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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Remarks at the Signing Ceremony for the Baltic Nations-United States Charter of Partnership

January 16, 1998

The President. President Meri; President Brazauskas; President Ulmanis; members of the Estonian, Lithuanian, and Latvian delegations; Secretary Albright; Mr. Berger; Members of Congress; Senator Dole; Mr. Brzezinski; and all friends of the Baltic nations who are here.

The Vice President and I and our administration were honored to welcome President Meri, President Brazauskas, and President Ulmanis to Washington to reaffirm our common vision of a Europe whole and free, where Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia play their full and rightful roles, and to sign a charter of partnership to build that Europe together.

To the three Presidents, let me say thank you. Thank you for the key role you have played in making this moment possible; holding to the difficult path of political and economic reform; leading Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania back to the community of free nations where they belong. This charter of partnership underscores how far your nations have come. Almost exactly 7 years ago today, Baltic citizens were facing down tanks in the struggle to reclaim their independence. Today, your democracies have taken root. You stand among Europe's fastest growing economies. Your nations are a source of stability within your region and beyond, through the Partnership For Peace, the Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion, and your contributions in Bosnia.

America has been proud to support this progress through our SEED assistance program, more than 500 Peace Corps volunteers, and in many other ways. We share a stake in your success. And with this charter, we set out a framework to achieve our common goals. It affirms our commitment to promoting harmony and human dignity within our societies; it stresses our interest in close cooperation among the Baltic States and with all their neighbors; it launches new working groups on economic development to spur greater trade, investment, and growth, complementing the efforts of our European friends; and it furthers America's commitment to help Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia to deepen their integration and prepare for membership in the European Union and NATO.

Of course, there can be no guarantees of admission to the alliance. Only NATO's leaders, operating by consensus, can offer membership to an aspiring state. But America's security is tied to Europe, and Europe will never be fully secure if Baltic security is in doubt. NATO's door is and will remain open to every partner nation, and America is determined to create the conditions under which Estonia, Lithuania, and Latvia can one day walk through that door.

The hopes that fuel the goals of this charter must be matched by our will to achieve them. That's why we're forming a new partnership commission which Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott will chair. I'm pleased to report that the charter is making a difference already. Yesterday our nations signed treaties to eliminate double taxation, which will encourage American business to play an even greater role in Baltic prosperity. We're also expanding our common efforts to combat organized crime with better information-sharing and more joint operations.

And this year the United States, in a unique public-private partnership with the Soros Open Society Institute, will be creating a Baltic-American partnership fund to promote the development of civic organizations. Nothing is more crucial to democracy's success than a vibrant network of local groups committed to their communities and their nation. I want to thank George Soros for his visionary generosity.

I also want to say a special thanks to the Baltic-American communities. For 50 years, Lithuanian-, Latvian-, and Estonian-Americans kept alive the dream of Baltic freedom. Now, on the verge of a new century, they are working here at home and with their Baltic brothers and sisters to make sure the hard-won blessings of liberty will never be lost again.

President Meri, President Brazauskas, President Ulmanis, we recall the August day in 1989 when hundreds of thousands of people linked hands from Tallinn to Riga to Vilnius, forming a human chain as strong as the values for which it stood. Today, that Baltic chain extends across the Atlantic Ocean. America's hands and hearts and hopes are joined as one with yours. Working together, we can build a new Europe of democracy, prosperity, and peace, where security is the province of every nation and the future belongs to the free.

Thank you very much.

President Guntis Ulmanis of Latvia. Dear President, ladies and gentlemen, today is a happy day as we are signing the U.S.A.-Baltic charter. This charter will serve as a key for the next century. It makes us allies. Our signatures write the strategic philosophy for the next century. They mark strong Atlanticism and also the formation of a new Europe. The Baltic region is a success story for all who shape it by their everyday work.

I call on President Clinton and his administration to get actively involved in the formation of its future. The symbolic meaning of the charter has been expressed in its first words, which speak about our common vision of the future. It has been created by people of our countries in continuous work by mutual enrichment. I am proud of my people and its strengths. I am proud of my friends who I am happy to welcome here.

Thank you.

President Algirdas Brazauskas of Lithuania. Dear Presidents, ladies and gentlemen, today we are signing the particularly important document with the United States of America, with which we not only share common values but are also linked by a number of American Lithuanians who have found home in the United States. The charter of partnership establishes the institutional framework that promotes the furtherance of bilateral and multilateral cooperation, reciprocal support to the Euro-Atlantic integration, and common efforts designed for the consolidation of security, prosperity, and stability within the region and Euro-Atlantic area as the whole.

The U.S.-Baltic charter confirms repeatedly that Lithuania is a serious candidate for accession to NATO, as well as that the United States support the Baltic States' aspirations and their efforts to become members of the alliance.

Lithuania values the charter first and foremost as the commitment to its further role as the promoter of stability within our region and Europe as a whole, its commitment to progress, economic reforms, and further enhancement of defense system effectiveness and interoperability with the North Atlantic alliance. We appreciate and are supportive of President Clinton's and the U.S. role of leadership in opening up to Central European democracies the doors to history's most successful alliance. It is our hope that this openness to new members will enhance the security and stability for all the present and aspiring members, as well as other European nations.

Thank you.

President Lennart Meri of Estonia. Mr. President, Excellencies, ladies and gentlemen, today is an historic day in the history of our four nations. With the signing of the charter of partnership among the United States of America and the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia, and the Republic of Lithuania, we enter a new phase of even closer United States-Baltic relations.

Seventy-five years ago last summer, the United States and Estonia—[*inaudible*]—diplomatic relations, thus launching a special relationship based in mutual respect and trust. There is an old saying that one recognizes a true friend in times of need. With its bipartisan support for nonrecognition policy, America was a true friend of the Baltics in a time of need, acting as a beacon of hope throughout the long, dark, and cold years of the Soviet occupation.

You, Mr. President, were a true friend when, 4 years ago, you personally contributed to making sure that occupation would

end and the foreign troops were withdrawn. This principled behavior is one quality of United States foreign policy that we greatly admire. The fact that morals play a major role in Americans' foreign policy is what defines the United States as the world's remaining superpower.

Estonia sees the United States-Baltic charter as the latest expression of that principled approach. The charter recognizes the Baltic States' role in the American strategy to guarantee security and stability on the European Continent, and spells out that the United States has a real, profound, and enduring interest in the security and sovereignty of the Baltic States.

An important element in our security strategy is eventual full membership in NATO. We believe that NATO continues to be the sole guarantor of security and stability in Europe. Estonia applauds President Clinton for his leadership in starting the process of NATO enlargement which has already redefined the terms of security policy in Europe.

Estonia also understands that NATO enlargement through the Baltics will be the next big project of the alliance. We believe that the question of Baltic membership in NATO will become the real test of post-Madrid security thinking—that is, that countries shall be able to choose their security arrangements regardless of geography. We are confident that, with American leadership, this test will be met with success.

Thank you.

The President. I thank you all. We are now going to sign our charter. Before we do, I just want to say again how much I appreciate all of our guests coming here, all from the three nations, their American counterparts. And thank you, Senator Durbin, Congresswoman Pelosi, Congressman Shimkus, Congressman Kucinich. Thank you, Senator Dole and Mr. Brzezinski.

And I'd also like to point out—I didn't earlier—we have a very large, unusually large, representation from the diplomatic corps here, which is a tribute to the importance of this moment that the rest of the world community attaches to it. And I thank all the ambassadors who are here. Thank you all very much for your presence.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:45 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Senator Bob Dole; former National Security Adviser Zbigniew Brzezinski; and philanthropist George Soros, chairman, Soros Fund Management, LCC. He also referred to the Support for East European Democracy (SEED) Program. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

A Charter of Partnership Among the United States of America and the Republic of Estonia, Republic of Latvia, and Republic of Lithuania

January 16, 1998

Preamble

The United States of America, the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia, and the Republic of Lithuania, hereafter referred to as Partners.

Sharing a common vision of a peaceful and increasingly integrated Europe, free of divisions, dedicated to democracy, the rule of law, free markets, and respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of all people;

Recognizing the historic opportunity to build a new Europe, in which each state is secure in its internationally-recognized borders and respects the independence and territorial integrity of all members of the transatlantic community;

Determined to strengthen their bilateral relations as a contribution to building this new Europe, and to enhance the security of all states through the adaptation and enlargement of European and transatlantic institutions;

Committed to the full development of human potential within just and inclusive societies attentive to the promotion of harmonious and equitable relations among individuals belonging to diverse ethnic and religious groups;

Avowing a common interest in developing cooperative, mutually respectful relations with all other states in the region;

Recalling the friendly relations that have been continuously maintained between the United States of America and the Republic of Estonia, the Republic of Latvia, and the Republic of Lithuania since 1922;

Further recalling that the United States of America never recognized the forcible incorporation of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into the USSR in 1940 but rather regards their statehood as uninterrupted since the establishment of their independence, a policy which the United States has restated continuously for five decades;

Celebrating the rich contributions that immigrants from Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have made to the multi-ethnic culture of the United States of America, as well as the European heritage enjoyed by the United States as a beneficiary of the contributions of intellectuals, artists, and Hanseatic traders from the Baltic states to the development of Europe; praising the contributions of U.S. citizens to the liberation and rebuilding of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania.

Affirm as a political commitment declared at the highest level, the following principles and procedures to guide their individual and joint efforts to achieve the goals of this Charter.

Principles of Partnership

The United States of America has a real, profound and enduring interest in the independence, sovereignty, and territorial integrity, and security of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

The United States of America warmly welcomes the success of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania in regaining their freedom and resuming their rightful places in the community of nations.

The United States of America respects the sacrifices and hardships undertaken by the people of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to re-establish their independence. It encourages efforts by these states to continue to expand their political, economic, security, and social ties with other nations as full members of the transatlantic community.

The Partners affirm their commitment to the rule of law as a foundation for a transatlantic community of free and democratic nations, and to the responsibility of all just societies to protect and respect the human rights and civil liberties of all individuals residing within their territories.

The Partners underscore their shared commitment to the principles and obligations contained in the United Nations Charter.

The Partners reaffirm their shared commitment to the purposes, principles, and provisions of the Helsinki Final Act and subsequent OSCE documents, including the Charter of Paris and the documents adopted at the Lisbon OSCE Summit.

The Partners will observe in good faith their commitments to promote and respect the standards for human rights embodied in the above-mentioned Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE) documents and in the Universal Declaration on Human Rights. They will implement their legislation protecting such human rights fully and equitably.

The United States of America commends the measures taken by Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to advance the integration of Europe by establishing close cooperative relations among themselves and with their neighbors, as well as their promotion of regional cooperation through their participation in fora such as the Baltic Assembly, Baltic Council of Ministers, and the Council of Baltic Sea States.

Viewing good neighborly relations as fundamental to overall security and stability in the transatlantic community, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania reaffirm their determination to further enhance bilateral relations between themselves and with other neighboring states.

The Partners will intensify their efforts to promote the security, prosperity, and stability of the region. The Partners will draw on the points noted below in focusing their efforts to deepen the integration of the Baltic states into transatlantic and European institutions, promote cooperation in security and defense, and develop the economies of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

A Commitment to Integration

As part of a common vision of a Europe whole and free, the Partners declare that their shared goal is the full integration of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania into European and transatlantic political, economic, security and defense institutions. Europe will not be

fully secure unless Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania each are secure.

The Partners reaffirm their commitment to the principle, established in the Helsinki Final Act, repeated in the Budapest and Lisbon OSCE summit declarations, and also contained in the OSCE Code of Conduct on Politico-Military Aspects of Security, that the security of all states in the Euro-Atlantic community is indivisible.

The Partners further share a commitment to the core principle, also articulated in the OSCE Code of Conduct and reiterated in subsequent OSCE summit declarations, that each state has the inherent right to individual and collective self-defense as well as the right freely to choose its own security arrangements, including treaties of alliance.

The Partners support the vital role being played by a number of complementary institutions and bodies—including the OSCE, the European Union (EU), the West European Union (WEU) the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO), the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council (EAPC), the Council of Europe (COE), and the Council of Baltic Sea States (CBSS)—in achieving the partners' shared goal of an integrated, secure, and undivided Europe.

They believe that, irrespective of factors related to history or geography, such institutions should be open to all European democracies willing and able to shoulder the responsibilities and obligations of membership, as determined by those institutions.

The Partners welcome a strong and vibrant OSCE dedicated to promoting democratic institutions, human rights, and fundamental freedoms. They strongly support the OSCE's role as a mechanism to prevent, manage, and resolve conflicts and crises.

Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania each reaffirm their goal to become full members of all European and transatlantic institutions, including the European Union and NATO.

The United States of America recalls its longstanding support for the enlargement of the EU, affirming it as a core institution in the new Europe and declaring that a stronger, larger, and outward-looking European Union will further security and prosperity for all of Europe.

The Partners believe that the enlargement of NATO will enhance the security of the United States, Canada, and all the countries in Europe, including those states not immediately invited to membership or not currently interested in membership.

The United States of America welcomes the aspirations and supports the efforts of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to join NATO. It affirms its view that NATO's partners can become members as each aspirant proves itself able and willing to assume the responsibilities and obligations of membership, and as NATO determines that the inclusion of these nations would serve European stability and the strategic interests of the Alliance.

The United States of America reiterates its view that the enlargement of NATO is an on-going process. It looks forward to future enlargements, and remains convinced that not only will NATO's door remain open to new members, but that the first countries invited to membership will not be the last. No non-NATO country has a veto over Alliance decisions. The United States notes the Alliance is prepared to strengthen its consultations with aspirant countries on the full range of issues related to possible NATO membership.

The Partners welcome the results of the Madrid Summit. They support the Alliance's commitment to an open door policy and welcome the Alliance's recognition of the Baltic states as aspiring members of NATO. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania pledge to deepen their close relations with the Alliance through the Euro-Atlantic Partnership Council, the Partnership for Peace, and the intensified dialogue process.

The Partners underscore their interest in Russia's democratic and stable development and support a strengthened NATO-Russia relationship as a core element of their shared vision of a new and peaceful Europe. They welcome the signing of the NATO-Russia Founding Act and the NATO-Ukraine Charter, both of which further improve European security.

Security Cooperation

The Partners will consult together, as well as with other countries, in the event that a Partner perceives that its territorial integrity,

independence, or security is threatened or at risk. The Partners will use bilateral and multilateral mechanisms for such consultations.

The United States welcomes and appreciates the contributions that Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania have already made to European security through the peaceful restoration of independence and their active participation in the Partnership for Peace. The United States also welcomes their contributions to IFOR, SFOR, and other international peacekeeping missions.

Building on the existing cooperation among their respective ministries of defense and armed forces, the United States of America supports the efforts of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania to provide for their legitimate defense needs, including development of appropriate and interoperable military forces.

The Partners welcome the establishment of the Baltic Security Assistance Group (BALTSEA) as an effective body for international coordination of security assistance to Estonia's, Latvia's and Lithuania's defense forces.

The Partners will cooperate further in the development and expansion of defense initiatives such as the Baltic Peacekeeping Battalion (BaltBat), the Baltic Squadron (Baltron), and the Baltic airspace management regime (BaltNet), which provide a tangible demonstration of practical cooperation enhancing the common security of Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania, and the transatlantic community.

The Partners intend to continue mutually beneficial military cooperation and will maintain regular consultations, using the established Bilateral Working Group on Defense and Military Relations.

Economic Cooperation

The Partners affirm their commitment to free market mechanisms as the best means to meet the material needs of their people.

The United States of America commends the substantial progress its Baltic Partners have made to implement economic reform and development and their transition to free market economies.

Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania emphasize their intention to deepen their economic integration with Europe and the global economy, based on the principles of free movement of people, goods, capital and services.

Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania underscore their commitment to continue market-oriented economic reforms and to express their resolve to achieve full integration into global economic bodies, such as the World Trade Organization (WTO) while creating conditions for smoothly acceding to the European Union.

Noting this objective, the United States of America will work to facilitate the integration of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania with the world economy and appropriate international economic organizations, in particular the WTO and the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), on appropriate commercial terms.

The Partners will work individually and together to develop legal and financial conditions in their countries conducive to international investment. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania welcome U.S. investment in their economies.

The Partners will continue to strive for mutually advantageous economic relations building on the principles of equality and non-discrimination to create the conditions necessary for such cooperation.

The Partners will commence regular consultations to further cooperation and provide for regular assessment of progress in the areas of economic development, trade, investment, and related fields. These consultations will be chaired at the appropriately high level.

Recognizing that combating international organized crime requires a multilateral effort, the partners agree to cooperate fully in the fight against this threat to the world economy and political stability. Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania remain committed to developing sound legislation in this field and to enhance the implementation of this legislation through the strengthening of a fair and well-functioning judicial system.

The U.S.-Baltic Relationship

In all of these spheres of common endeavor, the Partners, building on their shared history of friendship and cooperation, solemnly

reaffirm their commitment to a rich and dynamic Baltic-American partnership for the 21st century.

The Partners view their partnership in the areas of political, economic, security, defense, cultural, and environmental affairs as contributing to closer ties between their people and facilitating the full integration of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania into European and transatlantic structures.

In order to further strengthen these ties, the Partners will establish a Partnership Commission chaired at the appropriately high level to evaluate common efforts. This Commission will meet once a year or as needed to take stock of the Partnership, assess results of bilateral consultations on economic, military and other areas, and review progress achieved towards meeting the goals of this Charter.

In order to better reflect changes in the European and transatlantic political and security environment, signing Partners are committed regularly at the highest level to review this agreement.

William J. Clinton
President
United States of America

Lennart Meri
President
Republic of Estonia

Guntis Ulmanis
President
Republic of Latvia

Algirdas Brazauskas
President
Republic of Lithuania

Washington D.C.,
January 16, 1998

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this agreement. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

Statement on the Appointment of Senator John Breaux as Chairman of the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare

January 16, 1998

I am pleased to join with Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott and House Speaker Newt Gingrich in announcing the appointment of Senator John Breaux (D–LA) as Chairman of the National Bipartisan Commission on the Future of Medicare.

In addition, I am grateful that Representative Bill Thomas (R–CA) has agreed to become Administrative Chair, working with the Chairman on this important Commission.

Over the past 5 years, we have strengthened and modernized the Medicare system by providing Americans with more choice and preventative care, reducing fraud and waste within the system, and extending the life of the Trust Fund for more than a decade.

Despite these advances, there is more work to do to ensure that Medicare stays strong and solvent for the generations to come.

I look forward to working with the Commission and to receiving their analysis of and recommendations for the future challenges facing the Medicare program.

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

January 17, 1998

Good morning. Today I want to talk about the steps we must take to protect our children and the public health from one of the greatest threats they face—tobacco. For years, tobacco companies have sworn they do not market their deadly products to children, but this week disturbing documents came to light that confirm our worst suspicions.

For years one of our Nation's biggest tobacco companies appears to have singled out our children, carefully studying their habits and pursuing a marketing strategy designed to prey on their insecurities in order to get them to smoke.

Let me read you two of the most startling lines from an internal tobacco company presentation proposing a marketing campaign targeted at children as young as 14. Quote, ''Our strategy becomes clear: direct advertising appeal to younger smokers.'' Younger smokers, this document says also, and I quote, ''represent tomorrow's cigarette business.'' The message of these documents is all too clear: Marketing to children sells cigarettes.

Today I want to send a very different message to those who would endanger our children: Young people are not the future of the tobacco industry; they are the future of America. And we must take immediate, decisive action to protect them.

We know that every day 3,000 young people will start smoking and 1,000 of them will die prematurely due to tobacco-related disease. We know that 90 percent of adults who smoke—90 percent—began using tobacco before the age of 18. That is why, starting in 1995, we launched a historic nationwide effort with the FDA to stop our children from smoking before they start, reducing their access to tobacco products and severely restricting tobacco companies from advertising to young people. The balanced budget agreement I signed into law last summer includes a $24 billion children's health initiative, providing health coverage to up to 5 million uninsured children, paid for by tobacco taxes.

But even these efforts are not enough to fully protect our children from the dangers of smoking. To do that we need comprehensive, bipartisan legislation. Last September I proposed five key elements that must be at the heart of that legislation. First, and most important, it must mandate the development of a comprehensive plan to reduce teen smoking with tough penalties for companies that don't comply. Second, it must affirm the FDA's full authority to regulate tobacco products. Third, it must include measures to hold the tobacco industry accountable, especially for marketing tobacco to children. Fourth, it must include concrete measures to improve the public health, from reducing secondhand smoke to expanding smoking cessation programs to funding medical research on the effects of tobacco. And finally, it must protect tobacco farmers and their communities from the loss of income caused by our efforts to reduce smoking by young people.

If Congress sends me a bill that mandates those steps, I will sign it. My administration will do all it can to ensure that Congress passes this legislation. In September I asked the Vice President to build bipartisan support for the legislation, and he has held forums all across our country to focus public attention on the issue.

In a few weeks, my balanced budget proposal will make specific recommendations on how much the tobacco industry should pay and how we can best use those funds to protect the public health and our children. Today I want to let Members of Congress know that our administration will sit down with them anytime, anywhere to work out bipartisan legislation.

Reducing teen smoking has always been American's bottom line and always our administration's bottom line. But to make it the tobacco industry's bottom line, we have to have legislation. This is not about politics. This is not about money. It is about our children.

The 1998 Congress should be remembered as the Congress that passed comprehensive tobacco legislation, not the Congress that passed up this historic opportunity to protect our children and our future.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:50 a.m. on January 16 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 17.

Statement on Representative Louis Stokes' Decision Not To Seek Reelection

January 18, 1998

Throughout his illustrious career in the United States Congress, Representative Louis Stokes has been a champion of America's finest values. He has worked tirelessly to better the lives of our children and our veterans and has stood steadfast in an effort to bring our country together amid all of our diversity to build a stronger community.

Representative Stokes has been a true advocate for the people of Cleveland and for all Americans who support giving people the tools they need to make the most of their own lives. He has served our country from the bottom of his heart, and his retirement after three decades of dedicated service will be a loss felt by all.

Exchange With Reporters at Cardozo High School

January 19, 1998

Paula Jones Lawsuit

Q. Mr. President, according to Ambassador Seitz, the British believe that Jean Kennedy Smith passed along intelligence information to the IRA. Does that concern you, sir?

On another subject—[*laughter*]—sir, I didn't hear, I'm sorry, I'm getting hard of hearing. Well, on another subject, after Saturday are you persuaded you may prevail if the Jones case actually does go to trial?

The President. You know, the judge asked us not to talk about it, and I think at least somebody involved in it ought to follow her instructions.

Q. You mean the judge's gag order, sir?

The President. Mr. Bennett will say anything that I have to say about that.

Attack on U.S. Citizens in Guatemala

Q. Did you see that Seitz story, sir, the Ambassador Seitz book?

You've seen the news from Guatemala. Is there anything the United States can do to safeguard U.S. citizens down there?

The President. Well, first of all, it's a terrible thing what happened with that. I have a lot of concerns, obviously, for the victims and their families. But we're persuaded that the Government is taking appropriate action. And it is—where they were, you know, there had been some difficulties. But I think that the Government is doing what it can, and we've been in touch with them. The main thing we need to do now is be concerned with the victims and their families and do whatever we can to minimize such things happening in the future.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Are you discouraged about the advance word that Prime Minister Netanyahu may not have anything to say that would advance the peace process?

The President. Well, I'm looking forward to the meeting. I'm committed to making it a success. I'm going to do my part, and I just want us to have constructive relations where we can move this forward. And I've been working on it all morning; that's why I'm a little late here today. I'm going to be prepared to reach out a hand in cooperation to both the Prime Minister and to Mr. Arafat and we'll see what happens. But I've got high hopes. I've worked hard on it. The United States, I think, is viewed rightly as a country that just wants a just, stable, and lasting peace. And we're all going to have to make some moves if we're going to get there. But I'm looking forward to this meeting.

Participation in Community Service

Q. When was the last time you painted a wall, sir?

The President. Not very long ago. This is the third painting project I've done with the national service—with the AmeriCorps people. But we really wanted to emphasize Martin Luther King's birthday as a day of service, a day on, not a day off. And I want to thank the people from the DC school system and the city government and General Becton and the others. This is encouraging, to have all these young people out here. And all over America there are young people working today, tens of thousands of them. That's the image of our young people I'd like for the rest of America to see, and I hope that they will inspire more people of all ages to get involved in community service.

Q. Thank you.

The President. You guys need to give Sam his cuts; he didn't have to work hard today. [*Laughter*]

Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith

Q. Sir, could you look into that Smith thing?

The President. Yes, I will. I will.

Participation in Community Service

Q. Mr. President, how much painting experience do you have?

The President. When I was a younger man, I did quite a bit of it.

Q. For who?

The President. For myself. That's the advantage when you elect a real middle class President—you get people who've had to do things like this in life.

Q. What's the shirt mean, Mr. President?

The President. It's just a shirt my daughter gave me.

Q. And the numbers on the back?

The President. I'm not sure. I have no idea. I hope it's not something embarrassing; I don't have a clue. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:55 a.m. in room 306 at the school. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. District Judge Susan Webber Wright; Robert S. Bennett, the President's attorney in the Paula Jones case; Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; Gen. Julius Becton, USA (Ret.), superintendent, District of Columbia public schools; and Sam Donaldson, ABC News White House correspondent. A reporter referred to Raymond G.H. Seitz, former U.S. Ambassador to the United Kingdom. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks to Volunteers at Cardozo High School

January 19, 1998

The President. Thank you. Are you having a good day?

Audience members. Yes!

The President. Me, too. I want to thank Mr. Ballard, the principal, and I want to say a special word of appreciation to the officials who are here with me today: first, the head of the Corporation for National Service, Harris Wofford; DC City Council Chairperson Charlene Drew Jarvis; General Becton; School Board President Harvey; Terri Green, the PTA president; the other school board members; and representatives of council members. And especially I want to thank all the volunteers in the AmeriCorps NCC program. And thanks for this; I like my little jacket here.

Thirty-one years ago Martin Luther King came to this very neighborhood and urged the people here to engage in citizen service to rebuild their lives and their community and their future. That's what you're doing here today. You are honoring the legacy of Martin Luther King and answering the highest calling of citizenship in this country.

My staff did a little research to illustrate what we could all do if we just gave back a little to our community. And they swear that if just everybody with the last name of Clinton and Gore in America—just the people whose last name is Clinton and Gore in America—would put in two hours a week, they could paint every classroom and every public high school in America by Martin Luther King's next birthday.

Now, that gives you an idea of what we can do if we serve and work together. That's why I have invested so much in AmeriCorps, our national service program that I'm so proud of. And all of you who are involved in the program, let me thank you from the bottom of my heart. I hope that you're getting a lot out of it. I know the AmeriCorps volunteers I painted with today made me feel proud that we started this.

That's why I have strongly supported, along with all the former Presidents, General Colin Powell and the Presidents' Summit on Service and the work that he is doing and that tens of thousands of people across America are doing to give all of our children a good chance in life.

But finally let me say that this country will never be all that it can be and your future will never be all that it can be unless we decide we're going to build that future together. We will never be able to bridge the racial and other divides in this country unless we decide we're not only going to work together and learn together but we're going to serve together.

We actually have to believe that we're all better off when our neighbors are better off. We actually have to believe that we'll do better if we go forward together. We actually have to believe that this diversity we have is a blessing; and that the fact that some of us start out life poorer than others is a condition that can be overcome if we work hard to give people who deserve it a hand up; and that as we do that, we are all happier, more fulfilled, and living in a stronger America. That's what this is about.

This is not just about painting the walls of a school, although I passionately believe it's important. I, personally, as a student, preferred old buildings to new ones, but every student deserves to go into a clean building with bright walls and clear windows, sending a signal that the student and his or her future is important.

But you're not just painting a school today, you're painting a very different picture for America's future, and it's a beautiful one because of you.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:49 p.m. in the cafeteria. In his remarks, he referred to Reginald C. Ballard, principal, and Terri Green, Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) president, Cardozo High School; Wilma Harvey, president, District of Columbia school board; former Presidents Gerald Ford, Jimmy Carter, and George Bush; and Gen. Colin Powell, USA (Ret.), chairman, America's Promise—The Alliance For Youth. The President also referred to the AmeriCorps National Civilian Community Corps (NCCC) program of the Corporation for National and Community Service.

Message on the Observance of the Lunar New Year

January 14, 1998

Warm greetings to all those celebrating the Lunar New Year.

This joyous occasion celebrates the blessings of family, community, and a rich and ancient heritage. It is a special time to reflect on the events of the previous year and to embrace the challenges of the year ahead. Vibrant with color, lights, dancing, parades, folk music, and delicious food, the Lunar New Year reminds all of us of the beauty and variety of Asian culture and of the strength, character, and achievement that Asian Americans bring to our national life.

As we join you in welcoming the Year of the Tiger, Hillary and I extend best wishes to all for a new year full of health, happiness, prosperity, and peace.

Bill Clinton

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 20.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel

January 20, 1998

Cuba-U.S. Relations

Q. Good morning, Mr. President.

The President. Good morning.

Q. Mr. President, Cuba is about to be in the news. What does the United States gain from pressing the embargo?

The President. Well, let me say, our position on that is that we want Cuba to move toward freedom and openness, and if they do, we'll respond. That's always been our position, and I believe in the end it will prevail.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, on the Middle East, Mr. Arafat is talking with some threatening phrases, speaking of maybe the intifada will be resumed. And of course, the Prime Minister said last night that's no way to negotiate. How do you feel about——

The President. I agree with that. I think if he makes an observation that if this whole thing fails, that it won't be good, then that's understandable. But I don't think it should be encouraged. I've really looked forward to this week. I've worked hard to get ready for the meeting. I'm anxious to begin my sixth meeting with the Prime Minister and then to see Mr. Arafat in a couple of days. And I think we have to have a positive attitude. We need to be reassuring to people. We don't want to undermine any confidence. We need to keep working.

Q. Mr. President, you said yesterday that you had high hopes, and that seems out of step with some of the views of your top officials here. What makes you have high hopes for these talks?

The President. Well, I've often been out of step, in having high hopes, with a lot of people. It may be a defect in my nature, but I think—for one thing I think that Israel wants peace and a resolution of this. And I believe that it's very much in the interests of the Palestinians and Mr. Arafat to seek to resolve it, and we're working very hard. I've just found that, more often than not, you ultimately have success if you stay at something and keep working at it in good faith.

Q. Mr. President, could you just tell us what you believe a credible withdrawal would be? And does Chairman Arafat need to do anything before such a withdrawal should take place?

The President. I think that's a conversation I need to have with the Prime Minister first. I don't—and I will do that.

Prime Minister Netanyahu's Cabinet

Q. Mr. Netanyahu, may I ask you one question, please? Are you in a more difficult situation because of the new makeup of your Cabinet, because it's a smaller coalition? Is it more difficult for you to make concessions and to negotiate?

Prime Minister Netanyahu. This is a difficult day for me because I've lost a good friend, the Deputy Premier and Minister of Education. But the composition of the government is irrelevant. The people who could topple the government before Mr. Levi departed could topple it after he departed. And I say to them what I say to everyone here and to President Clinton: We made a decision to go to peace. This is what this government is about, peace with security. And I am sure that I can muster the necessary support across the government and across the coalition for something that will move the peace process forward and maintain secure and defensible boundaries for Israel.

Q. And you believe you have enough support within your now more limited government to pass any sort of vote for withdrawal, for further Israeli withdrawal?

Prime Minister Netanyahu. For a withdrawal that will ensure our defenses, that is what we're prepared to do. We're prepared to move forward, but not to jeopardize the security of the State of Israel.

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

Prime Minister Netanyahu's Visit

The President. Welcome. Let me just briefly say that I am delighted to see the Prime Minister again. This is our sixth meeting. I'm looking forward to it. We're working hard to make progress, and I want to reaffirm to the people of Israel the strong support of the United States for Israel and the strong support of the United States for the security of Israel and a peace process that proceeds within that commitment. And I think we can succeed.

Q. Mr. President, what are your expectations from the meeting with the Prime Minister?

The President. That we're going to have a good-faith, detailed, frank discussion and do our best to make some progress. And I think we've got a chance to do that.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Are you going to pressure Mr. Netanyahu to give concessions to the Palestinians?

The President. I'm going to have a discussion with him about where we think the peace process is. I wouldn't use that word. Israel has to make its own decisions about its own security and its own future.

Q. Who do you think is breaching the agreement more severely, more seriously, the Israelis or the Palestinians?

The President. I don't think it's fruitful to discuss that. I think what we ought to talk about is what both sides can do now to get the peace process moving again. That's the most important thing.

NOTE: The exchange began at 10:19 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, Prime Minister Netanyahu referred to the late Zevulun Hammer, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Education and Culture of Israel, and David Levi, former Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks on Presenting the Congressional Medal of Honor to Major General James L. Day, USMC (Retired)

January 20, 1998

The President. Hillary and I are delighted to welcome all of you here today, including our Acting Secretary of Veterans Affairs, Togo West; the National Security Adviser, Sandy Berger; Senator Robb and Congressman Evans; Deputy Secretary of Defense Hamre; Secretary Dalton; General Shelton and other members of the Joint Chiefs; General McCaffrey; Deputy Secretary Gober; Mr. Bucha, the president of the Medal of Honor Society; and General Foley and other recipients of the Medal of Honor who are here; to all the commanders of our veterans service organizations and proud members of the United States Marine Corps and former marines; to the friends and the large and

wonderful family of General Day and Mrs. Day, we welcome you.

I thank Captain Pucciarelli for the fine invocation. He is not devoid of a sense of humor; before we came out here, he said he was going out to offer the exorcism. [*Laughter*]

To those who lived through World War II and those who grew up in the years that followed, few memories inspire more awe and horror than the battle for Okinawa. In the greatest conflict the world has ever known, our forces fought no engagement more bitter or more bloody. In 82 days of fighting, America suffered more than 12,000 dead in this final epic battle, the most costly one during the entire Pacific war.

At the very heart of this crucible was the fight for a hill called Sugar Loaf, the key to breaking the enemy's line across the south of the island, some of the grimmest combat our forces had ever seen. The marines on Sugar Loaf faced a hail of artillery, mortars, and grenades. They were raked by constant machinegun fire. Time and again, our men would claw their way uphill only to be repulsed by the enemy. Progress was measured by the yard.

On May 14th, 1945, a 19-year-old corporal named Jim Day led several other marines to a shell crater on the slope of Sugar Loaf. What happened then surpasses our powers of imagination. On the first day in that isolated hole, Corporal Day and those with him fought off an advance by scores of enemy soldiers. That night he helped to repel three more assaults, as those with him fell dead or injured. Braving heavy fire, he escorted four wounded comrades, one by one, to safety. But he would not stay in safety. Instead, he returned to his position to continue the fight. As one of his fellow marines later reported, the corporal was everywhere. He would run from one spot to another trying to get more fire on the enemy.

When the next day broke, Corporal Day kept on fighting, alone but for one wounded fellow marine. Through assault after assault and into his second night, he fought on. Burned by white phosphorus and wounded by shrapnel, he continued to fire his weapon and hold his ground. He hauled ammunition from a disabled vehicle back to his shellhole and fought and fought, one assault after another, one day, then the next.

The battle on Sugar Loaf decimated two Marine regiments. But when Corporal Jim Day was finally relieved after 3 days of continuous fighting, virtually alone, he had stood his ground. And the enemy dead around his foxhole numbered more than 100.

His heroism played a crucial part in America's victory at Sugar Loaf. And that success opened the way to the capture of Okinawa and the ultimate triumph of the forces of freedom in the Pacific.

Now, for this extraordinary valor, we recognize James L. Day as one of the bravest of the brave. In words that echo from the peaks of American military history, he has distinguished himself, at the risk of his life, above and beyond the call of duty. As Commander in Chief, I am proud to award General Day our Nation's highest military honor, the Medal of Honor. This medal confirms what every marine in this room already knows: the name Jim Day belongs in the rolls of the Corps' greatest heroes, alongside Dan Daly, Smedley Butler, Joe Foss, and John Basilone.

General, your achievements leave us all in awe. In particular, it is hard to know whether we should be conferring on you a Medal of Honor for bravery or for modesty.

Let me tell you the story of how we happen to be here today, over 50 years later. Although the battle for Okinawa was still raging when his battlefield commanders nominated young Corporal Day [1] for this decoration, so many died in the fighting and so many reports were lost in the battle, the paperwork simply never went forward in 1945. General Day later said that awards weren't on their minds in those days. As he put it, we just had a job to do, and we wanted to get the job done. Years later when veterans of Sugar Loaf wanted to restart the process, Jim Day forbade them from doing so. Then a general, he felt that seeking such an honor would set a bad example for those he commanded.

General Day, everyone in our Nation, in the military and outside it, can learn a lot from your selfless conduct both under fire

[1] White House correction.

and throughout your life. In your modest service, as well as your heroism, you are a shining example to all Americans.

Today, as we applaud one extraordinary performance on Sugar Loaf, we also celebrate one of the most remarkable military careers in our Nation's history. Just days after the action we recall now, Jim Day distinguished himself again on Okinawa and received the Bronze Star for his heroism. During a career that spanned more than four decades, he rose from enlisted man through the ranks to major general, becoming one of the greatest mustangs the Marine Corps ever produced. In Korea, his valor in combat was recognized with two Silver Stars. In Vietnam, his leadership and bravery under fire earned him a third Silver Star. Just as astonishing, for his service in three wars, Jim Day received six Purple Hearts.

General, I'm told that your ability to absorb enemy fire led to a lively debate among those who served with you as to whether it was safer to stand near you or far away. [*Laughter*]

Amid all this heroism, General Day and his wife have also raised a fine family. He has given not only a lifetime of devotion to the Corps, he and Sally have brought up two more generations of marines: his son, Lieutenant Colonel Jim Day, and grandson, Lance Corporal Joshua Eustice, both of whom are here today, and we welcome you.

General, we thank you for a lifetime lived to the highest standards of patriotism, dedication, and bravery. For all marines and, indeed, for all your fellow Americans, you are the embodiment of the motto *Semper Fidelis*. You have been unerringly faithful to those who fought alongside you, to the Corps, and to the United States. We are profoundly fortunate to count you among our heroes. On behalf of all Americans, I thank you for a lifetime of service without parallel and for all you have done to preserve the freedom that is our most sacred gift. Thank you, sir.

Lieutenant Commander Huey, read the citation.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:29 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Gen. Henry H. Shelton, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Paul Bucha, president, Congressional Medal of Honor Society; Maj. Gen. Robert F. Foley, USA, Commander, U.S. Army Military District of Washington; Capt. George W. Pucciarelli, USN, Chaplain, U.S. Marine Corps; and Lt. Comdr. Wes Huey, USN, Navy aide to the President.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner

January 20, 1998

Thank you very much. I want to begin by expressing my profound gratitude to Roy Romer and Steve Grossman, to Carol Pensky and Cynthia Friedman, to Alan Solomont and Dan Dutko, and to all the other people who have labored in this past year, sometimes under enormously difficult circumstances, to make sure that our party could celebrate this 150th anniversary year strong, in good shape, poised for the future, and proud of the last 5 years. They have done a terrific job, and I am very grateful to them.

I want to thank Melissa Manchester for being here tonight. I was thinking, when I told her that Hillary and I used to listen to her tapes—over 20 years ago when I became attorney general of my State, I had a little tape deck in my car, and one of the tapes I used to play over and over again was "Melissa Manchester's Greatest Hits," until it actually broke, the tape did, I listened to it so many times. And I looked at her and I listened to her, and I thought, I'm older and grayer, and she looks just like she did 20 years ago. But I thank her for that.

I want to thank all of you for your loyalty, your support, your belief in what we're doing and where we're going. You know, I was very moved by what Steve Grossman said a few moments ago, because to me politics is about more than winning elections. Power has no value in and of itself. What we're here to do is to use what the American people give us momentarily to broaden their horizons and deepen their possibilities and bring us together.

Yesterday, on Martin Luther King Day, I had the privilege of going to Cardozo High School here in the District of Columbia to be part of what was called this year a day on, not a day off, a day of service. And there were all these young people there, students

at the high school, teachers, and AmeriCorps volunteers. I met a young woman from Pennsylvania who came right out of high school and joined AmeriCorps because she wanted to do community service before going to Colgate next year. I met two other young volunteers who just finished college. I met two of the students at this high school—picture of America—one born in Panama, the other came here 3 years ago from Ethiopia. I met the teacher in the classroom I was helping to paint, who had been a dedicated schoolteacher in the District of Columbia since 1968, and a young man who was her student who now teaches chemistry at his old high school.

It's so easy to forget in Washington, when you read the papers and you listen to all the political back and forth, that out there in this country there are all these people out there who get up every day and try to do something to be worthy of the citizenship that they have been given, to work hard to take care of their families, to serve their communities, to educate our children. And when I left there, I just felt so good about America and about the prospects for our future.

I can't believe I've been here 5 years. It seems like yesterday when we flew out of Arkansas, Hillary and Chelsea and I, and then we went down to Monticello, to Thomas Jefferson's home, and took the bus up here. We walked across the bridge and rang the bells at my first Inauguration. And now about 60 percent of it is over, but 40 percent of it isn't. [*Laughter*] And what I'd like to do tonight is just—you can read in the little brochure all the details. I want to talk a little about the big picture.

This country, in my opinion, has been the greatest democracy and now the longest lasting large democracy in human history because we found a way to merge our incredible practical sense with our principles in a Government that has permitted us to meet each new challenge and rise above it by growing more strong together and by widening the circle of freedom.

That's what happened when George Washington and the rest of them decided we'd be one country instead of 13 States. That's what happened when Abraham Lincoln gave his life to keep us from splitting apart and to get over slavery. That's what happened when Theodore Roosevelt and Woodrow Wilson helped us to reap the benefits of the Industrial Revolution when people came to the cities from off the farms but also stood against its excesses, exploiting people, and exploiting our natural resources. It's what happened when Franklin Roosevelt reminded us that all we have to fear is fear and helped us to preserve freedom and come out of a Great Depression. For 50 years it has happened as we have built in our efforts to lift up this country in freedom, to fight racism, to fight the despoliation of our environment, to make our workplace safer, to do all the things that have happened.

The reason I ran for President is that I felt that we were losing our way back in 1991 and 1992, not just because unemployment was high and social problems were worsening and we seemed to be kind of uncertain in a lot of the things we were doing around the world, but because I had a sense of drift and division in this country and a sense that we weren't being animated by a unifying vision that would take us into this new century, which I believe will be the best time in humanity's existence.

Just think about it. We've had this explosion in science and technology and information, and it's changing everything—the way we work, the way we live, the way we relate to each other. Everybody E-mails now. The Internet is the fastest growing means of communication in human history. I forget—somebody told me the other day how many home pages were added to the Internet every week; it took my breath away. And I can't remember—there were a bunch of zeros after the one; I can't remember how many.

In the scientific revolution, we confront all these incredible prospects that we may be able, for example, to heal people with spinal cord injuries. We may be able to uncover the secret of what causes Alzheimer's and reverse it. We've detected the gene that causes or at least makes women strongly predisposed to breast cancer. We may be able not only to cure it but prevent it. When the human genome project is finished, we'll be able to send babies home with a genetic code. It may be troubling in a few odd cases when the children are overwhelmingly likely

to have something tragic happen to them, but for most people it will enable them to raise their children in ways that will lengthen their lives and increase the quality of it.

We're exploring the heavens in partnership with other countries. We're working increasingly in partnership with other countries in a globalized world that goes far beyond commerce. It's a very exciting time. But it's like every other new time; you can't just sort of wade into it and expect to have it come out all right. And if we're going to widen the circle of freedom and success in America and strengthen the bonds between us, we have to recognize that there is also an explosion of diversity in the world that can be positive but can lead to conflict.

We have to recognize that just like when we changed from an agricultural to an industrial society, now that we're going to an information age, we're going to have to work real hard to see that everybody has a chance to win, because people, for example, without a good education are having a very tough time in this economy ever getting a raise, if they can get a job.

We have to recognize that there are new common strains on the environment of this old Earth that we must meet together, chief of which is climate change. We have to recognize that the most important job in every society is not getting rich, or even working hard to make somebody else rich, but raising children. And now that we have the highest percentage of Americans ever in the work force, the number one family problem many families face is how to balance their responsibilities as parents and as workers—not confined, I might add, to people who can't afford child care. Nearly every parent I've ever talked to, even people with quite comfortable incomes, has felt instances of genuine gnawing conflict.

We look at a world in which we hope to build a great community of peace, in specific places like Bosnia and Ireland and the Middle East, and generally through efforts like the Chemical Weapons Convention and strengthening our efforts against biological warfare and continuing to reduce the nuclear threat and expanding NATO and unifying Europe and working out new partnerships with China and Russia—all these things. But we also see an almost primitive resurgence of racial and ethnic hatreds and religious hatreds around the world, which, interestingly enough, the very technologies that should be bringing us together can also facilitate.

So what I tried to do was to say, "Let's back up, and let's see if we can't make some sense of what's going on and figure out how to do what Americans always do when everything changes. How can we get the benefits of change and deal with its challenges in a way that strengthens our unity and broadens the circle of freedom and opportunity?" And that's what we've been trying to do.

So the words that I have used so many times, they may seem trite to the people who cover my speeches or those of you who have to listen to them all the time: opportunity for all, responsibility from all, a community of all Americans. That means something to me. I think about it every single day. And every day I say, "Have we expanded opportunity? Have we reinforced responsibility? Have we done something to strengthen our American community and our community of partnership with like-minded people throughout the world?"

All of the specific things we've done have been things that flowed out of that. And there were two specific changes that I sought to make, which the future will have to judge better than the rest of us here. One is, it seemed to me that the argument that was going on between the Republicans and the Democrats in Washington over the role of Government was pointless and ultimately destructive. I mean, since 1981, we've been—the Republicans essentially had argued that the American people should distrust and dislike their Government; that Government was the problem, holding Americans back, and if we just didn't have any of it, everything would be hunky-dory. Well, for us Democrats, that was an easy target, but it was too easy a target because we spent too much time arguing that they were wrong, and we could just do more of the same. But when things change, you can't do more of the same. And what we tried to say is, okay, we need a new Government. It ought to be smaller; it ought to be less bureaucratic; it ought to work in

partnership with the private sector more. But it has certain essential functions.

First, it has to create the conditions and give people the tools to make the most of their own lives, in a world where, increasingly, people have independent access to information and have to make their own decisions about are they going to get an education, for example. That is why I predict to you 30 years from now when they look back on this time and see that we finally opened the doors of college to every American who would work for it and say, this may well be the most profound thing that happened in terms of giving all Americans the opportunity they need to succeed.

Next, we have to be a catalyst for new ideas and experiment, because at a time of change nobody has all the answers. But if you work at it, even things that look little may have a big impact. There was an unbelievable article in a newspaper someone sent me the other day about how hardly any schools had school uniform policies until I went to Long Beach, California. And now 20 percent of the school districts with over 30 percent of the students in all of our public schools in America have schools with school uniform policies, and attendance is up, achievement is up, dropouts down, violence is down, disruptions down. It's moving the country forward. That's a little example.

For 20 years we've had something called the Community Reinvestment Act, which requires banks to invest money in communities that are traditionally overlooked—for 20 years. Eighty-six percent of the total investment made in our inner-city communities under that act has been made in the last 5 years. It works. It works. The unemployment rate in our cities—our 50 biggest cities—it's higher than the national average, but not as much as you would think. It's 6 percent now. It was about 12 percent when I took office. So we're moving forward.

And the last thing that we believe is that Government has a responsibility to help the helpless and to empower the disadvantaged. Now, we've been able to do that and cut 90-some percent of the deficit, give you the smallest Federal Government since President Kennedy, and in 1998, 3 years ahead of schedule, I'm going to give the Congress the balanced budget, and I believe they'll pass it. And it will be a big thing.

The second thing I tried to change people's minds about, I must say with a mixed record of success, is to make us understand how interdependent we are with the rest of the world and how it just really doesn't make sense anymore almost to talk about foreign and domestic policy. Take the crisis in the Asian financial market. Some people say, "Why is the President messing with that?" Well, an enormous amount of our exports in the last 5 years have gone to Asia—enormous amount. A third of our economic growth in the last 5 years has come from exports. If their currencies collapse, what does that mean? It means they don't have as much money to buy our exports because everything we sell over there all of a sudden becomes more expensive. Parenthetically, everything they compete with us in other markets for gives them an advantage because all their exports to other markets become cheaper. So it's not just something there, it's something here.

Well, you say, what about Bosnia? Well, what if it spread beyond the borders of Bosnia and ethnic hatreds engulfed a lot of the Balkans and other places, compelling us to send huge numbers of American soldiers later to die. That's a big problem for America. And if we don't stand up against ethnic hatred around the world, can we preserve harmony at home when we have our Christians and Jews and Orthodox Christians and Muslims here, just like they do there? That, to me, is the essence at the heart of the trade argument.

Interestingly enough, the differences we have there have, in my view, rarely been accurately interpreted. I believe the Democratic Party—all of our members—believe that economics cannot, in effect, take precedence over everything else in life and that we should try to lift the labor standards of the countries with which we trade, because if other folks get richer and they get their fair share of a nation's wealth, then they will buy more American products and they'll have more stable societies, they'll be better democracies. And besides that, it's just the right thing to do.

I believe that we should seek to have common efforts in the environment, because we know that an environmental problem in another part of the world can now affect us. And if we are irresponsible, we can adversely affect others.

I believe when we expand trade, most people are big winners, but there are some losers, and we have to do a better job of getting those people back on the winning track. We should give them more and better training more quickly. We should give them more support. We should do a better job. But the answer is not to try to pretend that the world is not integrating economically and to run away from the opportunities that Americans manifestly have to trade and, in trading, to build support for democracy and build partnerships and build people who will want to work with us in other ways. And I hope you will help me continue to do that over the next 3 years. The United States must continue to lead, but lead in partnership with other countries. And the Democrats ought to be on the forefront of that.

Now, all this has worked pretty well, I'd say, for the last 5 years. We've got the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years, the lowest inflation rate in 30 years, the lowest crime rate in 25 years, the highest rate of homeownership in history, the highest percentage of people in the work force in history, declining rates of teen pregnancy and divorce, declining rates of drug use. Finally, even juvenile crime is coming down. But this is not a time to sort of sit back and say, ''Gee, that's great.'' I didn't come here tonight for a pat on the back. I came here to ask you to renew your dedication to keep this country moving forward. If this direction is working now, you know as well as I do we still have unmet challenges before we really can say we have built our children a bridge to the 21st century they can all walk across. And until we can say that, we have no business giving ourselves a pat on the back. We've got lots of time left, lots of work to do, and I want you to leave here with your energy renewed for the fights, the struggles, and the issues of 1998 and beyond.

The evidence of the last 5 years is all the evidence you need to know that we need to keep on going. The first thing we need to do is balance the budget. Everybody is talking about what to do with the surplus. You know, nobody else would talk like this; only Government people could talk about what to do with a surplus when we've had a deficit every year since 1969, we quadrupled the debt since 1980, and we don't have a balanced budget yet. So it may be sort of old-fashioned, but if I might modestly suggest, let us balance the budget first, and then we can talk about the rest.

The second thing I'd like to say is, we have some new proposals that we think will help people deal with the challenges of the next generation. One is, since we've got more people than ever before in the workplace, but since raising a child is the most important thing, we need to do more to make quality child care, safe child care, affordable for more Americans. That's what is at the heart of our child care initiative. It's so people can know their kids are okay when they're at work. And it is very important.

The second thing we're going to do, and this is completely paid for in the budget, and I hope Congress will adopt it, is to say to the people who are in their later work years but not yet eligible for Medicare, they ought to be able to buy into Medicare if they're 55 or over and they get laid off and they can't get another job; or if they take early retirement from a company that promised them health insurance and then won't give it to them; or if they're married to an older spouse who quits work, goes on Medicare, and they're not eligible for it and they can't get health insurance anywhere. Now, a lot of these people will get help from their children in buying these policies, but they can't get policies now. I say do that.

What is the moral argument behind denying people access to a policy that is paid for that will not increase the deficit or wreck the Medicare Trust Fund? It is the right thing to do. It's a Democratic program within the constraints of fiscal discipline. And I hope you will support that. [*Applause*] Thank you.

There are a lot of other great things that are going to happen. And I ask for your support. But the main thing I want you to—if you leave here tonight and you think, ''I'm proud to be a Democrat; these past 5 years were right; we've got the right philosophy for

America; we're pulling America together,'' then I want you to leave committed to keep on doing it, because we need you badly.

Let me just leave you with this story. Today I had one of those wonderful experiences that comes to you when you're President. I bestowed the Congressional Medal of Honor on someone. And you say, well, we're not in a war now. Well, let me tell you this story. I bestowed the Congressional Medal of Honor on a retired marine major general who was 54 years ago a corporal on the island of Okinawa in the bloodiest battle of the war in the Pacific. And his job was to take a mountain called Sugar Loaf. And they got into a crater—a big kind of shell crater—he and his squad. His whole squad was wiped out. For 3 days—2 nights and 3 full days—he stayed awake, often alone. He lost all his men; they were either all killed or wounded. He left two or three times to take other wounded people to safety, always returning when he could have just stayed away, always going back to his post. He repelled assault after assault after assault after assault after assault. In the end, only one wounded marine was there helping him. For 3 solid days he stayed awake, and when finally they rescued him, there were 100—100—enemy casualties all around him.

The paperwork for his Medal of Honor was lost. Somehow, you know, a lot of records got lost at the end of World War II. Later, he went to Korea, where he won two Silver Stars for valor in combat. Later, he went to Vietnam, where he won another Silver Star for valor in combat. After three wars, he had six Purple Hearts. And so everybody in the Marine Corps wanted to put him up for the Medal of Honor because they had misplaced his records, and he ordered them not do it. He said it was not the right thing for a man who is a general in the Marine Corps to permit his name to be elevated in that way. So it took him until he had spent nearly 40 years in the Marine Corps and retired as a major general and moved to California, until this could be done. It was an awesome event.

Why am I telling you this? Because every one of you must be just as moved as I was by the story. Not everyone could have been on Okinawa; not everyone could have done that. But everyone can be what he was: a loyal, good-serving citizen. Everyone could be in a school like the school I was in yesterday. My staff did some research and concluded that if everybody in the American phone books with the last name of Clinton or Gore would volunteer 2 hours a week, we could paint every classroom in every high school in America by Martin Luther King's next birthday. Now, that's a funny thing to say, but you think about it. You think about it.

This is a great country, and we have met every challenge. I am so grateful for these last 5 years. I am so pleased that America is doing so well. But remember, no one—no one—could have anticipated the scope or the pace of the changes through which we are going. And believe me, no one can see the end of it. There is no visionary that has imagined the future completely. We are not finished. We have a lot of work to do.

We have work to do to reform the entitlements so they'll be there for our children without bankrupting our grandchildren. We have work to do to preserve the environment. We have work to do to spread economic opportunity to all of our people. We have work to do to lift the academic standards and the educational opportunities of all of our children. We have work to do in this world to make it a safe world, not a dangerous world, for our kids in the 21st century. We have work to do. So celebrate the last 5 years by making the next 3 even better.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:02 p.m. in the Main Atrium at the Corcoran Gallery of Art. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, Steve Grossman, national chair, Carol Pensky, treasurer, and Alan D. Solomont, national finance chair, Democratic National Committee; Cynthia Friedman, national cochair, Women's Leadership Forum; Dan Dutko, chair, DNC Victory Fund; and entertainer Melissa Manchester.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Emigration Policies of Mongolia

January 20, 1998

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On September 4, 1996, I determined and reported to the Congress that Mongolia was not in violation of the freedom of emigration criteria of sections 402 and 409 of the Trade Act of 1974. This action allowed for the continuation of most-favored-nation status for Mongolia and certain other activities without the requirement of an annual waiver.

As required by law, I am submitting an updated report to the Congress concerning the emigration laws and policies of Mongolia. The report indicates continued Mongolian compliance with U.S. and international standards in the area of emigration.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 21.

Interview With Jim Lehrer of the PBS "News Hour"

January 21, 1998

Independent Counsel's Investigation

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, welcome.

The President. Thank you, Jim.

Mr. Lehrer. The news of this day is that Kenneth Starr, the independent counsel, is investigating allegations that you suborned perjury by encouraging a 24-year-old woman, former White House intern, to lie under oath in a civil deposition about her having had an affair with you. Mr. President, is that true?

The President. That is not true. That is not true. I did not ask anyone to tell anything other than the truth. There is no improper relationship. And I intend to cooperate with this inquiry. But that is not true.

Mr. Lehrer. "No improper relationship"—define what you mean by that.

The President. Well, I think you know what it means. It means that there is not a sexual relationship, an improper sexual relationship, or any other kind of improper relationship.

Mr. Lehrer. You had no sexual relationship with this young woman?

The President. There is not a sexual relationship—that is accurate.

We are doing our best to cooperate here, but we don't know much yet. And that's all I can say now. What I'm trying to do is to contain my natural impulses and get back to work. I think it's important that we cooperate. I will cooperate. But I want to focus on the work at hand.

Mr. Lehrer. Just for the record, to make sure I understand what your answer means, so there's no ambiguity about it——

The President. There is no——

Mr. Lehrer. All right. You had no conversations with this young woman, Monica Lewinsky, about her testimony, possible testimony before in giving a deposition?

The President. I did not urge anyone to say anything that was untrue. I did not urge anyone to say anything that was untrue. That's my statement to you.

Mr. Lehrer. Did you talk to—excuse me, I'm sorry.

The President. Beyond that, I think it's very important that we let the investigation take its course. But I want you to know that that is my clear position. I didn't ask anyone to go in there and say something that's not true.

Mr. Lehrer. What about your having—another one of the allegations is that you may have asked—or the allegation that's being investigated is that you asked your friend Vernon Jordan——

The President. To do that.

Mr. Lehrer. ——to do that.

The President. I absolutely did not do that. I can tell you I did not do that. I did not do that. He is in no way involved in trying to get anybody to say anything that's not true at my request. I didn't do that.

Now, I don't know what else to tell you. I don't even know—all I know is what I have read here. But I'm going to cooperate. I didn't ask anybody not to tell the truth. There is no improper relationship. The allegations I have read are not true. I do not know what the basis of them is, other than just what you

know. We'll just have to wait and see. And I will be vigorous about it. But I have got to get back to the work of the country.

I was up past midnight with Prime Minister Netanyahu last night; I've got Mr. Arafat coming in; we've got action all over the world and a State of the Union to do. I'll do my best to cooperate with this, just as I have through every other issue that's come up over the last several years. But I have got to get back to work.

Mr. Lehrer. Would you acknowledge, though, Mr. President, this is very serious business, this charge against you that's been made?

The President. And I will cooperate in the inquiry of it.

Mr. Lehrer. What's going on? If it's not true, that means somebody made this up. Is that—

The President. Look, you know as much about this as I do right now. We'll just have to look into it and cooperate. And we'll see. But meanwhile, I've got to go on with the work of the country. I got hired to help the rest of the American people.

Pope's Impact on Cuba-U.S. Relations

Mr. Lehrer. All right. Speaking of the work of the country, other news today, the Pope is arriving in Cuba almost as we speak.

The President. Good thing.

Mr. Lehrer. All right. Has the time come maybe for the United States to also bury some economic and political hatchets with Cuba?

The President. Well, I think that our previous policy, the one that we've had now and the one we've had through Republican and Democratic administrations, of keeping economic pressure on and denying the legitimacy of the Cuban Government, has been a good policy. I have made it clear from the day I got here that we would be prepared to respond to a substantial effort at political or economic opening by Cuba. And we have, as you know, a system for communicating with each other. Nothing would please me greater than to see a new openness there that would justify a response on our part, and I would like to work on it, and I think Mr. Castro knows that. I've tried to proceed in good faith here.

Mr. Lehrer. Have you thought about doing something dramatic? I mean, this is your second term—getting on an airplane and going down, or inviting him to come up here, something like that—just like what the Pope is doing?

The President. I'm glad the Pope is going there. I hope that we will have some real progress toward freedom and opening there, and I'll work on it. But that's still mostly up to Mr. Castro.

Mr. Lehrer. Why is it up to him?

The President. Well, because—look what the Pope is saying. The Pope is saying, "I hope you will release these political prisoners." You know, no American President getting on an airplane and going down there or having him come up here is going to deal with that. I mean, the Cuban-American community—I know a lot of people think they've been too hard on this, but they do have the point that there has been no discernible change in the climate of freedom there. And I hope that the Pope's visit will help to expand freedom, and I hope that after that we'll be able to talk about it a little bit.

Mr. Lehrer. The Pope, in fact, was interviewed on his plane a while ago by some reporters, and they asked him, "What message would you give to the American people," and he—"about the embargo?" And he said, "To change, to change, to change." That would be his message to the American people.

The President. His Holiness is a very great man, and his position on this is identical to that, as far as I know, of every other European leader. And only time will tell whether they were right or we were.

Mr. Lehrer. Explain to Americans who don't follow the Cuban issue very carefully why Cuba is different, say, than China, a Communist country, North Korea, a Communist country, Vietnam—we had a war with Vietnam, as we did with Korea, and in some ways China as well. We have relations with them. Why is Cuba different?

The President. I think Cuba is different, in no small measure, because of the historic legacy we have with them going back to the early sixties. I think it's different because it's the only Communist dictatorship in our

hemisphere, a sort of blot on our neighborhood's commitment to freedom and openness. And a lot of Americans have suffered personal losses there of significant magnitude. And I think, as a practical matter, we probably think we can have a greater influence through economic sanctions in Cuba than we can in other places.

Now, I have worked over the last 5 years in a number of different ways to explore other alternatives in dealing with this issue, and I wouldn't shut the door on any other alternative. But I believe that our denial of legitimacy to the government and our economic pressure has at least made sure that others didn't go down that path, and that now, I think, it's one of the reasons that every country in this hemisphere is a democracy and a market economy except for Cuba. I think a lot of people forget what the impact of our policy toward Cuba and what the highlighting of the Cubans' policies have done to change the governmental structures in other countries in our neighborhood.

So I'm hoping—nobody in the world would be happier than me to see a change in Cuba and a change in our policy before I leave office. But we have to have both; we just can't have one without the other.

Mr. Lehrer. You don't see anything happening anytime soon as a result of the Pope's visit?

The President. Oh, no, I'm very hopeful. I was very pleased when I heard he was going. I wanted him to go, and I hope it will be a good thing.

Middle East Peace Process

Mr. Lehrer. The Middle East: As you said a moment ago, you met with Mr. Netanyahu twice yesterday; you meet with Mr. Arafat tomorrow. First, on Netanyahu, what is it exactly you want him to do?

The President. Well, let's talk about what he wants. What we want is not nearly as important as what he wants, what the Palestinians want, what the other people in the Middle East want. What we want is a just and lasting peace in the Middle East. What I believe that he and his government want is an agreement to go to final status talks in the peace process under circumstances that they believe maximize their security. I think what the Palestinians want is an agreement that moves them toward self-determination under circumstances that maximize their ability to improve the lives of their people and the reach of their popular government.

And we've been out there now for a year—I mean another year, of course, 5 years since I've been President—but since the Hebron withdrawal, we've been out there for a year in the Middle East looking around, listening, talking, watching the frustration, seeing the growing difficulties in the Middle East peace process. And we came up with an approach that we thought, in the ballpark, would satisfy both sides' objectives.

We worked with Mr. Netanyahu yesterday exhaustively to try to narrow the differences. And we didn't get them all eliminated, but we made some headway. And we're going to work with Mr. Arafat tomorrow to try to do that. And then we're going to try to see if there's some way we can put them together. And I'm very hopeful, because I think it's not good for them to keep on fooling with this and not making progress.

Mr. Lehrer. Why does it matter that much to an American President that these two men get together and make an agreement?

The President. Well, first of all, I think it matters in the Middle East because of our historic ties to Israel and the difficulty that it would cause us if there were another war in the region. Secondly, of course, we have major energy interests in the region; a big part of our economic recovery is having access to it. The third thing is we have a lot of friends in the region, beyond Israel, and if they all fall out with one another that's bad for America.

And of course, then if deprivation among the Palestinians leads to a rise of violence and leads to a rise of more militant Islamic fundamentalism in other countries throughout the region, then that could be a destabilizing fact that could really make things tough—if not for me, then for my successors down the road and for the American people down the road in the 21st century.

Mr. Lehrer. So you believe with those who say only America can make peace in the Middle East?

The President. I believe America is uniquely situated to help to broker a peace

in the Middle East. I actually believe only the parties can make peace in the Middle East. I think only Israel and the Palestinians and Syria and Lebanon can join Jordan at that table; that's what I think. I think in the end we need to be very aggressive in stating what our views are; we need to fight hard to at least have our position taken seriously; but in the end, you know, they have to live with the consequences of what they do or don't do, all of them do. And they're going to have to make their own peace.

Mr. Lehrer. The word around, as I'm sure you know, is that you and Netanyahu really just don't like each other very much. Is that right?

The President. I don't think so. It's certainly not true on my part. But we have had differences of opinion on occasion in approach to the peace process, and then there has been a little smattering in the press here, there, and yonder about those differences and whether they were personal in nature. But for me, they're not personal in nature. I enjoy him very much. I like being with him. I like working with him.

We had a difficult, hard day yesterday. We had a long session in the morning, and then he worked with our team, including the Vice President, the Secretary of State, through much of the afternoon. Then after my dinner last night, I came back, and we worked again for a couple hours. So it's hard to do that if you don't like somebody. I really believe that he is an energetic man, and I think that within the limits of his political situation, I believe he's hoping to be able to make a peace and to get to the point where he and Mr. Arafat can negotiate that.

But our job is to see, if you will, from a different perspective, the positions of both the Palestinians and the Israelis. It's sort of like standing too close to an impressionist painting sometime—there's lots of dots on the canvas and the people who are standing too close to it, even though they're painting the canvas, may get lost in the weeds, and then the people that are standing back can see the picture. And it's a beautiful picture if it all gets painted.

So that's what I'm trying to do. I have to keep backing the painters back, so they can see the whole picture, and then getting to the details and trying to help them ram it home. Because the one thing that I worry about is, you just sit there and have the same old conversation over and over again until the cows come home, and it's easy to do. So that's what I'm trying to—I'm trying to broker this thing, be a catalyst, get the people together, and give an honest view of what the picture looks like from back here about what the two artists can live with.

Mr. Lehrer. Well, some people say that it doesn't look like, to the innocent observer, that either one of these guys want to make peace; that you may be forcing them to do something that deep down in their either political hearts or otherwise——

The President. That could be.

Mr. Lehrer. ——they just don't want to do it.

The President. That could be. And I don't know what to say about that.

Mr. Lehrer. But you're not going to give up on it?

The President. No. No. You know, if I don't make any progress, I'll level with the American people and the rest of the world and tell them I'm doing my best but I'm not making any progress. But we were hitting it last night until late, and then we're getting ready now for Mr. Arafat to come, and we'll hit it hard tomorrow. And that's all I know to tell you; we're just going to keep hitting it.

Asian Economies

Mr. Lehrer. On Asia, the Asia financial crisis, what business is it of the United States to save these failing Asian economies?

The President. Well, first of all, we can't save the Asian economies if they won't take primary steps to help themselves, the way Mexico did. You remember, we loaned Mexico some money, and they paid back early with interest, and we made about $500 million because they took tough steps to restore economic growth and create jobs, raise incomes, and get their financial house in order.

That's the first and most important thing the Asians have to do. But in order to make it, they also need the backup of the International Monetary Fund and a plan designed to deal with the particular problems of each country, and then the U.S. and Japan and

Germany and the rest of the Europeans to stand behind that to say, if necessary, we will put together a package to really restore confidence. In most of these Asian economies, the problem is the financial system and people can't pay back their loans or investors take their loans—when their loans are repaid, investors take the money and go somewhere else.

What's that got to do with America? Well, every day now in some of our newspapers you can see what's happening in the Asian stock markets and the Asian currency markets. What happens when a country's currency drops? When a country's currency drops, it doesn't have as much money in dollars, and therefore it can't buy as many American exports. A big part of America's economic growth since 1993 has occurred from exports, a big part of that from exports to Asia. If the value of all their money goes down, they can't keep buying our exports. And that hurts us. Also, if the value of their money goes down, everything they sell in other places in the world is all of a sudden much cheaper, so they can push us out of those markets.

Mr. Lehrer. Cheaper than our stuff?

The President. Correct. So if you want to just look at the plain, brutal, short-term economic interest, that's the short-term economic interest. If you want to look at the long run, we've got an interest in Asia in having stable democracies that are our partners, that work with us to help grow the region and grow with us over the long run to help shoulder burdens like climate change, cleaning up the environment, dealing with global disease, dealing with weapons of mass destruction, contributing to the efforts in Bosnia, ending the nuclear program in North Korea. All those things we depend on the Asian countries to be a part of. They can only do that if they're strong. So, we live in a world that's so interdependent that we need them to be strong if we're going to be strong.

Mr. Lehrer. As you know, there's some Members of Congress who are saying what this really boils down to is welfare for international bankers—that's what we're up to. How do you respond to that? That's going to get—that seems to be growing particularly in the last few days.

The President. It bothers me a lot. First of all, there's some truth to it. That is, if a country like Indonesia gets money from the International Monetary Fund to deal with its financial problems, what are its financial problems? You've got to pay notes when they're coming due. And if somebody made a foolish loan that they should not have made in the first place, that's an only 90-day loan on a building that's going to last for 20 years, for example, you hate to see them get their money back plus a profit at someone else's expense.

On the other hand—and let me say, we're sensitive to that. Secretary Rubin has done a very good job of trying to get these big banks to roll over their debt.

Mr. Lehrer. Take some hits themselves?

The President. Take some hits—at least ride the roller coaster. They'll actually get their interest back——

Mr. Lehrer. If they'll hang in there.

The President. ——and the principal if they hang in there. But they need to hang in there. They don't need to just take the money and run.

On the other hand, if you start saying, well, everybody is going to get half back of what they put in, that will actually speed the rate at which people take money out and reduce the rate at which people put money in; you don't rebuild confidence, and therefore the collapse is more costly. That's what bothers me.

I mean, nobody likes the idea—I don't think any American likes the idea that every single banker in one of these countries that made every bad loan will get paid back. And that, in fact, won't happen. But when you try to pay back most things to stabilize the situation, the reason you're doing it is not to give the people who made the loans their money back; the reason you're doing it is to send a signal to the world that business is back up and going, that you have to be more careful now, but you can trust this country now and you can invest.

So I think—I'm convinced we're doing the right thing for our own economy. I'm convinced we're doing the right thing for our values and our principles. And I hope I can persuade the Congress that we are.

Situation in Iraq

Mr. Lehrer. All right. Another subject, Iraq—bad news today. Apparently, Mr. Butler left. What can you tell us about where that thing stands, in terms of whether the inspectors are going to be allowed to do what they want to do, et cetera?

The President. They seem to want to wait until early March to open the——

Mr. Lehrer. Iraq does?

The President. Iraq—open the sites that Mr. Butler believes that ought to be open. That's a problem for us because we believe that we have to do everything we can, as quickly as we can, to check for chemical and biological weapons stocks. And as I told the American people the last time we had the standoff with Saddam, before he relented and let the inspectors go back, my concern is not to re-fight the Gulf war; my concern is to prepare our people for a new century, not only in positive ways like creating a big international financial framework that works for them, as that we just talked about, but also to make sure we have the tools to protect ourselves against chemical and biological weapons.

So tonight I can't rule out, or in, any options. But I can tell you I'm very concerned about this, and I don't think the American people should lose sight of the issue. What's the issue? Weapons of mass destruction. What's the answer? The U.N. inspectors. What's the problem? Saddam Hussein can't say who, where, or when about these inspection teams. That has to be done by the professionals. And sooner or later, something is going to give here, and I'm just very much hoping that we can reason with him before that happens. But we've got to have those sites open.

Mr. Lehrer. Now, Ambassador Richardson with the U.N. and others in the administration have said the military option—just to pick up, just to continue your sentence—the military option remains on the table. The Ambassador from Iraq to the U.N. was on our program recently, and he pretty much acknowledged that Iraq is banking on that not being real, that the U.S. alone is not going to go in there and take out some suspected anthrax facility, particularly if it's in the palace where Saddam Hussein lives, et cetera, et cetera.

The President. The United States does not relish moving alone, because we live in a world that is increasingly interdependent. We'd like to be partners with other people. But sometimes we have to be prepared to move alone. You used the anthrax example. Think how many people can be killed by just a tiny bit of anthrax. And think about how it's not just a question of whether Saddam Hussein might put them on a Scud missile—an anthrax head—and send it to some city of people he wanted to destroy. Think about all the terrorists and drug runners and other bad actors that could just parade through Baghdad to pick up their stores if we don't take the strongest possible action.

I far prefer the United Nations; I far prefer the inspectors. I have been far from trigger-happy on this thing. But if they really believe that there are no circumstances under which we would act alone, they are sadly mistaken.

And that is not a threat. I have shown that I do not relish this sort of thing. Every time it's discussed around here—I said, you know, one of the great luxuries of being the world's only superpower for a while—and it won't last forever, probably, but for a while—is that there is always time enough to kill. And therefore, we have a moral responsibility to show restraint and to seek partnerships and alliances. And I've done that.

But I don't want to have to explain to my grandchildren why we took a powder on what we think is a very serious biological and chemical weapons program, potentially, by a country that has already used chemical weapons on the Iranians and on the Kurds—their own people.

Mr. Lehrer. So you would order an air strike or whatever it would take to take out some facility if you couldn't get rid of it any other way?

The President. Well, I'm going to stay with my tried and true formulation: I'm not ruling out, or in, any option. I was responding to what you said, that the Iraqi official thought we were just talking because we wouldn't want to discomfit anyone or make them mad. That's not true. This is a serious thing with me. This is a very serious thing. And you imagine the capacity of these tiny

amounts of biological agents to cause great harm; it's something we need to get after.

And I don't understand why they're not for getting after it. What can they possibly get out of this? If he really cared about his people—he's always talking about how bad his people have been hurt by these sanctions—if he really cared about his people he'd open all these sites, let everybody go in and look at them——

Mr. Lehrer. And get it behind him.

The President. If he's telling the truth, there's nothing there; and if he's not, he'd get it behind it one way or the other. And we could then—he could say, ''Okay, what grounds does the United States have now for stopping the U.N. from lifting the sanctions? I have done everything I've been asked to do.'' And that would be a hard question for us, even though we've got reservations. We've had a hard time answering that question.

Mr. Lehrer. But would you go along with lifting the sanctions?

The President. Right now—our position is, if he complies with all the United Nations sanctions—the conditions of all U.N. resolutions leading to sanctions, that that's what we want Iraq to do. But what he wants is, he wants to have it both ways. He wants to get the sanctions lifted because he thinks people want to do business with him, and he wants to be able to continue to pursue a weapons program that we think presents a danger to the region and maybe to the world and certainly to our own interests and values.

So I just want him to think about it again before they weigh all this too much. I think that's a mistake. I want him to think about it and let these inspectors go back.

Bosnia-Herzegovina

Mr. Lehrer. One more foreign policy area, and that's Bosnia. That just hasn't worked out the way you had hoped, has it?

The President. Well, it hasn't worked out as fast as I'd hoped, but it actually is kind of working out the way I had hoped in the sense that the Dayton peace agreement is very much alive and well. And we've separated the troops—I mean the forces—and the people, and we've got some relocation going on, and we've collected a lot of the bad weapons and destroyed them. We're making some progress on the joint institutions and other things, and we're trying to get that country together.

And I must say, I was very impressed on my recent trip there by the level of support for the United States and the international community in our presence there, the level of support for our staying there, and the level of commitment of so many people to genuine pursuit of peace. And I think we can make it in Bosnia.

Did I think we could all withdraw by now? Yes, I did. But if you had told me, on the other hand—that's the down side. If you had told me, on the other hand, you can go there and stay a couple of years and there won't be any gunshots fired, and the only people you'll lose will be in accidents of one kind or another, and you'll have an increasing amount of harmony in the urbanized areas that you hadn't imagined you would get, and some of the other positive things that have happened, I think we'd all been very happy about that.

So I'm going to stay after this. Again, this may be my congenital optimism, but I believe we're going to make the Bosnian peace process work.

Mr. Lehrer. U.S. troops are going to have to be there a long time, aren't they, Mr. President?

The President. That depends on how long it takes to achieve the mission. What I do think we should do, since it just invites recalcitrance on the part of any parties in Bosnia that don't want to do something that's in the Dayton peace agreement, if the Americans say, ''Well, we're leaving in a year,'' and then the Europeans say, ''We're going to leave as soon as they do,'' then the people who have to make changes say, ''Well, all I've got to do is hang around a year, and I won't have to make any changes at all.'' So I think we should lift the sort of time certain——

Mr. Lehrer. No more deadlines.

The President. ——for withdrawal. Yes. Because it—the world community really hasn't done anything like this in a while—not like this—and it's very complicated. But on the other hand, at bottom, it's about people getting along together and working together and serving together as citizens. And

I have been quite impressed by how much has been done.

U.S. Role in an Interdependent World

Mr. Lehrer. We've been talking now about all these foreign policy things and I was just—if you were to go back through here, only the U.S. can keep peace in Bosnia; only the U.S. can make peace—and make peace in the Middle East; only the U.S. can stabilize——

The President. Facilitate peace.

Mr. Lehrer. Yes, facilitate peace.

The President. Whatever that word is.

Mr. Lehrer. Okay, facilitate peace.

The President. They've got to make the peace.

Mr. Lehrer. Okay. Only the U.S. can help stabilize the economies of Asia; only the U.S. can stare down Saddam Hussein in Iraq. If there are going to be any coalitions, the U.S. has to organize them and make them work. Is this the role of the United States of America for the immediate future?

The President. Well, it's a big part of it. But it also is a part of our role to put together a broad coalition on the climate change treaty to deal with global warming. It's also our role to put together global efforts to stiffen our efforts against biological warfare, or to put together a global effort to support the International Monetary Fund and nations themselves in dealing with the Asian financial crisis.

We live in a world that is interdependent in two or three ways. Number one, what happens in one country affects what happens in another one. We can see that. Number two, what happens on economic issues increasingly has a security impact, and vice versa. I'll just give you—the most blatant example is there's all these articles in the paper about all these countries, that their currency dropped and therefore they can't buy jet airplanes for their air forces. That's the most obvious case.

Mr. Lehrer. Thailand, for example.

The President. Yes. So there's the economics and the security; there's the national and the international. There's all this interdependence. And I just think that in this world, if you happen to be at the moment it's occurring, that this huge new world of interdependence is occurring—and plus you've got all this interdependence at a citizen level with the Internet exploding and the information explosion. We're going to have all kinds of implications with the scientific explosions going on now. And we just happen to be, at this moment in history, the strongest and the wealthiest country around. It is a unique gift for our people. They've worked hard for it, but it's still a blessing. But it's also a unique responsibility.

And, you know, looking back over the last 5 years—I just celebrated my 5th anniversary here—I think that our administration has had good success in changing the role of Government, in changing the debate about Government from—you know, the debate I heard for the 12 years before I got here was the Government is the problem versus Government is the solution. And we've sort of come up with, no, no, Government is neither. Government is a catalyst; it's got to give people the tools to solve their own problems; it's got to be a good partner; it's got to empower neighborhoods and people. So we've got a smaller, more active Government, and yet we've invested more in education, more in science and technology, more in the environment. And it's working, and we've got good results.

We've not been as successful in convincing people in very practical terms about the interdependence of foreign and domestic policy, of economic and security policy. We just haven't been. But I'm hoping we can be more successful.

Mr. Lehrer. The way it would come back to you would be this way, Mr. President. If there's a problem, like Asia has an economic problem, we're the folks that send the most money. You had a problem in Bosnia, Somalia, a military problem—we're the ones that send the most troops. That's how it translates in practice.

The President. Yes, but if you look at it—if you look at—there are some areas in the Bosnian peacekeeping operation, like civilian police, for example, where the Europeans have 9 times as many as we do. We put up more money. You look at the different allocations.

If you look at what's going on in the United Nations, if the congressional position—which

is that we ought to have our U.N. dues lowered to 20 percent—prevails, since a lot of really poor countries pay even less than their fair share of the world's GNP, we'd actually be getting off light compared to many, many other countries—really light. So it's just not true that we always pay an unfair share, but it is true that we are called upon to bear the largest burden.

If it helps us, I think we ought to do it. And if it's right and we can do it at an acceptable price, we ought to do it, whether or not we're sure it helps us. But it's hard to quarrel with the argument that we've been hurt by having 220-odd trade agreements in the last 5 years, when you look at what's happened and a third of our growth coming out of trade. It's hard to quarrel with the argument that we've been hurt by our leadership in Bosnia or the Middle East, in Northern Ireland or any of these other places.

It's hard to quarrel with the fact that our efforts to work with other countries to deal with chemical and biological and nuclear weapons, to deal with climate change, to deal with global disease spread, those things are good for Americans right where they live. And we just simply don't have an option to say, ''Well, I'm sorry, it looks bad in the newspaper today so I think I'll check out of this old world.'' But it looked pretty good there for a couple of years, and we were getting a whole lot more than we were giving, so we liked that.

We've got to be consistent, and we've got to realize that there is an interdependence within our country, on each other, and beyond our country. And I've been working on that. And I'm supposed to be a pretty good communicator, but I don't think I've done as well as I need to. I've got to do more to persuade people.

Racial Divisions in America

Mr. Lehrer. On a domestic issue, one that you've also been talking about a lot—recently, in particular, but you've always talked about it—and that's the racial divisions in this country. Where would you put that in terms of your own concerns and the concerns that you think the average American should have about their country right now as we sit here?

The President. Well, I think the average American should be concerned about it particularly as it relates to the racial disparities in the results we get in living and working and educating in America. I mean, if you look at the number of minorities who are in poor inner-city schools, where the performance is lower than it should be; if you look at the number of people who either don't have jobs or are still underemployed, no matter how strong the economy is; if you look at the patterns of opportunity wherever there are differences, I think we should be concerned about that.

And we don't have to have a fight over affirmative action every time. We can actually say, how are we going to make it possible for more people to live together, learn together, and serve together and work together at the same level of excellence? I think everybody should be concerned about it. I think everybody ought to be concerned about discrimination, where it still exists—and it still does.

And finally, you know, the Vice President gave a brilliant speech on Martin Luther King's Day, Monday, down in Atlanta, talking about how profoundly embedded in the human heart and culture and history the feelings of racial prejudice are. And I think it's really worth—if we're going to be an interdependent country leading an interdependent world, then all this interdependence has got to work. And with all of our diversity, we've got to keep working on it hard. It's not just a question of education. You've got to really work at it all the time.

Mr. Lehrer. Why are you having trouble getting some blunt talk started on this?

The President. I don't know—we finally got some blunt talk going on affirmative action. And there were some pretty compelling stories told in Phoenix the other day. But I would like to see some blunt talk.

Mr. Lehrer. On affirmative action?

The President. Well, we had some blunt talk on affirmative action. I don't think the whole debate ought to be about affirmative action.

I mean, you know, look at what we've done, for example, with something that's supposed to have a civil rights impact that's

largely economic, the Community Reinvestment Act. It passed in 1977, over 20 years ago. Now, the Community Reinvestment Act was set up to say to the bank regulators, "Look, you guys go in and look at these banks and tell them, you've got to take some of your money and invest it in inner cities and neighborhoods and with people who otherwise would not get it so they have a chance to build homes, to build businesses, to create jobs, to build neighborhoods." In the 20-year history of the Community Reinvestment Act, 85 percent-plus of the money loaned out under it to poor inner-city neighborhoods has been loaned in the 5 years since I've been President.

So I think there are things we can do to improve education, to improve job growth, to improve not just having jobs but also income and ownership among minorities, to create opportunities for service that will bring people together, that will also mean fewer racial discrimination claims that have to be dealt with by Government, and also I think will help to tame the savage heart that still lurks within so many of us.

President's Goals and Accomplishments

Mr. Lehrer. What should the American people think about their President right now? You're going into your—the last 3 years of your administration; you got all this controversy today; you've got all kinds of things in the air.

The President. I think they ought to, first of all, think that—I came to office after the '92 election with a real theory of what I wanted to do to build America's bridge to the 21st century; that I wanted to strengthen our Union, and I wanted to broaden our set of opportunities, and I wanted to deepen our freedom, and I wanted to prepare for this modern world.

I had an idea about changing the philosophy of Government, which I talked about earlier. I had an idea that all of our policies ought to be rooted in my three little words: opportunity, responsibility, and community. We had a plan for changing the economic policy of the country, the welfare policy of the country, the crime policy of the country, the policy helping people balance work and family, of integrating economic and other kinds of foreign policy. We had all these plans, and I think you'd have to say, on balance, it's working pretty good.

So the first thing I would hope they say is, the President might be right about his philosophy of Government and the values and the principles that we ought to be looking to, and about this whole interdependence business—because we do have the lowest unemployment rate, the lowest inflation rate in a generation, the lowest crime rate in a generation, the biggest drop in welfare ever, dropping rates of juvenile crime, teen pregnancy, drug use, and we're moving ahead in the world.

The second thing I'd like for them to say is, we've still got some significant challenges out there before we are completely prepared for this new era. We've got the entitlement challenge: How are our parents going to be on Social Security and how are the baby boomers going to be on Social Security without bankrupting their kids? We've got the work and family challenge still there: How can you do the most important work of society, raising children, and still be good at work? We've got the environment and economy challenge out there: How do you deal with climate change and clean air, clean water, safe food, diseases spreading—all this sort of stuff—preserving the environment, growing the economy? Those are just three of the big changes out there.

Look at the world. You know, in America we talk about diversity, and it's a real positive thing. We say we're going to get all these people together. In a world where the Internet can also give you information about how to make a terrorist bomb, and there's more and more diversity among religious and racial and ethnic hatreds, how can you make sure the world is about community, not conflict?

These are huge questions. And I don't think any serious person believes we've resolved all these questions. So when I look at '98, yes, I want to balance the budget; yes, I've got this great child care initiative which deals with work and family; I've got a Medicare initiative and the Medicare commission, which deals with honoring our obligations to our parents. But we've still got a bunch of work to do.

So the second thing I want them to say is, yes, he was right the first 5 years, and we're way ahead of where we were 5 years ago, but we've got a huge amount to do yet, a huge amount before we're really ready for the year 2000 and the 21st century.

Independent Counsel's Investigation

Mr. Lehrer. But on a more personal level, Mr. President, you're a week from your State of the Union Address, and here you're under investigation for a very, very serious crime—allegation of a serious crime. I mean, what does that do to your ability to do all of these things that we've been talking about, whether it's the Middle East or whether it's child care reform or what?

The President. Well, I've got to do my best. I'd be less than candid if I said it was just hunky-dory. But I've been living with this sort of thing for a long time. And my experience has been, unfortunately, sometimes when one charge dies, another one just lifts up to take its place. But I can tell you, whatever I feel about it, I owe it to the American people to put it in a little box and keep working for them. This job is not like other jobs in that sense. You don't get to take a vacation from your obligations to the whole country. You must have to remember why you ran, understand what's happening and why, and go back and hit it tomorrow. That's all you can do.

Mr. Lehrer. But going back to what we said at the beginning, what we were talking about, isn't this one different than all the others? This one isn't about a land deal in Arkansas, or it's not even about sex. It's about other things, about a serious matter.

The President. But all the others, a lot of them were about serious matters. They just faded away.

Mr. Lehrer. I'm not suggesting that they weren't serious——

The President. All I can tell you is I'll do my best to help them get to the bottom of it. I did not ask anybody to lie under oath. I did not do that. That's the allegation. I didn't do it. And we'll just get to the bottom of it. We'll go on.

And meanwhile, I've got to keep working at this. I can't just ignore the fact that every day that passes is one more day that I don't have to do what I came here to do. And I think the results that America has enjoyed indicates that's a pretty good argument for doing what I came here to do.

Public Approval of the President

Mr. Lehrer. Whatever the personal things may be, the polls show that people approve of your job as President, even though they may not have that high regard of you as a person.

The President. Hardly anyone has ever been subject to the level of attack I have. You know, it made a lot of people mad when I got elected President. And the better the country does, it seems like the madder some of them get. But that's not important. What's important here is what happens to the American people. I mean, there are sacrifices to being President, and in some periods of history the price is higher than others. I'm just doing the best I can for my country.

Paula Jones Lawsuit

Mr. Lehrer. We're sitting here in the Roosevelt Room in the White House, it's 4:15 p.m., Eastern Time. All of the cable news organizations have been full of this story all day. The newspapers are probably going to be full of it tomorrow and the news—this story is going to be there and be there and be there. The Paula Jones trial coming up in May, and you're going——

The President. I'm looking forward to that.

Mr. Lehrer. Why?

The President. Because I believe that the evidence will show what I have been saying, that I did not do what I was accused of doing. It's very difficult, you know—one of the things that people learn is you can charge people with all kinds of things; it's almost impossible to prove your innocence. That's almost impossible to do. I think I'll be able to do that. We're working hard at it.

Mr. Lehrer. What about the additional element here? You're the President of the United States. You've got—certainly you've got personal things that you want to prove or disprove, et cetera. But when does just the process become demeaning to the Presidency? I mean, somebody said—in fact they said it on our program—that this trial in May

will be tabloid nirvana. And look—just what happened——

The President. I tried to spare the country that. That's the only reason that we asked the Supreme Court to affirm that, absent some terrible emergency, the President shouldn't be subject to suits, so that he wouldn't become a political target. They made a different decision. And they have made the decision that this was good for the country. So I'm taking it and dealing with it the best I can.

Independent Counsel's Investigation

Mr. Lehrer. And the new thing, you're going to be, you know, pour it on, nothing is going to change?

The President. I have got to go to work every day. You know, whatever people say about me, whatever happens to me, I can't say that people didn't tell me they were going to go after me because they thought I represented a new direction in American politics and they thought we could make things better. And I can't say that they haven't been as good as their word—every day, you know, just a whole bunch of them trying to make sure that gets done. But I just have to keep working at it.

I didn't come here for money or power or anything else. I came here to spend my time, do my job, and go back to my life. That's all I want to do. And that's what I'm trying to do for the best interests of America. And so far, the results have been good, and I just hope the people will keep that in mind.

Mr. Lehrer. Mr. President, thank you very much.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 3:30 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. It was videotaped for evening broadcast on Public Broadcasting Service television stations nationwide. In his remarks, the President referred to Monica Lewinsky, former White House intern and subject of Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr's newly expanded investigation; President Fidel Castro of Cuba; Richard Butler, chairman, United Nations Special Commission; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq.

Excerpt of a Telephone Interview With Morton Kondrake and Ed Henry of Roll Call

January 21, 1998

Independent Counsel's Investigation

Mr. Henry. Hello, Mr. President, this is Ed Henry. How are you?

The President. Hi, Ed.

Mr. Kondrake. A few questions about the breaking news. Do you think that this Monica Lewinsky story is going to overshadow your State of the Union Address?

The President. Well, I hope not. But you guys will have to make that decision. The press will make that decision.

Mr. Henry. Some Republicans have been talking about impeachment for months now. And even your former adviser George Stephanopoulos mentioned it this morning, that it could lead to that. What is your reaction to the suggestion that this may lead to impeachment?

The President. Well, I don't believe it will. I'm going to cooperate with this investigation. And I made it very clear that the allegations are not true. I didn't ask anybody not to tell the truth. And I'll cooperate. So I think that there will be a lot of stirring and there will be a lot of speculation about how this all was done and what it means and what it portends, and you all will handle it however you will. I'm just going to go back to work and do the best I can.

Mr. Kondrake. Do you think you have to refer to it in some way in the speech on Tuesday?

The President. I've given no thought to that, no.

Mr. Henry. Will this cloud your ability to get anything done with this Congress as you head into the new session?

The President. Well, that will be up to them. I don't think so. It's election year; they'll want to get some things done, too. And we've got a lot to do. I'm going to give them the first balanced budget, 3 years ahead of time, and a great child care initiative and an important Medicare initiative. We've got a Medicare commission meeting. We're going to be able to actually see this budget balanced and start to run a little surplus. We've

got a lot of things to do around the world, so I think this is quite important.

Mr. Kondrake. Okay. Let me just ask you one more question about this. You said in a statement today that you had no improper relationship with this intern. What exactly was the nature of your relationship with her?

The President. Well, let me say, the relationship's not improper, and I think that's important enough to say. But because the investigation is going on and because I don't know what is out—what's going to be asked of me, I think I need to cooperate, answer the questions, but I think it's important for me to make it clear what is not. And then, at the appropriate time, I'll try to answer what is. But let me answer, it is not an improper relationship, and I know what the word means. So let's just——

Mr. Kondrake. Was it in any way sexual?

The President. The relationship was not sexual. And I know what you mean, and the answer is no.

NOTE: The interview began at 4:26 p.m. The President spoke from the Oval Office at the White House.

Interview With Mara Liasson and Robert Siegel of National Public Radio

January 21, 1998

Independent Counsel's Investigation

Mr. Siegel. Mr. President, welcome to the program.

Many Americans woke up to the news today that the Whitewater independent counsel is investigating an allegation that you, or you and Vernon Jordan, encouraged a young woman to lie to lawyers in the Paula Jones civil suit. Is there any truth to that allegation?

The President. No, sir, there's not. It's just not true.

Mr. Siegel. Is there any truth to the allegation of an affair between you and the young woman?

The President. No, that's not true, either. And I have told people that I would cooperate in the investigation, and I expect to cooperate with it. I don't know any more about it than I've told you and any more about it really than you do, but I will cooperate. The charges are not true, and I haven't asked anybody to lie.

Ms. Liasson. Mr. President, where do you think this comes from? Did you have any kind of relationship with her that could have been misconstrued?

The President. Mara, I'm going to do my best to cooperate with the investigation. I want to know what they want to know from me. I think it's more important for me to tell the American people that there wasn't improper relations; I didn't ask anybody to lie; and I intend to cooperate. And I think that's all I should say right now, so I can get back to the work of the country.

Ms. Liasson. But you're not able to say whether you had any conversations with her about her testimony, any conversations at all?

The President. I think, given the state of this investigation, it would be inappropriate for me to say more. I've said everything I think that I need to say now. I'm going to be cooperative, and we'll work through it.

Mr. Siegel. But is the fact that in this case, as we understand it, a close friend of this young woman was outfitted with a wire, with a microphone to record conversations with her at the instruction of the Whitewater counsel, does that disturb you? Do you regard that Mr. Starr is playing the inquisitor here in this case?

The President. Well, that's a question the American people will have to ask and answer, and the press will have to ask and answer, the bar will have to ask and answer. But it's inappropriate for me to comment on it at this time. I just have to cooperate, and I'll do that.

Scrutiny of the Presidency

Mr. Siegel. And a broader question. I understand that you don't want to comment on this. There are some commentators—on our network, it would be Kevin Phillips, who said that the moral leadership of the Presidency justifies the kind of scrutiny that you're receiving. Do you agree with that?

The President. Well, I think there is a lot of scrutiny, and there should be, and I think that's important. I'll leave it to others to define whether the kind we have received

in volume, nature, and accuracy, and sometimes downright honesty, is appropriate. That's for others to determine.

I just have a certain number of days here. I came here as not a Washington person. I came here to try to change the country and to work to build the future of America in a new century. And I just have to try to put this in a little box like I have every other thing that has been said and done, and go on and do my job. That's what I'm going to work at.

Ms. Liasson. Mr. President, earlier today you said you tried your best to contain your natural impulses and get back to work. Were you furious? Is that what you were referring to?

The President. I was. I was.

Ms. Liasson. And what were you furious about?

The President. Well, I worked with Prime Minister Netanyahu until 12:30 last night; I'm getting ready for Mr. Arafat; I'm working on the State of the Union; and we've got a lot of big issues out there within and beyond our borders. And I don't think any American questions the fact that I've worked very hard at this job. And anything that's a distraction I dislike.

Ms. Liasson. Do you see this as a partisan attack? Is that what——

The President. I didn't say that. I don't know what the facts are. I don't know enough to say any more about this. I don't want to get into that. You know at least as much about it as I do. I worked until 12:30 last night on something else. That's why I have given the answer that I have given to your questions today.

Middle East Peace Process

Mr. Siegel. Moving on to the matter you were working on late at night last night. First, it seems the message to Mr. Netanyahu from the U.S. was, we want to see you withdraw from some part of the West Bank. First, what's the message to Yasser Arafat, if you could sum it up?

The President. Well, first of all, let's talk about what they want. I think what Israel wants is a peace process that moves immediately to final status negotiations and gives them a stronger sense of security. I think what the Palestinians want is a peace process that gives them a stronger sense of self-determination and possibility and dignity.

So what we've tried to do—for 12 months now, ever since the Hebron redeployment, we have been out involved in the region, talking to all the players—that's not the royal "we," I mean me, the Secretary of State, Mr. Ross, Mr. Berger, others involved—trying to analyze what it would take to get the peace process back on track. And we've formulated some ideas and we talked to the Israeli Prime Minister about them yesterday; we're going to talk to Mr. Arafat about them tomorrow. We hope that by the time we finish the talk that both sides will be closer together than they were before we started. And if they are, then we'll try to close. But I think there may be circumstances under which we could take a real leap forward in the Middle East peace process if we get a break or two.

Mr. Siegel. This week?

The President. No, I wouldn't go that far. It's going to take a while. We have to work with the Palestinians tomorrow, then we have to analyze where we are with both and whether we can go forward. And we may not make any progress at all. And if we don't, I'll tell you that.

Mr. Siegel. I'd like to ask you, though, after spending so much time with Mr. Netanyahu on this visit and on other visits, some people regard him as a man who always opposed a land for peace settlement to the conflict with the Palestinians, certainly wouldn't have negotiated the Oslo accords had he been in office then, has never liked them particularly. Some would say he's really trying to thwart that process and contain the damage from his standpoint. Do you think so?

The President. No, I can't say that based on what I've seen. I do believe—he's made no secret of the fact that he has principle differences with the Oslo process, which he has pledged to support. And we all know he has a different political coalition, and that indeed, the political forces in Israel itself are different than they were even a few years ago in terms of the composition of the population, the rise of these small parties and immigrant-related intense groups and all that.

So I think that's all there. I think that, historically, there's been a little bit of difference in the kind of the texture of the relationship between the Likud Party and the Palestinians and the Labor Party and the Palestinians. So there are a lot of layers here.

But the bottom line is, I think, Mr. Netanyahu is an intelligent man who wants to make peace and understands that there has to be some formula where some marginal increase in territorial insecurity by giving up land is more than offset by a dramatic increase in security by changing the feelings of the people, the climate, the capacity for growth and opportunity.

So we're just trying to hammer out what each side will have to do to take another step. I'm hopeful.

Situation in Iraq

Ms. Liasson. Mr. President, in Iraq, diplomacy hasn't worked yet. UNSCOM is still barred from doing its job the way it sees fit, getting into the sites that it wants to inspect. Yet on the other hand, military action also has downsides. It might upset any progress you're making with allies on other issues. Do you think the U.S. has any good choices on Iraq?

The President. Well, there are no easy choices. If we define good as easy, the answer is no. What is the problem? The problem is the weapons of mass destruction program, chemical and biological weapons, primarily. What is the solution? Letting the UNSCOM inspectors go wherever they want. And that means that Saddam Hussein cannot determine when, where, and who, when it comes to the UNSCOM teams. So now he says that he's going to determine that, and there is not going to be any ''when'' for a couple of months, during which time he'll be free to move whatever he wants wherever he wants.

I think that this is a big mistake, and I believe that the United Nations will see it as such, and a real thwarting of its position. And we just have to see where we go from here.

Mr. Siegel. Do you feel that to even wield the threat of military action, possible military action, that you have to be able to point to some progress in the Arab-Israeli negotiations in order to maintain the support of U.S. friends in the region? Is there some linkage between progress——

The President. I don't think there is a linkage, a direct linkage. It may affect the atmospherics, just, you know, the attitude about America. But I think it would be wrong to say there's a direct linkage.

The main thing is every country in the region and throughout the world has a vested interest in seeing that no one who would either use or sell weapons of mass destruction—especially chemical and biological weapons which could be carried around in small amounts, in little valises—that no one who would use or sell them has a big program of them, which is why the whole United Nations is against the Iraqi program. They need to think long and hard, these countries that have been a little squeamish about being firm, whether or not it's possible that they could be the victims of this, if not directly from Iraq, from some group or another that Iraq sells to in the future.

So I think we need to be firm, and I'm going to do my best to keep rallying support and keep working ahead. I prefer the inspections. I prefer the diplomatic pressure. I have not been trigger-happy on this; some here in our country think that we should have acted before. But I don't think we can rule out any option.

Federal Budget

Ms. Liasson. Mr. President, moving to domestic policy and the budget surplus, Republicans and Democrats on the Hill have already said what they want to do with it, either cut taxes or pay down the debt or spend more money on social problems. But so far, you've been silent on this. And I'm wondering if you are ready to make a commitment to using whatever surplus there might be to shoring up the Social Security trust funds, making sure that safety net is there for the baby boom generation when it retires.

The President. Well, I'll make a commitment that—in my State of the Union Address, I'll announce what I think should be done.

Q. Well, what do you think should be done?

The President. I've decided, but I don't want to announce yet. I need to have something to say in the State of the Union that's new.

But let me say before I say that, I would like to just caution—we've had 5 great years, and we've always done better than we were predicted to do on the deficit. But I think I would still caution the Democratic and Republican leaders of Congress from passing some big 5-year program to spend money through spending programs or tax cuts that hasn't yet materialized. We do not yet have a balanced budget. We've worked so hard for so long to get this done; I sure hate to start counting our chickens before they hatch. So I would like to start with that. And then when I speak at the State of the Union, I'll say what I think ought to be done.

Social Security

Mr. Siegel. Would you like to caution equally against shoring up the Social Security fund in that case?

The President. Well, in general, I believe—my position on Social Security is that we need a bipartisan and fairly rapid process to work through the options and prepare for the long term health and viability of the Social Security system, along with the efforts that are going to be made by the Medicare commission, which I'm very hopeful about. One of the big things I hope to achieve before I leave office is entitlement reform in both major systems. So I tell you, I think that that needs to be done, and we're exploring how best to do that.

Ms. Liasson. Well, we don't want to let you off the hook too easily. You're not saying you're against using the surplus to shore up the Social Security trust funds?

The President. I'm not saying one way or the other. I'm saying I'd like to have something to announce on State of the Union night.

Proposed Tobacco Agreement

Mr. Siegel. Mr. President, on tobacco, there is talk on Capitol Hill of writing and passing a ''kids only'' bill, as opposed to seeking a huge global settlement. That would achieve the aims in theory of raising the cost of a pack of cigarettes by so much that it would be beyond the reach of teenagers, achieve your major aim, and not take companies off the hook for future liability. Are you in favor of such a bill?

The President. You'd have a ''children's only'' bill that did what? I'm sorry, you had a lot of points there.

Mr. Siegel. Yes, well, first, it would raise the price of a pack of cigarettes simply to deter teenage purchasers of cigarettes.

Ms. Liasson. And strengthen the hand of the FDA, do some marketing restrictions, but not be a complete global settlement.

The President. Well, I would favor doing something like that without committing to the specifics if we fail to get a global settlement. But I think we owe it to the attorneys general and the others who worked with us on this in good faith to try to achieve one, because I think, long term, we need to deter teen smoking with more than just a higher price tag for cigarettes. I think there are lots of other things that can be done. And I think that we ought to have certain benchmarks of performance for the tobacco companies, too, which in my view will help because then they'll be free to do more—that they even have to spend a little more money than they're obligated to under the agreement—if they're not meeting the targets, they may decide they ought to do that to save even more money down the road.

So I'm going to look for a global settlement in the tobacco case for the benefit of our children. If we fail, then I'll look at something else.

Ms. Liasson. Mr. Clinton, following up on that, you've cautioned Congress not to spend the surplus until they have it. Yet you have committed $60 billion of some projected tobacco settlement bill before it's even passed to new spending. Do you think that's wise? And if you don't get a tobacco settlement, are you committed to those programs? Will you cut elsewhere in order to keep that new spending?

The President. Well let me just say this: I will not, under any circumstances, favor funding anything I have recommended with the surplus—with the projected surplus.

Ms. Liasson. So, if you don't get the tobacco settlement, you'll cut elsewhere?

The President. If I don't get—in other words, if we don't get the tobacco settlement, we'll either have to cut the size of the child care initiative or cut elsewhere, or do something else, because I will not just, on my own, get up and propose that we spend the proposed settlement, or part of it, on these programs. I think they are terribly important, but right now we've got other fish to fry. And we've got to make sure—the most important thing is to keep this economy growing, to keep disciplined, to keep strong, to do what makes sense. And that's what has gotten us here, 5 hard years of that, and we don't want to forget that.

So we do have new spending in our programs, but it's new spending within a context of fiscal discipline. It's new discipline with the smallest Federal Government since Kennedy was President and the size of it continuing to go down.

Accused Unabomber Theodore Kaczynski

Mr. Siegel. Federal prosecutors reportedly rejected a plea bargain agreement not long ago with Theodore Kaczynski, with his lawyers at least, that might have guaranteed his imprisonment for life. Evidently they want the death penalty. Is it important to you, say, if he's convicted, that there be an exercise of the Federal death penalty?

The President. If he's guilty, he killed a lot of people deliberately, and, therefore, I think it's something that the jury should be able to consider. From my point of view, I approve of the laws that we have in America now, the sort of two-tiered trial where you determine guilt and then you determine penalty, and I would want to hear all the testimony before I decided how I'd vote in that case. But I do think it should be presented to the penalty phase.

Mr. Siegel. Even if you had a guilty plea that—as there is no parole in the Federal system—guaranteed none and spared any possibility of an acquittal, you would still prefer to reject that plea, to offer the jury the option of the death penalty?

The President. I think the jury should have the option. Now, also, as a practical matter, there aren't many inmates—perhaps he would be one—that actually do get life without parole. And that's probably not a terrible thing. That is, in a prison system, where you don't want prison riots, you have to reward people who do an extraordinarily good job of being good inmates within the prison system, perhaps the practice of allowing people who have life sentences to be paroled after quite a long period of time is a good one, or, at least, defensible. But juries know that, too.

So I think the—it's hard to generalize. But this was a case where, based on what I know, I would consider it appropriate to present that to the jury.

Asian Economies

Ms. Liasson. Mr. President, on the Asian financial crisis, a lot of Americans don't understand why taxpayers should help bail out banks and investors in the U.S. or Japan or in Europe who took a risk and made some mistakes. Don't they bear some responsibility? Don't they have to take some of the hit?

The President. Absolutely. They do bear some of the responsibility, and they shouldn't all be bailed out. And that's one of the most frustrating things about this. On the other hand, what this is about is about rebuilding confidence in the investment climate of these countries. I don't think they ought to get one red cent unless the governments commit to do things for the future that will mean these banks will have to take a bigger risk, and get their act cleaned up, unless the International Monetary Fund plan is implemented, and then the U.S. and Japan and these other countries come in as a backup.

But if we refuse on the front end to do anything, the problem is it could hurt us a lot worse than it could hurt the odd banker that doesn't get his money back, because if a lot of people start not getting any of their money back, then other people say, "Well, I'm going to get my money out," and then others say, "Well, I'm not going to put my money in"; and then all of a sudden the value of the currency goes way down. Then what happens? They don't have any money to buy American products and all their products are cheaper, competing against ours and other countries.

So we have a big economic interest as well as a huge interest in a stable, democratic Asia. And that's why I think we're doing the

right thing. I hope in the State of the Union I can persuade the American people that it's the right thing.

President's Political Philosophy

Ms. Liasson. I want to ask you about "Clintonism." We've been hearing a lot about "Clintonism" lately, a coherent political philosophy that may or may not be identified with you. Do you think there is such a thing, and what is it?

The President. Well, I do. I think, first of all, it's a very—it's a future-oriented political philosophy that attempts to break the logjam between the 1980's and early nineties debate of the Republican position that Government is the enemy and the Democratic position is, sort of, Government is the solution if we do more of the same; we just need to do more.

My position is we need a different kind of Government for a different kind of society and a different kind of world. And we need to focus more on giving people the tools they need to make the most of their own lives, more on being a catalyst for good ideas, more on empowering the disadvantaged, and creating opportunity, enforcing responsibility, building community. I think that's what "Clintonism" is about. And I think it will get us to the 21st century.

Mr. Siegel. Mr. President, thank you very much for talking with us.

The President. Thank you.

Mr. Siegel. I'd like to tell our listeners that the entire transcript as well as audio of this interview will be available later this evening on our Web site, which is www.npr.org. And once again, thank you very much.

The President. Thank you.

NOTE: The interview began at 5:08 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House and was broadcast live on National Public Radio stations nationwide. During the interview, the President referred to the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM).

Notice—Continuation of Emergency Regarding Terrorists Who Threaten To Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process

January 21, 1998

On January 23, 1995, by Executive Order 12947, I declared a national emergency to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States constituted by grave acts of violence committed by foreign terrorists that disrupt the Middle East peace process. By Executive Order 12947 of January 23, 1995, I blocked the assets in the United States, or in the control of United States persons, of foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process. I also prohibited transactions or dealings by United States persons in such property. In 1996 and 1997, I transmitted notices of the continuation of this national emergency to the Congress and the *Federal Register*. Last year's notice of continuation was published in the *Federal Register* on January 22, 1997. Because terrorist activities continue to threaten the Middle East peace process and vital interests of the United States in the Middle East, the national emergency declared on January 23, 1995, and the measures that took effect on January 24, 1995, to deal with that emergency must continue in effect beyond January 23, 1998. Therefore, in accordance with section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)), I am continuing the national emergency with respect to foreign terrorists who threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process.

This notice shall be published in the *Federal Register* and transmitted to the Congress.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
January 21, 1998.

[Filed with the Office of the Federal Register, 11:51 a.m., January 21, 1997]

NOTE: This notice was published in the *Federal Register* on January 22.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting the Notice on Terrorists Who Threaten To Disrupt the Middle East Peace Process

January 21, 1998

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Section 202(d) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1622(d)) provides for the automatic termination of a national emergency unless, prior to the anniversary date of its declaration, the President publishes in the *Federal Register* and transmits to the Congress a notice stating that the emergency is to continue in effect beyond the anniversary date. In accordance with this provision, I have sent the enclosed notice, stating that the emergency declared with respect to grave acts of violence committed by foreign terrorists that disrupt the Middle East peace process is to continue in effect beyond January 23, 1998, to the *Federal Register* for publication. The first notice continuing this emergency was published in the *Federal Register* on January 22, 1996.

The crisis with respect to the grave acts of violence committed by foreign terrorists that threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process that led to the declaration of a national emergency, on January 23, 1995, has not been resolved. Terrorist groups continue to engage in activities with the purpose or effect of threatening the Middle East peace process, and which are hostile to U.S. interests in the region. Such actions threaten vital interests of the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States. For these reasons, I have determined that it is necessary to maintain in force the broad authorities necessary to deny any financial support from the United States for foreign terrorists that threaten to disrupt the Middle East peace process.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.

Remarks at the White House Endowment Dinner

January 21, 1998

Ladies and gentlemen, may I have your attention please? This will be a brief program, because we want you to have a wonderful time tonight at the White House. We thank you for doing so much to support the White House Endowment Fund and for your commitment to ensuring that this house, the people's house, remains the pride of our people well into the next millennium.

No one has been more committed to making sure that this house is for all of our people than the First Lady. Over the past 5 years, Hillary has worked so hard to showcase the talent and creativity of all Americans in each of these grand and historic rooms, from refurbishing the Blue Room to securing the first painting by an African-American, or the first painting by Georgia O'Keefe for the White House's permanent collection. Her contributions to this house will remain a long time after we're gone from Washington.

Let me say it was in no small part because of her dedication that the 1.5 million visitors who walk through the White House every single year have been able to enjoy the richness and diversity of America's cultural heritage. I thank her for her leadership and for making this house on all floors a more wonderful and truly historic place to live.

And now, in reverse of the usual order, it is my pleasure and honor to introduce the First Lady of the United States.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:05 p.m. in the State Dining Room at the White House.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on Emigration Policies of Albania

January 21, 1998

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I am submitting an updated report to the Congress concerning the emigration laws and policies of Albania. The report indicates continued Albanian compliance with U.S. and

international standards in the area of emigration. In fact, Albania has imposed no emigration restrictions, including exit visa requirements, on its population since 1991.

On December 5, 1997, I determined and reported to the Congress that Albania was in full compliance with the freedom of emigration criteria of sections 402 and 409 of the Trade Act of 1974. That action allowed for the continuation of most-favored-nation (MFN) status for Albania and certain other activities without the requirement of an annual waiver. This semiannual report is submitted as required by law pursuant to the determination of December 5, 1997.

Sincerely,

Bill Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 22.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and an Exchange With Reporters

January 22, 1998

Middle East Peace Process

The President. Let me say before we begin that I am very pleased to welcome Chairman Arafat back to the United States as our partner in the peace process. As I did with Prime Minister Netanyahu, I want to emphasize what a critical time this is in the process and the importance of both parties meeting their obligations.

I also would like to take just a second to underline the principles of the peace process: mutual obligations and the concept of land for peace, so that Israelis can live in security, recognized by all their neighbors, and the Palestinians can realize their aspirations to live as a free people. If we can focus on these principles, I'm convinced we can make some progress. I'm going to give Chairman Arafat a little report on my meeting with Mr. Netanyahu, and then we're going to go to work.

Q. Mr. President, when do you think the Israelis will finally meet their U.N. obligations, or treaty obligations, to give back conquered land?

The President. Well, we're going to discuss that. We're working on it. We believe the Oslo process sets out a schedule for redeployment, and that's obviously one of the major issues to be discussed.

Q. But they're not going to meet it, are they?

The President. Well, give us a chance. We're working on it.

[*At this point, a reporter asked Chairman Arafat a question in Arabic, and a translation was not provided.*]

Q. Mr. President, what's the next step now, and is there a timeframe where you want things to move?

The President. Well, after this meeting, then what we'll do is to see whether we have moved the parties closer together. And if we have, then we'll try to figure out how to close the loop and get an understanding on what the next steps are. And if we can do that—we want to do it, obviously, fairly quickly; we don't want to just keep dragging this out. I think we have a sense of urgency here.

[*At this point, a reporter asked Chairman Arafat a question in Arabic, and a translation was not provided.*]

Q. Mr. Arafat, do you believe progress was made with Prime Minister Netanyahu, and do you believe progress will be made this week? And would you agree to a few-stage withdrawal?

Chairman Arafat. As long as there is pressure and efforts by President Clinton, I'm fully confident that the peace process will be protected and will be succeeded. And we should not forget that the President also has sent Madeleine Albright, Secretary of State, and Mr. Ross to the region many times to push the peace process forward.

Q. So you believe Mr. Netanyahu will stand by his commitments?

Chairman Arafat. We hope so, he would do so.

Independent Counsel's Investigation

Q. Forgive us for raising this while you're dealing with important issues in the Middle East, but could you clarify for us, sir, exactly what your relationship was with Ms. Lewinsky, and whether the two of you talked by phone, including any messages you may have left?

The President. Let me say, first of all, I want to reiterate what I said yesterday. The allegations are false, and I would never ask anybody to do anything other than tell the truth. Let's get to the big issues there, about the nature of the relationship and whether I suggested anybody not tell the truth. That is false.

Now, there are a lot of other questions that are, I think, very legitimate. You have a right to ask them; you and the American people have a right to get answers. We are working very hard to comply and get all the requests for information up here, and we will give you as many answers as we can, as soon as we can, at the appropriate time, consistent with our obligation to also cooperate with the investigations.

And that's not a dodge, that's really why I've—I've talked with our people. I want to do that. I'd like for you to have more rather than less, sooner rather than later. So we'll work through it as quickly as we can and get all those questions out there to you.

Pope's Visit to Cuba

Q. Mr. President, about the Pope and Cuba, what are your impressions of the remarkable scenes of the Pope in Cuba, and what about his call for an end to the embargo?

The President. Well, first of all, I'm glad he went to Cuba. I think it's a wonderful thing and I'm glad that Mr. Castro invited him to come. I'm glad the Cuban Government let the Christian people in Cuba celebrate Christmas last Christmas, acknowledge it in an explicit and open way. And I hope that this trip will lead to some reassessment on the part of the Cuban Government that would enable us to move closer together in many ways.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:11 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ambassador Dennis B. Ross, Special Middle East Coordinator. Chairman Arafat spoke in Arabic, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Videotaped Remarks on the 25th Anniversary of the Supreme Court's *Roe* v. *Wade* Decision

January 22, 1998

On January 22d, we marked the 25th anniversary of *Roe* v. *Wade*, the landmark Supreme Court decision that affirmed every woman's right to choose whether and when to have a child, and in doing so, affirmed two of our Nation's most deeply-held values, personal privacy and family responsibility.

Over the past 25 years, *Roe* v. *Wade* has had a major positive impact on the health and well-being of American women and their families. Safe, legal abortion has all but eliminated the dangerous, clandestine conditions that claimed too many women's lives when the procedure was illegal.

I'm committed to keeping abortion safe, legal, and accessible—and to making it more rare. Over the last 5 years, we've led the way on policies to prevent unintended pregnancy by making comprehensive family planning and sex education programs more widely available. We've increased support for Title X family planning services every year in our budget. And I'll do so again this year.

I fought to continue funding for international family planning, bringing much needed health care to women all around the world. Here at home, by working together with health care professionals, community groups, schools, and family planning agencies, we've made real progress in reducing teen pregnancy. And I was proud to sign legislation to protect the rights *Roe* established by protecting women's clinics from violence. We have enforced that law to its full extent.

I will continue to do everything I can to make sure that every child in America is a wanted child, raised in a loving, strong family. Ultimately, that idea is what the anniversary of *Roe* v. *Wade* celebrates.

Hillary and I join with all of you in commemorating this milestone and pledge ourselves anew to protecting the right to choose.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President recorded these remarks on January 6 in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Statement on the Apprehension of Goran Jelisic

January 22, 1998

I welcome the news that Goran Jelisic has been detained by SFOR forces, led by American units, in the Republika Srpska city of Bijelina. He is now being transported to The Hague for trial before the International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. Jelisic was indicted by the Tribunal in 1995 for 56 counts of genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. The SFOR forces acted according to their rules of engagement, which authorize the apprehension of indicted war criminals when encountered in the course of their duties. This was the third such apprehension by SFOR forces, following actions last July and December that resulted in the capture of four indictees and the death of a fifth.

I congratulate the SFOR troops who participated in this effort. The United States continues to support fully the work of the Tribunal to bring indicted war criminals to justice. Jelisic will be the 23rd of 78 indictees brought to The Hague for trial. It is important to recall that most of these were delivered in the last 7 months by the parties themselves. We intend to sustain political and economic pressure to assure continued compliance with the Dayton accords.

We must continue this progress. Today, I call again on all parties to the Dayton accords to fulfill their obligations to bring all indicted war criminals to justice. Carrying out these commitments is essential for advancing the work of reconciliation in Bosnia.

Statement on Receiving the Interim Report of the Secretary of State's Special Advisory Committee on Religious Freedom Abroad

January 23, 1998

I welcome the report of the Committee, which my administration established in November 1996 to advise us on means to combat religious persecution and intolerance abroad.

I am pleased that the Committee has recognized the considerable efforts we have already made to raise the profile of these issues and invigorate our advocacy, and we will carefully study the Committee's recommendations on how we can do more.

This distinguished group of Americans is playing a critical role in our effort to promote religious freedom abroad, and we look forward to a continued and close collaboration as the Committee prepares its final report in the months to come.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

January 17

In the afternoon, the President gave testimony by deposition in the law offices of attorney Robert S. Bennett.

January 20

In the evening, the President met with Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel in the Oval Office.

January 21

The President announced his intention to appoint Stephen B. Hand as member and Vice Chair of the Advisory Council on Historic Preservation.

The White House announced that the President will travel to Africa in March, including a state visit to South Africa at the invitation of President Nelson Mandela.

January 23

In the morning, the President met with his Cabinet in the Cabinet Room. Later, he met with Minister of Finance Tharin Nimmanhemin of Thailand to discuss the Asian-Pacific economic situation.

In the afternoon, the President met with former President Jimmy Carter in the Oval Office to discuss President Carter's recent travel to Africa and China.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

NOTE: No nominations were submitted to the Senate during the period covered by this issue.

Checklist of White House Press Releases

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of Other White House Announcements.

Released January 20

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Transcript of a press briefing by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on the visit of Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel

Released January 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Clinton To Make Historic Visit to Africa

Released January 22

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Statement by the Press Secretary: President Clinton Welcomes Signing of Ecuador-Peru Accord

Transcript of a press briefing by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright on the visit of Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority

Released January 23

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Transcript of a press briefing by Health and Human Services Secretary Donna Shalala and Justice Department Special Counsel for Health Care Fraud John Bentivoglio on the President's program on fighting Medicare fraud and abuse [1]

Acts Approved by the President

NOTE: No acts approved by the President were received by the Office of the Federal Register during the period covered by this issue.

[1] This item was embargoed for release until after broadcast of the President's radio address on January 24.