

Remarks on Endorsements of the North American Free Trade Agreement November 2, 1993

Thank you very much, President Carter, Mr. Vice President, all the distinguished people who have spoken here today.

I would like to begin by making two observations. First of all, after hearing what has been said, I'm pretty proud to be an American today. And I think all of you should be, too. Secondly, I have been sent an extraterrestrial telegram stating, "I, too, am for NAFTA," signed Otto von Bismarck. [*Laughter*]

You know, it is something of note that every living President, Secretary of State, Secretaries of Defense, national security advisers, Secretaries of Commerce, leaders of the Federal Reserve, distinguished contributors to the American spirit like John Gardner and Father Hesburgh and other great American citizens all support this agreement, for economic reasons, for foreign policy reasons. Our own Secretary of State, Warren Christopher, is in California even as we are here, talking about the foreign policy implications of NAFTA for our Government and our country.

Why have all of us declared this issue above politics? Why have we come to agree that whatever else has divided us in the past, this will weld us together in the cause of more jobs for our people, more exports for our markets, and more democracy for our allies? Why do we all know down deep inside that this would be such a profound setback for America and the world economy and in the new global polity we are striving so honestly to create? Why are we so willing to say no to partisan politics and yes to NAFTA? I think it is because we know, as all of these have said in different ways, that NAFTA reflects this moment's expression of all the lessons we have learned in the 20th century. It reflects this moment's expression of what we learned not to do after World War I, what we learned we had to do during and after World War II. It reflects the sheer economic weight of argument that Mr. Samuelson referred to, that we have seen even more expressed just in the last few years when a higher and higher percentage of our new jobs in this country are clearly traceable directly to exports.

I see it in my own work here. For years and years and years our allies in Europe and

Asia said, "Well, if America really wanted to promote global growth, you would do something about your deficit and get your interest rates down and quit taking so much money out of the global economy." And so we have tried to do that. And we have low interest rates and the deficit is coming down, and our own deficit this year was much lower, in no small measure because of those lower rates.

But we still have this great global recession. Why? Because we are not trading with one another. We are not buying and selling and investing across national lines and sparking the kind of global growth that is the only way any wealthy country, anyway, generates any new jobs.

No one attacking NAFTA has yet made a single solitary argument to refute this essential point: There is no evidence that any wealthy country—not just the United States, anyone, not one—can create new jobs and higher incomes without more global growth fueled by trade. If you strip away all the other arguments, no one has offered a single solitary shred of evidence to refute that central point.

And I know there is great insecurity and instability in all the wealthy countries in the world. You can say whatever you want about this being the first Tuesday in November; you've seen a lot of other Tuesdays come along in other nations, great political upheavals all across the world. Why? Because people feel the walls are closing in on them.

And in truth, I think when you strip all this away, we are facing a real decision about whether the psychological pressures of the moment will overcome what we know in our hearts and our minds is the right thing to do. Whether the same pressures that people in Canada feel, or France, or Japan, in a time when wealthy countries are not generating new jobs and people are working harder for stagnant wages, will those pressures make us do what is easy and perhaps popular in the moment? Or will we do what we should really do? The honorable thing to do to respond to those pressures is to take an action that may not be popular in the moment but that actually holds the promise of alleviating the pressures.

If we believe the feelings, the anxieties are

legitimate, as has been said already by other speakers, then don't we have the obligation to do what will alleviate the anxieties over the long haul, instead of play to them in the moment? That, in the end, is what this decision is all about. That is really what we mean when we say the secret ballot on this issue has already been won.

These students over here to my left are from my alma mater, Georgetown. And when I was in their place 25 years ago now, when we were studying global affairs, we came out really worrying about and thinking about the cold war and trying to debate exactly how much the pattern of the bipolar world could be manifested in every—[inaudible]—development, in every country in the world, in every region of the world. And sometimes we were wrong, and sometimes we were right. But at least we had a framework within which to view the world.

As Dr. Kissinger said, we are in the process now of creating a new framework. And a lot of people are complaining about how we don't have all the answers. I don't mean we, the administration, I mean we, the people. But I say to you—many of you in this room are old enough to remember, and I think I now qualify in that category—there are a lot of generations of Americans who would kill to be alive and of age in this time with this set of problems. I mean, who are we to complain about this set of problems? Very few mornings do I come to work in the Oval Office and wonder about whether some decision I make can spark a nuclear war. Very few mornings do I wonder whether, even in all the difficulties we face, we might make an economic error and a quarter of our people will be out of work, as they were during the Great Depression.

We see people in positions of responsibility going around wringing their hands about the difficulties of the moment. Yes, it's a new time. It's always difficult in a new time to see the future with clarity and to have the kind of framework you need. But none of that is an excuse to give in to the emotional pressure of the moment instead of to take steps that will alleviate the pressure. That is the dilemma before us.

You know, it's true that it's good for us economically. It's also true that what Mexico gets out of it is investment, so that if we don't take this deal somebody else probably will. And that will be bad for us economically, as has already

been said by President Carter. But the real thing that this is about is how we are going to view ourselves as we relate to the rest of the world. Keep in mind, this is not an isolated incident. This is not just a trade deal between the United States and Mexico; not even a deal that affects our relationships with the rest of Latin America, although that's where the real jobs and long-term economic benefit to us lie, perhaps; not even a deal that will help us to get the GATT agreement by the end of the year, although, I tell you, it will give enormously increased leverage to the United States to push that agreement through by the end of the year if this passes, enormous, and great incentive to other nations to support this. But over and above that, this is a decision which will demonstrate whether in this difficult moment we still have confidence in ourselves and our potential.

And I would say to all of you, anything you can do to the people at large and to the Congress in particular to instill that confidence again is very important. If we have lost our way at all in the last couple of years, it is in not having any historic memory. These are difficult problems. But for goodness sakes, give us these problems as compared with many of those our forebears faced, and give us these problems as compared to those we are about to create if we start turning away from the world that is plainly before us. Help us to give the Congress the freedom, the confidence, the courage that is inside every Member of the Congress waiting to be brought out. Help to give them the space they need to take the steps they know are right for America.

This is about whether we really have confidence in ourselves. I believe with all my heart the next 20 years can be the best we ever had. But they're going to require some tough decisions, some difficult moments, some uncertain moments. What do you do in moments like that? Do what the priests would tell you to do: Fall back on what you believe and what you know is right. What we know is right for America is to be confident, to reach out, to believe in ourselves and our potential, to believe that we can adjust to change, just as we have been doing for 200 years now.

Make three calls. Make 12 calls. Make two dozen calls. For goodness sakes, make however many you can. But remember, this is a test of our confidence. Every one of you can give confidence to someone else by the life you have

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lived, the experiences you have had, the things that you know. Give it now. We need it.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:20 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks,

he referred to John Gardner, writer and founder of Common Cause; Theodore M. Hesburgh, president emeritus, University of Notre Dame; Paul A. Samuelson, Nobel Prize-winning economist; and Henry Kissinger, former Secretary of State.

Statement on Signing Legislation on Most-Favored-Nation Trade Status for Romania

November 2, 1993

I am pleased to sign today House Joint Resolution 228, which extends most-favored-nation tariff treatment for Romania. This action, which will lower tariffs on Romanian exports to the United States, reflects Romania's significant progress thus far in rejoining the community of democratic nations. It will also assist the growth of Romania's private sector and enhance our bilateral trading relations, improving American access to one of the largest markets in Eastern Europe.

Romania's people are emerging from a long period of tyranny and Communist rule. Their road toward democracy, respect for human rights and rule of law, and a functioning market economy is not an easy one. While important steps have been taken, more remains to be done. As Romania continues to make progress,

the United States will offer our friendship and help in tangible ways. Romania deserves recognition for its close cooperation with the United States in international organizations, particularly for its compliance with United Nations sanctions on Serbia. Romania, like the other frontline states, has made real sacrifices in this important effort, earning the appreciation of the international community.

I welcome this positive step in U.S.-Romanian relations and look forward to working with the people and leaders of Romania to promote democracy, human rights, a market economy, and prosperity.

NOTE: H.J. Res. 228, approved November 2, was assigned Public Law No. 103-133.

Nomination for Assistant Commissioners of the Patent and Trademark Office

November 2, 1993

The President announced his intention today to nominate two Assistant Commissioners of the Patent and Trademark Office in the Department of Commerce. He named Lawrence O. Goffney, Jr., to be the Assistant Commissioner for Patents and Philip G. Hampton II to be the Assistant Commissioner for Trademarks.

"Each of these men combines substantial legal experience with a solid background in engineer-

ing," said the President. "I have great confidence in their ability to maintain the highest standards at the Patent and Trademark Commission."

NOTE: Biographies of the nominees were made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.