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roulette with our children's future and running an increased risk that this will be the national security issue of the 21st century.

[*The discussion continued*.]

Closing Remarks

President Clinton. John, I would like to thank you, the law school, and NYU and the other sponsors of the event. Again, let me thank all of you who participated. And I want to thank Hillary and Sid Blumenthal and the others who conceived of this, and Mr. Blair's folks in Great Britain who worked so closely with us on this.

I would like to close with—ask for just a brief reprise of two things we talked about. One is, can this whole third way approach be applied successfully to long-term problems that have big consequences before they have them, i.e., in American terms, Social Security, Medicare, climate change. Two is, can we not only develop a global consciousness and global policies within our respective country but actually band together to deal with this present global financial challenge in a way that gives us a trading system, a labor rights system, an environmental system, and a financial system that, in effect, recreates what works on the national level globally, that in effect takes these great 50-year-old institutions and does whatever has to be done to make sure that they see us through for the next 50 years.

Will the ideas that we've developed and the approach that we have developed work in those two great areas of challenge? Because if they do work in those two great areas of challenge, then I think that the 21st century is in very good hands.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:42 p.m. in Greenberg Lounge at the New York University School of Law. In his remarks, he referred to Ronald Dworkin, professor, New York University School of Law; and James D. Wolfensohn, president, World Bank. The transcript made available by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the opening remarks of Prime Minister Blair.

Statement on the Death of Florence Griffith-Joyner

September 21, 1998

Hillary and I are shocked and saddened by the sudden death of Florence Griffith-Joyner. America—and the world—has lost one of our greatest Olympians. Ten years ago, in a blazing 10.49 seconds, Flo-Jo sprinted to Olympic gold and earned the right to be called the "World's Fastest Woman." We were dazzled by her speed, humbled by her talent, and captivated by her style. Though she rose to the pinnacle of the world of sports, she never forgot where she came from, devoting time and resources to helping children—especially those growing up in our most disadvantaged neighborhoods—make the most of their own talents. I was very proud to have her serve as cochair of the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. Our thoughts and prayers go to her husband, Al, her daughter, Mary, and her entire family.

Remarks During Discussions With Prime Minister Keizo Obuchi of Japan and an Exchange With Reporters in New York City

September 22, 1998

President Clinton. Let me say that I'm very sorry that the weather didn't permit us to go up to Tarrytown today, but I'm pleased to welcome Prime Minister Obuchi and his entire team here. I have also invited the Prime Minister to come back for an official visit early next year so that we can work very closely together on the challenges we face. The United States has no more important relationship in the world than our relationship with Japan, for common security concerns, to advance democracy and peace, and in our common economic endeavors.

So we just had a good hour-long meeting, and we're going to have a couple of other sessions today, and then early next year we'll have another meeting.

Prime Minister Obuchi. I am very pleased to have this opportunity of having

a discussion with President Clinton extensively on my first visit to the United States since I became the Prime Minister of Japan.

This meeting of mine with the President I had earlier today brought home to me the importance of Japan and the United States working closely together. And although I am only 2 months in office and the President has experience—a wealth of experience of over 5½ years as President of the United States, we spoke in a very candid manner as if we knew from before. I think although this was the first time that we met in this kind of setting, we had a very substantive and important meeting.

Let me take this opportunity to thank President Clinton for, as he mentioned earlier, extending to me the invitation to visit the United States early next year. I think that visit of mine will provide a good opportunity to continue our discussion further. And I do hope to make it realized. Details, I will instruct our officials to work out with U.S. counterparts.

As we moved from the prior room to this room, we talked about the third way, but the path that we had in between two rooms were not enough to complete the subject. [*Laughter*] So I do hope to elaborate on that subject later on.

Aftermath of the Independent Counsel's Referral

Q. Mr. President, would you consider an appearance before the House Judiciary Committee in person, as some in Congress have suggested?

President Clinton. Mr. Plante [Bill Plante, CBS News], I don't have anything to add to whatever the White House is saying about all this today. I'm here working on a very important thing for the American people and for the Japanese people. We have to work together to restore growth to the world and to help our friends.

Yesterday, I was here working on terrorism and how to make the global economy work for ordinary citizens. That's what I'm doing, and I don't have any contribution to make to that discussion beyond whatever the White House has said.

Q. Do you pay any attention to what's going on other than this? Do you pay any attention to what happened yesterday, to what the lawyers are doing, to any aspect of this?

President Clinton. Not much. Believe it or not, I haven't read the report or my lawyers' replies. I think it's important that I focus on what I'm doing for the American people, and that's what I intend to do.

Japan's Financial Situation

Q. Mr. President, are you encouraged from what you heard today that Japan will be able to deal with its fiscal problems in a swift way and adequately?

President Clinton. Well, I think, first of all, let's look at the facts here. Japan is a very great country with a strong, sophisticated economy and immensely talented people and, as in America now, an increasingly complicated political situation. That is, we have a Democratic President and a Republican majority in the Congress. They have their government, and in one house of their Diet an opposition with more members. So they have to work out what is politically possible.

I think there is virtually unanimous support in the world for the kind of financial reforms that would restore economic growth in Japan. The rest of us want to be encouraging. We want to do what we can to be supportive to help do whatever we can to create the climate which would permit a quick restoration of economic growth in Japan and therefore in Asia. That's what our objective is, is to understand that they have unique challenges but enormous strengths and to help find a way to get this done.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, how optimistic or pessimistic are you about the prospects of getting reforms passed through your parliament?

Prime Minister Obuchi. I'm neither optimistic or pessimistic on this, but I think, as much as I do realize, many in Japan would realize, that this is not only an issue for Japan but something that has major implications on economies of Asia as well as the whole world.

I think steps we take in Japan to address the issue of financial system has very large implications worldwide. So I think with this understanding, I intend to make my very best effort at addressing this issue. I am convinced that we will be able to do something.

NOTE: The exchange began at 12:10 p.m. at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Remarks During Discussions With Prime Minister Obuchi of Japan and an Exchange With Reporters in New York City

September 22, 1998

President Clinton. Thank you. I'd like to say to the members of the Japanese press, I'm sorry that you had to go all the way to Tarrytown and then come back. But at least you have seen it—we didn't even get to see it. [*Laughter*]

I want to welcome Prime Minister Obuchi and his team here. We have had very good meetings already today. The United States has no more important relationship in the world than our relationship with Japan. We are very interested in deepening our partnership in the security area, in the political area, and in doing what we can economically together to restore growth in the world and to stabilize the world financial situation. All these matters we have discussed today in a friendly and constructive atmosphere.

I just wanted to say one other thing. I invited Prime Minister Obuchi to come back to Washington early next year for an official visit, and he accepted, and I thank him for that.

Prime Minister Obuchi. All the strong and solid partnership between Japan and the United States could not lift this fog, and it is unfortunate that some of you had to go to Tarrytown and come back, and I'm sorry about that. But as the President said just now, I've been invited, and I've accepted his invitation to visit the United States in the early part of next year. And I look forward to meeting him again in Washington.

Legislative Agenda

Q. Mr. President, you've said how busy you are, but I just wonder if you haven't found some time to check with Congress about how things are going?

President Clinton. Well, we're just a few days away from the new budget year, and I'd say things need to go a little faster. We need an education bill; we need a health bill. We desperately need the IMF funding. They need to pass a good Patients' Bill of Rights. There's a lot left to be done. Things are not going fast enough to suit me on the people's business.

NOTE: The exchange began at 1:02 p.m. at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

Common Agenda: Illustration of the New U.S.-Japan Cooperation

September 22, 1998

Five years after the creation of the U.S.-Japan Common Agenda for Cooperation in Global Perspective, President Clinton and Prime Minister Obuchi recognized the valuable work accomplished by dedicated Japanese and American scientists, researchers and aid workers to fight diseases, preserve natural resources and exchange scientific data on various natural disasters and global climate change.

The participation of U.S. and Japanese private citizens, foundations and other nongovernmental organizations in projects of the Common Agenda will enhance the impacts of these projects. Their participation is also expected to generate grass-roots public support. On September 23, 1998, U.S. and Japanese representatives of private-sector organizations (in Japan, the Common Agenda Roundtable) that support the Common Agenda will meet in Honolulu to discuss how they can assist in promoting the objectives of the Common Agenda.

The President and the Prime Minister welcome the first meeting of private sector representatives and made special mention of three projects:

1) The United States and Japan will work with the Government of Panama and nongovernmental partners to preserve the Panama Canal watershed by developing a program to focus on environmental education and the training of local nongovernmental organizations.

2) In light of the recent forest fires which affected Southeast Asia, The United States and Japan will support efforts to address the underlying causes of the fires and assist local