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Due to a staff error, the President incorrectly stated that NAFTA would create 1 million new jobs over 5 years.

The NAFTA will create 200,000 new export-related jobs in the first 2 years after it is passed. By 1995, 900,000 U.S. jobs will be dependent on exports to Mexico. NAFTA will help secure those jobs, and trade with Mexico will help create even more jobs in future years.

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Paul Keating of Australia

September 14, 1993

The President. Good morning. First, I want to welcome Prime Minister Keating here and his colleagues from Australia. We're looking forward to having a very good discussion, and we'll have some comments later, as you know.

I also want to applaud the announcement today of the common agenda established between Jordan and Israel, as well as the historic stop that Prime Minister Rabin and Foreign Minister Peres have made in Morocco, seeing King Hassan. I applaud King Hassan, and I hope that other Arab leaders will follow that example. And we will continue now rapidly to break down the barriers between Israel and other nations. And I'm looking forward to beginning work immediately on the United States part of implementing this agreement.

NAFTA

Q. Do you agree, sir, with President Carter and President Bush in their characterization of Ross Perot as a demagog?

The President. I'm going to try to pass NAFTA. And they're perfectly capable of speaking for themselves. I don't agree with Mr. Perot on this, and some of the assertions are not accurate that he has made. But, you know, I'm going to be out here. My job is to try to pass this. And I don't want to overly personalize it. I'm just trying to pass it. I think it's good for America; it's good for jobs.

Q. Are you going to work as hard for health care as you are for NAFTA, or vice versa?

The President. I'm going to try to pass them both. I'm going to try—you know, I work at everything I do. I just get up in the morning and go to work. I think that's what I got hired to do.

[*At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.*]

The President. As you know, we're going to have a joint statement afterward, and we'll answer your questions then. But I do want to welcome the Prime Minister and his colleagues here. I want to say to all of you how very important the relationship that the United States has with Australia is to me and to our administration. And I look forward to discussing a whole wide range of things, especially the upcoming APEC conference in Washington State in November. And I want to thank the Prime Minister publicly for his leadership in helping to put that together and helping to bring the leaders of the other countries there. We'll have more to say about it later, but I'm anxious to get on with the meeting.

Q. Will you get a chance to visit sometime, perhaps for the Olympics in Sydney?

The President. Why, I hope so. I've always wanted to come. I had one other chance to go to Australia, and I had to turn it down because of when I was a Governor. And I've been jealous of every friend of mine who ever went there. So I sure hope I can come.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:48 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.