

OMB, drafting our balanced budget, Jack Lew has been a true and dedicated public servant.

Like Frank Raines, with whom he has made a very good team, Jack works to balance the budget not just for its own sake but for the sake of the people whose interests and values he serves. He already serves as a valued member of our economic team. I look forward to his speedy confirmation as Director of OMB, and I thank him and his wonderful family for being here today and for being willing to undertake the sacrifice and rigors of public service for the honor and the reward.

Thank you very much. Now I'd like to ask Mr. Raines and Mr. Lew to make statements. [At this point, Mr. Raines and Mr. Lew made brief remarks.]

#### **NationsBank and BankAmerica Merger**

**Q.** Mr. President, what do you think of the big bank mergers? Mr. President, do you have any ideas about them?

**The President.** It would be inappropriate to comment now.

#### **Director of the Office of Management and Budget**

**Q.** Where is Mr. Raines going—this chance of a lifetime?

**Mr. Raines.** Stay tuned. [Laughter]

**The President.** Shortly. That's news, unfortunately, I can't make.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:55 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

#### **Remarks in a Telephone Conversation From Houston With Astronauts at Kennedy Space Center in Florida**

April 14, 1998

**The President.** Are you ready?

**Lt. Col. Richard A. Searfoss.** Yes.

**The President.** Well, you're looking good. I hope you find out a lot of things about the human neurological system to help me, because I'm moving into those years where I'm getting dizzy and I'm having all these problems—[laughter]—and I expect you to come back with all the answers.

**Lieutenant Colonel Searfoss.** Well, thank you, Mr. President. We'll take that on board as one of the challenges that we'll try to meet. [Laughter]

If you'd like, Mr. President, I'll introduce my crew to you.

**The President.** I'd like that, and anything you want to tell me about the mission, I'd be glad to hear it.

**Lieutenant Colonel Searfoss.** My name is Rick Searfoss. I'm the Commander of the flight. It will be my third shuttle mission. Right next to me, my immediate right, is Scott Altman. He will be the pilot on the flight. Next to him, Kay Hire, our flight engineer. Our payload crew consists of four doctors—right next to me, Rick Linnehan, who is a DVM, veterinarian. And behind us, Drs. Buckey and Williams are medical doctors; and Jim Pawelczyk is a physiologist, a Ph.D. researcher. So, as you can see, we've got some great science expertise to do the on-board portion of this mission.

**The President.** Just very briefly—you know, I've got the whole national press here with me, so why don't you briefly describe what the purpose of the mission is and what some of the things you're going to be exploring are.

**Lieutenant Colonel Searfoss.** Absolutely. The fundamental, overriding question that is consistent across all 26 of our experiments, Mr. President, is that what happens, in a very detailed sort of way that we want to understand, to the nervous and neurological processes and systems when you take the certain variable away that we just can't take away on Earth, and that's, of course, gravity.

I'm going to turn it over just for a minute or two to Dr. Linnehan, who is our payload commander, and he can give you a few more details on that.

Rick.

**Dr. Richard M. Linnehan.** Yes, sir. Mr. President, we have 26 major experiments that deal all the way from the vestibular system, which is the inner ear, how we interpret balance on Earth as opposed to in space, up to neuronal plasticity, which really is just another way of saying how the brain heals or rewires itself in terms of damage or new adaptations in space.

**The President.** That's great. Well, we're all excited about it. We're anxious to see you get off and anxious to see you come home safely, full of information.

One of the general points that I want to make with all of you here, that I have tried to make both to the Congress and to the Nation, is that the space program has enormous potential to change life here on Earth for the better, in a health way, in a way that you're exploring, in environmental ways, and in other ways as well. So this is a particularly exciting mission to me, because I believe it will help to strengthen the support of the rank and file Americans for our NASA operations, generally. And I'm very grateful to you.

Good luck, and have a great time out there. Thank you.

**Lieutenant Colonel Searfoss.** Thank you very much, Mr. President; we appreciate it.

**The President.** Goodbye. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:25 p.m. from the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center with Lt. Col. Richard A. Searfoss, USAF, mission commander; and Dr. Richard M. Linnehan, mission specialist. During the telephone conversation, the following crewmembers were referred to: Lt. Comdr. Scott D. Altman, USN, pilot; Comdr. Kathryn P. Hire, USNR, flight engineer; Dr. Dafydd Rhys Williams, mission specialist; and Dr. Jay Clark Buckley, Jr., and James A. Pawelczyk, payload specialists. Health sciences mission STS-90 was scheduled for lift-off aboard the space shuttle *Columbia* on April 16.

### Remarks at the Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center in Houston

April 14, 1998

Thank you very much. Once again, I'm delighted to be back here. I have to beg your pardon for starting this program a little late, but when I get here, I get involved in what I'm doing and, besides that, John Glenn wanted to make sure I saw every single square inch—[laughter]—of space he would be living and maneuvering in—which didn't take all that long to see, actually. [Laughter] But we've had a wonderful day.

I want to thank Dan Goldin for doing a marvelous job. One thing he did not mention was the fact that he made the decision, which

I strongly supported, to continue our involvement with the *Mir*, to participate with our partners there in the spirit of international cooperation in space. And I thank him for that. I'd also like to say to George Abbey, thank you very much for all the work that you and all the wonderful people here do. Thank you, Mayor Brown. I'm very proud that you were once a member of my Cabinet, and I see you've gone on to higher things. [Laughter]

That reminds me—you know, Abraham Lincoln used to keep regular office hours in the White House. And a woman broke in the White House one day, in a fit of anger and anxiety, worried about something, and she ran into him. And she was so excited she didn't recognize him. There wasn't any television back then, of course. And she said, "I demand to speak to no one lower than the President." And he said, "Ma'am, there is no one lower than the President." [Laughter]

So you folks gave Lee a promotion. I understand he's the first mayor, actually sitting mayor, to come out here to the Johnson Center, and I think that's a very good thing, and I appreciate that.

I'd like to thank Congressman Lampson. You just heard—he's the fairly eloquent advocate on your behalf. I asked him whether he and I should volunteer to go to Mars if we get the mission. It would make a lot of people happy, at least if I went, I think. [Laughter]

I'd like to thank Representatives Sheila Jackson Lee and Gene Green and Ken Bentsen for being here today and for the work they do for Texas, for the Houston area. I'd like to thank your Land Commissioner Garry Mauro, and your State Senator Rodney Ellis for being here, and the other city officials who are here, Don Boney, Sylvia Garcia, Judge Eckels; thank you for coming. I'd like to thank Colonel Curt Brown who is the commander for the mission Senator Glenn is going to. And you see his whole team back here, including a member from Japan and a member from Europe, who is a native from Madrid, Spain. And we're glad to have all of them here.

I'd like to thank David Wolfe and all the other astronauts that showed me around, and