

**Remarks Prior to Departure From
Santa Monica, California, and an
Exchange With Reporters**

September 22, 1995

The President. If I might, just listening to the county supervisors talk, it occurred to me that, for the benefit of the people in this county and this State who are interested in this problem, I ought to make two general points. First of all, this is an example of the kind of teamwork we need to solve the transitional problems, the many kinds of transitional problems that are plaguing the United States today as we move into a different kind of economy and a different kind of world.

They don't necessarily have a partisan tinge. They really require people to be creative, to be willing to embrace new ideas, to remember what the fundamental mission is, and to achieve that mission. And I want to applaud the people here who have spoken today for the way they work together across party lines. We need to do more of that in Washington right now in this budget process.

The second thing I want to emphasize to the people of this county—and this is true, by the way, to a greater or lesser extent in every State in this country and in very rural areas as well as more urbanized areas—you heard one of the commissioners say that one in three people in this county is uninsured. Well, one in three people in this county is not unemployed. Most uninsured people today are working people. And the reason the Medicaid program is so important is that it provides places like Los Angeles County with that extra amount of assistance, even though it's targeted to the poor, that helps them to keep their public health clinics and public hospitals open to deal with what is an increasingly difficult problem in America, which is working families without health insurance.

I tried to fix that last year, and my proposed solution didn't find favor. But if we're not going to have a comprehensive solution to it, then the only other alternative, if you believe as I do that you can't simply turn working families away when their children are sick or when the breadwinners are sick, the only alternative is to place greater emphasis on public health clinics and hospitals

that can help with primary and preventive care, as well as with people when they get very ill.

So this is a very important model, this restructuring that will take place over the next few years. And it won't be easy for them. But what they're trying to do is absolutely critical, given the fact that another million Americans every year who are in working families are without insurance. It would have been criminal to permit all of these clinics to close and all of this crisis to develop, not just because of the very poorest people in this county, but because of the working families on very limited incomes who don't have insurance.

And that's a national issue, it's not a Los Angeles County issue. And if it can be solved here with the restructuring, a lot of people all over America will be learning a lot from what you're doing, and the working families of our country will be better served by it.

Thank you very much.

Debt Limit Legislation

Q. Mr. President, what does that say about the spirit of cooperation and problem solving: Speaker Gingrich says that he won't bring a debt limit bill to the floor of the House unless you agree to the Republican budget tax cuts.

The President. Well, a lot of things have been said, you know. All I can say is that it's important for me to try to keep the rhetoric down and to keep calm. But I will say this: The United States has never failed to recognize its obligations to pay its debts. And the failure to raise the debt limit has nothing to do with holding the deficit down or balancing the budget. It is basically saying you're going to be a piker and welsh on your debts, and the United States has never done that. And it would be irresponsible to do that.

And let me emphasize that if the United States were to refuse to raise its debt limit, the real consequence to the Speaker and to the Republican majority in Congress would be to dramatically raise the risk that their own budget plan would fail because what would happen immediately is people would start to charge us more interest on our debt.

And most of the leaders in the Congress were around in the 12 years that we quad-

rupted the national debt. I wasn't there. But I can tell you today that our budget would be balanced but for the debts run up in the 12 years before I showed up in Washington. And if we don't—if we didn't raise the debt limit, the only practical impact would be, since we eventually would have to pay our debts, is that interest rates would go up, more and more of our budget would go to interest on the debt. It could raise our interest rates for a decade, and it could wreck their own budget plan.

So I just don't believe in the end that they will do that. There's going to be a lot of verbal back-and-forth between now and then, but it would be so irresponsible and it would undermine their own objectives, that I can't believe that it would happen.

The United States is a good citizen. We don't waltz on our debts, and we're not about to start doing it now.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:20 a.m. at the Santa Monica Airport. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

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.

September 16

The President declared a major disaster in the U.S. Virgin Islands and ordered Federal aid to supplement recovery efforts in areas struck by Hurricane Marilyn beginning on September 15.

The President declared a major disaster in the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico and ordered Federal aid to supplement Commonwealth and local recovery efforts in the areas struck by Hurricane Marilyn beginning on September 15.

September 18

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Philadelphia, PA. While en route on Air

Force One, he had a telephone conversation with NATO Secretary General Willy Claes to congratulate him on NATO's success in Bosnia. Following his arrival, he met with ministers and community leaders in the Mount Carmel Baptist Church.

In the evening, the President traveled to Jacksonville, FL.

The President announced his intention to nominate James C. Riley to be a Commissioner of the Federal Mine Safety and Health Review Commission.

September 19

In the evening, the President traveled to Denver, CO.

The President announced his intention to appoint M. Sharon Cassidy, Teresa Ghilarducci, and Joseph S. Perkins to be members of the Advisory Committee of the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

September 20

In the evening, the President attended a Clinton/Gore fundraiser at the Marriott City Center. He then traveled to San Francisco, CA.

The White House announced the President named Stephanie S. Streett and Anne L. Walley as Deputy Assistants to the President and Directors of Scheduling.

The White House announced the President has appointed Jack Quinn as Assistant to the President and White House Counsel to replace Abner Mikva, who will retire November 1.

September 21

In the morning, the President met with a group of CEO's from the information industry to discuss goals for education technology.

In the afternoon, the President went to Culver City, CA.

In the evening, the President attended a Saxophone Club fundraiser at the House of Blues.

The President announced his intention to nominate Anthony Cecil Eden Quainton to be Director General of the Foreign Service.

The President announced his intention to nominate Eric James Boswell as Assistant Secretary of State for Diplomatic Security.