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Now, this is not foreign aid. It's not a loan. It's not a gift. We are cosigning a note. That's what the loan guarantee is. And we will only do it if we have good collateral. Mexico has never failed on any of its financial obligations to us in the past, and this will be something where we will cosign a note with good collateral. I think it's in our interest. I know it's not popular, but it's in our interest clearly and we should do it.

Russia

Mr. Brokaw. Do you think that Boris Yeltsin is in charge of Russia every day?

The President. I think he is in charge of Russia.

Mr. Brokaw. Every day?

The President Well, if he's in charge, he's in charge every day. I think he's running the government. He's the elected President. He's been much more vigorous in the last few days in his assertion of policy with regard to Chechnya. The United States supports the territorial integrity of Russia and all of its neighbors, but we want to see an end to the violence there and a political reconciliation. I do believe he's in charge, and he's the elected President, and we've worked with him and our country is better off. There are no Russian missiles pointed at America now for the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age. We're destroying 9,000 nuclear weapons and ways of delivering them. We're moving in the right direction there.

Super Bowl XXIX and the 1996 Election

Mr. Brokaw. Mr. President, I want to conclude with two scorecard questions. Who do you like in the Super Bowl, and who do you most want to run against in 1996?

The President. I want the Republicans to decide who I'm going to run against, and I'll abide their judgment and gladly receive them. And I'm for the team from California.

Mr. Brokaw. Now, Mr. President, there's northern California and a southern California. [*Laughter*] One has a lot more votes than the other.

The President. They do.

Mr. Brokaw. You're not going to get off by just saying California.

The President. Both those communities voted for me. And I'm going to be for them. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The interview began at 11:42 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House and was embargoed for release until 4 p.m. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Statement on the Baseball Strike

January 26, 1995

America has been living without baseball for far too long. Now, as the strike drags on, it threatens the start of the 1995 season. It could well damage the economies of the spring training States. It is imperiling the livelihoods of tens of thousands of workers whose jobs depend on baseball. And it is trying the patience and depressing the spirits of millions of baseball fans—including me. It is time for this strike to end.

It has always been my belief—and it continues to be—that the baseball strike, like any labor dispute, should be settled through good-faith bargaining between the parties. It was with this principle in mind that I endorsed the Secretary of Labor's proposal to appoint the best mediator around—former Labor Secretary Bill Usery—to help the parties sort out their differences.

Over the last 2 days, I have spoken with Secretary Reich and with former Secretary Usery about the status of the strike negotiations. We discussed all of the alternatives. I remain convinced that the best way to get baseball back for America is for the parties to reach their own settlement. But we cannot wait indefinitely.

This morning, I asked Bill Usery to bring the owners and the players back to the table, and to step up the pace and intensity of his mediation efforts.

I have asked him to report back to me by February 6 with the progress they have made. If the parties have not reached an agreement by then—or are not on track towards a speedy settlement—I have asked Mr. Usery, if he believes it appropriate, to put forth his own recommendations for a proposed settlement between the parties.

I hope it doesn't come to that. I urge the owners and the players to give their full support to this mediation effort, and to settle this unfortunate dispute themselves. It is time to put behind us the rancor and cynicism that are shadowing the American ideal of baseball. It is time to let all the excitement that the 1995 season can offer sweep away that tarnished image. It's time to ''play ball.''

Remarks and an Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With Welfare Recipients

January 27, 1995

O.J. Simpson Trial

The President. Is everyone in? This is a big pool today.

Q. The O.J. trial is not on——

The President. The O.J. trial hasn't started yet today, has it? Thank goodness it's in California or you all wouldn't pay any attention to what we're doing. [*Laughter*]

Q. Have you been watching it?

The President. I've seen a little of it. I saw a little of the argument last night.

Welfare Reform and the Economy

I think all of you know, as I said in my State of the Union, perhaps the most important legislative issue Congress will take up this year is welfare reform. And I strongly believe we have to end the welfare system as we know it. Tomorrow I'm having a working session with Members of the Congress, with representatives of State and local government.

But I wanted to begin this process by meeting with four people here who made the decision to choose work over welfare. I thank these women for coming in to meet with me, and I thank them for the work they've done to make the most of their own lives.

When we meet tomorrow, we need to be mindful of how this system has worked, what works about it, what doesn't work about it, what the human impact's going to be, and how we really can foster work and independence and good parenting. And that will be the focus of our discussion today and the focus of our discussion tomorrow.

One other point I'd like to make is that today we had the economic report on 1994, and we see now that last year we had the strongest economic growth in 10 years and the best combined rates of high growth and low inflation in 30 years. So we're moving in the right direction—or, 25 years. We're moving in the right direction.

And as we take up these decisions in the Congress over the budget and over the things that we are going to do, I would say we have to keep in mind that the most important social program is a job. And the most important thing that we can do to get to the New Covenant of more opportunity and more responsibility is to make sure as we are working to legislate and to create more responsibility at the grassroots level, we also keep opportunity in mind. And so we've got to keep the economic recovery going. We've got to pass responsible welfare reform. And those are the two things that I want to emphasize today.

Q. Mr. President, what worries you about some of the welfare remedies that are being proposed by Republicans in Congress?

The President. Well, some of them seem to say that we should cut people off of assistance without regard to what will happen to their children and without regard to whether they will have an opportunity to get the skills they need to move into the work force. And I think that's the thing that bothers me most of all.

The other thing I wanted to do is to make sure that as we give more responsibility to the States, which is something I strongly support—we've given two dozen States permission to get out from under Federal rules and regulations to try their own remedies; no one of us has all the answers to this; nobody does, otherwise the problem would be solved—but I want to make sure that we do not do it in a way that strongly disadvantages some States and helps others. I think we have to be fair to all States. Not every State at every point in time in the future will have the same percentage of its citizens eligible for welfare.

The third thing I want to point out is, I think it's important that we do not forget that a lot of people who go on public assistance will only do it one time in their lives and do it because they hit a bump in the road, they have a marriage that breaks up, they lose a job, they have some personal misfor-