In a few days, the House will actually try to cut off Federal funds for abortions for poor women that arise from rape or incest. Even those with strong antiabortion feelings know this is a tough issue, and most people think it ought to be left to individual citizens. It's one thing to say that the taxpayers should not pay for a legal abortion that arises from a poor woman's own decision. That's one thing. Quite another to say that the same rules apply to rape and incest.

This is a big, diverse country. We are deeply divided over many issues, none more than the painful and difficult issue of abortion. The law now is that the woman, not the Government, makes a decision until the third trimester when a baby can live independently of his mother and therefore the Government can prohibit abortions.

There are some who believe that America now must toe their line and that every woman must live by their rules, even though the Constitution, as interpreted by the Supreme Court, says exactly the reverse. They'll stop at nothing to get their way. And this week it looks like the Republican leaders in Congress have given them the keys to the store. Looks like they'll vote for any bill, oppose any nomination, allow any intrusion into people's lives if they get orders to do so from these groups.

Many, many Americans oppose abortion. And everyone agrees it's a tragedy. I believe we should all work to reduce the number of abortions through vigorous campaigns to promote abstinence among young people; reduce out-of-wedlock pregnancy, especially among teenagers; and promote more adoptions. I believe, in short, that we ought to all do more of the kind of things that Henry Foster has been doing for decades.

If people in Washington spent less time using abortion to divide the country for their own political ends and more time following Dr. Foster's example of fighting these problems, there would be a lot fewer abortions in America and we'd be a lot stronger as a country.

We need more citizens like Henry Foster willing to commit their time, their energy, and love to fighting for our children, our families, and our future.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:06 a.m. from the Pine Bluff Convention Center in Pine Bluff, AR.

Interview With Susan Yoachum of the San Francisco Chronicle in Pine Bluff, Arkansas

June 24, 1995

The President. Hello.

Ms. Yoachum. Hello, Mr. President.

The President. How are you?

Ms. Yoachum. I'm fine. It's very good of you to call, so I'll get right to it.

The President. Where are you?

Ms. Yoachum. I'm in Portsmouth, New Hampshire.

The President. It's a great town.

United Nations

Ms. Yoachum. Actually, it is. I'm following around one of your newest—well, not your newest rivals but one of the newest candidates for President on the Republican side, Pete Wilson.

So let me begin by asking you about your speech on Monday concerning the 50th anniversary of the United Nations. How do you plan to outline ways for the U.N. to reconstitute itself for the next 50 years?

The President. Well, I think we have to, first of all, recognize that—I think there are two fundamental realities we have to recognize. Number one is that the end of the cold war gives the U.N. the possibility of living up to the dreams of its founders in ways that were simply impossible when the world was divided into two large blocs. And so I think there should be a lot of hope about the U.N.

The second thing I think we have to recognize is that in order for that hope to be realized, the U.N. has got to be properly run and, in particular, the peacekeeping operations have to be properly run. And the United States has spent a lot of time, because we pay a lot of the costs of the U.N., analyzing how the overall operations can be more efficient and cost-effective and inspire more confidence in the countries that are paying the bills and, in particular, looking at the peacekeeping operations and setting up systems to make sure that we use peacekeeping when it will work, that we restrain it when the situation is not right, and that the com-

mand-and-control operations are absolutely clear, that we don't have any kind of mixed signals and crossed lines that have sometimes happened in the past.

I think those are the two fundamental realities you start with. And then when you look ahead into the future, I think it's clear that the new problems of the 21st century are likely to be rooted in ethnic, religious, and other internal problems within countries and across borders; dealing with or helping to avoid natural disasters that are brought on by a combination of population explosion and natural problems like the inability to produce food; and the rise of terrorism and the danger of proliferation of biological, chemical, and small-scale nuclear weapons.

I think—and so I want to talk about kind of the threats to the future security of the members of the United Nations and how we have a new set of threats, an unprecedented opportunity, and we have to clean up our—operate—clean up implies—that has the wrong implication. I don't want to imply that there's anything unsavory about it, but it's just that the operation, I think, really needs to be streamlined and reformed in order to inspire confidence in all the member nations.

As you know, both our—the last two Congresses, one was a Democratic Congress and this Republican Congress, expressed varying levels of opposition to some of the U.N. operations. But the last Congress was far more focused on getting the U.N. to work right, not having America walk away from its responsibilities and became more isolationist.

So—and therefore, the message—that will be the message. But I will also say back to my fellow Americans and to the Congress that we should continue to support the United Nations, that they do a lot of work in the world that the United States might have to do alone or might eventually be pulled into doing, because they keep problems from becoming as bad as they would otherwise be.

Ms. Yoachum. Mr. President, given the difficulties—the highly publicized difficulties, of course, with the U.N. peacekeeping forces in Bosnia and other U.N. difficulties, doesn't it make more difficult for you to try to sell this to Americans, and don't you run some political risk in trying to do so?

The President. Well, I suppose there's—in a time like this, when a lot of people are bewildered almost by all the things that are going on in the world and the apparent conflicts of all the good forces and the troubling forces rising up at once, there's some political risk in everything. But you have to do what you think is right.

I think the—I think it's important not to define the—first of all, I think it's important not to define the U.N. solely in terms of Bosnia. I mean, there was also—I'd ask the United States to remember that we went into Haiti with a multinational force that restored the Aristide government and democracy, but we were able to hand it off to a U.N. force with even more nations involved, where there were more countries paying for it.

I think most Americans know that there are going to be problems all around the world that affect United States interests and that can affect United States citizens, and it's better to have a larger number of nations working on those problems and a larger number of nations paying for the solutions to those problems.

Bosnia is a unique circumstance because it's in the heart of Europe, but there's a war that's been going on there for 4 years. But if you look at it, the people in Northern Ireland fought for 25 years, the people in the Middle East fought for more than four decades before there was any peace progress there. And for all the frustration people in our country have with the problems in Bosnia, the casualty rates have gone way, way down since the U.N. forces went on the ground there and since the United States began to support them with massive humanitarian airlifts and with our operation to keep the war from going into the air. That's what Captain O'Grady was doing when he was shot down; he was enforcing the no-fly zone. And I think it's important never to forget that. Before the United Nations became involved and before we became as aggressive as we were in trying to provide air help, in 1992, there were about 130,000 people killed in that civil war. In 1994, the death rate was down to under—about 3,500. So I think that it's important, even in Bosnia, to keep this in perspective.

The United Nations did not succeed in ending the war in Bosnia. The United Nations did not go in there to militarily defeat the Bosnian Serbs, and they're not capable of doing that, and that was never what they were established—that's not what they were sent there to do. But the war has become less violent and has been at least contained to Bosnia and has not spread beyond its borders. So with all of our frustrations, I think it's important to remember that.

Ms. Yoachum. You'll be doing a number of things in your speech on Monday, which has been, I think, widely anticipated around the world. And certainly, the patron saint of the U.N. 50 celebration, Walter Shorenstein, says that it's a real opportunity for you to give a world-class speech. Having said that, and you having said that you're going to outline your hope for the U.N. given the changing circumstances of the world, what part of your speech—what will you say in your speech to address some of the criticisms, particularly by key Republicans, of the United States' involvement in 1995 in the U.N.?

The President. Well, I will—consider the alternatives. I mean, here the United States is, the world's only superpower militarily, with other countries becoming increasingly wealthy, where there are other countries willing to put their troops on the ground in their own trouble spots and not asking us to do it, like Bosnia, and willing to pay an increasingly large share of running the United Nations. And now we have people in our country and, most importantly, people in our Congress, who want to walk away from our global responsibilities and walk away from the opportunity to cooperate with people in ways that permit others to carry some share of the load.

You know, sometimes I get the feeling that some of the critics of our cooperation with other countries want it both ways. They want to be able to run the world and tell everybody exactly how to behave, and then not have to cooperate with anybody when they have a slight difference of opinion from us or even if they're willing to put their troops on the ground and put their money up.

That's the case in Bosnia, where the Europeans said, "We'll take the lead. We'll put our troops on the ground. This will be paid for through the United Nations, so you won't have to pay for any more than your regular assessment. We ask you for your air power and the support of the NATO, but we're going to follow the prescribed United Nations policy. We're not going to let the U.S. dictate policy, especially when it's our troops and our lives that are at risk."

And I think we cannot have it both ways. We can't become an isolationist country, and we can't dictate every other country's course. We can't become the world's policemen. And it's better for us to be a leader within the framework of the United Nations, which means that from time to time we will have to cooperate with people and agree on a policy that may reflect more of a consensus than our absolute best desires. But that's what the United Nations was set up to do.

The U.S. is still clearly the dominant country in the United Nations. We still are able to do the things we need to do to be—for example, to keep a firm hand with Serbia; we've been able to keep other countries from lifting the sanctions off Iraq; we've been able to get a tougher line—in many ways, we were able to have our policy in Haiti prevail. But the United Nations is about working with other countries and shared sacrifice, shared contribution, shared decisionmaking, where the U.S. leads but can't control everything. And I think that's the way the world ought to be going forward.

Ms. Yoachum. And so in your speech on Monday, despite the criticism of the U.S. involvement in the U.N., you'll not be backing away from the U.N., but at the same time, you'll also be offering suggestions for reforming it?

The President. Absolutely. I don't intend to back away at all. But I do intend to say that this is going to be a 21st century organization, that it's more than a debating forum and—that involves a collective decision by the community of free nations to deploy people all across the world, not just in military situations, like peacekeeping, but in other ways, where it's going to have to be run very well and it's going to have to be able to inspire the confidence of taxpaying citizens not only in the United States but throughout the world.

But I think—I still think the fundamental fact is that the end of the cold war permits the U.N. to live up to its full potential; that we ought to become—we ought to stay involved, we ought to pay our fair share, and we ought to be very grateful that there are other countries that are willing to spend their money and actually put their people at risk in places where either we wouldn't do it or we don't now have to do it all, we don't have to carry the whole load; and that we ought to be willing to lead in an atmosphere in which we also have to cooperate from time to time, especially when others are making a greater sacrifice and when the problem's in their backyard. And that is—that's the sort of future we ought to want.

And we also ought to be mature enough to recognize that as long as human beings are alive on the Earth, bad things will happen, problems will exist, and that there will never be a complete and easy solution to all the problems in the world. This is not—the world will never be problem-free. But far better this course into the future than either having the nuclear cloud hang over the world, as it did in the cold war, or having the U.S. become an isolationist power, as we did between the wars, and run the risk of other terrible things happening all around the world which would drag us back into another war in the future.

In other words, the course that I advocate is not problem-free because as long as there are people and as long as bad people can get political power in various places, there will always be problems in the world. But it is far better than the alternative, better than what we went through in the cold war and better than having an American isolationism.

Military Base Closings

Ms. Yoachum. Sir, one question away from the U.N., and that is the subject of military bases. One of your political allies, Senator Boxer, has asked you to consider sparing some of the bases in California slated to be closed. At the same time, one of your political opponents, Pete Wilson, plans to attack the administration in a speech this evening in New Hampshire for what he says are artificially low target levels that OMB has given the Department of Defense, which has resulted in a need to close more military bases than necessary to meet the budget targets. I'm wondering first, on the political ally side, if there is any chance that you would spare any of the bases in California, and on the political opponent side, what you would say to that criticism by Governor Wilson?

The President. Well, first of all, let's deal with the base issue. The way the base closings works is—the way the base closing process works is that the commission votes on which bases to close. Then they send it to me in a package, which they will do on July 1st. Then I have three options: I can accept it, in which case it goes to Congress, and unless Congress rejects it, it goes into law; the second option is I can reject it out of hand, in which case there are no base closings; the third option is that I can send it back to the commission with recommended changes. Are you still on?

Ms. Yoachum. Yes, sir.

The President. And I have to tell you that with regard to California, as you know, the McClellan Air Base was not on our list. And it was not on our list, basically—it was not on the Pentagon list for two reasons, both of which I thought were good reasons. One was that California had about 20 percent of the defense investment for the country, but it sustained 40 percent of the base cuts in the first two rounds. Before I became President I thought that was more than enough, and the law provides for economic impact to be considered. The other is that the Pentagon thought that a better way to deal with the problem of over-capacity in what is done at McClellan and down at Kelly Air Force Base in Texas was to shave some of the capacity off all five of the sites around the country and presented a plan to do that. So I'm concerned specifically—I'm concerned about the decision made by the Base Closing Commission there, but I have to be careful about further comment until they send them all to me.

Now secondly, Governor Wilson is just wrong about what he said about defense. Basically, my defense numbers have been about the same as the Republicans of Congress have recommended and what the Pentagon has asked for. And the truth is that the Army

people—all the military people but particularly the Army—will tell you that we have brought the force structure down, we have reduced defense in real dollar terms about 40 percent since 1987 and we have reduced the size of the military by about 40 percent, and we've reduced our base structure, oh, about less than half that, considerably less than half that. So most of the military experts will tell you that the reduction of base structure in the United States and throughout the world has lagged far behind the reduction in numbers of people in the military.

And I have tried to be very sensitive since I've been in office to the economic impact of this, to trying to give these bases a chance to do alternative things like help to develop a civilian mission as well as a military mission, and a lot of that work is being done at McClellan and in some other places as well in California and throughout the country.

But it's just not true to say that inadequate budgets have led to the closing of more bases than were necessary. That's just absolutely untrue. We have, in fact, tried to keep more open than the strict, harsh numbers would dictate, given how much the size of our forces have been reduced. So that's just—it's just not true. I'm sure it's good politics for him to say that in New Hampshire or wherever else, but it's simply not true.

Ms. Yoachum. Sir, one last question. That is——

Deputy Press Secretary Ginny Terzano. Susan, we're going to have to stop this because we now have to depart for our next meeting.

Aid to California and 1996 Election

Ms. Yoachum. Okay, I'm sorry. I was just going to ask the President if Governor Wilson really is the candidate he fears most and if there's any chance that McClellan will or may not open?

The President. Well, first of all, let me just say those two questions are totally independent of one another. From the day I became President I worked hard to help California, and I think the people of California know that. We have given aid because of the earthquakes and the fires on more generous terms than had previously been the case. Thirty-three percent of our defense conversion money to develop new technologies from old defense technologies in the commercial sector have gone into California, a disproportionate amount. An enormous amount of investment has been put into the State because I was so concerned that the California economy had been overly hurt by the defense cutbacks before I showed up and by the global recession. I have also done far more than my two Republican predecessors did to try to combat illegal immigration. And so the record is clear and unambiguous and will not be subject to distortion by anybody between now and 1996.

And in terms of who I fear most, the truth is I don't have a clue. I don't know who's going to win. And I have observed this process for 30 years now at close hand, and one thing I'm absolutely convinced of is that you cannot predict who would be the strongest or the weakest candidate or what the dynamics are going to be. People think—and I don't waste any time thinking about it. I haven't given it 5 minutes thought. Because the Republicans have to pick their nominee, and then whomever is picked will be the nominee, and then I'll launch the election. And I also have to be nominated. So I'm just worrying about doing my job as President, doing the best I can, and we'll see who gets nominated.

Ms. Terzano. Susan, thank you.

Ms. Yoachum. Mr. President, thank you very much.

The President. Goodbye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. by telephone while en route to Taylor Field. During the interview, Ms. Yoachum referred to Walter H. Shorenstein, chairman, U.N. 50 National Committee.

Interview with Gary Matthews of ESPN in Pine Bluff

June 24, 1995

Mr. Matthews. Thank you very much, Mr. President. Thank you for coming in. I understand that you're a great amateur baseball fan. Did you have the opportunity to play when you were growing up here in Arkansas?