

the problem of the East Timor?

*The President.* I don't want to talk about it today. We have discussed it, and we may have more to say about it later.

*The Vice President.* I think just before your question Bishop Tutu was about to say something.

*Archbishop Tutu.* Well, I just want to say how deeply thrilled I am at the President's announcement, because I have been speaking with the Assistant Secretary of State and Assistant Secretary for Africa yesterday and said I couldn't understand how the United States could not recognize a government that was democratically elected. And they were very cagey in their responses. And I am really over the moon in a sense because I was going to raise this issue with the President in my capacity as President of the All Africa Conference of Churches in our appeal to the administration to reward democracy. And this is happening, and I am certain it will help the process in our continent where not all countries have had a good record on human rights. And I am very, very thrilled. If my complexion was different you would probably see better. [*Laughter*]

*Q.* [*Inaudible*—what message are you going to—the President about South Africa—the situation in South Africa today?

*Archbishop Tutu.* Well, I haven't yet spoken. I would have hoped we would do that and talk with you afterwards because, I mean, I don't think it is fair to say, I am going to say to the President—and I haven't said it yet.

*White House Travel Office*

*Q.* Mr. President, can we ask you if you feel you were fair in summarily dismissing some employees of this Government of long standing without a hearing and leaving the impression perhaps that they may have committed criminal acts?

*The President.* I don't know. I'll have to refer to the Chief of Staff about that.

*Q.* We're speaking about the Travel Office, sir.

*The President.* I know. All I know about it is that I was told that the people who were in charge of administering in the White House found serious problems there and thought there was no alternative. I'll have to refer to them for any other questions. That is literally all I know about it. I know nothing else about it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:37 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Archbishop Tutu referred to George Moose, Assistant Secretary of State for Africa. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

## Statement on the Human Rights Situation in Burma

May 19, 1993

I was moved by the stories of individual suffering I heard this afternoon and am deeply concerned by the tragic human rights situation in Burma, as well as by the continued detention of Burmese pro-democracy leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been under house arrest since 1989. I strongly urge the Burmese government to release Aung San Suu Kyi and all political prisoners, to respect the results of the May 1990 elections, and to commit itself to genuine democratic reforms.

The Burmese people should know that America stands with them and with others in the

international community in the struggle for freedom in Burma.

NOTE: The President issued this statement following a meeting in the Cabinet Room at the White House with a group of Nobel Peace Prize laureates including Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Betty Williams, and Kara Newell, who had traveled to Thailand earlier this year to focus international attention on the human rights situation in Burma.