

ed States Jesus Silva Herzog Flores signed the protocol.]

### **Possible Visit to Mexico**

**Q.** Mr. President, do you plan to visit Mexico to celebrate this?

**The President.** The answer to your question is I do plan to visit Mexico and soon. We have not fixed a date yet, but I told President Zedillo that I would be there as soon as I could. And I think it will be actually quite soon.

### **Mexican Economy**

**Q.** Mr. President, it seems just a few months ago the peso was in trouble once again. I'm wondering if you feel in your mind, do your advisers feel that that the Mexican economy is on very certain footing right now?

**The President.** Do you want to answer that? [Laughter]

**Secretary Rubin.** If the President is going to learn to do these things, then I'll answer your question. [Laughter]

**The President.** I thought since you make so much more money than I do. [Laughter]

**Secretary Rubin.** There is a point to that. [Laughter] The answer is that I think the accomplishments—or we think the accomplishments of Mexico have been enormous. President Zedillo, Minister Ortiz, and the others have really had enormous political courage in following the track they've been on.

Having said that, while a great deal has been accomplished, there is also a great deal to do going forward, and we look forward to being helpful to, and working with, the Mexican Government.

### **Speaker Newt Gingrich**

**Q.** Mr. President, what do you think about the political warfare that's sprung up around the ethics case of Speaker Newt Gingrich?

**The President.** I want it to be over. I want it to be over. You know, the American people have given us larger responsibilities. I think in general, at least in my experience in my brief time here the last 4 years, way too much time and energy and effort is spent on all these things, leaving too little time and emo-

tional energy for the work of the people. So that's what I think. I want it to be over, whatever—the Speaker should do whatever is appropriate, and we should get on with it, put it behind us, and go on with the business of the country.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:22 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. During the exchange, Secretary Rubin referred to Foreign Minister Guillermo Ortiz Martinez of Mexico.

### **Statement on the Bombing of a Women's Health Clinic in Atlanta, Georgia**

*January 16, 1997*

Our thoughts and prayers are with the law enforcement officers and other citizens injured this morning and with their families.

The double bombing at a women's health clinic in Atlanta this morning was a vile and malevolent crime. Make no mistake: Anyone who brings violence against a woman trying to exercise her constitutional rights is committing an act of terror. It is always wrong. And it should be punished severely.

Nobody has a right to use violence in America to advance their own convictions over the rights of others. It is precisely because we take the constitutional rights and individual liberties of all our people so seriously that I fought for and signed new legislation in 1994 to make it a Federal crime to interfere with a woman exercising her constitutional right to visit a women's health center.

Federal investigators from the FBI, ATF, the Marshals, and the U.S. Attorney are on the ground in Atlanta and working closely with local law enforcement. We will pursue this investigation aggressively and methodically. We will get to the bottom of this, and we will punish those responsible to the fullest extent the law provides.

**Proclamation 6966—Religious Freedom Day, 1997**

January 16, 1997

*By the President of the United States of America*

**A Proclamation**

Every day, in neighborhoods and communities across our Nation, Americans come together to worship and to reaffirm their most deeply held spiritual values. Our right to worship freely—each in our own way—is essential to our well-being. Religious Freedom Day offers us an invaluable opportunity to reflect on this precious human right and to give thanks for its protection in our Nation.

Freedom from religious persecution was of such profound importance to our founders that they placed it first among the freedoms guaranteed by the Bill of Rights. History has proved the wisdom of that decision. America's commitment to religious tolerance has empowered us to achieve an atmosphere of understanding, trust, and respect in a society of diverse cultures and religious traditions. And today, much of the world still looks to the United States as the champion of religious liberty.

Yet, even in America, we must be ever vigilant in protecting the freedoms so important to our ancestors and so admired by people throughout the world. The church arsons and the desecration of synagogues and mosques in recent years demonstrated for us all that our country is not entirely free from violence and religious hatred. My Administration took quick and decisive action, including working with the Congress to help churches rebuild and to prevent future incidents. And I am pleased that the American people are coming together as a national community to speak out against such crimes and to renew the climate of trust and tolerance so that all our people can worship without fear.

We must also support the aspirations of ethnic and religious minorities in other nations as they strive for their own right to worship freely. My Administration has established the Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad to provide counsel on how best to prevent persecution and promote reconciliation among people of different faiths.

I invite all nations to join us in supporting individuals in houses of worship around the world as they exercise one of the most sacred of human rights.

**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 January 16, 1997, as Religious Freedom Day. I call upon the people of the United States to observe this day with appropriate ceremonies and activities, and I urge them to reaffirm their commitment to the principle of religious freedom.

**In Witness Whereof,** I have hereunto set my hand this sixteenth day of January, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-seven, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-first.

**William J. Clinton**

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:55 a.m., January 17, 1997]

NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on January 21.

**Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Former Senator Bob Dole**

January 17, 1997

Thank you very much, General Woerner, for your kind words and for your fine work. I thank you on behalf of all Americans for all the American Battle Monuments Commission does all around the world to ensure that our fallen heroes receive the honor they deserve.

Mr. Vice President, to the members of the Cabinet, Senator and Mrs. Dole and Robin, Majority Leader Lott and many Members of Congress who are here today, to the representatives of the veterans service organizations, the members of the American Battle Monuments Commission, my fellow Americans. Let me begin by thanking Congresswoman Marcy Kaptur, Governor Hugh Carey, Commissioner Wheeler, Dr. Williams, my good friend Jess Hay, and all the members of the American Battle Monu-