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Russian forces were not under NATO command and control or there was some type of dual key arrangement wouldn't work. Is that still the U.S. position?

President Clinton. Our position is that we're going to have an operation that works. We want Russia to be involved in it. We made some progress today consistent with both of our objectives, with neither side giving up the things that were most important to it. We made some progress today on that. And we recognized that some of the things that needed to be decided neither of us could in good conscience decide without giving our military leaders the chance to work through that. So we agreed that this week—this week—our military leaders would keep working.

That is all I can tell you; the more we say about it, the worse it will be. We are moving toward peace. The first and most important thing is, make peace in Bosnia. That has not been done yet. If that happens—and we hope it will, and we've agreed on that completely, how we will approach it—then we have the responsibility to work together to make the peace work. And we will do that.

President Yeltsin. I want to add, you are underestimating the Presidents of two such great powers. Maybe something didn't quite reach you. Maybe you can't quite figure out how we can solve it, but it came to us; it reached us.

NOTE: The President's 104th news conference began at 3:44 p.m. on the front steps of the Franklin D. Roosevelt home. In his remarks, he referred to Russian Minister of Defense Pavel Grachev. President Yeltsin spoke in Russian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter.

Joint Statement With President Yeltsin on Nuclear Materials Security

October 23, 1995

Presidents Clinton and Yeltsin noted the importance they attach to ensuring the security of nuclear weapons and nuclear materials, maintaining effective control over them, and combating illegal trafficking in nuclear materials. They underscored their strong support for the efforts underway in the Russian Federation and the United States to achieve these objectives, including the rapidly growing range of cooperative activities being pursued jointly by US and Russian experts. The Presidents noted with satisfaction that bilateral and multilateral cooperation in these areas has grown rapidly over the past year and includes joint activities on law enforcement, customs, intelligence liaison and on-the-ground cooperation to improve nuclear materials security at ten sites, protecting tons of nuclear material. The Presidents also welcomed cooperative efforts to improve the security of nuclear weapons in transport or storage in connection with their dismantlement.

The two Presidents welcomed the joint report on steps that have been accomplished and additional steps that should be taken to ensure the security of nuclear materials, prepared by the Gore-Chernomyrdin Commission in implementation of the May 10 summit declaration on nonproliferation. This report outlines current and planned U.S.-Russian programs of bilateral cooperation that will result in broad improvements in nuclear materials security, including several important sites with weapons-usable nuclear material, increased security for nuclear weapons in connection with their dismantlement, and construction of a safe and secure long-term storage facility for fissile material from dismantled weapons. The Presidents endorsed speedy implementation of these plans and directed that they be expanded and accelerated to the greatest extent possible.

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

Remarks to the AFL–CIO Convention in New York City

October 23, 1995

The President. Thank you very much for the wonderful welcome. Thank you, Tom, for the great introduction. I wish I'd been here to hear it. [*Laughter*] But I appreciate it.

You know, I've taken so many controversial positions in the last 3 years, I thought I'd come here and tell you what you ought to do in this election. [*Laughter*] You should elect—listen to this—you ought to elect an Irish-American from the Bronx who comes

out of the Service Employees Union. [*Laughter*] I just want you to know that whatever you do, I intend to be there with you every step of the way. And I know how important this is. [*Applause*] Thank you.

Let me say before I get into my remarks, I have just come, as I think all of you know, from Hyde Park and a meeting with President Yeltsin of Russia. We made a lot of progress today in agreeing to work toward peace in Bosnia, something that concerns every citizen of the world whose conscience has been shocked by all the children and other innocent people who have been killed there.

We also agreed on working together, very importantly, to control the spread of nuclear materials, something that is a very serious problem in the aftermath of the cold war, to minimize the prospect that terrorists will ever be able to get small amounts of nuclear material and make bombs out of them.

And finally, President Yeltsin agreed with me that we should go for the strongest possible comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty next year. And that means we will probably get it, and the world will be much safer as a result of it.

I know that you have—all of you—and I came here more than anything else just to thank you, because I know that you have waged a strong and passionate grassroots campaign for a year now to oppose the cuts in worker safety and job training, in education and health care, being considered in the Congress. The White House mailroom is jammed with postcards from union retirees. [*Applause*] Thank you. This may be the high-tech age, but you have got the Capitol Hill switchboards groaning with calls from your members. And I say, send more. And I know that those ads you're running have gotten some Members of Congress suffering with heartburn. And we just need to pour it on a little more. I thank you for that.

I come here today with a simple message: This is a very great country. You helped to make it that way. We're on the edge of a new century. We're living in a time of great change. No one can perceive clearly all the implications of that change.

We know that we've moved from an industrial age to an information and technology age, which, as all of you know in your own experience, even industry and agriculture is infused today with more technology. We know we have moved from the bipolar world of the cold war to a global village in which we have dreamed of new possibilities but also a lot of new vulnerabilities because of the changes that are going on.

And we know we've got to somehow harness this change to benefit ordinary people in our country and throughout the world. We have to do it consistent with the basic values that made America great and that make life worth living, values that your movement embodies: a commitment to opportunity for every American; to the dignity of work; to the commitment that the family should be strengthened and children should be nurtured and parents should be honored; a recognition that we have to go forward or backward together and therefore it is crazy for us to be divided by race, by region, by income and any way that in any way saps our strength; and the determination to keep this country the strongest nation on Earth. Those are the things which have animated the labor movement in the later half of the 20th century. And those are the values that will take us into the 21st century.

Three years ago, you helped the American people to send me to Washington to uphold these values and to turn our economy around. I had a commitment to make the American dream real for all Americans in the 21st century and to make sure that our country would remain the strongest country in the world. I had a simple strategy to harness change to benefit all of us. I thought we needed to be faithful to the mainstream values I just mentioned. I thought we needed a middle class economic strategy to grow the middle class and shrink the under class. I thought we needed a modern Government that would be less bureaucratic, more entrepreneurial, but still strong enough to take care of the business that the people need done.

The lion's share of the credit belongs to you and the rest of the American people, but we're moving in the right direction. And I know that our policies had something to do with it. We've got 7½ million new jobs in this country, after the slowest job growth in

the country since the Great Depression, in the 4 years before I took office. We've got 2½ million more homeowners, 2 million new small business people, the lowest combined rate of inflation and unemployment in 25 years. Our country is safer and stronger. For the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age, there's not a single solitary nuclear missile pointed at the people of the United States of America. And I'm proud of that. And by the grace of God, from Northern Ireland to Haiti, to the Middle East, now to Bosnia, the United States is a strong partner in pushing for peace.

Maybe most important of all, this country seems to be slowly coming together around its values again. It's hard to turn a great country around, but when we get going in a certain direction, we can make a real difference. In almost every State, in this great city where you're meeting, the crime rate is down; the murder rate is down; the welfare rolls are down; the food stamp rolls are down. Believe it or not, the poverty rate is down, and the teen pregnancy rate has dropped for 2 years in a row. America is coming back and moving together.

And we proved you could do it together. Instead of just condemning the Government the way my predecessors did, we made a partnership with the Federal employees, and in a balanced and fair and disciplined way, we tried to downsize the Government so that this big Government attack is a myth today. But we left our Government strong enough for the employees that are there to do their jobs. And we just didn't throw anybody on the street; we gave them good buyout provisions. We tried to protect their retirement. We treated them and their families with decency and the honor and the respect they were entitled to after the years they had served the United States of America. And that's the way this ought to be done everywhere.

Let me tell you what the Federal employees are doing—just a few things. I could talk all day about it. But Federal employees working in the Commerce Department, in the Export-Import Bank, in other areas, have helped to create good jobs, many of them union jobs, in America by increasing our exports 4 percent, 10 percent, and 16 percent this year, in the last 3 years. A lot of that was done because of aggressive actions by people who work for the United States Government.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency—we've had as many natural disasters to deal with in the last 3 years as any time I can remember. And it is probably the most popular arm of the Federal Government because the Federal employees have been there in a timely, aggressive, effective fashion when they were needed, whether it was for floods in the Middle West or fires and earthquakes in the West or anything else. And I am proud of that.

And let me tell you something I'm especially proud of. Business Week magazine, which is hardly an arm of the Federal Government or the Democratic Party, every year gives awards to businesses that perform at the highest level of efficiency in a number of categories. And one of their categories is for customer service over the telephone. So the businesses that compete, for example, are Southwest Airlines or L. L. Bean or, you know, anybody that you call on the telephone. You know who won this year? The Social Security Administration of the Federal Government won that award.

These Federal employees operate a Medicare program that has a 2 percent administrative cost, lower than any private insurance program in the United States of America, something you rarely hear about in the debate going on in Congress today. They have implemented a crime bill that's putting 100,000 police on the streets of America, and they're doing it on time and under budget. They have implemented the motor voter law, the family leave law, both those things that you helped to get.

They have been able to be much tougher in capturing large quantities of drugs before they come into this country. Without going into a bunch of immigrant bashing, they have been able to in a disciplined way strengthen our ability to reduce the problems of illegal immigration in the United States. And they have fought discrimination, something that was out of fashion for the Federal Government to do until this administration came in. And I thank them for it.

And guess what? We've been able to prove you can grow the economy and be decent to working people, something that the people who were there before and the people who are in the Congress today in dominant positions apparently don't believe. If you look at what's happened—and I'm sure Tom mentioned a lot of this—but when we repealed my predecessors' anti-union Executive orders that denied American workers their rights from private industry to public service, it didn't hurt the economy. The economy got better, not worse. When we said in no uncertain terms that you ought to have a fair, decent, effective NLRB, and we did our best to provide that, the economy got better, not worse. It didn't undermine the American economy.

When we refused to go along with repealing Davis-Bacon and the service contract law, the economy didn't collapse; it helped to create more high-wage jobs, not fewer. And when we began to crack down on sweatshops where unscrupulous employers make illegal immigrants work in prison-like conditions, depriving them of the minimum wage, overtime pay, a safe workplace and the right to organize, it will make us stronger, not weaker.

And when we have refused to go along with the attempts of some people to weaken our ability to provide a safe workplace, it has not weakened the economy; it has helped to make the American economy stronger. It is time we accepted a fundamental lesson: Treating working people in a decent, fair, humane, enlightened way gives you a stronger American economy, not a weaker one.

Audience members. Four more years! Four more years! Four more years!

The President. Thank you.

Now, we do have some real challenges before us. You and I know that this recovery's benefits have not been spread evenly to all Americans. We know that we've been in a time of increasing inequality. By the way, this is what usually happens when you move from one economic model to another. When we move from the agricultural age to the industrial age, the labor movement grew up because there were so many people who were being exploited, not benefiting from the benefits of the new industrial age. So whenever you change in a huge way the way people work and live and relate to each other and the rest of the world, some will be well-positioned and do well; others will not be.

That's why people need to come together, because you know in the end you cannot sustain progress unless everybody can benefit. That's one of the big reasons we had the Great Depression, because people did not understand that everybody had to have a stake in the future in order for free enterprise to flourish.

And so we have that happening today, where people who are well-positioned tend to do well; others work harder for less and become more insecure. There are some fundamental things we have to do about it. First and most elementally, it is high time we raise the minimum wage. It is wrong—[*applause*]. Thank you. If we do not do that, next year the minimum wage will reach a 40-year low in purchasing power. That is not my idea of the 21st century America I want our children and grandchildren to live in. I want us to go up together.

It also will be good business. People will have more money to consume, and people who are presently out of the work force will be attracted to get back into it. There is no evidence, no evidence, and I have read all the studies—at least I've read fair summaries of all the studies. I don't want to—[*laughter*]—there is no evidence that the minimum wage, a modest increase in the minimum wage, will cause unemployment. There is every evidence that it will strengthen America and bring us together.

The second thing I think we need to do is to make some changes that recognize that there is a fundamental difference in the nature of unemployment today and unemployment 30 years ago. The unemployment compensation system, the whole setup was designed for people who were laid off when there was a slowdown and then picked right back up by their employers when the economy picked up again. It was designed to give people a way to just get by until they got called back.

As recently as 30 years ago, 80 percent—85 percent of the people who were laid off and collected unemployment were called back to the same job from which they were

laid off. Today, over 80 percent of the people who are laid off are not called back to the same job from which they are laid off. All of you know that. Therefore, I have proposed having the Labor Department, working with the Education Department, create a ''GI bill for America's workers,'' which consolidates all of our training programs, puts more money into it, and gives every person who loses a job a right to get a voucher to take to the program that you want, whether it's a union apprenticeship program, a union training program, the local community college. Whatever is best needed for the people that are unemployed, they ought to have it. And I think we ought to do it immediately.

The second thing that we ought to do—if we're going to have a tax cut we ought to target it to working families and what they need the most, which is help raising their children, paying for their child care, and getting an education. So I think we ought to have a tax deduction for the cost of all education after high school. Now, that would help working people a lot. That would help.

The third thing I will say is—and I know we have sometimes disagreed on this—I believe that we win when we expand trade. So it's not enough to have more free trade, which I favor, we also have to have more fair trade. That's what the Japanese auto agreement was about. And thank you, Owen Bieber, for supporting us and for finally giving us a chance to crack some of those markets that have been denied American workers for too long. And we're going to keep doing things like that all the way down.

Against that background, this is how I think you ought to see this balanced budget fight. What has worked for us the last 2½ years? Mainstream values, work and family and responsibility and community and treating people with dignity, all people, without regard to their race or their region or income; believing that you have to lift working people up if you want other people to do well: That has worked for us. What's worked for us? Middle class economics, help the small business people, help the entrepreneurs, also help to grow the middle class working people and shrink the under class: That's what works. That's what is at stake in this budget battle.

This is not—I want to say this, and I want you to go home and tell everybody you know this—this is not a battle about balancing the budget. That has nothing to do with what is going on in Washington today. I gave the Congress a balanced budget. You'd be better off if we could balance the budget. When we quadrupled the debt in 12 years before I showed up, what happened? We had to spend more and more money on interest on the debt. We had less and less money to invest in worker training, in new technology, and the kinds of things that will grow the economy, raise incomes, educate our children.

It would be a good thing to do. But we have to do that, like everything else, consistent with our values and our objectives. That is what is at stake. It is, what kind of America are we going to live in?

I've given the Congress a balanced budget. It cuts all kinds of spending. It eliminates hundreds of programs. But it increases our investment in education, in technology, in research. It protects instead of hurts the old, the poor, the disabled, the little children on Medicare and Medicaid. It supports investment in worker safety and in a clean environment and in the kinds of national treasures that we share together. That is the kind of balanced budget we need.

And that is what I want to talk to you about. I am not about to do something that I think will prevent us from doing what I ran for President to do: giving every American a shot at the American dream and making sure this is the strongest, finest country in the world in the 21st century. I am not going to do that. And you shouldn't put up with it. You shouldn't put up with it.

Now, here's what I mean. I'm going to give you the 10 greatest hits or so of this present budget. This is not the Letterman show, and so it won't all be funny. You may have to laugh a couple of times to keep from crying, but here's what this is really about. Here's what the real contract is.

We all say we believe in honoring our parents for what they have done for us. And Medicare is a way of honoring our parents. We have to slow the rate of growth of medical inflation. We have to secure the Medicare

Trust Fund. I presented a budget which will do that.

We have to recognize that health care is changing. I have no problem with giving seniors the option to join managed care plans if they can get lower costs or better services. I think we should do that. I'm sympathetic with doctors and hospitals and their need to have some changes in the law so they can work together to compete with insurance companies to provide managed care. I'm not against that. But I'll tell you what I am against. I'm against this budget that was passed that, believe it or not, makes it easier to commit waste, fraud, and abuse. When the Federal Government says up to 10 percent of the money may be wasted, they passed a budget to make it easier to commit waste, fraud, and abuse but harder for the poorest, the oldest, and the sickest seniors to make sure their health care needs are met. That is wrong. I don't like it. I won't support it. And if it passes, I will veto it. It is wrong.

I want to talk to you about the Medicaid program. There's a lot of AFSME workers here who work in health care institutions that depend upon Medicaid. New York City has a whole health care network that depends not just on Medicare but Medicaid. Most people think Medicaid is the welfare health program. Let me tell you—70 percent of the Medicaid money goes to the elderly and the disabled for nursing home care, for in-home care, for physician care. Thirty percent of the Medicaid money does go to poor people, not all of them on welfare, some of them even working for very poor wages. And most of that money goes to take care of the little children. Over one in five children in the United States of America is eligible for Medicaid help for health care. And all those kids, they may not be in your family, but they're your kids. And 20 years from now, they're either going to be in jail or in school or in the workplace. And they're going to be a big part of our future. And I don't know about you, but when I retire, I want them out there working, making lots of money, taking care of me. And I want to take care of their health right now.

So my idea of the 21st century is not a Medicaid program that takes away the money that helps the poorest seniors to pay their part of the Medicare program. That's right; they get rid of it, $10 billion. We help the poorest old folks pay their copays. We help them pay the fees they owe under Medicare because they don't have any money. There's a lot of old folks out there. There's folks still living on $300 a month. This budget takes it all away. And there's been a study which estimates that it may take at least a million elderly people out of the Medicare program.

I was in Texas the other night at a fundraiser, and a doctor came up to me. A doctor came up to me, and he said, ''You keep fighting on this.'' He said, ''I've been a doctor a long time. I remember when I did not have any older patients, before Medicare, before Medicaid, when I had no older patients, because older people were too proud to come to the doctor if they couldn't pay their bills. So a lot of them just stayed home and got sick and died.'' It is wrong. I will not put up with it. It is not right. And you shouldn't put up with it either. It is not right. It is not right.

I want to tell you one more thing about this Medicaid plan. It says, ''Oh, we're going to block-grant this to the States. We're going to get these terrible Federal rules and regulations out of the State's hair.'' I was a Governor for 12 years. I used to sing that song. [*Laughter*] I believe in that.

Our administration—don't you let anybody tell you this is about State's rights—our administration has given more waivers, more freedom to get out from under Federal rules to State governments to experiment with moving people from welfare to work or serving more people, getting health insurance to more people, than the last two administrations combined. More in 2½ years than they did in 12 years. This is not about giving the States flexibility.

But let me tell you the kind of things they want to let the States do and what they don't want to let the States do, and it will tell you what's really behind this. They've adopted their Medicaid programs. And among other things, they say that the State ought to get Medicaid block-granted and they ought to have the right to get rid of the so-called spousal impoverishment rule. That's Government language. You know what that means? That means if an elderly couple lived to be 78 years old and they've been married 50

years and they're living on their Social Security and one of them gets so sick that he or she needs to go in the nursing home, they want to give back to the State governments the right to tell the one that doesn't go to the nursing home, "You want your wife or your husband to get any help? You've got to sell your car, sell your house, clean out your bank account, give it to us, and then we'll give you a little help. We don't know how you're going to live." I don't like that. That is not my idea of the 21st century I want to live in.

But you know what? In the next breath, do you know what they did? They took away from the States—they say, "We're going to give you lots of flexibility and a little less money. And we want you to run it however you want to, but, oh, oh, there's one thing you've been doing we're not going to let you do anymore. Right now you can bargain with the drug companies to get the lowest possible price for drugs for elderly people and little kids. And we're not going to let you do that anymore, because the drug companies don't want us to. So I'm sorry, you will have to do more with less money, but here's something you can't do." I don't know about you, but I don't get driving up the price of drugs and driving old folks into the poor house. I don't think that's right. That's not the America I want to live in. And I'm going to do everything I can to stop it. And I want you to help me.

Now, I want to talk to you about education. Everybody's for education. You ask anybody in the Congress, are you for education? They say, absolutely. But you've always got to ask the next question; the first question is never enough. I'll tell you—you know the best story I know about that—you know, there's a—this minister was sort of a—not a very effective minister, and people would go to sleep in his sermons. And he was overcome, and he prayed day-in and day-out for inspiration so he could finally give a barn-burning sermon and everybody would stand up. And their hearts would be purified, and their spiritual zeal would be great.

So he worked so hard on this. And he showed up, and he gave the sermon of his life. And people were stomping and clapping and even in this staid church were shouting amen. And he got to the final line of his sermon; he said, "I want everybody that wants to go to heaven to stand up." And the whole congregation stood up, except one woman that hadn't missed church in 45 years. And he was crestfallen. He said, "Sister Jones, don't you want to go to heaven when you die?" And she leapt up, she said, "I'm sorry, I thought you were trying to get up a load to go right now." [*Laughter*]

So you always got to ask the next question. Everybody's for education. Our budget balances the budget and increases our investment in education by $40 billion—by $40 billion over 7 years—by making choices and setting priorities. Why? Because if 22 percent of the kids in this country are poor enough to be on Medicaid, they need a little extra help through Head Start to get off to a good start in school, because a lot of schools are too poor to have the class sizes they need or the computers we want them to have; because a lot of kids are in danger going to and from school, and we need to give schools more help to remain safe and drug-free; because we want to make it possible for everybody to go to college.

When I ran for President, I came here and I made a specific commitment. I said if you will vote for me and get me elected, I'll do everything I can to cut the cost of college loans, to improve the repayment on college loans, and then to be tougher on people who default. We cut the default rate in half, but we also cut the cost of college loans. We made repayment easier. And to boot, we added more scholarships.

And enrollment is going up, but nowhere near what we need. I want every middle class family in this country and every poor family in this country to be able to send their kids to college. And I don't want anybody ever from now on to have to walk away from a college education because of the cost. That's my idea of the 21st century.

So when the Congress presents a budget that says, no, it's all right if several thousand more kids—20, 30, whatever it is—more kids don't get to go to Head Start and we have to remove them; it's all right if we don't help as many schools with safe and drug-free programs as we were; it's all right if a whole lot of schools now can't use that money for

their poor kids for the smaller classes and the computers; it's okay if because the people that lost money on the direct loan program, the special interests, want their money back, so we're just going to kill this program that the Government's running that's got lower cost college loans and better repayment terms. We're going to get rid of that, and to boot, we'll get rid of somewhere between 150,000 and 380,000 scholarships. I don't know about you folks, that is not the kind of America I want for the 21st century. And I'm going to do everything I can to stop it. It is wrong. And it's bad for our economy. It doesn't make sense.

And we're getting a little closer to home now. You say to people, are you for family values? Why, of course we are. Who could be against it? Most of those who were there last time—they're in the majority now—when we asked them to stand up for family values by adopting the family and medical leave law, they said no. And we said yes. And there are families that are stronger today because of the family and medical leave law because they don't lose their jobs when there's a kid sick or a parent dying or one of them gets sick. It's a better country. It's a stronger country. And it's a stronger economy because of that.

So what do we mean? Well, family values to me means safe streets, a clean environment, economic opportunity, fair taxes, secure pensions; let's just start there. Well, at least one House of Congress wants to eliminate our program to put 100,000 police on the street and to give communities—the only block grant they don't like is the one we passed to give communities the power to do what they can to prevent crime, to give our children something to say yes to instead of something to say no to, the one all the mayors love, all the Governors love, everybody thinks is great—they don't like that. Well, making us less safe is not my idea of family values.

Then they want to put 315 of our national parks and other national facilities up for sale, including Franklin Roosevelt's home where I was today. I know you find some of this unbelievable, but it's true. That's on the list. They have proposed to do all kinds of things to make it harder to preserve clean air, clean water, safe food. That's not my idea of family values. In economic opportunity, there's not a company in America that if they could avoid it in 1995 would cut research, technology, or training. But this budget cuts research, technology, and training. That's not my idea of how to build strong families. And worst of all, there's $148 billion of hidden taxes and fees on working families while they propose to give people in my income group a tax cut. And that's not my idea of the kind of 21st century I want to live in.

Now, I want you to listen to this. The Wall Street Journal, hardly an arm of the Democratic Party—[*laughter*]—reported the other day that if this budget passes with all of the taxes in it and all the tax cuts in it, with all the tax cuts in it the group of Americans as a group who make less than $30,000 a year, which is 51 percent of the American people, will have greater tax hikes than tax cuts. I get a tax cut, and we're going to soak people like that?

You know, in 1993, one of the best things about our economic program was that we doubled the family tax credit, the earned-income tax credit, which had bipartisan support, signed into law by Gerald Ford, supported by Ronald Reagan, increased by George Bush, and we doubled it. Why? Because I wanted to be able to say to the American people, "Look, you got to choose work and family over welfare and dependence. And anybody who'll work 40 hours a week with children in the house—I don't care how low their pay is—we will not tax them into poverty. We will use the tax system to lift them out of poverty." That is the principle. That is the principle. And it's the right thing to do.

I mean, I thought the game plan was we were supposed to be growing the middle class and shrinking the under class. They want to cut this by more than I increased it. They want to kick people out of the middle class and then pull the ladder up so poor people can't work their way into it. You want to get more people on welfare? Raise taxes on people with two kids making $11,000–$12,000 a year, and they will say, no thank you. This does not make sense. It violates our values. It violates our interest. It is bad for the economy. It is wrong for America. And if I can stop it with a veto pen or with

my voice or whatever it takes, I am going to do everything I can to stop it. And I want you to help me, too.

Audience members. Veto! Veto! Veto!

The President. This is the last issue I want you to focus on. These are great hits. I want you to remember this. I want you to go home, I want you to talk to friends in the workplace, and I want you to talk to friends who aren't in your union. I want you to talk to people at church, at the bowling alley, at the ballpark, wherever two or more are gathered. I want you to talk to people. I want people to know about this. This is their country, just like it's your country. This is not about me or the Republicans in Congress. It's about the future of the American family, the future of the American workplace, the future of the United States. And so I want you to listen to this. This is the greatest last hit.

During the 1980's, when—you know, that ''everything goes'' decade where everything was going to trickle down to ordinary people—thousands and thousands of corporations transferred some $20 billion out of their employees' pension funds for buyouts and other purposes. An awful lot of workers lost their life savings. Last December, one of the proudest things I was able to do in the last Congress, even after the November election, the Congress passed a bill that saved 8½ million American pensions and stabilized 40 million others that were in danger of being in trouble. I don't know what the retirement income of 48½ million Americans is worth to the strength, the stability of America; to our pro-family, pro-work values; to our economic future, but I think it's worth an awful lot.

Now, as if we haven't learned anything from the eighties and didn't have to do that, this Republican budget would allow companies to withdraw money from their workers' pension funds to use it for whatever reason they want.

Audience members. No-o-o!

The President. For whatever reason they want. Corporate buyouts, bonuses, any reason.

Now, folks, we just had to fix this last year. You know, I don't remember as well as I used to; my circuits are kind of jammed. But I can at least remember what I did last year. [*Laughter*] That is not my idea of what I want America to look like in the 21st century, taking good middle class people that worked hard all their lives, paid into their pension, showed up at work, did everything they were supposed to, and, ''Oh, I'm sorry, your pension is gone.'' One of two things is going to happen: Either the Government will have to bail it out again, in which case the deficit reduction won't take place. Or we'll throw them into the street, and we'll one more time shrink the middle class and grow the under class. Say no to that. Say no to looting the pension funds. Say no. It's wrong. It's wrong.

And look, the thing that bothers me about this is that this budget would snatch defeat from the jaws of victory This country is in better shape than it was 2½ years ago. We're moving in the right direction. What we need to do is build on what we've done, not tear it down. We need to build on middle class economics. We need to build on an economy that has the largest number of new small businesses in history. We need to build on the best time for education in the last 30 years, in the last Congress. We need to build on medical reforms that are slowing the rate of medical inflation without stripping elderly people of the security and dignity of knowing that their health care is there. We do not need to tear it down. We need to prove we can make the environment and the economy go together, not walk away from our common responsibilities.

Folks, this is about more, even more, than all the things that we are concerned about that directly affect any of us individually. This is about what kind of country we're going to be. This is about what kind of people we're going to be. It's about whether we're going to live by the values we all say we believe in. It's about whether the American dream is going to be alive in the 21st century. And what we really have to do is to do what that sign says. If we'll just stand up for America's working families, if we'll just do what we know is right, if we'll use every tool at our command—I will use the tools at my command, but I want you to go home, and I want you to talk to people in the streets and say we're moving this country. This country is going into the 21st century. Don't let these people take us back. If it takes a veto, you'll

have it. But I need you in the streets standing up for America's future.

God bless you, and thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:35 p.m. in the Imperial Ballroom at the Sheraton New York Hotel and Towers. In his remarks, he referred to Tom Donahue, president, AFL–CIO, and Owen Bieber, former president, United Auto Workers.

Proclamation 6843—National Consumers Week, 1995

October 23, 1995

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Business and trade have always been central to the American experience. In the period since the Industrial Revolution, the extraordinary growth of our economy has created a marketplace that is the foundation of global commerce. Unparalleled natural and human resources have energized every part of our society—from the agricultural heartland that feeds an international community; to the textile and steel mills that began the machine age in America; to the scientific, computer, and information companies that are leading the way into the fast-paced world of the 21st century.

Consumer protections such as fair pricing and product safety rules are more necessary than ever to ensure that all of us are able to fully and fairly participate in a free enterprise system that encourages competition, productivity, and innovation. These protections have evolved alongside the remarkable expansion of the world economy. In 1962, President John F. Kennedy clarified the importance of consumer protection in a Special Message to Congress that has become known as the Consumer Bill of Rights. This statement articulated each person's rights to safety, information, and choice, and the right to be heard in the process of resolving consumer problems. In 1975 President Gerald R. Ford added the right to consumer education.

As the driving force behind the richest, most prosperous country in the world, the United States' free market is a model for others to emulate. We must ensure that our system continues to emphasize the centrality of the consumer even as it becomes increasingly technology-oriented. Accordingly, last year, I was proud to add the latest element to the Consumer Bill of Rights—the right to service—which urges that convenience, courtesy, performance, and responsiveness remain hallmarks of the American marketplace. So that Federal workers and agencies can take the lead in providing high-quality service, my Administration has also initiated the National Performance Review to improve efficiency and promote excellence in every sector of our Government.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim October 22 through October 28 as National Consumers Week. I call upon Government officials, industry leaders, and the people of the United States to recognize the vital relationship between our economy and our citizenry and to support the right of all Americans to service excellence.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-third day of October, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-five, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twentieth.

William J. Clinton

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 2:36 p.m., October 24, 1995]

NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on October 26.

Proclamation 6844—United Nations Day, 1995

October 23, 1995

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

Fifty years ago, at the end of the most destructive war the world has ever known, delegates from fifty-one countries met in San