

## Remarks Prior to a Meeting With the Economic Team and an Exchange With Reporters

October 8, 1998

### *Impeachment Inquiry Vote*

**The President.** We are about to start a meeting with the economic and budget team about the unfinished work in the budget that has to be done in the next few days. But before we start I'd like to make just a very brief comment on today's vote.

First of all, I hope that we can now move forward with this process in a way that is fair, that is constitutional, and that is timely. The American people have been through a lot on this, and I think that everyone deserves that. Beyond that, I have nothing to say. It is not in my hands; it is in the hands of Congress and the people of this country—ultimately, in the hands of God, there is nothing I can do.

But there are things I can do something about. And the most important thing I can do now is to work in the next few days to work to cross party lines to do the work that we have to do here. We have got to pass a budget that protects the surplus and still to save Social Security, that keeps the American economy going amidst all this economic turmoil in the world, that protects, instead of damages, the environment, and that gives the kind of priority to our elementary and secondary education that it so clearly needs.

Those are my priorities. I think those are the priorities of the American people. It will require us to put progress ahead of partisanship, but it clearly will strengthen our country. And that's what we're going to work on, and I hope we can do it.

**Q.** Sir, you could speed the pace of this up if you were to volunteer to testify, decide whether or not now you would challenge Monica Lewinsky's account of your relationship. Have you made any decisions on that front?

**The President.** Let me say again, on that I will do what I can to help to ensure this is constitutional, fair, and timely. Ultimately, it is in the hands of the Congress. I don't think it's appropriate to comment further than that.

### *International Financial Situation*

**Q.** Mr. President, what's your reaction to the Republican demands on the IMF funding bill, and how closely are you watching the decline of the dollar against the yen?

**The President.** Well, we're watching that very closely. Of course, the strengthening of the yen could be a good thing. The yen got too weak, and it led, for example, to breathtaking increases in imports of Japanese steel, which hurt a lot of our people, our industry, and our workers who were clearly competitive internationally.

And if the Japanese yen were to come back because people believed Japan was serious about economic reform, then it would be a good thing. It would be a balancing of forces in the world economy. It would strengthen the American economy by strengthening our own domestic manufacturing sector and making our exports more competitive. It would make it possible for Japan to buy other country's exports in Asia.

If it's a temporary phenomenon that evidences some sort of instability, then that's something we just have to try to sort out. But I don't think we can know for sure yet. The clear answer over the long run is for America to fund our responsibilities to the IMF, for Japan to get serious about its economic reform, for the Europeans to keep their markets open and continue growth so that all of us can get more money back into the global economic system right now and then deal with the long-term problem. That's what I hope. I think it's very important not to be diverted by day-to-day developments here and think about what the larger problem is.

### *International Consultations/ Impeachment Inquiry Vote*

**Q.** Mr. President, have you talked to other world leaders today? And how are you feeling personally about the vote?

**The President.** Today I spoke with President Chirac of France. And I am meeting tomorrow with the man who will be the next German Chancellor, Mr. Schroeder. And we talked about Kosovo. And I have been working, as you know, all week long with people from all over the world on the international financial crisis.

Personally, I am fine. I have surrendered this. This is beyond my control. I have to work on what I can do. What I can do is to do my job for the American people. I trust the American people. They almost always get it right and have for 220 years. And I'm working in a way that I hope will restore their trust in me by working for the things that our country needs. These things we're going to discuss at this budget meeting, that's what I can have some impact on, and that's what I intend to do.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Jacques Chirac of France and Chancellor-Elect Gerhard Schroeder of Germany. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

### **Statement on Senate Action on the "Internet Tax Freedom Act"**

*October 8, 1998*

I am pleased that the Senate has joined the House in passing the "Internet Tax Freedom Act." This bill will create a short-term moratorium on new and discriminatory taxes that would slow down the growth of the Internet and launch a search for long-term solutions to the tax issues raised by electronic commerce. As I said earlier this year in my speech on Internet policy, we cannot allow 30,000 State and local tax jurisdictions to stifle the Internet, nor can we allow the erosion of the revenue that State and local governments need to fight crime and invest in education. I look forward to signing this legislation into law so that America can continue to lead the world in the information age.

### **Proclamation 7135—Leif Erikson Day, 1998**

*October 8, 1998*

*By the President of the United States  
of America*

#### **A Proclamation**

Almost a thousand years ago, the great Norse explorer Leif Erikson first set foot on the North American continent. In com-

memorating Leif Erikson Day each year, we honor the pioneering spirit of this son of Iceland and grandson of Norway. We recall the daring of the Viking seafarers, who saw the ocean not as a boundary but as a gateway to another world, and we pay tribute to the courage of their descendants who, centuries later would brave their own ocean journeys to find a new life in America.

This thirst for adventure has remained a fundamental trait of the American character since our earliest days as a Nation. But men and women of the Nordic countries brought other important strengths to their adopted land as well: resourcefulness, self-reliance, determination, a willingness to work hard, a love of freedom, and a belief in human dignity. Leif Erikson's arrival in North America brought not only the explorer's passion to our country, but also laid the foundations of the friendship the United States enjoys today with the Nordic countries. Building on the values we share, our nations have made a powerful commitment to protect and expand political, religious, and economic freedom to peoples around the world. Staunch allies in times of peace and war, the United States and the countries of Scandinavia look forward to the year 2000 when we will commemorate together the 1000th anniversary of Leif Erikson's historic voyage to our continent and celebrate the important and lasting contributions the sons and daughters of Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Denmark, and Finland have made to the history and heritage of our Nation.

In honor of Leif Erikson, the Congress, by joint resolution approved on September 2, 1964 (Public Law 88-566), has authorized and requested the President to proclaim October 9 of each year as "Leif Erikson Day."

**Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton,** President of the United States of America, do hereby proclaim October 9, 1998, as Leif Erikson Day. I encourage the people of the United States to observe this occasion with appropriate ceremonies and activities commemorating our rich Nordic-American heritage.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this eighth day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-eight, and of the Independence of the