

Remarks on Receiving the Rotary International Award of Honor and an Exchange With Reporters

March 4, 1993

Award of Honor

Clifford Dochterman. Mr. President, as the former president of Rotary International, I have the occasion on several occasions to present an award called the Rotary International Award of Honor presented to selected heads of state. We've only presented this on about 12 occasions. This award is given for humanitarian service. And the service that you're giving for Rotary International's programs of support for immunization of children in the world, as well as our programs of humanitarian aid in Bosnia and Croatia, gives me the opportunity—if you would accept this award on behalf of 1,100,000 Rotarians of the world in 187 countries—it would be a great pleasure—to accept this award.

The President. Thank you for your good work, and thank you for the award. I appreciate that.

Mr. Dochterman. It has a ribbon there, but I'll not be so presumptuous to put it over your—

The President. Isn't it beautiful? Thank you.

Mr. Dochterman. This award has been presented on selected occasions on behalf of those who support humanitarian efforts throughout the world.

The President. I'm deeply honored.

World Trade Center Bombing

Q. Excuse me, Mr. President, can you tell us anything about the arrest and whether the American people can now believe that they are secure in that someone has been arrested?

The President. I can tell you that I was informed this morning about it. And the authorities are still working on a statement that I think will be issued to you later this afternoon. I think they'll be able to give you some more information later this afternoon.

Q. Now the suspect though is linked to terrorism, should Americans feel less secure about their safety?

The President. I think you should wait until the—I think, first of all, the American people should be very proud of the work done by the law enforcement authorities. They worked hard together. They worked aggressively. They worked without stopping until they made, I think, a very quick arrest. But I'd like for you to wait until the proper authorities have a chance to make their statement to you later this afternoon. And then tomorrow I will have a chance to make some more comments on it.

Q. Can we assume that it's terrorism?

The President. I don't think you should assume anything until you hear the statement today. I know that an arrest was made. I know who was arrested. I think that at the time I was informed this morning there were a lot of other questions we did not know the answers to. And they're trying to get as much information together as possible to give you later this afternoon.

NOTE: The presentation began at 3:07 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Exchange With Reporters Following a Meeting With Tilden Middle School Students

March 4, 1993

Health Care Task Force

Q. Mr. President, can you explain to us why your health care task force won't be open to the public?

The President. No working group of the Government before they have a proposal—that

would be like opening the White House at every staff meeting we have. We can't do that. I mean, they've got 400 people over there, working continuously on thousands of different issues. Nobody ever does that. We would never—we can't get anything done.