

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With Democratic Congressional Leaders February 13, 1993

Economic Program

Q. Mr. President, what kind of concerns are you hearing from congressional leaders?

The President. I think they want me to give them a good, credible program, and one that will get the economy—

Space Program

Q. Will you be cutting the space station, Mr. President?

The President. Tune in Wednesday. Before I discuss any specifics—I support—I think you all know I've always been a big supporter of NASA and the space program and the technologies it can represent. I think that people who care about that will be pleased by the recommendations we make.

Somalia

Q. Will the troops be coming home from Somalia?

The Vice President. Thanks for coming to the photo op. [Laughter]

Q. Will the troops be coming home from Somalia, sir, by April?

The President. Well, I'm encouraged by what the Secretary-General said today. This does need to go from a U.S. mission from a U.N. mission. I never thought we could do it. Even though I think President Bush hoped we could, I never thought we could do it by the end of January. And I'm hopeful, by the timetable he has suggested today. And I'll do some work on that Monday.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:25 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

The President's Radio Address February 13, 1993

Good afternoon, my fellow Americans. On Wednesday night I will present my plan to generate jobs and increase the incomes of the American people. This morning I want to talk with you for a few moments about that program, its goals, and the thinking that went into it.

As I have traveled our country over the last year and a half, a single theme has emerged repeatedly from all of you in every region and from every walk of life. That theme is the need for change: bold, comprehensive change to reverse the trickle-down policies of the 1980's and restore the vitality of the American dream.

Over the last 12 years, while the middle class saw their tax burdens rise and their incomes go down, the wealthiest Americans, whose incomes went up, often by paperwork manipulation and moving jobs overseas, saw their taxes go down. Higher deficits came with lower taxes on the wealthy. And those deficits forced Government to cut back on essential services to

the middle class, the working poor, and the neediest Americans. Good families in embattled neighborhoods saw their children getting by with outdated school books, going to school in neighborhoods that were ever more dangerous, while the wealthiest Americans in protected communities watched their bankbooks grow. Our economy suffered through two grinding recessions, and our job-creating engine stalled. The status quo simply isn't working for working families anymore.

The experts say we're in a robust economic recovery. And to be fair, there are some good signs: our best companies doing better, people being able to refinance their homes, and consumer confidence on the upswing since the election.

But the jobs just aren't there yet. The unemployment rate has been over 7 percent for 14 months now, and we're 3 million jobs behind where we ordinarily would be in a real economic

recovery. That's why change is so important. And the risk of doing the same old thing is far higher than the cost of change. If we don't change, the American economy and the living standards of our broad middle class will continue to decline, and many of us and most of our children will not enjoy the standard of living that past Americans have.

Change is never easy. It requires us to forsake the old order and to embrace a new one. Change means asking everyone to pull his or her own weight for the common good. But change is our only choice.

Under my economic program, we will build an America where even the most privileged pay their fair share, not because we want to soak the rich but because we want to stop soaking the middle class and ask everybody to bear a fair share of the load; an America where the most impoverished move off welfare and go back to work; an America where middle class families who work hard and play by the rules are rewarded in their own lives and can pass on to their children a more prosperous future than they inherited from their parents; and yes, an America where Government is not immune from the sacrifices it asks of our people.

Just this week I cut the White House staff by 25 percent and saved \$10 million compared to the budgets of my predecessors. I've ordered further administrative cuts in Federal departments and agencies of \$9 billion over the next 4 years, with more to follow from tough and smart management.

I'm also ordering an investigation into the enormous cash bonuses paid to officials of the departing administration. In some cases it was done just minutes before I was sworn into office. While I deeply admire the dedicated members of our Federal services, we simply cannot have extravagant payments made to departing bureaucrats and political cronies at a time when most people are tightening their belts.

If Government is going to ask the American people to contribute, it must lead by example and learn to do more while spending less. That is a challenge I have embraced and one I will present to the Congress on Wednesday.

Next, we will take the battle to the special interests. We will demand that those who see

the Tax Code as a table game to be won rather than a social compact to be respected pay their fair share of taxes. I will keep my pledge to restore fairness to the Tax Code. We will raise taxes on the wealthiest individuals and companies in our society. That will be one of their contributions to create the high-skill, high-wage economy that we seek. And I will say to the drug companies, the insurance companies, and the others who profit from the status quo, they must join our cause to make comprehensive reforms in our medical care system. The time has come for all Americans to have affordable health care, a real chance at a healthy life.

In return for these contributions, we are determined to create long-term, good-paying private sector jobs. We will encourage the development of new technologies and find markets for them all across America and around the world. We will provide special incentives to new businesses and small businesses to create the jobs of the future. We will lower their costs of capital so they can expand and succeed. We will upgrade the skills of the long-term unemployed and the rest of our work force. And when military cutbacks hurt our enterprises, we'll help defense workers to find new careers and to continue productive lives.

That's what my plan is all about: a leaner, more efficient, more responsive Government; a ladder of contribution that demands the most from those who have the most; investment incentives to help businesses build for the future and create jobs for all Americans; education and training to prepare workers and students for new jobs in a new economy; a reformed medical system that restores peace of mind to family life; an America where every citizen has a right to a prosperous economy and a shared patriotic stake in the work to make it grow.

That is a program for economic change you have justly demanded. Now it's time for all Americans to join the cause and embrace the change. It is time to restore the American dream.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:06 p.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.