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Economic Stimulus Plan

Q. Do you feel you now have the votes on the stimulus package, Mr. President?

The President. Well, I haven't gotten a late count, but I feel good about it. We worked hard on it, and I feel good about it.

Q. What does it do to your package if Breaux and Boren were to prevail? Is that a killer amendment?

The President. All I can tell you is, we're going to try to pass it. Let's just see what happens. I feel pretty good about it. We're working hard

Russia

Q. Mr. President—contact of Boris Yeltsin today? Have you heard anything?

The President. No. I would say I've gotten reports and I've spent about, oh, I don't know, an hour and half on it this morning, working, trying to get ready for Vancouver and trying to make sure we know what's going on. But I don't have anything to add to what you already know.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:22 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With Dorsey High School Students

March 25, 1993

Ukraine-U.S. Relations

Q. Mr. President, did anything come out of your meeting with the Ukrainian Foreign Minister as far as the START Treaty?

The President. I just told him how important it was to us, that I realize that there was some opposition at home in Ukraine because of uncertainty in Russia, but we had to have them sign on. And I would encourage them to go ahead and do it, while I realize there are some implementation issues that we would have to work with them on. And I was glad to work with him on that but that the United States wanted very much to be close to the Ukraine. We have a big stake in their success, and we've got a lot of commercial potential there and they here, as well as a lot of ties. We have a lot of Ukrainian Americans, as you know.

But I think this START Treaty is a precondition to a long-term, successful relationship. And I think they should go into the nonproliferation regime and give up nuclear weapons. We don't need any more nuclear states. The United States is trying to reduce our nuclear arsenals, and we need to continue to push in that direction.

It was a very good meeting. And I think over the long run, the United States will have a good relationship with Ukraine if we get the START issue resolved.

Q. Mr. President, did he say the crisis in Moscow is having repercussions back home for him?

The President. Well, he said it was adding to a sense of uncertainty in this country, which you would expect it would. I mean, they're right next door there. But I hope, of course, as every day goes by there seems to be an attempt by President Yeltsin and others, frankly, to confine the dimensions of the process, to regularize it and to let it play itself out in a vote of the people on April 25th. Of course that's the most democratic way you could do that to resolve that crisis.

Q. Did you get a sense——

The President. I don't know that. I know what you were going to say. I don't know that. I hope so. I feel better about it, but I don't know that for sure.

U.S. Attorneys

Q. Are you afraid that firing all the U.S. attorneys at once will be seen as political?

The President. Absolutely not. We waited longer than most of our predecessors have. Go back and look and see when they tried to replace them under Bush, under Reagan, under—particularly under Reagan. Anytime when you change parties—it took us longer to begin the process because of the delay in getting an Attorney General confirmed. But all those people are routinely replaced, and I have not done anything differently. The Justice Department is just proceeding from essentially a late start. And I think the blanket decision is less political than picking people out one by one.

Q. Do you think Jay Stephens should stay on at least to the end of the Rostenkowski——

The President. I support the Attorney General. She made the decision about what the best way to handle this was, since we were behind. And support her decision.

NOTE: The exchange began at 4:10 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. Jay Stephens is the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks on Signing the Greek Independence Day Proclamation

March 25, 1993

I just wanted to ask Mr. Stephanopoulos to come up here so I could remove all doubt about how I know what to do. [*Laughter*] Please sit, ladies and gentlemen, Archbishop.

I have a few remarks, but before I do, I want to formally sign this proclamation for Greek Independence Day and present it to the Archbishop.

[*At this point, the President signed the proclamation.*]

Thank you. Please be seated. I'd like to welcome all of you here to the White House and say a special word of welcome to Archbishop Iakavos, the spiritual leader of the Greek American community, with whom I have just had a wide-ranging discussion of many of the issues that I know that concern you. I'd also like to welcome the political leader of the Greek American community, my friend Senator Paul Sarbanes of Maryland, and to say how delighted I am to sign this proclamation recognizing Greek Independence Day and celebrating the democracy that we share in the United States with Greece.

It is particularly timely that we celebrate democracy today at the very moment that our friends around the world who have been deprived of democracy are working hard against great odds to bring it to full flower. And I know, Archbishop, that our prayers are with the people in Russia today and throughout the world who are working hard to preserve and enhance their own democracy.

Greece, the birthplace of democracy, and the United States have long had a history of friendship and cooperation. The authors of our Nation's Declaration of Independence and our Constitution were inspired by Greece's commitment to liberty, to freedom, and to democracy. Indeed, James Madison and Alexander Hamilton wrote in the Federalist Papers, and I quote, "Among the confederacies of antiquity, the most considerable was that of the Grecian republics." Today, those ideas continue to strengthen the United States. And working together, Greece and the United States have worked to advance the cause of freedom around the world.

It is against that backdrop of longstanding and close cooperation between the United States and Greece that I want to say a brief word about two issues that I know concern this audience greatly: Cyprus and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia.

On Cyprus, I want to give you my personal assurance that I and my administration will stay fully engaged in the U.N. process of negotiations, that we will give our full energies to helping reach a fair and permanent solution to the Cyprus dispute, and that we will not rest until a solution is found. Already, in the first 2 months of my Presidency, I have had the opportunity to raise the issue of Cyprus in serious discussions in person with President Özal of Turkey and by a long telephone conversation with Prime Minister Demirel. You can count on the United States to be there until this issue is resolved.

On Macedonia: Here, also, I take seriously the concerns that have been raised by Greece. Like Athens, we believe that a solution to the dispute over the name of the former Yugoslav Republic must be found rapidly to avoid the spread of further instability. I have admired the steady hand of Prime Minister Mitsotakis, and I want to work closely with him to find an appropriate solution to this problem. Progress has already been made on this issue, as I'm sure you know, and I believe we can find a just solution with broad vision and flexibility. Again, you can be sure that the United States will not allow the security of such a close friend