

trying to get ready. That's what we're doing here. And secondly, if you look at the way FEMA and the Agriculture Department and the other Departments handled the flooding in the Middle West, it's obvious that while we don't control what Mother Nature does, we're going to be on top of it with all the resources and

effort that we can possibly marshal as quickly as possible.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:13 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to William M. Daley, Chairman, NAFTA Task Force. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

The President's News Conference With Caribbean Leaders August 30, 1993

President Clinton. Good afternoon. Today I had the great honor of welcoming five outstanding leaders from the English-speaking Caribbean to the White House: President Cheddi Jagan of Guyana, Prime Minister Erskine Sandiford of Barbados, Prime Minister Patrick Manning of Trinidad and Tobago—Tobago, excuse me; I'm still hoarse from our luncheon—Prime Minister P.J. Patterson of Jamaica, and Prime Minister Hubert Ingraham of the Bahamas. I'm impressed by the intelligence, the dynamism, and the dedication of the Caribbean leadership.

The end of the cold war has altered the nature but not the depth of our interest in the Caribbean. Our concern for the region is firmly rooted in geographic proximity, the resultant flows of people, of commodities and culture, and in our shared interest in fighting drug trafficking and projecting our economic interests and in protecting fragile ecosystems.

As with U.S.-Mexican relations, U.S.-Caribbean relations dramatically demonstrate the absolute inseparability of foreign and domestic issues. More than ever before, our Nation is a Caribbean nation. In our discussions, we recognize the concerns that NAFTA may adversely affect the Caribbean and Central American nations by diverting trade and investment flows to Mexico. Therefore, I want to announce today that I have asked Ambassador Mickey Kantor to study the impact of NAFTA on these small economies and to consult with them on new measures to increase regional trade.

American workers have a direct interest in the prosperity of the English-speaking Caribbean. The \$2 billion in United States exports to those countries creates at least 40,000 American jobs. Our warm and productive luncheon

meeting covered many other areas as well. These nations are all vibrant democracies striving to adapt their economies to new global realities while maintaining a full respect for individual freedoms and human rights.

In the Organization of American States and in the United Nations, they consistently take strong stands in favor of the collective defense of democracy. They have all been firm supporters of multilateral efforts to restore President Aristide in Haiti. And we discussed cooperative security and economic measures to assist Haitian democracies. I thank them for their support of the restoration of President Aristide and, of course, we all enjoyed a recounting of President Aristide's swearing-in of his new Prime Minister today.

The Caribbean community will be an important building block of a hemispheric community of democracies linked by growing economic ties and common political beliefs. That will happen, I believe, in no small measure because of the leadership of the five people who are here with us today. And I'd like now to ask them each in turn to come to the microphone and say a few remarks.

And I think President Jagan is going first. He was here first in 1961. Is that right? The microphone is yours, sir.

President Jagan. Thank you, Mr. President. As you just pointed out, I was here in 1961. Those were difficult, different times. I'm happy to be here now with my colleagues jointly at this invitation of the President and to say that we definitely have problems, you in the United States and we in the Caribbean. Your problems are big; ours are critical. And I think it will be necessary for us to work closely together

to solve these problems because at one time Caribbean was described as a third border of United States, and some have said it's the Achilles' heel. And I believe 10 years ago, the Caribbean was described as one of the world circles of crisis.

We have deteriorated somewhat; our economies are in trouble. But nevertheless we are optimistic that if we work together with the United States in a feeling, in a spirit of genuine partnership and interdependence, we can together resolve these problems. We have to, because increasingly we see developments taking place around the world in megablocs, and we in this hemisphere have to chart out our own destiny and work together in order to alleviate the problems of our people—they are many—and to bring about economic progress and human development.

Thank you.

Prime Minister Sandiford. We in Barbados and the rest of the Caribbean believe that we in this region have great opportunities to deal with the problems facing our region. We see these problems as relating to the achievement of greater levels of growth, providing more jobs for our people, keeping inflation low, and also dealing with the issues of competitiveness and productivity in our economies. Within this framework we believe that the United States, the Caribbean, and all other countries of our region have an opportunity to work through a new conceptualization of our region based on what I am calling a twin continent concept, involving the countries of North America, the countries of South America, linked on the one side by the countries of Central America and on the other side by that string of lovely tropical islands called the Caribbean, of which Barbados, forgive me, is the most beautiful. And then there are all the countries that are in between. [Laughter.]

The opportunity of discussing with the President and his high-level delegation the issues involved and how we can do this, I think, is a most welcome one. And we believe that we can do it on a sustainable basis, sustainable in the sense that we have to provide an acceptable standard of living for our people, taking into account that those who are disadvantaged or deprived are not left to waste away and taking into account also that we have to make provision for our children and our children's children so that they, too, can live in an environment that

can enable them to achieve adequate standards of living. We believe that we must now sit down and work as partners in order to achieve these objectives. And that is what we have been discussing, and that is what we will be working for.

Prime Minister Manning. Thank you very much, ladies and gentlemen. We were very pleased today to have a chance to talk with the U.S. President and a team of his closest advisers. The CARICOM countries are situated on the doorstep of the United States of America. And it would be a great error to conclude that now that communism has come virtually to an end, that the CARICOM countries and the Caribbean territories on the whole are no longer of significance to the United States of America. That would be a great mistake, indeed.

All of these countries are going through a structural adjustment, and in that context, we are all experiencing relatively high—relative on absolute terms—high levels of unemployment. It will be a great tragedy if in seeking to pursue sustainable development for our countries, it takes place at such a rate that the domestic populations begin to see as one of the options available to them a greater involvement in drug and drug-related activities. That's an option, ladies and gentlemen, that we are trying our best to avoid already. There's a drug problem in the Caribbean, and many of our countries have been transshipment points for the transfer of cocaine from South America to the United States and Canada and to the north.

And so there is an urgency in the way we deal with development, and there's an urgency in the strategies that we pursue, the urgency in identifying these strategies and pursuing them as expeditiously as possible to ensure that we satisfy the aspirations of our populations.

That is a point that was discussed at length today. And in particular we discussed with the President and his advisers this whole question of access to aid in the transition period, as our economies go from one state to the next, and in particular the use of per capita income as an indicator, a trigger indicator, an indicator for accessing concessional rates of funding and of assistance. Really, the populations of countries don't see per capita income. What they see is the change in per capita income. So no matter where you are, as long as there's a significant change downwards in the per capita income of any country, then it results in social problems

in that particular country. And that is a point of view that we advocated today as perhaps an alternative for mechanisms for giving aid to countries and for allowing countries to access concessional funding. I think that the point was taken. And our discussions were in fact very pleasant and, I believe, very fruitful.

Thank you.

Prime Minister Patterson. When I heard the Prime Minister of Barbados asserting the claims of his country, I thought of making a simple rejoinder and then reflected that it ran the risk of being misunderstood here. I had intended to say, good wine needs no bush. [Laughter]

May I, Mr. President, thank you on behalf of the Government and people of Jamaica, and indeed on behalf of all the governments and people of the CARICOM member countries, for having invited us to participate in a timely discussion with you as your administration seeks to chart a relevant Caribbean policy in the context of the developments in the world and the hemisphere to which we belong.

I think out of our discussions has emerged a recognition of the need to take that further step in forging a closer and more effective working partnership. As has been mentioned, the United States, Canada, and Mexico are on the verge of completing the signatories for the NAFTA agreement. For us in the Caribbean, we note that the whole world is moving towards larger and larger trading blocs. And we envisage a time when eventually there is going to be a free trade that extends throughout the hemisphere to which we belong.

We in the Caribbean, particularly in CARICOM, have already started to prepare for that process. But we recognize that there is going to be the need for special transitional arrangements, taking into account certain products and exports which are very sensitive to us and certain areas of industrial activity that are so important to ensuring that employment levels are maintained, indeed, that unemployment is reduced so that social stability is maintained in all our respective countries.

To these objectives, the strengthening of democracy, the enhancement of social mobility, and for economic progress in our region, all of us are firmly committed. And we are very happy that we are agreed to work in a collaborative exercise to make the dreams of all us as proud, independent people in this hemisphere a reality in our times.

Prime Minister Ingraham. Mr. President, colleagues, ladies and gentlemen. When I heard the Prime Minister of Barbados and Jamaica—[laughter]—and I speak for the Bahamas, the undisputed leader in tourism in the entire region. [Laughter]

We are delighted to have the opportunity to be in Washington, DC, at the White House and to have been so warmly welcomed by President Clinton and his administration. And in my capacity as Chairman of CARICOM and as Prime Minister of the Bahamas, let me say thank you very much for the opportunity to exchange views, which we found most useful.

We had the opportunity to talk about the further steps which we may take as a group of nations to strengthen democracy in our region and to ensure that there is great accountability to our citizens and transparency in the governance of our respective countries. We were able to share views on Haiti and the progress which is being made in relation to the restoration of democracy to that country and to express our appreciation to the United States of America for the work which it is doing in that regard. We were also able to discuss our desire to do all we can to assist in helping to create an atmosphere in this region where all countries in the region will be democratic countries in the not too distant future, including Cuba.

We were able to put before the administration of the United States the items of highest priority for the Caribbean region, and they are the inclusion in NAFTA, provisions to preserve and enhance CBI benefits to small CARICOM countries, the convention tax deduction benefits, and tourism development, which is most important to countries in the region like the Bahamas and elsewhere. We were able to point out the need for continual support for agriculture and banana, particularly for the countries of St. Vincent, Dominica, and St. Lucia.

We were also able to focus on the joint cooperation in the antidrug effort and to point to the fact that one of the most successful, if not the most successful, drug interdiction program which has taken place anywhere takes place between the United States of America and in the Bahamas where some 26 percent of all cocaine seizures are captured.

And lastly and finally, we were able to focus upon the need for the continuing promotion of democracy in our region.

We all leave Washington, DC, reinvigorated

and determined to continue our efforts in this region to work together as partners to ensure better quality of life for all of our citizens. We are most hopeful of the benefits that will come to our region through the administration of President Clinton, and we thank you very much.

President Clinton. Thank you. Let me also say, before you ask the question, if there are people here representing your nations, I want to make sure that I give them a chance to ask their questions also, but we'll start with Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

NAFTA

Q. Mr. President, since you have a better chance of passing NAFTA in the Senate, will you push for the Senate consideration first? And did it come as a surprise to you that the Caribbean would feel adversely affected by NAFTA? I mean, was it news?

President Clinton. No. Well, let me answer the first question first. I haven't made a decision on that yet, and I don't think I should until I consult with the supporters of the agreement. It can't pass in either House until the legislation is developed, which is now going on to embody the agreement. But I'm certainly open to that. I just simply haven't had the opportunity to sit down and visit with the supporters and see what they want to do. I have no objection to going that way.

With regard to the Caribbean, it didn't come as a surprise to me. I think in general what these leaders said was that they thought it was a good idea but that it shouldn't adversely affect existing relationships. Our administration has worked hard to have a positive mutually beneficial relationship with the CARICOM nations to faithfully carry out the laws of Congress, including one that was passed late last year designed to stop a previous problem with our efforts there. And I said, as I said today, I asked the Ambassador for Trade, Mickey Kantor, to look into this and see whether we can provide some assurances that there will not be a disadvantage to the Caribbean nations.

Cuba

Q. Mr. President, can you be more specific about what the dialog was on Cuba and bringing it into a more democratic society?

President Clinton. Actually, we had a general conversation about it. As you know, the position

of CARICOM and the position of the United States with regard to trade with Cuba is different. I just simply reiterated that the Cuban democracy act does not sanction any trade with Cuba unless it is somehow subsidized by governments. That is not contemplated, so the difficulty issue we just got off the table, and then we talked a little bit about what the prospects were for economic and political reform in Cuba, something that is devoutly to be hoped for by the peoples of all the nations here represented. But there was nothing more specific than that.

Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, if the Bosnian peace agreement is reached in Geneva, how many American forces would you be willing to offer to help enforce that agreement? How long would they be required to serve? And what would be the risk to those forces?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, whether I would be prepared to do that or not depends on whether I'm convinced that the agreement is both—is fair, fully embraced by the Bosnian government, and is enforceable. That has been a source of concern for our military planners all along—about, you know, whether we could have something that would be enforceable.

But I made clear last February, and I will reiterate again, the United States is prepared to participate in a multinational effort to keep the peace in Bosnia. But I want to see what the details are. I want to get the briefing on it. I want to know that it will be enforceable. But I'm certainly open to that, but I also want to know whose responsibility it is to stay, for how long.

It's a little bit different than the situation in Somalia, for example, where you really have two problems that relate to one another. There needs to be a lot of nation-building in Somalia from the ground up, a lot of institution-building. We did go there to stop the starvation and the violence and the bloodshed. But it's also true that the absence of order gave rise to all those problems.

And so we're still trying to fulfill our original mission in Somalia. This is a very different sort of thing, but I certainly think it can work. A multinational effort to keep the peace, if it is enforceable and the understandings are there, can clearly work. You can see that in the long-standing success we've had in our participation in the aftermath of the Camp David agreement.

Cuba

Q. Mr. President, my question is for Prime Minister Patterson, if you could step to the microphone. Going back to Cuba, what is the position of CARICOM in regards to Cuba? And do you think you can do anything to bring Cuba back into the democratic fold?

Prime Minister Patterson. First of all, what we are seeking to establish with Cuba is a joint commission that discusses the range of matters no different from those presently covered by a joint commission with Mexico, with Venezuela, with Colombia. It is not an agreement that provides for subsidized trade with Cuba and therefore does not offend any existing legislation in the United States or elsewhere.

We feel that the time has come for all countries in the hemisphere to work towards a normalization of relationships among them. There are differences between the political systems in Cuba and those in the CARICOM countries. We remain firmly committed to the democratic tradition. But Cuba unquestionably is a Caribbean country. That is a reality which we must face, and we believe that the joint commission should assist in the process of inducing Cuba towards the sorts of policies and programs that are compatible with those of other independent nations in the hemisphere.

Q. Would you like to see the U.S. do the same thing?

Prime Minister Patterson. What the U.S. does is a matter for the U.S. to determine. If we can assist anywhere in the process of contact or mediation, we are always prepared to do so.

Somalia

Q. Mr. President, in Mogadishu some of the humanitarian relief workers say that the U.S. raid early this morning was a blunder, and in fact, the U.S. military is making their job more difficult. What do you say to those who are there to help? And will the U.S. forces remain there long enough to capture Aideed? Is that a target for you?

President Clinton. Well, the United Nations operation set that as their objective, and they asked us for our help in that regard.

I would remind you that I understand the problems with this, but the United Nations be-

lieves and has ample evidence to support the fact that the supporters of Aideed murdered a substantial number of Pakistani peacekeepers and are behind the deaths of four Americans. So we have to deal with that. And I am open to other suggestions. I think the United Nations should be open to other suggestions.

To date, we have tried to be cooperative with the policies that have been jointly developed. We have not been just simply driving this. We have really tried to work within the framework of the U.N. to prove that this thing could work over the long run. We've also tried to make sure that everyone understood that this is not all of Somalia we're talking about. We're talking about one part of Mogadishu. In much of the rest of the country, the U.N. mission has continued unimpeded and successfully. I don't think anyone wants to change the fundamental character of it.

And so, would I be willing to discuss that with our people and with anyone else? Of course, I would. But I think it is very important to point out that what provoked this was people involved with Aideed killing the Pakistanis first and then the four Americans.

Caribbean-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President—[inaudible]—talked about the need for—[inaudible]. Is there a need to ensure the dialog continues through the establishment perhaps of U.S.-CARICOM policy machinery? What are you prepared to do?

President Clinton. Well, I think there is a need for a continuing dialog. One of the things that I pledged today to these leaders is that next year when the conference on the sustainable development in smaller nations is held in the Caribbean, that the United States would send a high level delegation there. And we didn't discuss any specific mechanism. But I think it is very important. You know, all these nations, and others not here present, in the Caribbean, are at different points in their history with different challenges. And I think that what we need to do is to make it clear that the United States is committed to democracy, to market economics, and to economic growth of this region over the long run. Here even at home we find great difficulty in predicting with precision what's going to happen economically, because we're in a period of real profound eco-

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conomic change. And I think it's important that we make these commitments over the long run and that we keep the doors of communication open, and that's exactly what we intend to do.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 24th news conference began at 2:09 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Exchange With Reporters on Cuba

August 30, 1993

Q. Mr. President, are there any conditions that would be met that you would be able to end the U.S. embargo on Cuba?

The President. We've had the press conference. [Laughter]

I support the Torricelli bill, as you know. I did when it was passed, and I still do. But I said before, I could just reiterate what I said again: We all hope that there will come a time

when democracy and an open economy will come to Cuba. And it will be a cause of enormous celebration in this country when it happens.

NOTE: The exchange began at 2:36 p.m. in the Blue Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With the Joint Chiefs of Staff

August 30, 1993

Defense Review

Q. Is this a crisis meeting, Mr. President?

The President. I hope not. [Laughter] The Secretary of Defense and the Joint Chiefs say it's a meeting to discuss their review of the defense needs of the country and how we're going—

Somalia

Q. Was the Somalia raid bungled?

The President. I don't think I would characterize it in that way.

NOTE: The exchange began at 4:16 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks at the Summer of Service Forum in College Park, Maryland

August 31, 1993

The President. You know, I really love Senator Mikulski, if she just weren't so laid back and passive and soft-spoken, you might figure out what's on her mind. [Laughter] She was terrific.

I'd like to begin by introducing some other people who are here, and I hate to do this always because I know I'm going to miss someone that I should introduce. But I want to begin anyway by introducing the distinguished Gov-

ernor of Maryland, Governor Don Schaefer, one of my former colleagues when I was a Governor; one of the most important leaders in the House of Representatives, Congressman Steny Hoyer from Maryland. I want to introduce a man who came all the way from his State of Connecticut to be here with us today, the first Republican sponsor we had for the national service legislation, Representative Chris Shays from Connecti-