

the administration. And this year, we're at a billion. So, we look at it as a billion more than some might have recommended and proposed, and you look at it as half a billion less.

The way the appropriations process works, as you know, these things are still subject to adjustment within the caps. And so if this goes up 500, something else has to go down 500. This is not one that we would, I think it's fair to say, fight and die over. We thought a billion was a lot more than zero. I can understand why you think it's less than 1.5 billion.

#### *Medicaid Waivers*

*Governor Romer.* I want to thank the President for his willingness to exchange these views with us on such a candid level. And I appreciate his welcome to the White House that he has consistently extended to us as Governors.

And even more importantly, I appreciate the fact that we've been able to work together in a true federalism partnership which has made it possible for us to be more productive.

Some of the questions today even reflected the way in which we've been able to work out differences. The one about the Medicaid settlement was a very serious problem to a number of us. We worked together through the months of October

and November in a fashion which included they-said-it-couldn't-be-done type activity. And the Congress, because the President had worked so arduously with us toward reconciling those differences, agreed. And we were able to stabilize the situation which was highly volatile for our own budgets and for the Federal budgeting process as well.

So, Mr. President, thank you very much for your special welcome to us, and your kindness to us, your cooperation with us, and your willingness to exchange these views with us. We're deeply grateful to you.

*The President.* Listen, I enjoyed having you. I see John Sununu. I think those of you, as we tried to get through that Medicaid problem, you had an inside voice here. [Laughter] And I really think he deserves credit for the fact we were able to reach agreement that brought some relief and, I wouldn't say joy, but at least less concern to the Governors around the table. I'm very grateful to him and Dick also. But it required some skill up on the Hill, too, which he demonstrated.

But in any event, thank you all very much. And I appreciate the spirit of this visit, and look forward to doing this again. Thank you very much.

*Note: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the East Room at the White House.*

## Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Ronald Venetiaan of Suriname

*February 3, 1992*

#### *Japan-U.S. Relations*

*Q.* Any defense of American workers in response to what Mr. Miyazawa said?

*The President.* Just go by what Marlin Fitzwater told you guys when you asked the same question about 6 hours ago. [Laughter]

*Q.* Have you seen the—

*The President.* Strong support. I just heard what Marlin said, and I back it 100 percent. I also saw the correction by Mr. Miyazawa, I'm pleased to say. So, that was

fine.

*Q.* Do you accept that, sir, as an apology?

*The President.* I accept it for what it was, a very clear statement from a good man, a man who has said clearly that they're going to live up to their commitments, and I support him for that. And we had a very good visit. So, you know, he's gone out of his way to make clear that he was not denouncing all American workers. And I strongly support them and continue to say so. We can compete with anybody in the world if we're

*Feb. 3 / Administration of George Bush, 1992*

given access. Marlin summed up our position very well.

*Note: The exchange began at 4:31 p.m. in the Oval Office. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa of Japan.*

## Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on the President's Meeting With President Ronald Venetiaan of Suriname

*February 3, 1992*

The President met today with President Ronald Venetiaan of the Republic of Suriname.

The President expressed his satisfaction at the success of Suriname's elections and orderly transition to democratic civilian government following the military coup in December of 1990. He stressed the United States deep commitment to fostering democratic civilian rule throughout the hemisphere and emphasized that President Venetiaan enjoys our full support for his efforts to strengthen democratic institutions, undertake economic reform, and curb narcotics trafficking.

The two Presidents discussed the Surinamese Government's plans for economic

reform and adjustment. The President pointed out that effective action in this area will enhance Suriname's ability to stimulate private investment and trade, which are the key to long-term growth.

The two Presidents also discussed the threat to Suriname of increased narcotics trafficking, and the President pledged our support for Suriname's counternarcotics efforts.

President Venetiaan is making his first visit to the United States since his inauguration in September 1991. He entered office as a result of elections held in May 1991 with the participation of observers from the Organization of American States.

## Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on United States Government Activities in the United Nations

*February 3, 1992*

*To the Congress of the United States:*

I am pleased to transmit herewith a report of the activities of the United States Government in the United Nations and its affiliated agencies during the calendar year 1990, the second year of my Administration. The report is required by the United Na-

tions Participation Act (Public Law 264, 79th Congress; 22 U.S.C. 287b).

GEORGE BUSH

The White House,  
February 3, 1992.