

June 5 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1996

The President. No, no, no. No, I haven't said—I'm sorry. Our plan—and by the way, the savings that have been agreed on already by the Republicans and the Democrats in the balanced budget negotiations would put another decade on the Medicare Trust Fund. And I think we ought to do that right away. I have always felt that way. The plan that I detailed last year included Medicare reductions of \$270 billion, \$170 billion more than the trust fund—the trustees said was necessary to go into the trust fund to stabilize it.

But the differences in our numbers now are not that dramatic, and the amount that we have agreed on in common would add—would take it out to 10 years, and I think we ought to do that now. I've always said we should go on and pass the right kind of balanced budget and do that. We can do that now with no trouble. We have agreed on those things. Providers know they're coming. Everybody understands how they would be managed. And I think we ought to do that. We should not wait.

Q. [Inaudible]—you all can get together on those. Is that the problem?

The President. What?

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Well, yes. The problems are, I think, far more than the money involved, is the structure of Medicare. I don't favor breaking the structure of Medicare. I think putting the medical savings account for Medicare payments in would be a particularly bad idea. You know, Medicare has the lowest administrative cost of any health insurance plan in America, private or public. It has done a basically good job. There are more seniors now on the plan than ever before. We have to deal with the population problems that exist now and the ones that are going to exist in the future.

But we have the ability right now to put 10 years into the life of the Medicare Trust Fund, and we ought to just do it. We ought to just go on and do that. We can do that with no problem, and we can do it in the context of a balanced budget plan.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:50 p.m. at the Longworth House Office Building on Capitol Hill prior to a meeting with the House Democratic caucus. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Nomination for Chief of Naval Operations

June 5, 1996

I am pleased to nominate Admiral Jay L. Johnson, U.S. Navy, to be Chief of Naval Operations.

Admiral Johnson currently serves as the Vice Chief of Naval Operations. He brings to the job of Chief of Naval Operations a dynamic vision of the Navy's future, a wealth of operational experience, a decisive leadership style, and a deep regard for America's sailors.

During his distinguished career, Admiral Johnson completed two combat cruises in Vietnam and served as the Deputy Commander of Operation Restore Democracy and Uphold Democracy in Haiti. As Commander Second Fleet, he significantly improved the effectiveness of

our forces in both multiservice and multinational operations. As Assistant Chief of Naval Personnel, he oversaw the career development of the officer and enlisted community during the challenging post-cold war drawdown.

Admiral Johnson assumes the post of Chief of Naval Operations with the full trust and confidence of the Navy community at a crucial time in its history. I will depend upon him to continue Admiral Mike Boorda's high standards and demanding goals for the Navy. With Admiral Johnson at the helm, I am confident that our Navy will continue to protect and advance our Nation's freedom and security.