

And I have not heard word one from you or from your office about that since you took over. Is this still on your list? And, if so, how high?

**The President.** Absolutely. I strongly favor it. I think it ought to be done. Nothing is clearer to me than when you see the Congress still trying to make up their mind what the domestic policy of the citizens of the District of Columbia in non-Federal matters ought to be. I think that the District of Columbia should chart its own course. And I still believe all the concerns are very compelling.

I have to tell you that there has always been substantial opposition in the Congress. And a lot of Members who might ordinarily be strongly for statehood are nervous about whether their own citizens are going to be taxed by the District of Columbia if it becomes a State. I think the question now is, since this is going to be a major debate that will require an awful lot of concentration on the part of the Senators and a lot of focus to work through the issues, when is the appropriate time for it to be brought up to guarantee that it will be seriously considered? Because unless you get serious consideration, it won't pass. That is, the easy thing for a lot of the Members of Congress will be is just to vote no. The only way it can win is if we can bring it up in a relatively calm atmosphere where people can really focus on the practical problems the people living in the District of Columbia face and on the contribution the District of Columbia makes to the country in terms of taxes, people in military service, and in many other ways.

So I still very much believe that this ought to be done. But we have to bring it up at a time when we've got a fair shot to prevail. I mean, I could bring it up and make a speech for it and let it go down. If we want it to pass, we have to bring it up at the right time where people can really focus on it.

#### **President's Priorities**

**Mr. Levey.** Sir, you said the night before you took over, that you did not want to be allowed to become a captive of the White House. You wanted to be the kind of President who got out. Do you think you've succeeded in that?

**The President.** To some extent. You know, early on here, I have to stay here a lot and just do the work. There's just so much work to be done.

**Mr. Levey.** I guess so.

**The President.** If you're trying to change things as much as we are, if you want to put on the Nation's agenda a new economic plan and a new health care plan and then follow that with a plan to open the doors of college education to all, the plan to reform campaign finance and lobbying, a plan for moving people from welfare to work, that requires an immense amount of effort. And then, of course, every President has to spend a significant amount of time on national security and foreign policy issues.

But I have traveled some. I expect to do it more, and I also try to get out and around in DC a lot. You know, one of the reasons I try to jog downtown is just so I can stop and talk to citizens and let them visit with me and kind of make sure I don't lose touch with the real world. I wish I could go—

**Mr. Levey.** Well, don't jog when it gets humid out there.

**The President.** It's pretty hot out there.

**Mr. Levey.** Yes, it is.

**The President.** But I'm straight. I expect it to be a never-ending struggle, but I hope it's one I can prevail in.

**Mr. Levey.** Mr. President, we thank you so much for joining us on Newstalk 630 WMAL.

**The President.** Thank you. I enjoyed it.

NOTE: The interview began at 1:12 p.m. The President spoke from the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

### **Remarks to the United States-Mexico Binational Commission and an Exchange With Reporters**

*June 21, 1993*

**The President.** Please sit down, ladies and gentlemen. I want to welcome all of you here to the Roosevelt Room at the White House and say a special word of welcome to our distinguished guests from Mexico.

Today the U.S.-Mexico Binational Commission is holding its 10th meeting at the State Department. I want to say how very proud I am as President to welcome all the participants here. There is no closer partnership between two nations than that which we have with our neighbor Mexico. We share strong ties of history. Our cultures are richly interwoven. Our people are strong in their bonds of kinship and friendship. And the peaceful cooperation of the communities along our 2,000-mile border is not only important but is a real tribute to both our peoples.

An important sign of this close relationship is the Binational Commission itself, which provides a forum for our Cabinets to meet annually to work on issues ranging from the environment to education to telecommunications. Another sign of that partnership is our increasingly close cooperation in world affairs and our commitment to support democracy here in this hemisphere. We worked together to help end the war in El Salvador. Mexico has contributed to the International Civilian Mission of Human Rights Observers in Haiti. Mexico's leadership in the OAS was critical to the successful collective defense of democracy in Guatemala. And President Salinas speaks with a special authority as one of the world's leading economic reformers when he calls for progress in the Uruguay round to expand world trade.

Mexico and the United States agree that the movement toward open markets and free trade in Latin America is vital for the long term success and strengthening of democracy and human rights in this hemisphere. The countries of Latin America have already made tremendous strides. The emergence of democratically elected governments in this region has permitted Latin America to modernize and to develop. The Latin countries have made enormous progress restructuring and opening their economics, controlling inflation, and increasing the competitiveness of their own productive sectors. In the last 2 years, for the first time in a decade, Latin America has had real growth in per capita income.

Democratic governments have achieved peace, strengthened freedoms, and accelerated the pace of economic integration. With

the support of the OAS and the United Nations, internal conflicts in Nicaragua and El Salvador have ended and hopefully will soon end in Guatemala. The OAS routinely observes the freedom of elections across the region. Subregional free trade agreements have emerged throughout the hemisphere. These are points that were recently very well articulated by Foreign Minister Solana at the OAS and those which we in the United States enthusiastically embrace.

Increasingly today, the line has blurred between domestic and foreign policies. What we do abroad directly affects us here at home. And our success at home directly impacts what we are able to do abroad. No relationship illustrates better the strong linkage between foreign and domestic policies than the relationship between the United States and Mexico. The interdependence of our societies and our people are stronger than ever, and they will continue to grow. Domestic policies affect the lives and prosperity of Mexicans, even if they are American domestic policies, in the same way that the domestic policies of Mexico profoundly affect us.

You need only look at the scope and complexity of today's agenda in this meeting to understand how important Mexico and the United States are to each other. We will work to deepen and expand that partnership. One of the most productive areas in which we must work is on trade between our two nations. That has doubled in the last 5 years. This trade is vital to our economic future, to Mexico's economic future, and to our cooperation in every other area of endeavor. It is making both of our economies grow. It is making both of us more efficient and more competitive in global markets. And it adds to the resources we can use to address our common concerns such as the environment.

That is why I am firmly committed to the North American Free Trade Agreement and why the American people and Congress will, I hope and believe, support the NAFTA this year. We are the world's number one exporter. Exports are creating more jobs for us in the last few years than any other source of economic activity. American workers and companies want to be able to compete fully and fairly in global markets. They seek no special advantage, only a level playing field.

Mexico has already made important strides in labor rights and in protecting the environment. And when we conclude the side agreements which are now the subject of negotiations, we will have an even broader basis for cooperation and progress and a warmer embrace of the NAFTA here in the United States.

By approving NAFTA, we can cement in place a new source of jobs and economic growth for workers in Canada, Mexico, and our own country. And we'll do more than that. We can send a signal to the nations of the Americas that are on their way to rebuilding their economies, that we are on our way to work with them to build a hemisphere of freer trade, more jobs, and higher growth.

Once again, let me say how very grateful I am to see all of you here. And I know my administration is proud to be a part of these negotiations. I look forward to our continued successes, including the success of NAFTA. I believe that the future belongs to countries committed to democracy, to free markets, and to closer integration of their economies and more trade. That's where the jobs and the incomes are; that's where the hope of a better life lies.

Thank you very much.

[At this point, Foreign Minister Fernando Solana Morales of Mexico made a statement.]

### **Haitian Refugees**

**Q.** Mr. President, what is your reaction to the Supreme Court ruling on Haitian refugees?

**The President.** I haven't had a chance to review it. I'm sorry, I haven't had a chance to review it.

### **NAFTA**

**Q.** Are you frustrated by the fact that these negotiations, the bilateral negotiations, are taking so long and they don't seem to get anywhere yet?

**The President.** No. I think that everything takes a little longer around here than I think it should. But I think we are getting somewhere, and I think that you will see these negotiations produce successful agreements. And I think we will go forward with the free trade agreement this year. I'm very hopeful.

**Q.** Can I follow up on that, Mr. President? Don't you think with the full domestic agen-

da you have and the opposition to NAFTA in the United States, it's more likely to get a ratification, if at all, next year and not this year?

**The President.** No. Because I think the issue has been, in effect, fully aired and debated before it comes up for ratification. And I think a lot of the questions that have been raised about it in the Congress are the very questions that are being debated and dealt with in the negotiations now going on between the countries. So I would expect that we can get successful consideration of it this year.

And also, you know, I think this is another one of those battles of ideas in which we're engaged. But I believe very strongly that this will create jobs and increase incomes for people on both sides of the border. And I think if that argument is accepted, it's just as likely to be accepted this year as next year.

### **Henry Leon Ritzenthaler**

**Q.** —about the half-brother, is this gentleman your half-brother, do you know?

**The President.** What did you say, Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International]?

**Q.** [Inaudible]—California. Same question, basically.

**The President.** I placed a call today, but there was nobody home. I don't think I should say anything until after the call takes place.

### **NAFTA**

**Q.** You do not have the votes in the House right now. Are you planning on launching a campaign in order to push forward for ratification of NAFTA?

**The President.** I try to win the things that I support. When we can bring it up, we'll bring it up and try to win it. And I have been discussing this quite a bit, actually, in personal conversations with various Members of the House and Senate and getting advice, beginning to plot strategy. But of course, we'll have a campaign to do it. We can't prevail without a campaign; we have to try to win it.

Thank you very much. One person from the Mexican press, we'll take one question. That's only fair.

**Drug Policy**

**Q.** Mr. President, do you have a new policy to fight drugs here, or do you have a new policy towards immigration?

**The President.** We will, but I believe that the announcement of that should involve the drug czar, Mr. Brown, and others. And we will have something to say about that in the future.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:10 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

**Statement on the Meeting of the  
United States-Mexico Binational  
Commission**

*June 21, 1993*

Today the U.S.-Mexico Binational Commission is holding its 10th meeting at the State Department. I want to extend a very warm welcome to the members of the Cabinet of President Salinas and to say a few words about our warm friendship with Mexico.

There is no closer partnership between two nations than that which we have with our neighbor Mexico. We share strong ties of history. Our cultures are richly interwoven. Our people share strong bonds of kinship and fellowship. And the peaceful cooperation of the communities along our 2,000-mile border is important to both of our peoples.

An important sign of our close relations is the Binational Commission itself, which provides a forum for our Cabinets to meet annually to work on issues ranging from the environment to education to telecommunications.

Another sign of our partnership is our increasingly close cooperation in world affairs and our commitment to the success of democracy in this hemisphere. We worked together to help end the war in El Salvador. Mexico has contributed to the International Civilian Mission of Human Rights Observers in Haiti. Mexico's leadership in the OAS was critical to the successful collective defense of democracy in Guatemala. And President Salinas speaks with a special authority as one of the world's leading economic reformers when he calls for progress in the Uruguay round to expand world trade.

Mexico and we agree that the movement toward open markets and free trade in Latin America is vital and for the long-term success and strengthening of democracy and human rights in this hemisphere. The countries of Latin America have already made great strides. The emergence of democratically elected governments in the region has permitted Latin America to modernize and develop. The Latin countries have made enormous progress restructuring and opening their economies, controlling inflation, and increasing the competitiveness of their productive sectors. In the last 2 years, for the first time in a decade, Latin America has had real growth in per capita income.

Free trade agreements have contributed to the progress in regional integration. Democratic governments have achieved peace, strengthened freedoms, and accelerated the pace of integration. With the support of the OAS and the U.N., internal conflicts in Nicaragua and El Salvador have ended and hopefully will soon end in Guatemala. The OAS routinely observes the freedom of elections across the region. Sub-regional free trade agreements have emerged throughout the hemisphere. These are points that were recently well articulated by Foreign Minister Solana at the OAS and that we enthusiastically embrace.

Increasingly today, the line has blurred between domestic and foreign policies. What we seek to do abroad directly affects us at home. No relationship illustrates better the strong linkage between foreign and domestic policies than our relationship with Mexico. The interdependence of our societies and people are stronger than ever and continues to grow. Our domestic policies affect the lives and prosperity of Mexicans in the same way that the domestic policies of Mexico profoundly affect us. You need only to look at the scope and complexity of today's BNC agenda to understand how important Mexico and the U.S. are to each other. We will work to deepen and expand our partnership even further.

One of the most productive areas in which we must work closely together is on the trade between our nations, which has doubled in