

incide. Our futures are joined. As each of us prospers, all of us benefit.

For 45 years, the Organization for American States has worked tirelessly to strengthen the ties that bind us together. Now, its members have challenged us to implement many of the summit's initiatives, especially in the area of democracy and human rights. And in turn, we have asked the OAS to help turn our goal of a free trade area of the Americas into a concrete reality.

Under Secretary General Gaviria's dynamic guidance, I am confident the OAS will meet the responsibilities of its mandate and help to build a new era of democratic progress throughout the Americas.

Nowhere is the potential for progress clearer than in our relationship with Mexico. The stronger our trade, the greater the well-being of all of our people. The deeper our cooperation, the better we will be able to fight together our common problems like drugs and crime and pollution. The more effective our partnership, the stronger an example we will be able to set for all the nations of our hemisphere.

That's why when the peso collapsed, the United States stepped forward. The international support package we assembled, with the IMF, the World Bank, the Inter-American Development Bank, helped Mexico to get back on the path of stability and growth. It also protected hundreds of thousands of American jobs, and it prevented the crisis from spreading throughout our region and, indeed, to other emerging markets throughout the world. To put it mildly, the action the United States took was not popular here at home at the time it was taken. But it was the right thing to do.

In the months since the crisis, Mexico has demonstrated more strongly than ever that it is not only our neighbor, it is a very good neighbor. The Mexican people, led by President Zedillo, have courageously stayed on the road to reform.

Mr. President, the tough steps you took required courage and the ability to convince the Mexican people of the need for short-term pain in return for long-term gain. But now your resolve is paying off. Mexico has turned the corner toward recovery. And all of your partners in our region applaud your

leadership and your success and the basic character and vision of the people of Mexico who have supported your direction.

During his visit to Washington, President Zedillo and I discussed how we can move our partnership forward, not only to benefit our two nations but the entire hemisphere. By spreading the success of NAFTA, leading the fight against crime and corruption and drugs, clearing our air and cleaning our water, modernizing our educational systems for the 21st century, we hope to inspire the efforts of our neighbors throughout the Americas.

All of us in the Americas have an extraordinary opportunity, if we work together. We can build a future where our borders serve as bridges, where open societies and open markets flourish, where ordinary citizens, their families, and their communities see the benefits of a free-market economy without being swept away by its excesses, where our horizons know no limits and we prove the promise of our common commitment to democracy and human dignity.

If we achieve that vision, it will be thanks in no small measure to the steady hand and the clear-sightedness of my friend and partner, who is here, the distinguished President of Mexico, President Zedillo.

Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:13 p.m. in the Hall of the Americas at the Organization of American States. In his remarks, he referred to Cesar Gaviria, Secretary General, Organization of American States, and Enrique V. Iglesias, President, Inter-American Development Bank.

### **Message to the Congress Transmitting the Report on Hazardous Materials Transportation**

*October 11, 1995*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

In accordance with Public Law 103-272, as amended (49 U.S.C. 5121(e)), I transmit herewith the Biennial Report on Hazardous Materials Transportation for Calendar Years

1992–1993 of the Department of Transportation.

**William J. Clinton**

The White House,  
October 11, 1995.

**Teleconference Remarks With Rural Hospital Administrators and an Exchange With Reporters**

*October 12, 1995*

**The President.** First of all, let me thank you very much for participating in this conference call to discuss the importance of continuing to invest in health care in rural America.

As you all know, we are involved here in a serious attempt to balance the budget. I want to balance the budget. I have offered the Congress a proposal to do it. I think it will help to lift the burden of debt off our children, it will help to strengthen our economy if we do it in a way that is consistent with our values and our interests.

And one of the most important values we have is the obligation we have to strengthen our families and preserve the health care of our children and our parents. And the balanced budget I presented to the Congress does call for slowing the rate of growth in the Medicare and Medicaid programs, and it does secure the Medicare Trust Fund. But it strengthens rather than guts our Medicare program and it recognizes that Medicaid is the principal source of funding not only for health care for poor children but for a lot of our seniors and for an enormous number of our hospitals in rural areas and in urban areas.

And I believe that the Medicare-Medicaid budget that the Republicans in Congress are pushing violates both our basic values and our interests and it is not necessary—not necessary—to balance the budget. The level of Medicare cuts are more than twice what I propose. The level of Medicaid cuts are 3 times what I propose. And I believe it will force American families to choose between educating their children and making sure their families have the health care that they need.

And as all of you know—and I want to hear from you in a moment—these cuts will be especially devastating to rural communities and to rural families because Medicare and Medicaid are the backbone of the health care system in so many rural areas. Hospitals in rural areas already are struggling to make ends meet and are closing at far more rapid rates than hospitals in urban areas, and tend to depend a lot more on Medicare and Medicaid than urban hospitals do.

Therefore, if this budget passes that the Congress has proposed, it can mean, I think, devastating consequences for rural health care. And, of course, we want to hear what it will mean for your local hospitals. And if more of them close, they won't be there for families in emergencies or for families with a child that needs to be immunized or for people who need longer term care.

And let me say, having been a Governor for 12 years in a rural State and having presided over a lot of hospital closings in the 1980's and having spent hours and hours and hours inside rural hospitals in all different kinds of communities, I think I have a good feel for this. But I wanted to hear from you because I want America to know what the real consequences are.

This budget debate should not be a matter of abstract ideologies. We know we have to slow the rate of medical inflation. We know we have to deal with entitlements. We know we have to balance the budget. But we have to do it in a way that is prudent, humane, and decent and that is consistent with our values. So that's my objective, that's what I'm fighting for, and I need your help.

Now, before I close, I'd like to say one more word about the Republican Medicare plan because it affects hospitals directly. Two days ago, we saw further evidence that the Congress is prepared to walk away from the impact of this plan on people. In the dark of night, the Republican leadership cut a deal with the AMA that put, once again, put their interests ahead of the interests of the patients.

It may help the Republicans to pass their plan, but the rest of America needs to know who's going to pay for the payoff to the AMA to get them to support it. Older Americans who rely on Medicare are going to pay for