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later today NASA will be making some exciting new announcements on the results of the *Lunar Prospector* mission, currently orbiting the moon.

The knowledge we gain from our space missions could help us treat diseases here on Earth, from osteoporosis to ovarian cancer. It could make our farms more productive. It could help us meet the challenge of global climate change. And perhaps help us to uncover the very origins of life itself.

All Americans, especially our young people, have important roles to play in making these plans a reality. They have to begin by taking their studies, especially their studies in math and science, seriously.

Last week we learned that our leading spacefaring nation is not faring very well when it comes to achievement of high school seniors in math and science. This is unacceptable. As we prepare for an information age that will require every student to master not just the basics of reading and math, but algebra, geometry, physics, and computer science, I call on every parent, every school, every teacher to set higher expectations for our children. And I call upon all of our students—and I know that Hillary and Eileen will today—to take these challenging courses, so that we can all be prepared for the known and still unknown challenges of the future. And I call on all young girls across America and their parents to take inspiration from Colonel Collins' achievement.

Let me remind you of something she was too modest to say. She has a distinguished degree from Syracuse University. She came up through the ROTC program. She began her high school education in community college. I want every child in this country to know that we have opened the doors of college to all Americans, that community college is virtually free for all children now, that everybody can make this start and nobody needs to put blinders on their aspirations for the future. She is proof.

I want to say, especially to the little girls who will hear Eileen Collins and these who will see her and to their parents, let's remember that at a time when very few girls were taking the hardest math and science courses, Colonel Collins was taking them and mastering them. She did in part because of the unfailing support of her parents who set high expectations and told her she could do anything she set her mind to. She never gave up, and one by one her dreams came true.

I think our country owes a great debt of gratitude to her parents, and I hope that more will follow her direction. And perhaps with her well-justified new fame, notoriety, the greatest mark Colonel Collins will make will not just be written in the stars but here on Earth, in the mind of every young girl with a knack for numbers, the gift for science, and a fearless spirit. Let us work to make sure that for every girl and every boy, dreams and ambitions can be realized, and even the sky is no longer the limit.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:34 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Lt. Col. Collins' husband, J. Patrick Youngs, and her parents, James and Rose Collins; former astronaut Sally K. Ride; and aviation pioneer Jean Ross Howard-Phelan.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With the Medicare Commission and an Exchange With Reporters

March 5, 1998

The President. Good day, everyone. I am glad to be joined here by members of the Medicare Commission. In a few moments we will talk for the very first time about what we have to do as Americans to preserve Medicare, a system that has served our country so well for 33 years now. It's more than a program; it is a way we honor our duty to our parents and build a future for our children. It has been one of the great achievements of American society in the 20th century.

We've already done a lot in the last few years to strengthen Medicare: The balanced budget will extend the Medicare Trust Fund for at least a decade; $20 billion has been saved by reducing fraud abuse and mismanagement in the system; we're giving people on Medicare a wider range of health plan choices and preventive services, including mammograms and diabetes management.

When Medicare was first passed into law, President Johnson said, and I quote, "It

proved that the vitality of our democracy can shape the oldest of our values to the needs and obligations of changing times.'' I'm confident that the Medicare Commission will help us to build a new consensus to meet the challenges of a new era, strengthening Medicare for the 21st century and giving our people the security they need to thrive.

I'd like to thank Senator Breaux for agreeing to chair the Commission. He has a longstanding record, both in his work on the Aging Commission and the Finance Committee—the Aging Committee and the Finance Committee—of working to develop consensus on important issues affecting our senior citizens.

I'd also like to thank Congressman Thomas for his leadership on this issue and on the Commission. He is well known for his expertise on the Medicare program. He shepherded the Medicare provisions in the Balanced Budget Act through and helped to assure that we could achieve bipartisan agreement on these reforms. And for that I am very, very grateful.

So I'd like now to give the Vice President and Senator Breaux and Congressman Thomas a chance to say a few words.

[*At this point, the Vice President, Senator John B. Breaux, and Representative William M. Thomas made brief remarks.*]

President's Deposition

Q. Mr. President, are you upset by the leaking of your Jones deposition—or did you people actually do the leaking?

The President. Well, let me say, the court has made it absolutely clear that it is illegal to leak or to discuss it. And I think, Mr. Donaldson, [Sam Donaldson, ABC News] I should follow the law. And so I don't have anything else to say. I know you've got to ask the question; it's your job. But I'm going to just do my job. That's what I'm doing here. And I'm going to follow the law. That's what I wish everyone else would do.

Q. Sir, you never answered the important questions that I think a lot of people out there would like to hear you on it.

The President. Well, I believe I have given all the answers that matter. And I don't have anything else to say at this time. I'm just going to go back and do my job.

Q. Mr. President, do you stand by the facts in the deposition as reported by the newspaper?

Senator John D. Rockefeller IV. Do you care what Medicare is, Sam? Do you care what Medicare is?

Q. We all care, sir. Mr. President, it says in the deposition as reported that you asked Betty Currie to see if she could help Monica Lewinsky get a job.

The President. For one thing, I haven't read the article. For another thing, I don't know whether the article is accurate or not. Finally, whether it is or not, it is against the law. The judge has ordered us neither to release such materials or to discuss them. Somebody in this case ought to follow the law. I intend to be that person, so that I can go back to work about these things. I have nothing else to say.

Q. Things have gotten very personal between you and Kenneth Starr, Mr. President. It seems to have gotten very personal between you and Kenneth Starr, Mr. President. I'm asking a question not about the deposition.

The President. Sam never quits. He never quits.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:25 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House.

Statement on the House Banking Committee Vote on Funding for the International Monetary Fund

March 5, 1998

I want to congratulate members of both parties in the House Banking Committee who have voted to give the International Monetary Fund the resources it needs to deal with the risks to financial stability around the world. This bipartisan legislation will help ensure that the IMF has the funds it needs to protect American jobs and exports.

The American economy continues to demonstrate its remarkable strength, and we must do everything we can to keep it on a path of steady growth. That is why we will work to build broad bipartisan support for this legislation as it moves forward in Congress. It is vital that the Congress move as