche, resigned.

Submitted March 24

Paul D. Borman,
of Michigan, to be U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Michigan, vice Stewart A. Newblatt, retired.

Denny Chin,
of New York, to be U.S. District Judge for the Southern District of New York (new position).

R. Samuel Paz,
of California, to be U.S. District Judge for the Central District of California (new position).

Submitted March 25

Philip N. Diehl,
of Texas, to be Director of the Mint for a term of 5 years, vice David J. Ryder.

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 19

Statement by Staff Secretary John Podesta on preparation of the Clinton's tax returns

Released March 21

White House statement announcing the opening of ratification hearings in the Senate on the Chemical Weapons Convention

Released March 23

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers

Statement by Chief of Staff Thomas F. (Mack) McLarty and Special Counsel Lloyd

Cutler on transfer of responsibility for supervising the issuance of White House passes within the Counsel's office

Released March 25

Statement by Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers on the Vice President's meeting with President Jean-Bertrand Aristide of Haiti

Statement by Press Secretary Dee Dee Myers on the status of the National Security Council under the Freedom of Information Act

White House statement announcing Staff Secretary John Podesta's intention to testify before the grand jury led by Special Counsel Robert Fiske

Acts Approved by the President

Approved March 24

S.J. Res. 56 / Public Law 103–221
To designate the week beginning April 11, 1994, as ''National Public Safety Telecommunicators Week''

S.J. Res. 162 / Public Law 103–222
Designating March 25, 1994, as ''Greek Independence Day: A National Day of Celebration of Greek and American Democracy''

S.J. Res. 163 / Public Law 103–223
To proclaim March 20, 1994, as ''National Agriculture Day''

S.J. Res. 171 / Public Law 103–224
To designate March 20 through March 26, 1994, as ''Small Family Farm Week''

Approved March 25

S. 1926 / Public Law 103–225
Food Stamp Program Improvements Act of 1994