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Policy of Constructive Engagement

Q. Mr. President, if constructive engagement is the right policy in your view for dealing with China, why isn't it an appropriate policy for dealing with other countries, say, Cuba?

The President. That's not the question I thought you were going to ask—[*laughter*]—I mean, the example I thought you were going to give. I think each of these has to be taken on its own facts. In the case of Cuba, we actually have tried—I would remind you—we have tried in good faith on more than one occasion to engage Cuba in a way that would develop the kind of reciprocal movement that we see in China.

Under the Cuban Democracy Act, which was passed by the Congress in 1992 and signed by President Bush, but which I strongly supported during the election season, we were given a clear roadmap of balanced actions that we could take and that Cuba could take. And we were, I thought, making progress with that map until the—people, including American citizens, were unlawfully shot out of the sky and killed. That led to the passage of the Helms-Burton law.

And even after that, after the Pope went to Cuba, I took some further actions, just about everything I'm empowered to take under the Helms-Burton law, to again increase people-to-people contacts in Cuba, to empower the church more with our support as an instrument of civil society, and to send a signal that I did not want the United States to be estranged from the people of Cuba forever.

I do believe that we have some more options, and I think Cuba is a case where, because it's close to home and because of the position we occupy in the region, our policy has a greater chance of success. But even there, you see, whatever policy you pursue, you have to be prepared to have a little patience and work with it and hope that it will work out in the long run.

But nothing would please me more than to get some clear signal that Cuba was willing to be more open and more free and more democratic and work toward a common future and join the whole rest of the hemisphere. You know, in our hemisphere every country but Cuba is a democracy, and I would like the see—nothing would please me more than to see some rapprochement between the people of our two countries, especially because of the strong Cuban-American population in our Nation.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 162d news conference began at 5:23 p.m. in the Grand Ballroom of the Grand Hyatt Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Premier Zhu Rongji of China; President Li Teng-hui of Taiwan; freed Chinese dissidents Wei Jingsheng, Bishop Zeng Jingmu, and Wang Dan; David Trimble of the Ulster Unionist Party and John Hume and Seamus Mallon of the Social Democratic and Labor Party of Ireland; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland; Prime Minister Ryutaro Hashimoto of Japan; and Mayor Xu Kuangdi of Shanghai, China.

Memorandum on the Joint Institute for Food Safety Research

July 3, 1998

Memorandum for the Secretary of Health and Human Services and the Secretary of Agriculture

Subject: Joint Institute for Food Safety Research

Americans enjoy the most bountiful and safe food supply in the world. My Administration has made substantial improvements in the food safety system, from modernizing meat, seafood, and poultry inspections to creating a high-tech early warning system to detect and control outbreaks of foodborne illness.

Our success has been built on two guiding principles: (1) engaging all concerned parties including consumers, farmers, industry, and academia, in an open and far-ranging dialogue about improving food safety; and (2) grounding our efforts in the best science available. We have made progress, but more can be done to prevent the many foodborne illnesses that still occur in our country.

As we look to the future of food safety, science and technology will play an increasingly central role. An expanded food safety research agenda is essential to continued improvements in the safety of America's food. We need new tools to detect more quickly

dangerous pathogens, like E. coli O157:H7 and campylobacter, and we need better interventions that reduce the risk of contamination during food production.

Food safety research is a critical piece of my Fiscal Year 1999 food safety initiative; and I have urged the Congress to revise the appropriations bills it currently is considering to provide full funding for this initiative. I also have urged the Congress to pass two critical pieces of legislation to bring our food safety system into the 21st century: (1) legislation ensuring that the Food and Drug Administration halts imports of fruits, vegetables, and other food products that come from countries that do not meet U.S. food safety requirements or that do not provide the same level of protection as is required for U.S. products; and (2) legislation giving the Department of Agriculture the authority to impose civil penalties for violations of meat and poultry regulations and to issue mandatory recalls to remove unsafe meat and poultry from the marketplace.

At the same time, we need to make every effort to maximize our current resources and authorities. One very important way to achieve this objective is to improve and coordinate food safety research activities across the Federal Government, with State and local governments, and the private sector. Solid research can and will help us to identify foodborne hazards more rapidly and accurately, and to develop more effective intervention mechanisms to prevent food contamination.

I therefore direct you to report back to me within 90 days on the creation of a Joint Institute for Food Safety Research that will: (1) develop a strategic plan for conducting food safety research activities consistent with my Food Safety Initiative; and (2) efficiently coordinate all Federal food safety research, including with the private sector and academia. This Institute, which will operate under your joint leadership, should cooperate and consult with all interested parties, including other Federal agencies and offices—particularly, the Environmental Protection Agency, the National Partnership for Reinventing Government, and the Office of Science and Technology Policy—State and local agencies focusing on research and public health, and on consumers, producers, industry, and academia. The Institute should make special efforts to build on efforts of the private sector, through the use of public-private partnerships or other appropriate mechanisms.

These steps, taken together and in coordination with our pending legislation, will ensure to the fullest extent possible the safety of food for all of America's families.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This memorandum was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 3 but was embargoed for release until 10:06 a.m., July 4.

The President's Radio Address

July 4, 1998

Good morning, I've just returned from my trip to China, a great and ancient nation that is undergoing historic change—change I could see in new private businesses that are helping China's economy to grow, in people free for the first time to work in jobs of their own choosing, and in Chinese villages in the first free elections of local leaders.

I was able to speak directly, not only to President Jiang and the leaders of the Chinese Government but to the Chinese people themselves about the partnership we hope to build with China for peace and prosperity and about the importance of freedom and what it means to us in America. At this particular moment in history, when for the first time a majority of the world's people live under governments of their own choosing, and when in China the positive impacts of greater openness and personal liberties are already apparent, I'm especially glad to be home for Independence Day—the day we celebrate the freedom our Founders declared 222 years ago this Fourth of July.

And this Fourth of July, even as we celebrate, we should be not only grateful for the freedom we enjoy; we should rededicate ourselves to the work of responsible citizenship. For example, on the Fourth of July, families and friends come together all over America at backyard barbecues and parks for picnics. As they enjoy their meals, I want to report to you about what I'm doing to make sure