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"Rodney Slater has been one of my most trusted advisers for many years and played a major role in getting me to this position," said the President. "Rodney, Michael Huerta, and Aida Alvarez are the kind of innovative leaders that we need in public service. I am very pleased that they and the people chosen by Secretaries Pena, O'Leary, and Shalala are joining me here in Washington."

NOTE: Biographies were made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Remarks in a Telephone Conversation With Senators George Mitchell and Jim Sasser and an Exchange With Reporters

March 25, 1993

Russia

Q. Does the situation now appear to have eased in Russia to you, Mr. President?

The Vice President. I don't think this is a press conference.

The President. I don't know. I hope so.

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

Senator Mitchell. Hello?

The President. Senator?

Senator Mitchell. Yes.

The President. How are you doing?

Senator Mitchell. We're doing fine. How are you doing?

The President. Well, I'm doing a lot better, thanks to you.

Senator Mitchell. No, thanks to Jim Sasser, who is sitting right here with me and on the line, too.

Senator Sasser. Hey, Mr. President, I'm on this party line, also.

The President. Hello, Senator Sasser.

Senator Sasser. How are you doing? We're doing terrific here.

The President. The Vice President's here with me, and we just wanted to thank you for the work you've done. This is a great, great day.

Senator Sasser. It certainly is. And we want to thank you, I do, particularly, for the help that you gave us in moving this resolution through the committee and off the floor. We had 56 amendments, and the truth is that not a single number changed in that budget resolution on any of those amendments. And we couldn't have done it without your help.

The President. Well, we were glad to do it. I believe, and I think the American people believe, that this is really an historic moment. Finally, we've done something to break the gridlock and to bring the deficit down and to create new jobs through investment. It's a remarkable achievement. And I know we've got a lot of work still to do, but the fact that the Senate and the House have both passed these budget resolutions, it's really astonishing this early. And I'm just amazed, because we all know what a hard road you had to hoe. I can't tell you how much I admire you and how grateful I am to both of you.

Senator Sasser. You're very kind to say that, and I very much appreciate it. I might say that this is the earliest time in my memory—the majority leader may know another time—but this is the earliest time in my memory that we passed a budget resolution here in the Senate. And we're proud of that and proud of your help on getting it done.

And tell the Vice President we sure appreciate him coming over here and giving us encouragement.

The Vice President. Well, I'm on the line, Jim, and thank you very much. You did a fantastic job. George, I think Jim is right. This is the earliest in history that a new budget has passed. And I've been hearing from a lot of people about how effective you all were in the caucus meeting in the conference a couple of days ago. The unity among Democratic Senators has been just remarkable and has made this whole thing possible. So, Mr. Leader, congratulations to you, and to you, Jim.

Senator Mitchell. Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President. We really do appreciate your help, not just your physical presence but the leadership you gave in talking to Democratic Senators. I know many of them were impressed

with the fact that you took the time to come up here, meet with them, talk with them, express support for and explain the President's position. I think that was extremely helpful in getting that kind of unity. So we're very grateful to both of you.

And now, of course, there's no rest for the weary. I'll have a list of people for you to call on the supplemental——

The Vice President. I'm ready.

The President. We're ready to go. Give us our next assignment.

Senator Mitchell. Well, that's it. We've already started on it, and we'll be in touch with you on that later today.

The President. Thank you very much, George.

Senator Mitchell. Thank you. Bye, Mr. President.

[*At this point, the telephone conversation ended, and the President took questions from reporters.*]

Stimulus Package

Q. Do you feel you now have the votes on the stimulus package, Mr. President?

The President. Well, I haven't gotten a late count, but I feel good about it. We worked hard on it, and I feel good about it.

Q. What does it do to your package if Breaux and Boren were to prevail? Is that a killer amendment?

The President. All I can tell you is, we're going to try to pass it. Let's just see what happens. I feel pretty good about it. We're working hard

Russia

Q. Mr. President—contact of Boris Yeltsin today? Have you heard anything?

The President. No. I would say I've gotten reports and I've spent about, oh, I don't know, an hour and half on it this morning, working, trying to get ready for Vancouver and trying to make sure we know what's going on. But I don't have anything to add to what you already know.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:22 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With Dorsey High School Students

March 25, 1993

Ukraine

Q. Mr. President, did anything come out of your meeting with the Ukrainian Foreign Minister as far as the START Treaty?

The President. I just told him how important it was to us, that I realize that there was some opposition at home in Ukraine because of uncertainty in Russia, but we had to have them sign on. And I would encourage them to go ahead and do it, while I realize there are some implementation issues that we would have to work with them on. And I was glad to work with him on that but that the United States wanted very much to be close to the Ukraine. We have a big stake in their success, and we've got a lot of commercial potential there and they here, as well as a lot of ties. We have a lot of Ukrainian-Americans, as you know.

But I think this START Treaty is a precondition to a long-term, successful relationship. And I think they should go into the nonproliferation regime and give up nuclear weapons. We don't need any more nuclear states. The United States is trying to reduce our nuclear arsenals, and we need to continue to push in that direction.

It was a very good meeting. And I think over the long run, the United States will have a good relationship with Ukraine if we get the START issue resolved.

Q. Mr. President, did he say the crisis in Moscow is having repercussions back home for him?

The President. Well, he said it was adding to a sense of uncertainty in this country, which you would expect it would. I mean, they're right next door there. But I hope, of course, as every day goes by there seems to be an attempt by President Yeltsin and others, frankly, to confine the dimensions of the process, to regularize it