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Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Chancellor Kohl

February 9, 1995

Former Vice President Dan Quayle

Q. Mr. President, have you heard that former Vice President Quayle has decided not to run for the Republican nomination?

The President. I was literally—I was informed of that 3 minutes ago.

Q. What do you think about it?

The President. I'm a little surprised. But it's a hard decision, and it's an intensely personal one. I wish him well. I know it must have been a difficult decision for him.

Death of J. William Fulbright

Q. Do you have anything to say, sir, about Senator Fulbright?

The President. Yes. As you know, he was a very close friend of mine. And if it hadn't been for him, I don't think I'd be here today. I had a wonderful visit with him and with Mrs. Fulbright over Christmas. They came to the White House to see the decorations, and we had a great, great visit. And I was in his home a few weeks before that. So I've kept in close touch with him in these months of his illness.

He made an amazing contribution to the life of our country and, of course, to our home State. And he was a great inspiration to thousands and thousands of us who were young when he was a Senator and serving. And the country is in his debt.

Q. Do you think you'll go to his funeral?

The President. I certainly hope so. We're—I was informed early, early this morning that he had died during the night, and I told the folks to try to work it out.

Surgeon-General-Designate Henry Foster

Q. What do you think of Dr. Foster's performance on ''Nightline''?

The President. I'm sorry to say, I didn't see it because I went to bed early last night; I was very tired. But I heard he did quite well. And I think he's a good man. I think he just needs to keep talking about his life and his record and what he wants to do. I'm looking forward to the hearings.

[*At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.*]

President Boris Yeltsin of Russia

Q. Mr. President, may I ask a question? Do you see eye to eye with the Chancellor when it comes to supporting Boris Yeltsin?

The President. I think we are almost completely in agreement on our positions. Now, we haven't had a chance to talk; we've just arrived. But certainly over the last 2 years since I've been President, our positions have been the same. And we have worked very hard to try to promote democracy and progress within Russia. And we have done it together, and I think we will continue to work together on this.

Q. Do you support economic sanctions because of the situation in Chechnya?

The President. I don't think—we just started, and we haven't had a chance to have a conversation yet. We'll have a press conference later, and we'll all answer questions then.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:40 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

The President's News Conference With Chancellor Kohl

February 9, 1995

The President. Good afternoon. Please be seated. It's a pleasure for me to welcome Chancellor Kohl to the White House again. For more than 12 years American Presidents have looked to Helmut Kohl for insight and cooperation, for friendship and support on the most pressing issues of the day. Thanks to his wisdom and leadership, the relationship between Germany and the United States has strengthened and grown, becoming a force for positive change in the post-cold-war world. America has no better friend than Chancellor Kohl.

The Chancellor's visit comes at an important time. One of the most vital issues we discussed today is building a more integrated Europe in the wake of this new era. The Chancellor and I reaffirmed our intention to press ahead with the enlargement of NATO