

years and beyond, you can count the United States in.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 a.m. in the General Assembly Hall at United Nations Headquarters. In his remarks, he referred to United Nations General Assembly President Diogo Freitas do Amaral and United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President Nelson Mandela of South Africa in New York City

October 22, 1995

President Clinton. Hello. Is everyone in?

President Mandela. They're the only people who can order the President of a superpower around. [*Laughter*]

President Clinton. Let me just begin by saying that it's a great honor for me to have a chance to meet with my friend President Mandela again. He is a symbol of the best of what has occurred in the world in the last 50 years, since the United Nations has been in existence. And we honor the progress South Africa has made and is making. We value our partnership and look forward to doing more together.

I want to thank again the President for making it possible to establish the Gore-Mbeki commission so that we'll have a very high-level way of working together systematically over the long run. And we are very excited about it, and I'm looking forward to our meeting.

President Mandela. [*Inaudible*—is in power in South Africa, it is the duty of the new government to solve the problems facing the country and not to be pointing the finger—fingers—at what happened before we came into power. But for the purpose of appreciating what the United States of America has done to facilitate the transformation that has taken place in our country and the trend of democracy, we must start from the point that we faced one of the brutal systems of racial oppression in our country. And the fact that in our anti-apartheid fight, we had the support of a country like the United States of America, strengthened the democratic

forces in our country and enabled us to win. It is in that spirit that I always look forward to meeting the President of the United States of America. And it is in that spirit that I'm going to have discussions with him.

Thank you.

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

President Clinton. Let me begin by saying it is a great honor for me to welcome my friend President Mandela back to the United States. He is a hero to so many people in our country because of his long fight for freedom and democracy and justice in South Africa. And on this 50th anniversary of the United Nations, I think we can fairly say that the example that he and his country have set really embodies the best of what the United Nations is trying to do throughout the world.

Vice President Gore and Mr. Mbeki have established a remarkable commission where we're going to have a high-level, ongoing, significant partnership with South Africa. And I believe that this relationship is in good shape. And I look forward to making it better.

And I'm delighted to welcome you here, Mr. President. Would you like to say anything before we let them ask a question or two?

President Mandela. Thank you. We have had very good relations with the United States of America. I must point out that the first head of state to congratulate me when I came out of prison was the President of the United States of America at the time. And he invited me to this country.

Our relations have deepened considerably since President Clinton took over power. He has helped us to ensure that democracy in our country is deeply entrenched. And it is always in that spirit that we think of him. And it is in that spirit that I'm here today to have these discussions with the President.

I look forward to reaching agreement on a wide variety of issues. This has been my experience before in having discussions with him. And I have no reason to doubt whatsoever that from this short meeting that we're going to have, we'll come out stronger and more close to one another as never before.

Thank you.

United Nations Funding

Q. Mr. President, what makes you think the Republican Congress will be in any mood to give you the money to make up the back payments the U.S. owes the U.N.?

President Mandela. Can you just repeat that?

President Clinton. Excuse me.

President Mandela. He was talking to you. I'm so sorry. Very sorry. I am very sorry.

President Clinton. I wish you would answer that question. [Laughter]

Q. Do you think they might—the money until—

President Clinton. Well, the Secretary of State and Ambassador Albright are working on that in the Congress now. There are some supporters of the United Nations in the Congress and the Republican Party. And again I say—you know, we're having this argument on another subject—I just believe America ought to be a good citizen. I think we ought to pay our bills.

Now, we have made it clear that our contribution should be more commensurate with our share of the world's wealth, and it will be. We have made it clear that there have to be reforms in the United Nations, and we're working hard on that. But I don't think the United States wants to be known as the biggest deadbeat in the U.N. That's not the kind of reputation I think we should cultivate. And we are still the largest contributor to the United Nations, but we ought to pay our obligations. I was raised to believe we should pay our obligations. I was raised to believe the United States set a standard for the world in honoring its obligations. And I do not believe that we should depart from that now. I worked hard to get our arrears paid back in a disciplined, regular way, and the Secretary of State and Ambassador Albright will be working with Congress to see if we can do that.

Cuba

Q. Mr. President, if President Mandela was able to speak to the apartheid government when he came out of prison, why is it the United States can't talk to Cuba's Fidel Castro?

President Clinton. He was speaking to his own country and his own country trying to change his own country.

We have a Cuban Democracy Act which sets the framework of our relationship. And we have a mechanism within which we have dealt with the Cubans on matters of common concern for some years now. And that mechanism has operated since I've been President. And the Cuban Democracy Act provides for a measured improvement of our relationships in direct response to measured steps by the Cubans moving toward greater freedom and openness and democracy. And we have taken some steps in the last few days, as you know, to try to open contacts and to try to facilitate travel by Cuban-Americans to go see their families. So we're moving in a direction that we can continue to move in if Cuba continues to move in that direction.

I think the Cuban Democracy Act and its framework sets a good way of seeing this relationship mature when there are changes in Cuba that warrant it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:20 p.m. at the United States Mission to the United Nations. In his remarks, he referred to Executive Deputy President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks at a United Nations Luncheon in New York City

October 22, 1995

Mr. Secretary-General, first, on behalf of all of us here present, let me thank you for your hospitality. But far more important, I thank you for your leadership, your energy, your resolve, and the vision of the United Nations and the world for the next 50 years that you have just painted for us. To be sure, the United Nations will face greater demands, but the potential for doing greater good is there as well. And we believe that your leadership has played a very important role in bringing us to this point.

This morning, I was able to speak about many of the specific activities of the United Nations and some that I hope we will undertake in the future. At this luncheon, I would just like to thank you for something that has