

gress that you will support cutting the deficit, you will support balancing the budget, but investing in our country and having the Federal Government play a role, which in the larger scheme of things is still a modest role but a critical one, is absolutely essential for our future.

You've been working hard out there, and a lot of you work under very difficult circumstances. But there is no more noble, no more important task, especially at this moment when we stand on the threshold of a new century.

I thank you for your service to your country. I thank you for your service to the children and to the future of America. I wish you well. I ask for your good wishes and your strength and your willingness to stand for what you know is right for America.

God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke by satellite at 2:20 p.m. from Room 459 in the Old Executive Office Building to the National Education Association (NEA) convention meeting in Minneapolis, MN. In his remarks, he referred to Keith Geiger, president, NEA.

Telephone Conversation with Space Shuttle *Atlantis* Astronauts

July 7, 1995

The President. Hello? Captain Gibson?

Commander Robert L. Gibson. Hello, Mr. President. This is Captain Gibson. We're on-line.

The President. Welcome home, and congratulations. We are very proud of you.

Commander Gibson. [*Inaudible*—Mr. President. It's a pleasure for us to be back—back on the ground again and to have had the opportunity to take part in this flight.

The President. Well, the pictures were wonderful, and we all watched you with absolute fascination and incredible support and enthusiasm. This is truly the beginning of a new era of cooperation in space between the United States and Russia. We've built a new relationship between our two countries. We're doing things together. And I think that what you and your team and what the Russians did together symbolizes that more than anything that I could ever say. And I think

because of your mission now, the United States and Russia, with our partners in Canada and Japan and Europe, are going to be able to meet the challenge of building the international space station. And I hope you and all of your team members will take an enormous amount of pride in that.

Commander Gibson. Well, thank you, Mr. President, for those extremely kind words. We certainly will. And I can tell you very honestly that at least all of us on the crew have a lot of very good friends in Russia and among the Russian Cosmonaut Corps and elsewhere in Russia. And I look forward very much to all of us continuing this.

The President. So do I. Before I sign off—I know you're tired and I know you're glad to be home—I want to offer a special congratulations to Norm Thagard on his record-breaking stay on orbit. We're all very proud of that. And I want to invite the entire crew to the White House as soon as you can come, because I want to hear some more about the mission, and we need to talk about where we're going from here to keep the United States commitment to space exploration, travel, and to keep our whole program strong and alive.

Astronaut Norman E. Thagard. Mr. President, thanks for the words. This is Norm Thagard. The Russians took good care of me. We're great friends, so I think if what we did on a personal level is any indication, there won't be any problem with us on an intergovernmental level as well. And I'm sitting here looking at my two Russian crewmates, and I couldn't be more pleased with a crew that I've ever had.

The President. The next time we have any problems between American and Russian officials, I'm going to send them into space. I think I now know how to solve all international problems. [*Laughter*]

I thank you very much, and I look forward to seeing all of you. Welcome home.

Commander Gibson. Thank you, Mr. President. We really appreciate your time and your support.

The President. Thank you. Goodbye.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:27 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on the National Economy
July 7, 1995

Today's employment report shows that since the start of our administration, the economy has created 7 million jobs, with over 92 percent of them created in the private sector. When I ran for President, I stated that this country must have a strategy to strengthen and restore the American dream and that a core element of this strategy must be to create more and better jobs for hard-working Americans.

Seven million jobs in 30 months is very good news, but still not good enough: millions of families are still working harder than ever just to stay in place. In order to increase incomes for hardworking Americans, we must remain committed to a broadbased economic strategy to reward work, balance the budget, open markets for American goods, invest in education and training, target tax cuts to helping families invest in their futures, and take serious steps to health reform while protecting Medicare.

**Digest of Other
White House Announcements**

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

July 1

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled from Miami, FL, to New Haven, CT. They returned to Washington, DC, late in the evening.

July 3

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton traveled to Camp David, MD.

July 5

In the afternoon, the President and Hillary Clinton returned to Washington, DC.

The White House announced the President has invited President Ernesto Perez Balladares of Panama for an official working visit on September 7.

The President announced his intention to nominate John Raymond Garamendi to be Deputy Secretary of the U.S. Department of the Interior.

The President announced his intention to nominate Cheryl Halpern as a member of the Broadcasting Board of Governors for the International Bureau of Broadcasting.

The President announced his intention to appoint Irving J. Stolberg to the Commission for the Preservation of America's Heritage Abroad.

July 6

In the afternoon, the President attended a reception in Riggs Library at George Washington University.

The White House announced the President has accepted the invitations by the British and Irish Governments to visit the United Kingdom and Ireland, November 29 to December 2.

The White House announced the President has invited President Nicephore Soglo of Benin for an official working visit to the White House on July 13.

The President announced his intention to nominate Richard Henry Jones as Ambassador to Lebanon.

The President announced his intention to renominate Ernest W. DuBester to the National Mediation Board.

The President announced his intention to appoint Ruth Ann Minner to the Advisory Committee on the Arts of the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts.

**Nominations
Submitted to the Senate**

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.