

reform as you seem to be doing on lobbying reform, say, with respect to soft money donations to the party? And does the party understand fully, sir, your feelings about them selling access to you to big money donors?

**The President.** Yes, and we changed that. And we can change that. And I have no problem changing that. That is wrong.

I think—by the way, I think that the President and that any other person in public office ought to meet with his or her supporters, including financial supporters. I think that's important. I would do that anyway. I have always done that; from the time I was attorney general of my State I have done that. But it is wrong to raise money on the promise of guaranteed specific kinds of access. That is wrong, and we stopped that.

Now, the difference is, I can do this lobby reform and hold the executive branch to a higher standard and challenge the Congress to follow suit in a way that does not in any way undermine the public interest. But if I hold the Democrats to a standard which in effect paralyzes them financially, in comparison to the Republicans, I will be punishing the very public interest that I seek to advance because it will make it less likely that there will be competitive elections.

The American people's only chance to make the right choices is when there are genuine competitive elections. I would love nothing better—if I could get an agreement with the Republican Party we could shut this whole thing down tomorrow. We could, by mutual agreement, at least change the party rules on campaign finance reform. And if they would do it, we could do it and we wouldn't have to wait for Congress to act.

### **Telecommunications Reform**

**Q.** You mentioned the telecommunications bill, sir. Have the changes that have been made to it today made it any more acceptable to you?

**The President.** Well, I want to wait and see what happens. I know that they acted to try to stop one person from being able to own television stations, newspapers, radios, and cable networks in the same market. That was a very important step forward. I congratulate the House on that. Did the V-

chip amendment pass? They're working on that. That's also very important to me.

As you know, I issued a letter on the House bill, which was changed markedly after it came out of committee—that's a very unusual procedure—setting forth the concerns that I have, the Vice President shares, our administration has. We'll just have to review the bill when it gets in its final form.

### **Bosnia and Croatia**

**Q.** What about the war in Croatia? Are you concerned that that could spread into an all-out war in the Balkans?

**The President.** Yes—well, I'm concerned that it could spread the war in Bosnia and in the Croatia-Serbia area.

Let me just back up and say the Croatian offensive originally was launched in response to the Serb attack on Bihac, one of the protected areas. And it has largely, apparently, relieved a lot of pressure on Bihac. But because it is so comprehensive, it runs the risk of a wider war. And that is what we have cautioned against in our contacts with the Croats.

**Q.** So, Mr. President, you're saying that the actual offensive is justified?

**The President.** I explained that the original Croatian action, which we were told by the Croatian Government they would feel compelled to take, was animated by the Serbian attack on Bihac. But we have asked them to exercise real restraint because we are very concerned about a wider war.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

### **Statement on the 30th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act**

*August 4, 1995*

This Sunday, August 6, 1995, marks the 30th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, guaranteeing the right to vote to all Americans, regardless of race. Passed by a bipartisan majority in Congress and signed by President Lyndon Johnson after years of struggle, the Voting Rights Act has correctly been recognized as the single most important civil rights law our Nation has ever adopted. It

was accomplished through the sacrifice of thousands of Americans of all colors who courageously faced down a terrible injustice.

At the time the Voting Rights Act was enacted, people of color in many parts of the country were denied the right to exercise the most fundamental right of American democracy—the right to vote. African-American voter registration was practically non-existent in many areas due to an organized system of disenfranchisement, often backed by brutal intimidation, designed to fence people out of the political process.

In the 30 years since the enactment of the Voting Rights Act, minority registration rates have soared and thousands of people who once could not get elected simply because of the color of their skin are serving in Congress, State houses, and city halls throughout the country.

More important than those results, however, has been the effect of opening our democracy to all Americans. The Voting Rights Act guarantees that no American need ever again be afraid to register to vote, no American need ever again fear the walk to the polling place, no American need ever again fear that their vote is not wanted or will not count.

In signing the law, President Johnson said, “This act flows from a clear and simple wrong. Its only purpose is to right that wrong . . . The wrong is one which no American, in his heart, can justify. The right is one which no American, true to our principles, can deny.”

On this 30th anniversary, my administration reaffirms its commitment to the full enforcement of the Voting Rights Act. We must continue to protect the right of every American to fully participate in the electoral process. I challenge Americans of all races and colors to rededicate ourselves to exercising our precious right to vote. Voting is the oxygen of democracy, and millions of Americans have given their last breath to keep that right alive. So, even as we celebrate 30 years of righting a terrible wrong, we must keep working to make sure that 30 years from now, every American over the age of 18 is a voting American.

### **Statement on Signing the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations and Rescissions Legislation**

*August 4, 1995*

On July 27, 1995, I approved H.R. 1944, the Emergency Supplemental Appropriations for Additional Disaster Assistance, for Anti-terrorism Initiatives, for Assistance in the Recovery from the Tragedy that Occurred at Oklahoma City, and Rescissions Act, 1995. This legislation shows how we can work together to produce good legislation.

From the start of this rescission process, I agreed with the Congress on the need to cut spending. The question was, how should we do it?

I vetoed the original rescission bill because it would have cut spending the wrong way, by targeting education and training, environmental protection, and other key national priorities. I then worked with Republicans and Democrats alike to produce a better bill. I am pleased that this bill cuts nearly \$16 billion in spending while protecting our key investments in education and training, the environment, and other priorities.

Like the earlier version, this bill also provides much-needed supplemental funds that I have sought for disaster relief activities of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the Federal response to the bombing in Oklahoma City, increased anti-terrorism efforts, and debt relief to Jordan to facilitate progress toward a Middle East peace settlement.

To be sure, I do not support every provision of this bill. For instance, I still do not believe that this bill should contain any of the provisions relating to timber. But the final bill does contain changes in the language that preserve our ability to implement the current forest plans and their standards, and protect other resources such as clean water and fisheries. In addition, I am pleased that the Congress amended the bill to limit its special authorities for timber sales to end on December 31, 1996. Therefore, I have directed the Secretaries of the Interior, Agriculture, Commerce, the Administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency, and other Federal agencies to carry out timber salvage