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*Q.* This is going to take care of 90 million people without health care?

*The President.* It will take care of $40 billion. No, our plan takes care of the 90 million by giving—90 million? Come on, that's too high a figure.

*Q.* That's what they're saying.

*The President.* No, no. That's way high. It will take care of it through giving everybody access to health care.

*Presidential Primaries*

*Q.* Mr. President, the Democrats are now down to three. You've got two or three on your side. How do you feel about how it's shaping up?

*The President.* Let the process work. I thought Saturday was fantastic, and I think we'll have a good day tomorrow. Just keep your sights set on the ball; don't get irritated, be pleasant. I've been through the other side of that drill over a period of years, so I don't intend to react. Act, not react.

*Q.* So you're changing your modus operandi?

*The President.* Well, I have over the last 3 or 4 years, yes. [*Laughter*] My modus operandi is to be pleasant with you people when you ask me irritating questions. And that isn't always easy. But I think you'll have to give me good marks for having done that, and I don't plan changing now.

*Q.* Well, you say you're willing to do anything you have to do to win.

*The President.* But I think being pleasant is the way to do it and keeping your sights set on the major issues facing this country, challenging the Congress to move.

And incidentally, I get credit for a full press conference here because I was only going to make one statement. Making the 231st since I've been President. Ready access.

*Q.* But you haven't had any lately.

*The President.* No, I know it. Ask Marlin why.

*Q.* Mr. President, Michael Dukakis didn't respond, and look what happened to him.

*The President.* Well, look at the results of the election so far. Anytime you beat somebody by 40 points, that used to be considered a landslide. Now we've changed the—I don't know what different ground rules are being used, but I think it's fair in my own defense to say 40 points, 40-point victory over the nearest competitor is a pretty good size win. I will settle for that in the fall over the Democratic candidate.

*Q.* Buchanan is hoping to upset you in Michigan, Mr. President, a week from now.

*Q.* Is Pat Buchanan upsetting your agenda, Mr. President?

*The President.* No way. What?

*Q.* Michigan is where Buchanan wants to beat you.

*Q.* Is Pat Buchanan upsetting your agenda?

*The President.* We've spelled out our agenda over the last 3 years. What we want to do is get this country's economy moving and preserve and strengthen world peace. And I think we'll do it, plus better education, fighting against crime by trying to get some reasonable crime bill passed, winning the fight against drugs where we've made a good start. There are so many issues, but they're all obscured by the noise of the campaign. But that will be in focus in the fall; you watch.

*Note: The President spoke at 7:58 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.*

## Remarks to the National League of Cities

*March 9, 1992*

Thank you very much. Glenda, thank you so much for that kind introduction, and to all of you. And may I salute the Members of Congress that have been with us here. Let me say good morning to them, and please do what's right up on Capitol Hill. My greetings to all the special guests here at the head table; to Don Borut and Wallace

Stickney, who is with us.

Let me just say that I'm very pleased to join you today. I enjoyed, Glenda referred to it, I enjoyed speaking to you over the television hookup in December. It's much better face to face. And I hear that you have had a very energetic, very well attended series of meetings. And I salute your leadership, present leadership; and then, of course, an old former colleague of mine, or put it this way, a still young but former colleague of mine in the House of Representatives who will be your leader—what, starting next November, is it—Don Fraser.

In January, as Glenda said, I had a follow-up meeting with 10 of your members. And like your organization as a whole, they represented a broad cross section of urban America's leadership: Republicans and Democrats, liberals, conservatives, officials from large and small and midsize cities.

And of course, we're all concerned, all of us here, about the big issues, jobs and family and world peace. And even so, I was struck at this meeting by the unanimity of the message that your members wanted to deliver. It can't be repeated often enough in Washington or any State capitol or any city hall. Your message was simply this: The enormous problems facing cities today, from infant mortality to high dropout rates to runaway crime, are partly, at least, symptoms of one larger problem, the deterioration of the American family.

Now, I understand the breadth of the issues that you deal with daily, poverty to potholes to property taxes. And in addressing myself to this one subject, I don't want you to think that we are less concerned about these enormous problems you face every day. But this morning, I would like to discuss that same serious issue that you all raised with me, the family. The restoration of the American family is at the heart of much of what we have done these last 3 years. Leaving aside for a moment the enormous costs, the wasted human resources or the billions spent to repair the damage of broken homes, family breakdown ultimately endangers our position in a world increasingly driven by economic competition.

Certainly, the integrity of family is critical on its own merit. As Barbara Bush, my favorite philosopher, says, "What goes on at the White House is not nearly as important as what goes on in your house." And there's a lot of truth in that. But particularly at a time when our efforts must focus on economic growth, the family's disintegration endangers, for all of us, our ability to create and to preserve jobs, and to create an economy open to participation by all our citizens.

So we must start with a clear-eyed look at what is really happening to the family in American communities today, not just in poor urban neighborhoods but all across America. And then we've got to look inside ourselves, to establish the principles that will shape our approach. And then we must act.

The urgency is clear. We all know the statistics, perhaps you know them better than most Americans, the dreary drumbeat that tells of family breakdown. Today, one out of every four American children is born out of wedlock; in some areas the illegitimacy rate tops 80 percent. A quarter of our children grow up in households headed by a single parent. More than 2 million are called latch-key kids, who come home from school each afternoon to an empty house. And a large number of our children grow up without the love of parents at all, with nobody knowing their name.

We know from experience the consequences of family decline. Neglected children are more susceptible to the lure of crime and drugs; they're more likely to have poor health, drop out of school early, more likely to lead a life without hope. Each of you is in a position to know the human costs that these statistics can only dimly sketch. You know, as I do, that for every blip on a chart or dot on a graph, there is a human story to tell, and too often the story is a tragedy.

About 10 days ago, I was in Bexar County, Texas, in San Antonio, meeting with Latin American leaders to intensify our war on drugs. And while there, I saw a front-page story in the San Antonio Light. A cabdriver had been murdered last September, another act of random, selfless violence, and his murderer had just been found guilty. But what was truly horrifying,

what would horrify any American, was this: The murderer was a 12-year-old boy. And as the deputies took the boy from the courtroom, according to the newspaper story, they had trouble fitting him with shackles and handcuffs, so slender were his wrists. This youngster was 4 feet tall, not yet a teenager but now a convicted murderer.

The drumbeat continues: two teenagers shot dead in a New York public school, an LSD ring busted up in an affluent northern Virginia suburb, or the harrowing stories of runaway kids and the horrors that befall them.

I know that almost all of you could tell stories equally distressing, stories from your neighborhoods and your cities where the unthinkable has become the commonplace. I am sure that many of you here took office with high confidence in the power to solve these problems, only to discover, sooner rather than later, I suspect, that they were far more stubborn than we could imagine. Let's not forget that the trials our citizens face each and every day were generations in the making. We can't expect change overnight. But make no mistake: Change will come because change simply must come.

Let's face it. We can only change things if we work in common purpose. We must call a cease-fire in the war of words that too often consumes us. Casting blame brings no solutions, nor will questioning each other's motives. We have got to focus every ounce of our energy to turn back this assault upon the American family and act as one Nation to defend and strengthen it. As public servants, we must never forget that the best department of HHS, of health and human services, is, indeed, the family. In restoring the family, we restore to coming generations the values, the sense of right and wrong, the will and confidence to succeed that only a family can provide a child. And in doing this, we will reinvigorate our cities and our communities as well.

We needn't look far for principles to guide us. There are old home truths: Rely on what works; discard what doesn't. Never be afraid to innovate. Remember that Government closest to the people responds best to the needs of the people. And let's not forget this as a guiding principle: If people are to be responsible, they must be given responsibility.

The Government's first duty is like that of the physician: Do no harm. But the fact is, with the best of intentions, many past Government policies have worked against the institution of the family, undermined young people's desire to marry and stay married, to provide for their children, to plan for their future. As a practical matter, doing no harm means in part that we ensure parents retain the authority to make the big decisions for their families. This doesn't absolve parents of responsibility; it's just the opposite.

For example, even if we're able to reform our education system—and I am determined that the Federal Government assist all of you in every way in revolutionizing the education system—but even if we are, parents must still read to their children. The point is that Government harms the family when it restricts its autonomy or usurps the authority of responsible parents.

Let me give you another example. Those of us in Government can never plausibly claim to fight for families if we insist that Government, not parents, must choose who cares for their children. So 2 years ago our administration waged a fight in Congress over this very issue, and we won. We kept choice of child care out of the hands of Government and put it where it belongs, in the hands of parents.

And now we're engaged in a similar fight over whether parents should have the right to choose their children's schools. We know the benefits of competition; it is the linchpin of American prosperity. And competition among schools will be the linchpin of educational excellence, too. From Minnesota to Milwaukee to east Harlem, school choice works.

But you see, it's important for other reasons: It restores authority and responsibility to parents. Just as it makes our schools accountable, it also makes parents accountable for the decisions they make. Not only in child care and school choice but in other areas as well, a key to healing the American family will be restoring parental authority and accountability.

Another example, the initiative that we

call HOPE, H–O–P–E. It took more than a year to get that program through Congress and another year to get even partial funding for it. But HOPE will be crucial to our success by offering low-income families a greater opportunity to own their own homes. HOPE is based on a simple principle: To survive, people need the intangible values of dignity and self-respect. Government can't provide those, but homeownership can, an education can, a job can, and being part of a family can.

The Federal Government has a positive role in preserving the family, and we welcome that role. It's guided the decisions that we make every single day. Since 1989, for example, we have more than doubled the funding for the program that I bet everybody in this room supports, Head Start, a program that brings children and parents into the classroom, strengthens family ties, and reinforces parental responsibility. For the first time in the program's history, we can support now Head Start for all eligible 4-year-old children whose parents choose to have them participate.

There are many other examples. We've increased the earned income tax credit for low-income families. And since '89, we've increased the funding for WIC, the supplementary food program for women, infants, and children, by 47 percent to $2.8 billion next year. We've increased other nutritional programs by similar percentages. And this year Federal support for childhood immunization grants will top $340 million, an increase of 18 percent over last year's level. So all told, funding for children's programs, from nutrition and education to foster care and child immunization, has increased 66 percent since we took office.

But look, we will never measure, and I think you all would be the first to agree with this, we would never measure our compassion simply in dollars spent. We will measure it by results. The test will be the health and happiness of our children and, most important of all, the sense of well-being and self-reliance instilled by our families. Our administration has targeted funding to programs that efficiently fulfill Government's role in supporting families and keeping them together, programs that work for the family.

Yet, at the same time, we must face another fact. Government can sometimes be a burden as well as a boon. Over the past 40 years, the child tax exemption has lagged far behind the soaring costs of childrearing. And I have asked Congress to increase the exemption by $500 per child. For a family with four children, that's an increase of $2,000. And it's a crucial first step toward redressing the imbalance, and it's what we can afford to do right now.

And now I come to perhaps the most crucial matter of all, one that concerns you all. We must reform our Nation's welfare system. Americans are the most generous people on Earth, but they want to see and they are entitled to see some relationship between welfare and work. Welfare must never be what Franklin Delano Roosevelt warned it might become, "a subtle destroyer of the spirit." It is not meant to be a way of life or a family legacy passed from one generation to the next. Welfare can eat away at the ties that bind a family together.

And State and local governments are undertaking the brave work of reform: Learnfare in Wisconsin; REACH, Realizing Economic Achievement in New Jersey; Washington State's FIP, Family Independence Program. These are all demonstration projects that we support. And my administration is committed to reform, and we are acting now on waivers, to loosen up on waivers, to waive unnecessary redtape that impedes reform.

There's no hidden agenda here. This administration, the mayors, the State leaders who press for drastic reform of welfare aren't modern-day Scrooges chiseling one more dime out of some poor family. Democrat or Republican, California, New Jersey, Federal or State: In our heart of hearts, we really believe reforming the welfare system is the best way to serve people. Break this sorry cycle of despair. Give people real hope. And we're going to keep on trying to do just that because every single American deserves to believe in the American dream.

Today, with family as the center, I've highlighted the role of government, both positive and negative, because we're men and women of government. But let's never forget the work of private Americans dedi-

cating themselves to the voluntary service of others, who create an environment where families can flourish. Each is a Point of Light, offering service with no thought of reward, though the reward will be reaped by every single American.

And let me be very clear. When I talk about Points of Light, they are not a substitute for the good that government can do, but it's more this: We will simply not solve our most pressing problems without the dedication of those Points of Light, of those volunteers. And I urge all of you, when you return to your cities, to do all in your power to encourage these caring men and women, to make yours a community of light.

In my State of the Union Address, I announced that we would soon institute a commission on America's urban families. Your executive board or directors or whatever group it was—I've never been sure with whom I was dealing, but they were all big shots, believe me—[*laughter*]—came together. And their work will be one result of my meeting in January with some of your leaders.

And I have asked Governor Ashcroft of Missouri, a caring man, Annette Strauss, the former Mayor of Dallas, a very able woman who also cares deeply, to lead the commission and fulfill its mandate: To identify those government programs, at all levels, that weaken or strengthen urban families; to analyze ways to improve private efforts to strengthen families; and to recommend new policies to help families in our cities.

I am convinced that we can correct our mistakes, that we can learn from our failures and build on our successes. I do not exaggerate when I say that the future of America depends on our efforts. The family is the irreducible unit of comfort and love. And from families radiate neighborhoods, from neighborhoods come towns and cities, and their health determines the health of our country, for better or for worse. And like you, I am committed to making our health whole and to ensuring that our cities, as Theodore Parker said, "remain the fireplaces of America, radiating warmth and light against the darkness."

Thank you all very much for giving me this opportunity to visit with you today. And may God bless our great country. Thank you so much.

*Note: The President spoke at 11:36 a.m. at the Washington Hilton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Glenda E. Hood and Donald J. Borut, president and executive director of the National League of Cities; and Wallace E. Stickney, Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The Executive order of March 12 establishing the National Commission on America's Urban Families is listed in Appendix E at the end of this volume.*

## Letter to Congressional Leaders on Nuclear Cooperation With EURATOM

*March 9, 1992*

*Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)*

The United States has been engaged in nuclear cooperation with the European Community for many years. This cooperation was initiated under agreements that were concluded over 3 decades ago between the United States and the European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM) and that extend until December 31, 1995. Since the inception of this cooperation, the Community has adhered to all its obligations under those agreements.

The Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 1978 amended the Atomic Energy Act of 1954 to establish new nuclear export criteria, including a requirement that the United States has the right to consent to the reprocessing of fuel exported from the United States. Our present agreements for cooperation with EURATOM do not contain such a right. To avoid disrupting cooperation with EURATOM, a proviso was in-