

Thank you, and God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:25 p.m. in the Crystal Courtyard at the IDS Tower. In his remarks, he referred to Mary Ellen Imdieke, president, Minnesota Nurses Association, and Mayor Sharon Sayles Belton of Minneapolis. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters in Minneapolis

April 8, 1994

Japan and Rwanda

The President. I wanted to mention a couple of things today. First, this morning, pretty early, I had a conversation with Prime Minister Hosokawa in which he told me that he was going to resign and that he hoped it would help the cause of political reform. He said he was very proud of the work that he had done in his term as Prime Minister in trying to promote reform within Japan and in trying to reform Japan's relationships with the United States and that he intended to keep working on that and that he hoped that I would continue to work on the Japanese-U.S. relationship with his successor.

I told him that I was personally very sorry to see him step down, that I thought he had provided amazing leadership to the people of Japan, and that he had made them believe in the possibility of change and that it could help the people. And I thanked him specifically not only for his work in political reform but for opening the Japanese rice market for the first time in history and for engaging us on a lot of other issues and for his support in Korea and in a number of other areas. It was a good conversation, and I'm very grateful to him for that, for what he did.

Let me just mention one other thing, if I might. I called today the Secretary of State, the Secretary of Defense, and my National Security Adviser and had extended conversations with all three of them about the situation in Rwanda. And I want to mention it only because there are a sizable number of Americans there, and it is a very tense situation. And I just want to assure the families of those who are there that we are doing ev-

erything we possibly can to be on top of the situation, to take all appropriate steps to try to assure the safety of our citizens there. But it is a difficult situation, and we should all know that.

Japan-U.S. Trade Relations

Q. Mr. President, there are some people, even within the administration, who feel that this really marks a very bad turn for U.S.-Japanese trade talks and economic policy. There's been little progress until now, and now there is even less hope that it can be concluded successfully.

The President. I'm just not sure. We certainly don't intend to change our economic policy or our trade policy. But one of the problems that the Prime Minister had was that the coalition that he heads, as presently constituted, contains a small minority that can, in effect, veto what a majority of the coalition might want on economic reform. So while I think clearly he was as committed to the kinds of changes in the modernization of Japan's economic policy as any person who has ever headed that government, I think what he hopes is that in the end there will be a realization, without him, that there must be a majority coalition for change.

So I think what we're going to have to do, frankly, is to stick with our policy and then see how it shakes out in Japan, how it works itself out. They're going to have to work that out.

Q. But Mr. President, in the past we've been pretty hard on Japan. In the last year or so we've been very rough on them. When the talks broke down, you said you didn't want to paper over differences with rhetoric. Do you think there's a chance maybe we were a little too hard on Japan and it might be a time to kind of step back and let this kind of settle?

The President. Well, I don't—those two things are not inconsistent. I think we should stick with our policy and be firm about it. We also tried to support Japan in many ways. And as I said on my trip there, I think that our policy is in the best interest of the Japanese. A more open Japanese market means that the Japanese citizens won't have to pay almost 40 percent more for their consumer goods than they otherwise would. And I think

it means more jobs and a more prosperous economy in Japan, and I think we should keep pushing for that. But I think plainly the Japanese are going to need a little bit of time to constitute a new government.

The United States-Japanese relationship is a complicated one in the sense that it has many legs. It has a security aspect, a political aspect, an economic aspect. But I do not expect there to be a marked deterioration in our relationships with that country. We're too important to each other and to the rest of the world.

Q. With Prime Minister Hosokawa stepping down, is there a sense in your White House that the administration is going to have to start from scratch with Japan on trade? It's a whole new picture now.

The President. I don't think so. I don't think so. We started, interestingly enough—it's easy to forget now, but the agreement itself, the framework agreement was negotiated with Mr. Miyazawa before he left office, with the concurrence of at least a sufficient number of the people in his government in the LDP, which would normally be thought of as more resistant to these sorts of changes. And we have kept up, we have had a good relationship, our administration has, with a number of the Japanese political leaders in this coalition. And we'll just have to see what comes out of it.

But I would not assume that the cause of economic and political reform will suffer an irrevocable setback. If you listen to the Prime Minister carefully in his public statement, he made it clear that while there were these personal questions which were raised which he took, I think, to use his words, personal and moral responsibility for, he also talked about the importance of having an effective governing coalition and the need for the reform movement to come to grips with its internal contradictions.

So I wouldn't write the epitaph of change too quickly here. I think Mr. Hosokawa believes that he may be able to continue to push for it and be a force for it, and I think he believes that we may wind up with a Japanese government with a little more capacity to change in some areas than perhaps the

present coalition does. We'll just have to wait and see.

Asia

Q. Might it complicate the situation with North Korea and with China? You've got some big decisions regarding Asia in the next 2 months.

The President. Well, we do. My belief is that any successor government will keep working closely with us on North Korea and keep in close touch with us on China and keep working with us with China on North Korea. I believe that will happen. I would be surprised if that did not happen.

Bosnia

Q. Which way are we going on Bosnia right now?

Q. The Perry way or the Christopher way?

The President. We're going—no. Let me just say, I think that's a great overstatement. I talked to both of them in each of the last few days about a number of other issues. But I don't think that there ever was a real difference between them. And our Government position is clear, and we'll keep trying to work for peace in Bosnia. We'll make our air forces available as part of the NATO strategy, as part of the UNPROFOR strategy to protect the forces that are there.

They were both trying to say in different ways that we might—we certainly wouldn't rule out the use of our efforts around Gorazde but that there is a process that triggers those efforts, which you know well and which has to be followed before we can bring our force into play. So I do not believe there is a difference between the two of them and I—frankly, my instinct, having talked to both of them at some length, is that there never was a difference between the two of them. So we are together. We have the same policy we always had, and we're going to keep trying to make it work.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:36 p.m. at the Marquette Hotel. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement by the Press Secretary on the Resignation of Prime Minister Morihiro Hosokawa of Japan
April 8, 1994

The President spoke with Prime Minister Hosokawa of Japan today at 9:40 a.m. for approximately 12 minutes. The President conveyed his regret at the Prime Minister's decision to resign and commended him for his commitment to political and economic reform in Japan. The President expressed his hope that the process of reform would continue in Japan. The President stated that he is confident that our strong bilateral relations with Japan will continue.

The President told Prime Minister Hosokawa, "I am confident that you will always be viewed as an historic Prime Minister who made great strides in helping Japan in a period of transition. You gave your people the courage to change."

The President intends to work closely with the new Prime Minister to improve the economic relationship with Japan and to implement fully the framework agreement, which remains a high priority and is very much in the interests of both countries.

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

Remarks in a Town Meeting in Minneapolis
April 8, 1994

Angela Astore. Welcome to the Twin Cities and our town hall meeting. And thank you for this unique opportunity to answer questions about your health care program.

The President. Well, thank you for giving me the chance to do it. And I want to thank the people who are joining us from Milwaukee and Detroit and Sioux Falls, too.

Ms. Astore. We'd like you to start off the program perhaps with some opening remarks.

The President. I'll do that.

Randy Meier. We turn it over to you.

The President. Thank you.

First, let me say, I came here to Minneapolis late last night, and I started the day off with a rally for health care sponsored by

the Nurses Association of Minnesota. Over 2 million nurses in the American Nurses Association have endorsed our health care plan. And that's especially important to me because I started out my interest in health care because my mother was a nurse. And then many years ago when I started out in public life, I was an attorney general, and one of my jobs was to try to ensure good care within our nursing home system in my State. Then as a Governor, I had to worry about health care for the poor through the Medicaid program, something Minnesota and every other State has wrestled with.

About 4 years ago, a long time before I even thought I'd be running for President, I agreed to take a look at the health care system for the Nation's Governors to see what we could do about it. And at that time, I talked to literally 900 health care providers, doctors, nurses, hospital administrators, paramedical workers of all kinds, and a lot of business people and health care consumers, people in every kind of medical problem you can imagine. I became convinced then that unless we had a national solution to a lot of our health care problems, we wouldn't be able to solve them; that no State, even the most progressive State, could solve all the problems of the health care system without a national solution.

And let me just briefly say what I think the issues are, and a lot of them will be represented by people who are in our four audiences tonight. First of all, 39 million Americans don't have health insurance at all, ever, during the year. And about another 100,000 a month are losing their health insurance permanently. Secondly, at any given time in this Nation of about 260 million people, 58 million people won't have health insurance at some time during the year. Third—and it gets worse as we go along here—about 81 million of us live in families with so-called preexisting conditions, a child with diabetes, a mother with cancer, a father who had a heart attack early but still had to go back to work. Those families either can't get insurance, pay very high rates, or can never change their jobs because if they change jobs, they won't be able to get insurance in their new jobs. Fourth, small business people and self-employed people who have health insur-