have to develop all new economic strategies. There are communities which basically don't have a diverse economic base today, where if they lose a base, for example, instead of a plant, that may have great difficulty in redesigning an economic strategy even though they may have the resource of the base right there that they can use. So my view is that there is no silver bullet here. You have to work on the workers, the companies, and the communities. And we've got to keep working on this.

I will say this: I think there is a lot of sympathy and understanding of these problems in the Congress. And I think that the mayors will be able to have some significant successes in the years ahead. If we can go on and pass this economic program, lock down our determination to bring the deficit down, and keep these interest rates down, then I think we'll be able to come back to the Congress on conversion issues and do quite well.

[*At this point, Mayor Juanita Crabb of Binghamton, NY, asked the President to meet with mayors and police chiefs to discuss community policing programs.*]

The President. I think that's a good idea, Mayor Crabb. I think the goal can be achieved, but it's important that we achieve it in a way that you feel is maximizing your ability to do a good job and that we do it in a way that achieves the ultimate objective, which is safer streets and more robust and hopeful communities. So I'd like to have the meeting with you and, obviously, representatives of the police chiefs.

There are three or four different avenues that we can pursue to get to our ultimate goal of having 100,000 more police officers. And we really need to talk about what's best for you, what works best, how you can get folks with the maximum flexibility to pursue community policing strategies. I'm very interested in this. This is something that the Attorney General and I have had several conversations about already, and there are a lot of people in the White House itself working hard on this. I think we ought to get our group together and meet with your group and just talk it out, and we can develop a coordinated 4-year plan to get the job done. I'm anxious to do it. It's one thing we can do that will literally change the lives of most Americans who live in the communities affected by it. And we need to continue to work on it until we get the job done.

[*At this point, Mayor Althaus thanked the President and reaffirmed the mayors' support for him.*]

The President. Thank you, Mayor. Goodbye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:50 a.m. from Room 459 of the Old Executive Office Building.

Telephone Conversation With the Crew of the Space Shuttle *Endeavour* and an Exchange With Reporters

June 22, 1993

The President. Can you hear me?

Mission Commander Ronald Grabe. Mr. President, I believe we hear you loud, but slightly broken up.

The President. Well, we can hear you, and we are looking at you. And you all look wonderful.

Commander Grabe. Well, you're loud and clear now, Mr. President. That's much better.

The President. We want to congratulate you on a spectacular launch and on looking so happy. The American people are very reassured watching you on television now.

Commander Grabe. Well, thank you sir. It's early in the mission, but we're very excited about the mission. It's certainly a multifaceted one, and it really does show the versatility of the space shuttle. We're doing a little bit of everything on this flight.

The President. I know. I understand one of the things you're doing is chasing down the EURECA satellite that was put up by the shuttle last July. And I'm especially pleased about that because it shows what we can do in the way of international cooperation as well as science. And I want to congratulate you on that and wish you well.

Astronaut Janice Voss. Thank you very much, Mr. President. We've been working very hard for about a year training for this rendezvous and retrieval. And we've had a lot of fantastic support, both in our own

country in our own ground support team and the international team all over in Europe, and we're looking forward to bringing back great science in EURECA to the Europeans.

The President. We're looking forward to that, too. I also understand that David and Jeff will be outside the shuttle practicing for the repair of the Hubbell telescope and for the future assembly of the space station. And I thought that maybe one of them or both would like to comment on it so people can get a good look at you now, and when they see you outside in your suits they'll know who they're seeing.

Astronaut Jeff Wisoff. Well, Mr. President, we're looking very forward to the space walk. We feel proud to be able to represent America. And we're very happy of your support of the space station. We think it represents the best of America and their pioneering spirit. And the NASA team has done a really great job of preparing us for our flight. And I think both Dave and I just can't wait to get there.

The President. Well, we're excited about it. And while you're up there, we're going to be down here trying to support the space program and the space station. As you know, we had a very distinguished commission looking at the whole space station project. They recommended some redesign and some management changes at NASA. But I think this should give us a great deal of credibility. We've got some important votes coming up in the Congress in the next 2 days. While you're up there, we're going to be down here voting on this project. And I very much hope that we can prevail, and I think, frankly, your success and your work will help us to prevail. You're doing as much up there to help us win the votes down here as anyone, and I thank you for that.

Commander Grabe. Well, Mr. President, we're very gratified by your support of the space station. We certainly all consider it to be an immensely important project in continuing our leadership in science and technology.

The President. Thank you. Let me just say one last thing about something that's very important to me. I understand that later in the mission Janice and Brian are going to be talking with schoolchildren around the world. And you may know that my daughter is a big fan of the space program. She's off at summer language camp now. But I want to just tell you how much I appreciate the fact that you're making an international education project out of this mission. That's very important to me.

Astronaut Brian Duffy. Mr. President, we find that using amateur radio is an excellent way of communicating with children all around the world, and we're also able to excite them by using space and science. In letting them see space and science in action, we're able to excite them and hope they'll study harder.

The President. You have no idea. You may be on this mission creating thousands of scientists for the future just by the power of your example and by this direct communication. I think sometimes we underestimate the impact that human contact in an enormously impressive setting like this can have on children all across the world, not only those with whom you'll talk but millions of others who will just see it and know that it happened.

I want to thank all of you for the wonderful job you've done. We're very proud of you, and we're very proud of all the NASA folks down here who are supporting you. I want to encourage you and say again that I'm behind you, this administration is behind you, and I think the American people are behind you.

Astronaut David Low. Mr. President, once again, we thank you very much for your support. It's a real pleasure to be up here at your service.

The President. Thank you. Let's hear from the last astronaut there.

Astronaut Nancy Sherlock. I just wanted to add my thanks for your support. We all feel that the space program has done a tremendous amount for this country, both in promoting inside the country science education and also with the international partners. And it means a lot to us to know that that support still is around and that we're going to have a strong space program in the future.

The President. I'm committed to that. The American people, in watching you today, can see one area of human endeavor in which

we are indisputably continuing to lead the world and bringing other countries into partnership. And both leadership in technology and science and partnership with other countries, those are the keys to our future as a people, to our standard of living, to our quality of life, as well as to our ability to continue the American tradition of exploring frontiers. And I'm very proud of you, and I wish you well. And we can't wait until you get home safe and sound. But have a great time up there, and learn a lot, and we'll all learn from you.

Good luck, and God bless you all.

[*At this point, the telephone conversation ended.*]

Gays in the Military

Q. Mr. President, there's apparently a memo circulating over at the Pentagon suggesting that gays should be allowed to serve in the military if they simply don't advertise their status. Is that what you're likely to recommend?

The President. I think I should wait until I get the report from the Pentagon. I have not received the report. I talked to Secretary Aspin very briefly just a couple of days ago and asked him to proceed with this and let me know as soon as possible. I think the American people in the military are certainly ready for a resolution. But I can't comment on the specifics until I see it.

Q. Does that sound like a good solution to you?

The President. I want to see what the details are. There's been a lot of very helpful comment I think on this whole issue, finally, in the last few weeks. Senator Dole was very helpful in what he said. I thought some of the people who testified, interestingly enough, on both sides of the issue in the last set of hearings really tried to shed more light than heat, tried to bring down the emotionalism in the debate and get people to look at the facts. So I think we're ready to resolve this and get it behind us. And I hope that it will happen soon. But I don't want to comment specifically until I get a specific recommendation.

Q. But you haven't changed your mind, have you?

The President. Absolutely not. And I don't see this as a liberal-conservative issue. I mean, you've got a core who was in the Reagan administration supporting the idea that there has to be some provisions for people who don't do anything wrong but who are homosexuals serving in the service. You've got Barry Goldwater, you've got a lot of people who served with great distinction in the military who are now in the Congress taking the same position. So I think we're coming toward agreement on it, and I'm hopeful. But I'd like to see it resolved soon.

Henry Leon Ritzenthaler

Q. Sir, have you spoken to this fellow who claims to be your brother—half-brother?

The President. No. I left word on his answering service in California yesterday. I didn't know he was in the air. And I also left word in New York. And I'd like to talk to him, and then I'll have a brief statement about it. But I think I should—I'd like to try one more day to talk to him.

Q. I think he's afraid to call you.

The President. Well, I hope not; I mean, we left word that it would be fine for him to call.

Q. He's showed some reticence.

The President. He's been, I think, very appealing and humble the way he's handled this whole thing. I've been impressed.

Pat Nixon

Q. Any thoughts on the death of Pat Nixon?

The President. Well, I'm very sad, and I intend to try to speak with President Nixon today. I talked with him a couple of times in the last month, once when he was at the hospital and once when he had just come from the hospital in the last month or so, to ask his advice about various things. You know, they had a very long and very close marriage. And this must be a very difficult time for him. I think the American people really appreciate the dignity with which she served as First Lady. And I hope and believe that the Nixon family has the thoughts and prayers of all the American people today.

Q. Is Panetta going to tell us anything we don't know? [*Laughter*]

The President. Well, that's not so much a condemnation of me as a compliment to

you. You know everything already. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. The exchange portion of this item could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Statement on the Death of Pat Nixon

June 22, 1993

The Nation is deeply saddened today by the loss of former First Lady Pat Nixon.

Patricia Ryan Nixon was a quiet pioneer whose concern for family and country will leave a lasting mark on history. Mrs. Nixon personified a deep reverence for the cherished American traditions of community service, voluntarism, and personal responsibility to one another.

As First Lady, she was indeed a lady of ''firsts.'' She was the first First Lady to represent the President of the United States on an official overseas visit. She was the first incumbent First Lady to publicly support the equal rights amendment. And she was an early advocate of promoting a woman to the U.S. Supreme Court.

While always dignified and gracious, Mrs. Nixon was also a passionate believer in volunteer service and the importance of Americans helping one another. The appearance of the White House today and its accessibility to visitors at special times each year owe themselves in large degree to her generous and creative efforts. During her first Thanksgiving as First Lady she invited 225 senior citizens from area nursing homes to the White House for a special meal. She invited hundreds of families to nondenominational Sunday services in the East Room. And she offered the White House as a meeting place for volunteer organizations dedicated to solving community problems.

Mrs. Nixon, a mother of two, was also a loyal and steadfast believer in family. She traveled extensively with her husband across the Nation and abroad and was widely praised for her diplomatic gestures overseas. As she said in 1971, ''We've always been a team.'' We are heartened that former President Nixon and Mrs. Nixon were able to celebrate their 53d wedding anniversary yesterday. Our thoughts are with Mrs. Nixon's family today as we remember her many accomplishments and contributions to the Nation.

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's Task Force on National Health Care Reform

June 22, 1993

The United States Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia ruled today that the President's Task Force on Health Care Reform, chaired by First Lady Hillary Rodham Clinton, was not subject to the Federal Advisory Committee Act. The Court of Appeals decision confirms that the task force operated in full compliance with the law.

In reversing the United States district court on this issue, the court of appeals held that Mrs. Clinton is a ''full-time officer or employee of the Government'' for purposes of the advisory committee act. The court of appeals decision means that the advisory committee act's requirements for open meetings and production of documents did not apply to the task force.

The President announced the creation of the health care task force, as well as interdepartmental working groups, on January 25, 1993. The task force held over 20 meetings in April and May and has presented health care reform proposals and options to the President. The President is now in the process of reviewing those proposals and options and will be preparing a final proposal for delivery to Congress.

The task force terminated on May 30, 1993. There are no plans to reconvene the task force.

White House Statement on the Posthumous Award of the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Arthur Ashe

June 22, 1993

The President awarded a posthumous Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Nation's highest civilian honor, to tennis great Arthur Ashe at the National Sports Awards ceremony at Constitution Hall Sunday night.