on the debt relief issue by looking into other issue related to alleviating poverty and closing the vast gaps in income and quality of life. And that's what we talked about today with education; that's what the disease initiative was all about. So I think they're going in the right direction.

And I don't have any particular suggestions for changes, except I think that every year if we could do what Prime Minister Mori did this year, focus on some problem that affects not only us but the rest of the world and have at least half-day where we bring in people like they did in Tokyo—and I regret that I missed that part of it because I think it was fascinating—I think that would be a good thing to do.

I think the fact that it's more informal now than it used to be and that the leaders spend more time talking than they used to—maybe not making news on a particular day, is a plus, not a negative. These people need to know each other. There are a lot of decisions they have to make, a lot of conflicts they can avoid if they know each other and trust each other. So I'm not troubled by the format.

U.S. Presence on Okinawa

Q. Mr. President, if so many people on Okinawa resent the presence of American military here, why not withdraw them?

President Clinton. Well, because we still have security needs here and because I believe that as long as we're good citizens, most of the people on Okinawa understand and appreciate that. What we are doing is aggressively trying to reduce our footprint, and we should continue to do that. We should be as little burden and as great an economic support to the people of Okinawa as possible, because they have borne a disproportionate share.

But I want to say again to Governor Inamine and the people of Okinawa, they've done a great job on this conference, but they've been very, very good to the United States service families that have been here over all these years. And we're going to keep trying to reduce our burden, but we have not yet reached the time, in my judgment, when the Japan-U.S. security partnership requires no presence of the United States forces in northern Asia.

Thank you.

NOTE: The exchange began at 9:20 a.m. in the lobby at the Manza Beach Hotel. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Yoshiro Mori of Japan; Chizuko Obuchi, widow of Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan; Gov. Keiichi Inamine of Okinawa; and former Senator Bob Dole. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Department of Health and Human Services Report on the Decline in Youth Gun Deaths

July 24, 2000

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) released promising new data today showing that the number of children killed by gunfire in America continues to decline. The HHS report shows that 3,792 children and teens were killed with guns in 1998—a 10 percent decline from the year before. The reduction is even more significant when compared to 1994: 2,000 fewer young people were killed by gunfire in 1998 than in 1994—a 35 percent decrease. Our combined efforts to reduce gun violence and save lives are indeed having an impact.

While these figures are encouraging, there is no question that gun violence is still far too prevalent in our Nation. Despite our progress, 10 young people are killed with guns every day in America. All of us must work together toward a solution. Parents must ensure that guns are stored safely to prevent accidental shootings. Schools and communities must give children positive alternatives to steer them away from guns and violence. Law enforcement must crack down on gun traffickers who supply young people with firearms and armed criminals who commit violence against our children. And the gun industry must responsibly design, distribute, and market its products to make sure that they do not fall into the wrong hands.

Congress has an important role to play as well by fully funding my $280 million national gun enforcement initiative and by passing the stalled commonsense gun safety legislation that can help keep guns out of the

hands of children and criminals. Working together, we can keep gun violence on the decline and the prospects for our children's future going up.

Statement on the Selection of Zell Miller To Be Senator From Georgia

July 24, 2000

Georgia Governor Roy Barnes has exercised great wisdom in selecting former Governor Zell Miller to fill the Senate seat of the late Paul Coverdell. Zell Miller will continue to demonstrate the same devotion to the citizens of Georgia and our Nation that was the hallmark of Senator Coverdell's Senate career. Having established himself as one of the greatest Governors in Georgia history, Zell returned to his first love, teaching college. He now comes to Washington out of a profound sense of duty to his Nation and the people of his State.

His commitment and accomplishments in education have rightly earned him the title, "the education Governor." I was so impressed with the HOPE scholarships he began in Georgia that I took the program national, giving millions of young people the opportunity to pursue their dream of a college education. Zell Miller has also been a leader in the areas of economic development, crime prevention, and social justice. In every job he has ever held—as a U.S. marine, college professor, Lieutenant Governor, and Governor—Zell Miller has put the interest of hard working families first. I believe he will be a great United States Senator, and I look forward to working with him.

Trilateral Statement: Middle East Peace Summit

July 25, 2000

Between July 11 and 24, under the auspices of President Clinton, Prime Minister Barak and Chairman Arafat met at Camp David in an effort to reach an agreement on permanent status. While they were not able to bridge the gaps and reach an agreement, their negotiations were unprecedented in both scope and detail. Building on the progress achieved at Camp David, the two leaders agreed on the following principles to guide their negotiations:

1) The two sides agreed that the aim of their negotiations is to put an end to decades of conflict and achieve a just and lasting peace.
2) The two sides commit themselves to continue their efforts to conclude an agreement on all permanent status issues as soon as possible.
3) Both sides agree that negotiations based on UN Security Council Resolutions 242 and 338 are the only way to achieve such an agreement and they undertake to create an environment for negotiations free from pressure, intimidation and threats of violence.
4) The two sides understand the importance of avoiding unilateral actions that prejudge the outcome of negotiations and that their differences will be resolved only by good faith negotiations.
5) Both sides agree that the United States remains a vital partner in the search for peace and will continue to consult closely with President Clinton and Secretary Albright in the period ahead.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this trilateral statement.

Remarks on Returning From Camp David, Maryland, and an Exchange With Reporters

July 25, 2000

Air France Concorde Tragedy

The President. First of all, let me say, like all of you, I just heard the news of the crash of the Concorde outside Paris, and I wanted to extend the deepest condolences of the American people to the families of those who were lost.