setting much if not all of the incentive payments;

(c) A proposal to ensure continued aggressive implementation of the Multiethnic Placement Act, as amended by the Inter-ethnic Adoption Provision of the Small Business Job Protection Act;

(d) Plans to compile and publish an annual State-by-State report on success in meeting the numerical targets; and

(e) Plans to recognize successful States.

II. To move children more rapidly from foster care to permanent homes, the report shall also recommend changes to Federal law and regulations and other actions needed to emphasize the importance of planning for permanency as soon as a child enters the foster care system. The Secretary's report should include, but should not necessarily be limited to, recommendations in the following areas:

(a) Plans to provide States with funding to identify barriers to permanency and to develop targeted strategies to find permanent homes for children who have been in foster care a particularly long time;

(b) Proposals to shorten the period of time between a child's placement in foster care and his or her initial hearing at which a permanency determination is made;

(c) A proposal to clarify that the purpose of ''dispositional hearings'' is to plan for permanency and, as appropriate, to consider referrals for family mediation, termination of parental rights, adoption, legal guardianship, or other permanent placements;

(d) A proposal to clarify the ''reasonable efforts'' requirement and other Federal policy as it relates to permanency and safety;

(e) Plans to ensure that States give appropriate weight to permanency planning by establishing standards for securing permanency through adoption or guardianship, once a decision has been made that a child cannot be returned home; and

(f) Plans to examine alternative permanency arrangements, such as guardianship, when adoption is not possible.

Last month, I signed a proclamation designating November as National Adoption Month—a time to increase awareness about the tens of thousands of children waiting for families and to encourage all Americans to consider the rewards and responsibilities of adoption. However, adoption must be a national concern throughout the year. Therefore, I direct:

(a) The Secretary of Health and Human Services to develop and lead a public awareness effort including use of public service announcements, print materials, and the Internet;

(b) The Secretaries of Health and Human Services and the Treasury in consultation with State, civic, and private sector leaders to develop and disseminate information about the new adoption tax credits and other adoption benefits;

(c) The Secretaries of Labor and Commerce, in consultation with State and civic leaders, to identify and recognize companies in the private sector with model policies to encourage and ease adoption among employees; and

(d) The Director of the Office of Personnel Management to direct all Federal agencies to provide information and support to Federal employees who are prospective adoptive parents.

William J. Clinton

The President's News Conference With European Union Leaders

December 16, 1996

President Clinton. Thank you very much. Please be seated. It is a pleasure to welcome back to the White House Prime Minister Bruton of Ireland and President Santer of the European Commission.

A year ago in Madrid, the United States and the European Union launched the New Transatlantic Agenda to fight international crime and terrorism and drug trafficking, to support peacemakers around the world, to

bring down barriers to commerce between our two nations. Today I am proud of the concrete progress we have made in that short year.

Our commitment to reducing trade barriers is paying off, clearing the path to greater prosperity. Next month our negotiators will finish work on a set of mutual recognition agreements which will abolish requirements that a broad range of products, including telecommunications and medical equipment, be reinspected and recertified for each other's markets. This will remove barriers on $40 billion worth of trade between the United States and the European Union, cutting red-tape for our businesses and prices for our consumers: one standard; one test; one time.

I want to especially thank the Transatlantic Business Dialogue for their leadership in achieving these agreements, especially the European and American cochairs, Jan Timmer, former chairman of the Phillips Corporation—excuse me—Phillips Electronics Corporation, and Dana Mead, chairman of Tenneco. They are both here today, and I'd like to ask them to stand and be recognized. Thank you very much, gentlemen, for what you did.

I also thank our European partners for helping us to complete the landmark information technology agreement finished last week in Singapore. It will eliminate by the year 2000 all tariffs on computers, semiconductors, telecommunications equipment, and software products. That's a $5 billion cut in tariffs on American exports which will benefit producers and consumers all over the world.

We have also deepened our work for peace and freedom in Bosnia. Today we agreed the civilian reconstruction effort there must move faster and that we have to have greater progress on projects for which funds have already been pledged. I thank the European Union for the generosity that has made it the largest donor to reconstruction, and we're working together to ensure the success of another donors conference next year.

The U.S. and the EU are also moving to confront new security threats. Our law enforcement officials are now working on a new joint counternarcotics offensive in the Caribbean. We're on the verge of an agreement for the EU to join the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Corporation. The EU's financial contribution and political support for KEDO are essential so that we can keep frozen and eventually dismantle North Korea's dangerous nuclear program.

And I welcome the EU's positive response in our proposal to establish an African crisis response force. This initiative would help African nations respond under the auspices of the U.N. to humanitarian and peacekeeping needs like those we have seen recently in Rwanda and Zaire. We look forward to working with European, African, and other nations to turn this concept into a reality.

I applaud the European Union for the important step forward it has taken by adopting a common position on Cuba, one that puts support for democracy at the heart of the relationship between Europe and Cuba, in keeping with values shared by great democracies on both sides of the Atlantic. And I hope that together we and our allies will continue to increase our support for freedom there.

As we look ahead, the historic strength of the relationship between the United States and Europe is deepening and taking new forms as we face new challenges. I thank Prime Minister Bruton and his government for the outstanding leadership that Ireland has given the EU during its Presidency. And I thank President Santer for making the last year's achievements possible. I am determined that we will carry them on in the coming year.

Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Bruton. Thank you very much. Mr. President, this has been a very successful summit between the European Union and the United States. We have discussed how we can promote peace and stability in the world, how we can enhance our trade between Europe and the United States, how we can meet the new challenges that are emerging on the world's stage.

And one of those I think was very aptly described by you, Mr. President, in your book "From Hope To History" when you said, the very openness of our society makes us vulnerable to new forces of destruction that cross national borders: organized crime, drug cartels, the spread of dangerous weap-

ons, including biological and chemical ones, and most of all, vicious terrorism. These were the challenges that this summit, first and foremost, set out to address.

We have identified, in Europe at the Dublin summit, that organized crime represents perhaps the biggest single threat to the security of ordinary individuals in our societies at the present time. Organized crime respects no borders. It is using the most modern technology available to promote its evil ends. And it can only be combated if civilized states are equipped with the same sophistication and are willing to cooperate with one another with the same will as those who are seeking to break our laws and threaten the lives of our people are applying in their illicit activity.

We have taken major steps at this summit in regard to the fight against drugs, which feeds organized crime. We've agreed on a program of action to support the governments of the Caribbean area to ensure that that area is no longer used as a transit area for drugs. We have reached agreements to cooperate on money laundering. And one of the suggestions that I made to the President is that we should also look at how we can pursue the assets gained through crime, so that there will be no place that people who have gained assets through crime can hide those assets in the world without law enforcement being able to confiscate those assets in order to compensate the victims of the crimes that are being committed.

We also, I think, have got to use technology to the full to combat the use of technology for crime. In the book that I've just quoted, Mr. President, you said that when a child born today is old enough to read—that's in 3 or 4 years' time—there would be 100 million users of the Internet in the world. The truth of the matter is that the Internet is being used to promote child sexual abuse. Modern technology is being used to move money across the exchanges from one country to another, money that has been gained through the sale of narcotics or other criminal activities. We must equip ourselves with sufficient sophistication, as civilized governments, to ensure that we can meet that challenge head on.

I believe if there's anything subject that requires—there's no subject, rather, that requires more cooperation across the Atlantic for which our citizens will give us full support than the subject of the battle against crime.

I'd also like to say, however, that this wasn't the sole subject we discussed. We applauded the work of those who are involved in the very successful World Trade Organization summit in Singapore. And I emphasize the word "very." This was an outstandingly successful summit with a huge number of countries taking part, and yet in Singapore itself, through sophisticated negotiation, we were able to reach major agreements. You've mentioned the result of them. They will free up trade and information technology, and they are showing out a pathway for the future as far as trade is concerned, which is extremely good.

I am glad to say also that we will reach agreement before the end of January on the mutual recognition by our standards authorities of products produced in the EU and in the U.S. A lot of business costs will be saved by ensuring that one certification will apply for a product. If it's safe enough for the United States, it would be safe enough for Europe and vice versa. That will save a lot of money for business and will enable more employment and more innovation to take place.

As the President said, we share concern about the recent annulment of elections in Serbia, and we look forward to the OSC mission there. We also welcomed the U.S. proposal for an African crisis response force, which you referred to, which is a practical, longstanding requirement.

We enhanced, during the Irish Presidency of the European Union, Europe's participation in the Middle East peace process. And we hope, as you do, Mr. President, for a rapid conclusion to the negotiations in Hebron. This is a vital and long overdue confidence-building measure as far as the peace process in the Middle East is concerned.

And I, like you, Mr. President, would like to applaud the people who have been involved in the Transatlantic Business Dialogue. They have kept us on our toes. They have ensured that we reached agreements that we mightn't have agreed were it not for their practical pressure.

Finally, I think it's appropriate as we enter 1997 that we should look back in history and say that next year will be the 50th anniversary of the Marshall plan. Through the Marshall plan, a prosperous and triumphant United States assisted a prostrate Europe back onto its feet in one of the greatest acts of generosity in human history. There was no requirement on the United States to do what it did under the Marshall plan. It did it, and it is fair to say that the United States has profited and prospered as a result of that generosity, even though that wasn't its intention.

I think now that Europe and the United States are on an equal footing, we can, I think, continue in that spirit of mutual generosity. We have the capacity to be generous, too, now in Europe, just as you were, the United States, so generous in 1947. And I hope that our dialog will intensify on that basis.

Thank you.

President Santer. Mr. President, Prime Minister, ladies and gentlemen, 6 months ago in this very room I said the world needed joint leadership from Europe and America as much as ever before. And 6 months later progress in that regard has been impressive.

The New Transatlantic Agenda signed a year ago has brought us a rich harvest. We have worked successfully together on humanitarian aid and nuclear nonproliferation, and we are cooperating to bring peace to the Great Lakes region, as well as making sure it holds in Bosnia and in the Middle East.

The New Transatlantic Agenda has also delivered to the world the prospect of a major deed on information technology in Singapore which will boost trade and provide vast new opportunities for business. We are also working together for a worldwide agreement on telecoms.

Next month we are hopeful of promoting transatlantic trade by cutting unnecessary administrative controls on business through a mutual recognition agreement. We are also fighting drugs and drug-related crime by working to stop dangerous chemicals falling into the wrong hands.

Today's summit has helped us take stock and prepare to cooperate in other areas. Let me mention two. Firstly, we have helped clear the air on Cuba. Today's talks have convinced me that although our views may differ on the means, we certainly agree on the end goal. Europe will remain firmly opposed to all extraterritorial legislation, whatever its source, and will continue to defend its interests. But we remain determined to search for common ground with the United States in our desire to bring democracy, freedom, and human rights to Cuba. We must all continue to work to bring Cuba into the international community.

Two days ago European leaders restated in some detail the policies they have held towards Cuba for at least a year. They endorsed a common position calling on Cuba to reform its laws so as to guarantee political and civil rights. We must sustain a dialog with Cuba in which we make clear that the further deepening of our relations with that country is linked to Havana's own efforts to improve human rights and political freedom. No agreement with Cuba could be envisaged if political circumstances did not improve.

Secondly, I have greatly appreciated the chance to discuss China with President Clinton and, in particular, China's entry in the WTO. There is little really that separates us on many of the key issues. We must work to get China into the WTO as soon as possible on the right terms for China and for us all.

I was also able to confirm Europe's determination to press ahead with the enlargement of the European Union, to include countries from Central and Eastern Europe. This is vital for the stability of the continent and as such is a major interest of the United States.

Let me conclude by saying that the stronger Europe becomes, the more effective our joint leadership with America will be. I have reassured President Clinton that a united Europe will be a stable, open, and powerful friend of the United States. Those here in America who doubt the will of most European Union countries to build such unity should witness their resolve to create a single currency at the EU summit that I and, of course, Prime Minister John Bruton, as President in office, have just attended in Dublin.

President Clinton has shown himself to be a loyal ally of the European Union. We look

forward to working with him over the next few years, a time when Europe will undergo great change, change that I believe to be fundamentally in the interest of the United States economically and politically.

Next year, as the Taoiseach said, next year we will see that 50th anniversary of the Marshall plan and the 40th anniversary of the Treaty of Rome which created the European Community. Those events are naturally connected. The Marshall plan has helped to revive and unite Europe, which is now working in a renewed partnership with the United States throughout the world. History shows that there is always more that unites us than divides us.

Thank you.

President Clinton. Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, since you've been otherwise preoccupied, the Middle East peace process is going down the drain. The Israeli Prime Minister is encouraging the expansion of settlements in occupied Arab lands and also new financing. Isn't it time that you spoke out? And while we're in the region, are you prepared to lift the ban on travel to Lebanon?

President Clinton. The answer to the second question is that our advisers still tell me they do not believe it is safe for American business people to do that, and so I am not, at this time, prepared to do it.

The answer to the first question is, of course, we have been in active contact with both sides in the negotiations between the Israelis and the Palestinians, pushing for an agreement on Hebron. There's been very little difference between them for weeks and weeks and weeks now. And we need to get the Hebron agreement over and behind us and go on to other issues.

With regard to settlements, I believe the State Department stated yesterday what my position is, which is that it just stands to reason that anything that preempts the outcome of something that both parties have agreed to should be part of the final negotiations cannot be helpful in making peace. And that's my concern about that.

Q. Can you do anything about it?

President Clinton. Well, we can say what we believe and we can press our views on all those issues, and we are. But I want to assure you that we have been in very close contact with both parties for some time now—I have personally, our administration has—and we're pushing ahead.

The talks are at a critical juncture, I think. The situation is full of tension and full of frustration. And I'm pleased that the Prime Minister and Chairman Arafat talked yesterday. That's a good thing, better than not talking. But sooner or later they have to do something. And they've had an agreement within grasp with very little difference on Hebron for some time now. The time has come to make that agreement. But I don't think that on the settlement issue that anything should be done which would, in effect, be seen as preempting the outcome of something they've already agreed to should be part of the final negotiations. And we've had a very clear position on that all along.

Cuba and the Helms-Burton Amendment

Q. Mr. President, Jacques Santer says you've cleared the air on Cuba. Does that mean you won't be implementing Helms-Burton? And, Mr. Bruton, does that mean that Europe will be withdrawing its court action against the United States at the WTO? Or are you still at loggerheads?

President Clinton. I thought you'd never ask. [*Laughter*] I don't think it necessarily means either one. I'll let the Prime Minister or President Santer speak for themselves. I have a decision deadline on that which has not been reached, and I have not gotten the final recommendation from Mr. Eizenstat, who's been working on that for me, and others in the administration.

But I would say this was a decision that Europe made on its own that was very impressive to me, not only the common position on democracy but the action taken by all the member nations of the EU on human rights and the decision made to channel further aid through the nongovernmental organizations. All those steps are quite significant and show that we are now working together to promote freedom and democracy in Cuba. And that, to me—it obviously has to be a factor in the decision I make, but that decision will be

made sometime in the middle of next month. And I'm not prepared to announce it yet and haven't received a final recommendation yet.

Prime Minister Bruton. Could I say that there is, of course, a difference in method, but there is absolutely no difference in objective between the European Union and the United States. We both want to see pluralist democracy in Cuba at the earliest possible moment. We believe that the denial of democratic rights to the Cuban people is an anachronism in the modern world and is denying the Cuban people something to which they are absolutely entitled. The United States and the European Union are working with vigor towards the same objective. It's fair to say that at the 2d of December council chaired by Dick Spring, a very strong declaration was adopted by the European Union, absolutely unanimously, calling for democracy in Cuba and saying that we will work together as a union of 15 to achieve that objective.

Of course, there are differences between us in regard to what we consider to be an attempt to apply U.S. law outside U.S. territory, to the detriment of European companies. However, that's an issue that can be—an issue that we will deal with in the course of normal negotiation.

Q. Monsieur Santer, does that mean that the European Union is going to drop its effort to take this issue of the Helms-Burton law to the World Trade Organization or to the World Court, in following up the first question?

And Mr. President, if I could ask you a related question: Why is it useful to engage in constructive engagement and trade policy with China, which has a human rights policy which you so strongly oppose, yet it's not worthwhile to engage in constructive engagement with Cuba? And at the risk of following up with a very self-serving question——

President Clinton. You asked three questions there. [*Laughter*]

Q. Very self-serving question. As you know, the Cuban Government——

President Clinton. Do I watch CNN every day? Yes, I do. Go ahead. [*Laughter*] I was thinking of the most self-serving question I could think of. Go ahead. [*Laughter*]

Q. You're close. [*Laughter*]

Q. The Cuban Government has given CNN permission to open up a bureau in Havana. The U.S. Government is sitting on that request right now. Do you think it's appropriate to give CNN permission to have a bureau in Havana, President Santer?

President Santer. For the first question—[*laughter*]—I must say, I remember it as the Taoiseach said, we have the same target. We are sharing, the United States and the European Union, the same values of democracy, of pluralism, and so on. We are already differing in means. And in that respect, we're sticking, of course, to the decision taken by the European Council about this—about also the panel which is pending before the WTO in Geneva.

But on the other hand, I repeat that we have adopted a clear policy, a common position for Cuba in a positive way, and we are implementing this common position. And the head of states and government in Dublin last weekend, they confirmed this common position. And we're working on that, and we're elevating on that, I hope so, very constructively with the United States to bring the pluralism of democracy to Cuba.

President Clinton. On the question of Cuba versus China or any other country, I can do no better than Ambassador Albright did when she pointed out that the United States cannot afford to have a cookie-cutter approach to the promotion of peace, democracy, and prosperity. We have to have different policies for different nations, different regions, different realities. That's the first point. The second point is the Chinese have not shot down any innocent American citizens out of the sky recently, and that had a very chilling effect on our relationships with Europe—or with Cuba and clearly raised the security issues related to our proximity.

On the bureau location, this is the first I've heard of it. I think you better give me a chance to huddle, think, and I will give you an answer to that, in public or private, but I can't do it right now.

Mr. Fornier [Ron Fornier, Associated Press].

Middle East Peace Process

Q. I want to ask you a question about your CIA designate. But a quick followup to Hel-

en's question. Your aides have been intimating that—more than what you said—the West Bank—it's not helpful, the West Bank settlement issue. Your aides have been intimating that it's actually an obstacle to peace. Do you agree with that?

President Clinton. Absolutely.

Q. It is an obstacle to peace?

President Clinton. Absolutely.

Director of Central Intelligence-Designate

Q. And on Tony Lake, he is telling congressional leaders that it was a mistake to keep Congress uninformed when your administration looked the other way as Iran shipped arms to the Bosnia Muslims. Do you agree it was a mistake, and do you think his confirmation is in jeopardy?

President Clinton. No, I don't think his confirmation is in jeopardy because he did a superb job as National Security Adviser, and this country is in better shape than it was 4 years ago, and because he's very well-qualified to be head of the CIA.

I believe that what he said is right. A lot of things were happening during that period of time. We were not under any legal obligation of any kind, as far as I'm aware, to make any kind of specific notation about the cables that went back and forth regarding this issue. But in retrospect, he said it probably would have been better to inform key Members of Congress on a confidential basis, and I accept that.

I would like to point out, though, one reason why I don't see how in the world this could be any kind of basis for voting against him—the Congress actually mandated that policy just a few weeks later, if you'll remember. The Congress actually mandated that the arms embargo not be enforced by the United States, going far beyond anything that had transpired in the cables. So I think that ought to be on the public record, and that will be a factor here.

Mutual Recognition Agreement

Q. How long will it take for business—on the MRA's?

Prime Minister Bruton. Pretty well immediately after it comes into force, because any new standards, any new products that are being introduced will not have to go through a twin-track approach, they will be able to get the requisite recognition in one jurisdiction and that would then be recognized in the other.

President Clinton. Do you agree with that?

Mr. Dana Mead. Yes, sir. Essentially immediately.

Central Intelligence Agency

Q. [*Inaudible*]——cooperation in Europe, we have an agency called the Central Intelligence Agency, which you may or may not know much about, but they are living in secret all the time, and they're trying to overthrow other nations around the world and sell arms to nations—even those fighting in a civil war, they sell to both sides. Don't you think that's adverse to cooperation?

President Clinton. They shouldn't do anything illegal, and if they are today, I don't know about it. I can't vouch for what they did before I showed up.

Yes, go ahead.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, during your second administration, are you prepared to enforce your policy on the settlement issue upon the Israeli Government, using American financial, political means in order to enforce the policy?

President Clinton. Let me say what I have said all along, what I strongly believe. I believe the United States cannot impose a peace in the Middle East. What the United States can do is to create the conditions in which it is easier for peace to be made by the parties because we work to minimize the risks of peace.

From my point of view, sir, the most significant incentive to making peace in the Middle East is the clear consequence of what will flow if it is not made. We cannot—this is not a situation in equilibrium here. It's not as if tomorrow will be like today and the day after tomorrow will be like today and the day after that will be like today. This is a process that, once having been undertaken, is either going to go forward or fall back. It will either lead to greater integration or greater disintegration and greater trouble. And I think the

leaders of the Middle East are well aware of that.

It has always been my position that we exercised the influence most profoundly when we did it in that context—when we said what we had to say to them in private, but our public role maintained its essential balanced neutral position that we had to create the conditions in which peace could occur, and then we were morally obligated—and in terms of our interests—obligated to minimize the risks for peace. I still believe that. But I've already said what I have to say about the present situation, and I think it's pretty clear.

EU–U.S. Anticrime Efforts

Q. Taoiseach and Mr. President, could you surmise what kind of financial outlay might be involved in the crime and drugs package you're talking about, put a bit more flesh on the joint action that will be taken by the two governments, by Europe and the U.S.?

Prime Minister Bruton. Well, the bulk of this will be within existing budgets, where people will cooperate on agreed standards. One of the areas where already the United States is very active in Europe is in police training. The United States has set up an institute in Budapest, which is helping the Eastern European countries to engage in police training, to bring their police levels up to a sophisticated standard capable of dealing with the modern crime as we know it in the West, unfortunately.

We can see more cooperation in that area. The fact that we will conclude a customs agreement, for example, very shortly will mean that our customs authorities will cooperate much more effectively, within existing budgets, on sharing information in order to stop crime moving from—or stop drugs moving from one jurisdiction to another.

The European Union will be preparing a major report on organized crime as a whole, which is in a sense a new phenomenon on its present scale, by the end of April. And we would hope to see the United States assisting us and participating with us in that study—that we will go forward, if you like, with the next wave of legal changes and also the devotion of resources to back those legal changes up on a transatlantic basis.

Greece and Turkey

Q. Did you talk about the problems between Greece and Turkey and the crisis in the Aegean and the problems of Cyprus within the context of the accession of Cyprus to the European Union?

President Santer. Yes, of course, we discussed it.

President Clinton. I'll be glad to comment, but since you mentioned the European Union, I think I should let them reply.

President Santer. You know, the position of the European Union in this respect is very clear. We defined it in a package on the 6th of March, 1995, in which package we developed the ideas that we would establish a customs union with Turkey. It is in force from the first of January 1996 and is benefiting from the European Union, and also third countries are benefiting from it. Unfortunately, the second deal is not yet realized, achieved, because of the financial protocol, because of the blockade of Greece, you know, because the difference they have with some islands in the Aegean Sea. And the third element of this package is also the development of human rights, the promotion of human rights. And we are stressing also these problems with the Turkish Government. And in the financial provisions through our program MIDA, we are providing some programs to Turkey to strengthen the human rights situation in Turkey and also to assist the civil society and also the needs of the population in the southeast, in the poorest part of Turkey.

That is what we are doing for Turkey at this moment. We hope that there would be also some evolution in the human rights situation and that we can deal also with the differences between Turkey and Greece on the basis of the resolution the European Council—not the European Council but the Council of Ministers of the European Union took on the 15th of July to go to the international core to deal with all these legal institutional problems.

For Cyprus, we didn't change our policy, not at all, because Cyprus is a candidate to become a member of the European Union. And we clearly defined on the 6th of March, 1995, that negotiations for enlargement with Cyprus would start 6 months after the con-

clusion of the intergovernmental conference. And this conclusion, we hope, would be finished under the Dutch Presidency in June 1997. So we are starting with the negotiation at the beginning of 1998.

President Clinton. Let me make two general comments. Number one, the United States believes that an integrated and democratic and prosperous Europe is very much in our interest, therefore we support the expansion of the European Union. But we recognize that it is for the Europeans to decide the terms and the parties and the timetable of that expansion. But in general, we welcome the strengthening and the broadening of the Union.

Secondly, we have spent a lot of time since I've been in office trying to minimize tensions and resolve difficulties between Greece and Turkey. And in particular, I have made an effort to try to resolve the problems over Cyprus. I believe that the future of the European Union and the future of the United States will be much brighter and much less troublesome if these things can be resolved.

I believe that Greece and Turkey are two great nations that have an enormous commonality of interest, whether in NATO, whether in their interest in European integration, whether in their interest in minimizing chaos in the vicinity in which they both live—if they could simply resolve these longstanding difficulties between them. And I can only say for my part that I intend to do whatever I can in these next 4 years the American people have given me to try to help work out the situation in Cyprus and work out the problems generally between Greece and Turkey.

They are both our allies, and they're both very, very important to a stable 21st century. And I intend to invest an enormous amount of effort in trying to succeed there. And I ask them to reexamine their positions and try to reach out to one another. They plainly have more in common looking to the future than they do which divides them. It is only the past which continues to bedevil them.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 133d news conference began at 2:20 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. The President met with Prime Minister John Bruton in his capacity as President of the European Council and President Jacques Santer of the European Commission. In his remarks, the President referred to Stuart E. Eizenstat, Special Representative of the President and Secretary of State for the Promotion of Democracy in Cuba.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister John Bruton of Ireland and an Exchange With Reporters

December 17, 1996

Irish Peace Process

The President. Let me say I'm delighted to have Prime Minister Bruton here again today, along with the members of his government, and we're going to talk about Northern Ireland today. And I want to reiterate my call for the IRA to institute a cease-fire in words as well as deeds. If they do that, I am convinced that Sinn Fein will be invited to participate in the talks, and we believe that substantive and inclusive peace talks are the only way to resolve this.

Meanwhile, the talks go on. Senator Mitchell is doing a terrific job. And I want to say also a word of appreciation to the Loyalists for holding the cease-fire. I think that's a very good thing. We can't make peace until we end violence, and that's what we're going to talk about today, how we can keep working on that.

Q. Do they await the British elections, I mean, the question of movement and progress?

The President. Maybe the Prime Minister ought to answer that.

Prime Minister Bruton. I would like to say that I completely endorse what the President just said. On the contrary, I think an immediate cease-fire would have advantages that a postponed cease-fire wouldn't necessarily carry. I think it would set a policy position in regard to Sinn Fein's participation in talks in place before an election, which would carry through into the next British Parliament in a much more durable way, whereas a postponed cease-fire after the election would go into the term of office of a new government, with perhaps a new opposition, and there would be much less certainty about the response.