more to say as the days go by. But we should know more in a week about what the trend lines are going to be and what's going to happen to the price of oil over the next few months.

Congressional Subpoenas

Q. Mr. President, did the White House deny congressional committees access to E-mails it subpoenaed?

The President. I believe that we have complied with every request, and there have been thousands. If the American people knew how much of their money we had to spend complying with requests for paper and E-mails, they might be quite amazed. But we certainly have done our best to do that. There has never been an intentional effort to do that, and I think that we are in full compliance. I believe we are. That's what Mr. Podesta told me right before we came out.

Internet Security

Q. Would you entertain one last question, sir? We've always heard for the last 4 or 5 years that it was going to take an electronic Pearl Harbor—many of the people around this table I've interviewed over the last 4 or 5 years, and they've agreed that's the kind of impact we would need for everybody to play together and work together. Is that what happened last week?

The President. Well, I hope not. [*Laughter*] I think it was an alarm. I don't think it was Pearl Harbor. We lost our Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor; I don't think the analogous loss was that great. But I think it——

Q. Was it of concern?

The President. Look, it's a source of concern, but I don't think we should leave here with this vast sense of insecurity. We ought to leave here with a sense of confidence that this is a challenge that was entirely predictable. It's part of the price of the success of the Internet, and we're all determined to work together to meet it. And so, yes, we got an alarm, but I wouldn't say—I wouldn't analogize it to Pearl Harbor.

We're all here. We're going to figure out what to do. But you need to let us work now.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:57 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Richard A. Clarke, Special Assistant to the President and National Coordinator for Transnational Threats, National Security Council. The President also referred to LIHEAP, the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Peter Solvik. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Actions on Digital Computer Exports

February 15, 2000

Dear _____:

In accordance with the provisions of section 1211(d) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998 (Public Law 105–85) (the "Act"), I hereby notify you of my decision to establish a new level for the notification procedure for digital computers set forth in section 1211(a) of the Act. The new level will be 12,500 millions of theoretical operations per second (MTOPS). In accordance with the provisions of section 1211(e), I hereby notify you of my decision to remove Romania from the list of countries covered under section 1211(b). I have taken this action based on the recommendation of the Departments of Defense, Commerce, State, and Energy. The enclosed report provides the rationale supporting these decisions and fulfills the requirements of sections 1211(d) and (e) of the Act.

Section 1211(d) provides that any adjustment to the control level described in section 1211(a) cannot take effect until 180 days after receipt of this report by the Congress. Section 1211(e) provides that any deletion of a country from the Tier 3 group cannot take effect until 120 days after the Congress is notified. Given the rapid pace of technological change in the information technology industry, these time periods are too lengthy. I hope that we can work together to reduce both notification periods to 30 days. Such changes will permit implementation of my current decision and future changes in a more timely fashion.

I have directed the Secretary of Commerce to adjust the level at which an individual license is required for computer exports to Tier 3 countries. For sales to military entities, the level will be raised from 6,500 MTOPS to 12,500 MTOPS. For sales to civilian end users, the new level will be raised from 12,300 MTOPS to 20,000 MTOPS. I have also directed the Secretary of Commerce to adjust the level at which an individual license is required for computer exports to Tier 2 countries from 20,000 MTOPS to 33,000 MTOPS. Given anticipated significant increases in microprocessor performance in the near term, the Secretaries of Commerce and Defense will review these levels, as well as the level described in section 1211(a), by April 2000, to determine if further adjustments are necessary at that time.

The aforementioned adjustments will take place immediately, with the exception of the change to the individual licensing level for military end users in Tier 3, which will coincide with the change for the notification provisions of the Act, section 1211(a). Both changes will become effective at the end of the 180-day notification period, unless the Congress provides for a shorter period.

I look forward to working cooperatively with the Congress on these issues.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to John W. Warner, chairman, and Carl Levin, ranking member, Senate Committee on Armed Services; Phil Gramm, chairman, and Paul S. Sarbanes, ranking member, Senate Committee on Banking, Housing, and Urban Affairs; Floyd Spence, chairman, and Ike Skelton, ranking member, House Committee on Armed Services; and Benjamin A. Gilman, chairman, and Sam Gejdenson, ranking member, House Committee on International Relations. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 16.

The President's News Conference

February 16, 2000

The President. Good afternoon. I would like to cover a couple of topics in an opening statement, and then I will take your questions.

First, let me say that we all know that we're in the midst of the longest and strongest economic expansion in our history, with nearly 21 million new jobs, unemployment at 4 percent, and solid income growth across all income groups.

Americans in public service and in the private sector must remember that our success in promoting peace and prosperity is not the result of complacency but of our common commitment to dynamic action rooted in enduring values. If we want to continue to enjoy success, we must continue our commitment to dynamic action.

There is important work to be done in America this year, and in Washington, DC, this year. First, we must stay on the path of fiscal discipline that got us to this point. If we stay on that path, we can make America, in just 13 years, debt-free for the first time since 1835. Then we can use the benefits of debt reduction to preserve two of the most important guarantees we have made to the American people, Social Security and Medicare, something that will be a challenge as we see the number of people over 65 double in the next 30 years with the retirement of the baby boom generation.

Specifically, we can make a bipartisan downpayment on Social Security reform by crediting the interest savings from debt reduction to the Social Security Trust Fund to keep it strong and sound for 50 years, beyond the lifespan of all but the most fortunate of the baby boom generation. As a first step toward a comprehensive solution, I believe we should do something I called for in my 1999 State of the Union Address, to end the earnings limit for Social Security retirees between the ages of 65 and 69.

To strengthen and modernize Medicare, I propose to implement important reforms and to dedicate more than half the non-Social Security surplus to Medicare, over $400 billion, to keep it solvent for another decade, past 2025, and to add a voluntary prescription drug benefit. I'm pleased Congress is beginning to take up this issue, and I ask them to move quickly and to resist the temptation to spend large portions of the surplus before