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deal is how much is it complicated by Republican infighting. Can you talk about that a little bit?

The President. Well, my best judgment is that we should do what we've been doing. I think—I have seen in the last year a spirit of bipartisan cooperation which did not prevail in the previous period. And I think that it will continue to prevail. I think it is so clearly in the interest of the country. And I don't have any comment about what's going on among the Republicans, except that I don't believe it will interfere with our ability to reach an agreement. I don't think that they will permit it to do so. I think it is in the interests of the country, and I think that's what we'll do.

Analysis of Drug Sentencing

Q. Mr. President, can you comment on Attorney General Reno's suggestions on crack cocaine?

The President. Yes. Attorney General Reno and General McCaffrey have sent me their recommendations. I have accepted it, and I have urged them now to go to work immediately with the Congress to try to reach an acceptable resolution of this. They did a lot of work on it. They deserve a lot of credit for the exhaustive analysis that they applied to this problem, and I've accepted it. And that's our position, and we're going to try to work with Congress now to achieve a resolution.

Nomination of William F. Weld as Ambassador to Mexico

Q. Today or tomorrow—are you going to be able to pass by Helms, or are you going to fight him, or what?

The President. Well, I'm going to nominate him, and we're going to work hard to see if we can confirm him and we'll see what happens. We're going to do what we can.

Q. Do you think it's possible? Albright's using her wiles. [*Laughter*]

The President. I don't know. That's better than I could have said it. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:25 a.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Edgar Bronfman, president, World Jewish Congress; and Barry R. McCaffrey, Director, Office of National Drug Control Policy.

Statement on the Report on Religious Freedom

July 22, 1997

I welcome today's release of the Secretary of State's report on United States Policies in Support of Religious Freedom. Promoting religious freedom around the world is a key part of our human rights policy and an important focus of our diplomacy.

Today's report will help shine a spotlight on the serious problem of religious intolerance and persecution. It also underscores the importance of concerted actions by the United States and other like-minded nations to promote religious freedom.

The report fulfills a congressional request for a summary of U.S. policies to reduce and eliminate persecution against Christians around the world. It also describes our efforts to address religious persecution more broadly, which have included defending the rights of Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Baha'is, and others to practice their faiths freely. Religious freedom is a fundamental human right, and the United States vigorously condemns persecution against any believer and all faiths.

Our Nation was founded by men and women seeking refuge from religious persecution. Religious freedom is the first freedom guaranteed in our Bill of Rights. I am pleased that our Nation has been a leader in promoting religious rights, including through the establishment last year of the Secretary's Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad, through our willingness to press for religious liberty at the United Nations and in our relations with other nations, and through our determination to report fairly and accurately on these issues around the world. Today's report is part of America's larger commitment to help people of all faiths to live free of persecution and to worship in the freedom that is their birthright.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Reception

July 22, 1997

Thank you very much. Ladies and gentlemen, one of the things that I really want before I leave this office in 3½ years is to be able to stand here with Dick Gephardt and have him introduce me and have me say, ''Thank you, Mr. Speaker.'' And your presence here tonight makes that more likely.

I thank Martin Frost for his tireless efforts, often thankless efforts. Some of you he has doubtless almost irritated asking for help. [*Laughter*] But we are working hard to bring back the House of Representatives to our party in the 1998 elections. And let me assure you that it can be done. I know that it can be done, but what I want you to understand is that it should be done. And I will just give you—just think about two or three things.

Number one, as Congressman Gephardt said, in 1993, with only votes from Members of our party, we passed an economic plan which exceeded all of our expectations. The deficit is now 77 percent lower than it was in 1993—with only votes from our party—and it helped to grow this economy.

We also passed in 1993 and 1994, with only a handful of votes from the other side, the family and medical leave bill, the Brady bill, the crime bill, which is putting 100,000 police on our streets. We've now had the biggest drop in crime, for the last 5 years, we've seen in a very long time, and last year the biggest drop in violent crime in over 35 years, thanks to the support I received from Democrats.

Then in 1995 and '96, when our friends in the Republican Party won the majority, if it had not been for the staunch, strong, steely determination of the Members of our party in the House of Representatives and in the Senate, we would not have been able to stand against the tide of the Contract With America. They made it possible. My veto pen was not worth a flip without their support, and don't ever forget it. They deserve every bit as much support.

Now, in 1997, we are actually on the verge of getting a budget agreement which includes not only a balanced budget and $900 billion worth of savings and 10 years of life on the Medicare Trust Fund but, in this Congress, the biggest increase in child health since 1965, the biggest increase in aid to education since 1965, the biggest increase in aid to help people go to college since the G.I. bill 50 years ago. Why? Because the Democrats have stood in there with us, and they know that the President's veto pen is good, so we can work together to do things that are right for America.

Now, if we balance the budget, if crime is coming down, if the welfare rolls are dropping, if our foreign policy is strong and our defense policy is strong—if you look ahead to the 21st century, what do we have to do? We have to deal with the health care problems of American children; we have to deal with the continuing crisis in our cities; we have to make our education the best in the world; we have to prove we can grow the economy while we preserve and improve the environment. Who should be doing that? The Democratic Party of the 21st century, the Democratic Party that you are going to help to elect.

Thank you, and God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:05 p.m. at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Representative Martin Frost, chairman, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee.

Remarks on the Childhood Immunization Initiative

July 23, 1997

Thank you very much. Thank you, Dr. Guerra. Senator Kennedy, Senator and Mrs. Bumpers, Secretary Shalala; to all the childhood immunization advocates, the State and local officials, all of you who have worked in this garden for so long, we welcome you here.

Hillary and I were the first—part of the first generation of Americans to receive the polio vaccine. Some of you, perhaps, are in our age group, and you were also. I remember when I got the polio vaccine. I remember being a child and having seen the pictures of all the children who were afflicted with polio. And I remember being very conscious that some enormous burden was being lifted