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I care about—many of which I was talking about here today—in a way that is respectful of the fact that the country has a new President, and the people need to bond with the new President, and the new President needs to establish his relationships and role in the world.

But I think I can find a way to do that. So I'll be around. But I also have to support a Senator, and I'm going to do my best to do that, as well.

Thank you very much. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. in the Ballroom at the Empire Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Hamdillah H.A. Wahab, chairman, APEC-CEO Summit 2000; Prince Abdul Qawi of Brunei; U.S. Ambassador to Brunei Sylvia Stanfield; Sy Sternberg, Paul Y. Song, and Ernest S. Micek, U.S. members, APEC Business Advisory Council; President Kim Dae-jung of South Korea; and Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush of Texas.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Vladimir Putin of Russia in Bandar Seri Begawan

November 15, 2000

2000 Presidential Election

Q. President Clinton, any comment on the U.S. election?

President Clinton. Yes, let him talk about it. [*Laughter*]

President Putin. We're interested, but with respect to the feelings of the American people, are waiting for the outcomes.

Russia-U.S. Relations

[*At this point, a question was asked in Russian, and a translation was not provided.*]

President Putin. President Clinton, during the term of his Presidency, has caused a breakthrough in the U.S.-Russian relations. And we expect this torch to be given to whoever will be the successor.

2000 Presidential Election

Q. Mr. President, how are you going to explain what's going on back home to Mr. Putin and other foreign leaders?

President Clinton. Well, I think it's pretty clear that no one knows yet who won the election. There are recounts in progress, and there will be a full accounting according to an accepted legal process in America. We have plenty of time. There's nothing to worry about.

I think other leaders should have the same reaction the American people have about it. I think they are pretty relaxed about it now. They're going to let the process play out. Both sides are certainly very well represented, and they'll argue their points, and we'll see how it works.

NOTE: The exchange began at 1:10 p.m. at the Assara Guest House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on Ratification of the Convention To Combat Desertification

November 15, 2000

On November 13 I signed the instrument of ratification for the Convention To Combat Desertification. Degradation of dry lands affects hundreds of millions of people around the world, especially in Africa. The Convention will help countries marshal the resources needed to mitigate the effects of desertification. It will enhance the effectiveness of foreign assistance and promote a strong role for nongovernmental organizations. Finally, it properly places affected