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NOTE: The exchange began at 5:48 p.m. in the Yellow Room at the Presidential Palace. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Statement on the Tentative Agreement in the Dispute Between American Airlines and the Allied Pilots Association

March 20, 1997

I am pleased by the announcement yesterday that the negotiating teams for American Airlines and the Allied Pilots Association have reached a tentative agreement on their longstanding labor dispute. This tentative agreement will be presented on Friday to the APA board of directors for approval and subsequent ratification by the union membership.

I want to commend the management of American Airlines and the leadership of the Allied Pilots Association for their commitment to each other and to the traveling public. I think it speaks well of the parties and their intentions that this tentative agreement was reached more than 5 weeks before the April 28 ''cooling off'' deadline. When labor and management work together, as they did here, U.S. industries are better able to maintain their prominent positions in the global marketplace.

I also want to thank Presidential Emergency Board Chairman Robert Harris and the other members of the panel, Helen Witt and Anthony Sinicropi, for their dedication and hard work. This settlement would not have been possible without their leadership and oversight.

Statement on the Anniversary of the Sarin Gas Attack in Tokyo, Japan

March 20, 1997

Two years ago terrorists launched a cowardly chemical attack in Tokyo's subways that took 12 lives and injured thousands more. Today we join with the people of Japan in remembering their pain and loss.

This tragic anniversary also reminds us that we must do everything possible to protect Americans from the threat of a similar terrorist outrage. That includes ratifying the Chemical Weapons Convention, a step that Japan's Diet took within a month of the attack in Tokyo. And just this week, the treaty was submitted to Russia's Duma for ratification. We still have not ratified. It would be harmful to our national interests if the United States, which led the way in developing this treaty, was on the outside, not the inside, when it comes into operation on April 29.

The Chemical Weapons Convention will help to thwart chemical terrorists in several important ways. It will eliminate their largest potential source of chemical weapons by mandating the destruction of existing chemical weapon stockpiles. It will make it more difficult for terrorists to gain access to chemicals that can be used to make chemical weapons. It will tie the United States into a global intelligence and information network that can help provide early warning of terrorist plans for a chemical attack. It will give our law enforcement new authority at home to investigate and prosecute anyone seeking to acquire chemical weapons or to use them against innocent civilians.

Just as no law prevents every crime, no treaty is foolproof. But the Chemical Weapons Convention will help make our citizens more secure. It will also help protect our soldiers by requiring member nations to destroy their chemical weapons, a step that we are already taking under U.S. law.

These overwhelming benefits explain why America's military leaders and Presidents of both parties have strongly supported the ratification of this treaty. As we remember the terrible toll that sarin gas took in Tokyo 2 years ago, I urge the Senate to help protect our citizens and soldiers and strengthen our fight against terror by ratifying the Chemical Weapons Convention now.

Statement on Senate Action on Certification of Mexico

March 20, 1997

I welcome the Senate action endorsing greater cooperation with Mexico and other nations in our hemisphere in the common fight against the scourge of drugs. The resolution approved today represents bipartisan