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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on March 9.

Remarks at the Screening of "Dare To Compete: The Struggle of Women in Sports"

March 4, 1999

Thank you. I hate to risk spoiling the moment. I'd like to ask you all to join me in thanking Jeff and HBO for this magnificent gift to our country. [*Applause.*] Thank you.

As I watched this film I had many thoughts. Hillary and I have been privileged to know some of the athletes that were featured. I missed Flo-Jo again. I knew I would never have a golf swing like Babe Zaharias. [*Laughter*] I knew I would never dunk the ball like you. [*Laughter*] I remembered how desperately I wanted Billie Jean to win that tennis match—[*laughter*]—for the sake of my mother, my then-girlfriend.

I remembered all the times as a private citizen—when I'm upstairs at the White House now I can indulge my obsession with sports by watching women athletes as well as men, across a whole range of endeavors. All the joy, all the elation—all because the pioneers in this room and on this film dared to compete. And we owe all of you who are here and all of those who are featured, all those living, and all those gone, a profound debt of gratitude.

I also remembered again, looking at Senator Bayh, the importance of what we do here—to give the American people the right to live out their dreams without regard to whatever particular conditions define them. Where would we be without title IX? There were only 300,000 girls all over America in high school sports then; today, there are well over 2 million. The law makes a difference, too, and we will do our best here to be faithful to it.

But finally, let me say, as the grandson and son of two women who worked and did their best to make their way in life; as the husband of a remarkable woman who has made her way; as the father of a daughter I hope will always be free to make hers—what Billie Jean said about the tennis match is true of this whole subject. This is about more than sports. This is about the fundamental right of every human being to dream and work and strive and the obligation never to quit, never to give in, never to be limited, never to be defined. And our obligation to see that all those who come behind us have that right to jump and soar in athletics, in music, in every endeavor—even some day, someone of a different gender will be standing here giving a speech like this, and I hope it won't be too long.

So we thank you for the gifts you have given us. We thank you for the gifts you have given our daughters. We hope our granddaughters will think this is a quaint remembrance, because all of them will have, without question, the right to live their dreams.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 8 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Jeffrey L. Bewkes, chairman and chief executive officer, Home Box Office, Inc. (HBO); and former tennis star Billie Jean King. The President also referred to Title IX—Prohibition of Sex Discrimination, part of Public Law 92–318, the Education Amendments of 1972.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema of Italy

March 5, 1999

The President. Good afternoon. I very much enjoyed my first meeting with Prime Minister D'Alema. I am proud of our alliance and our friendship with Italy.

I have to begin this press conference by stating again our great sorrow over what occurred at Cavalese. When I called former Prime Minister Prodi immediately after that terrible event, I made it clear that we would take strong measures to assure that something like that would not occur again. We have taken such measures to enhance safety; we will continue to do so.

The Prime Minister and I today agreed that our Secretary of Defense and their Minister of Defense will review these operational and safety measures together to assess their adequacy and to determine whether additional measures should be taken to ensure

the highest levels of safety. They will report to the Prime Minister and me as soon as possible.

I know you will understand that I cannot comment on any particular case, in part because legal proceedings are still pending, but let me say that our objective has been, and remains, to determine responsibility and accountability in an open and fair process. As I said when this happened, the United States is responsible for this terrible tragedy. Again I want to say to the people of Italy, on behalf of the American people, we are profoundly regretful and apologetic for what has occurred, to the families and to all the people of Italy.

Now, we must remember that we have been strong partners and good friends, especially in working for our common security. Today we discussed the coming 50th Anniversary NATO Summit. It will be here in April. We will admit new members. We will plan to meet new challenges. We will address our European allies' initiative, which I fully support, to enhance their defense capabilities and assume a greater role in our common defense.

NATO's efforts have been aimed at helping the Eastern half of Europe enjoy the freedom and stability the Western half has built over the last half century. The end of the cold war made this a possibility but not a certainty. We have learned that if we do not contain conflict in Europe, it will spread, and we will pay a far higher price to deal with it down the road. That is why we and our allies acted to stop the war in Bosnia and start it on the path toward reconciliation and democracy and why we are seeking to end the conflict in Kosovo. If we don't and it intensifies, there will be a major refugee crisis in the center of Europe, something that Italy knows all too well.

Almost certainly it will draw in nearby nations, including the bordering states of Albania and Macedonia, which today are engaged in the fragile process of building their own democracies. But the next round of talks, set to begin in 10 days, now—I very much hope the Kosovar Albanians will follow through on their statement at Rambouillet, and sign the agreement to end the fighting and restore self-government.

It is in their strong interest, and it is also in Serbia's interest. Serbia must accept the agreement and a NATO-led force in Kosovo, which is essential for peace to take hold. And NATO remains ready to act if Serbia instead continues the violent repression of Kosovo's people.

The Prime Minister recently wrote, ''the turmoil and uncertainly in southeast Europe has made Italy a frontline state.'' How true. It is terribly important that we, therefore, move together to strengthen stability across this region. NATO has been working closely with some of southeast Europe's emerging democracies to do that.

Two weeks ago, when President Chirac was here, I announced a new initiative to expand security cooperation with these nations, to coordinate security assistance from NATO countries to them, and to improve cooperation and economic development across the region. I hope and believe Italy will play a key role in this effort.

The Prime Minister and I also talked about our common efforts and our common interest in spurring global economic growth, bringing greater stability to the world's financial system, and putting a human face on the global economy by supporting working families and aiding the most vulnerable citizens, communities, and countries.

Today I am grateful to know that our economy reached a milestone of 18 million new jobs last month, since 1993. But the United States cannot grow over the long run unless prosperity is increasing for our friends and partners in Europe, Latin America, Asia, and Africa. I want to work with the Prime Minister to address growth, the stability of the financial system, and the human needs of the 21st century economy. And I must say I'm quite optimistic about our prospects, based on our first meeting today.

Again Mr. Prime Minister, welcome. The podium is yours.

Prime Minister D'Alema. Thank you, Mr. President, for your words, and thank you for our talks which, for me, have been very interesting, indeed.

I conveyed to the President of the United States that I was personally shocked, and so is Italian public opinion, owing to a verdict

which gave the impression that the tragic accident at Cavalese could find no effective answer in terms of determination and punishment of those responsible for it.

I thanked the President of the United States for the sorrow he decided to express in remembering that tragedy. It is a sincere sorrow and a feeling we have great appreciation for. The President of the United States repeated here that he believes that accident concerns the responsibility of the United States. I also understand that at this moment we cannot and must not interfere with the specific judicial proceeding which is not yet over which will include new trials and new verdicts.

I just wish to stress one point. That event certainly cannot be considered an ordinary occurrence. It is not normal for a military aircraft to fly in a valley, 300 feet from the ground. It is neither normal nor acceptable that this leads to the consequences it did lead to. We expect that at the end of the process it is made clear who was responsible for this accident and that these people are punished for it.

At the same time, as President Clinton said, we gave a mandate to the Defense Secretaries of the United States and Italy to jointly reexamine all measures concerning the functioning of military bases, concerning the military exercises around such bases, all the safety measures that will reassure citizens that such accidents can never again occur.

I must say, I appreciated the human sensitivity and the serious way in which President Clinton reminded us all of his commitments to Prime Minister Prodi and his will that justice is done in a clear way.

Our talks have shown that the friendship and cooperation between the United States and Italy is very strong, both in the preparation for the NATO summit and in the preparation of the G–7/G–8 meeting, as well as in confronting the most acute and delicate international crises.

We both want the Rambouillet peace accord to be signed. We ask this with great determination—we ask this of Albanians, Kosovar Albanians, for whom this peace agreement means autonomy, safety, and recognition of their rights. And we ask the same, with great determination, of the Yugoslav Republic and Serbian Republic, which have a duty to respect the rights of Kosovar Albanians. And for them the peace accord means putting an end to guerrilla activities and ensuring respect for the territorial integrity of Yugoslavia.

We are ready to take upon ourselves our responsibilities, as we did in Bosnia and Albania, together with our allies. We are ready to deploy our forces to ensure peace and security in that war-torn area.

We also talked about Russia, the very serious problems in Russia, the need for a common strategy between Europe and the United States to help Russia to embark upon the path of a more solid democracy, an open and functioning market economy.

I also expressed to the President of the United States my own personal gratitude for his commitment to peace in the Middle East. And I repeated to him our commitment to support and encourage that peace process.

It was very interesting for me to have a dialog on the major problems of the economy and of societies, making a comparison between the experiences and problems of Europe and the United States of America. We admire the American economic dynamism, the American capability for innovation, for job creation and creation of wealth. At the same time, we are very fond of the social rights and social solidarity which is one of the assets of Europe. This is, indeed, a major issue for a shared dialog and effort at finding new ways between Europe and the United States.

How do we combine together strong, economic dynamism with the values of social solidarity? We have opened a dialog on this issue, on this major issue, which President Clinton so many times has been actively engaged upon. And I suggested to him that after the forum that was held in New York with Prime Minister Prodi, with Tony Blair, with President Clinton, himself, I suggested to him that after that dialog we could have a similar dialog, including European and American intellectuals and political leaders.

And President Clinton told me he will think about this idea, namely, about the possibility for a new dialog of this nature, and we would be very pleased to host it in our country, organize it. It is very important for

me that, as well as having a loyal and active alliance at a military and political level, we can develop a common dialog and rethink it together. The world is confronting us with major challenges, and we must and can search for the answer to these challenges together.

Thank you.

The President. Thank you. Now we will alternate questions between the American and Italian press.

Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press]?

U.S. Aircraft Incident in the Italian Alps

Q. Mr. President, the Prime Minister said yesterday that he was baffled by the acquittal of the Marine pilot, and that he felt that the accident was a massacre. What do you say to Italians who feel that justice has not been done, and that if the pilot is not guilty, then someone else is?

And to the Prime Minister, sir, could you say, do the President's remarks today about this, do you think that they will calm the anger in Italy? How far will they go?

The President. Well, let me answer. First of all, because there are at least two further court-martial proceedings to go forward, I have to be quite careful in not making any comments that have any kind of impact on those one way or the other.

To me, the important thing now is that the United States must clearly and unambiguously shoulder the responsibility for what happened. Our presence in Italy, our air operations, our training operations were the context, the environment in which this horrible thing occurred. I think the things that we can do are: First of all, to work closely with the Italians, as I've said, to make sure that we have done everything we can to reduce the prospect to zero that something like this will occur again and that our Italian counterparts agree with that and agree with the changes.

Secondly, that we do what is appropriate by the families. And there was a modest cash settlement given to each of the victims' families shortly after the accident to deal with immediate expenses. And under Italian law, they file claims, adjudged by the Italians, and then we pay 75 percent of those claims under our agreement.

And the third thing is to do everything we can to have a just disposition of the cases that are now going through. And I'm committed to all three things. I will do the best I can. I also think it's very important. I don't know that my words could ever ease the pain of someone who lost a child or a parent or a sibling or a spouse in that terrible accident. But at least it's important for the people of Italy and for those families to know that the United States is not trying to duck its responsibility and that we are heartbroken and horrified by what happened. And we're going to do our best to make sure that nothing like that ever happens again.

Prime Minister D'Alema. I think President Clinton spoke very clearly. We are not asking for a scapegoat. I do not know who was responsible for what happened. It is up to the justice system to determine who was responsible and who is guilty. But we expect that at the end of this process it is clear and it is determined who is responsible, and those who are found responsible are punished through a fair trial. We are confident that this will happen.

Q. Prime Minister D'Alema, you touched upon something that we Italian journalists have very much at heart, the Cavalese events. But I ask you to make an effort, could you please very sincerely say to us, are you satisfied with the answer given by President Clinton on this specific point, on the Cavalese tragedy?

And I'd like to ask President Clinton, were you expecting a verdict of acquittal on this case?

Thank you.

Prime Minister D'Alema. Let me repeat, I appreciated President Clinton's words very much and the commitment he has taken. I consider them to be serious commitment. We shall say we are satisfied when whoever is responsible for what happened is found guilty and punished. With so many casualties, with so many deaths, you can hardly ever say you are satisfied. It is a word I cannot use. Let me say very clearly that I have appreciated very much, and I think we should appreciate, the great human sincerity with which President Clinton has shared this tragedy, with no arrogance, with no sense of detachment.

The President. Sir, let me say again, because the person involved in that court-martial is facing another action and because there is yet another action against another person who was in the plane, another trial pending, I cannot comment on what my reaction to the verdict was, because anything I say, under our law, that goes across the airwaves, could be inferred one way or the other to have an impact on a pending proceeding, in ways that would be disastrous for what I think we all want, which is an orderly and just process.

Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International]?

Kosovo/Missile Defense System

Q. Mr. President, I have a couple of foreign policy questions. Do you expect a breakthrough on Kosovo, especially in view of—the policy seems to be attacking or threatening Serbia and then retreating. It's constant. And my other question is, how can you justify chipping away at the ABM Treaty, which helped keep the peace during the cold war and pour billions and billions into a Star Wars defense against the possibility that starving North Korea might fire a missile at us?

The President. Well, first of all—[*laughter*]—you know, she's been doing this for quite a long time. [*Laughter*] And it's not a fair fight. She's better at it than I am.

Let me, first of all, say about Kosovo, I don't think it's fair to say that NATO threatens and backs away. We took military action in Bosnia, which led directly to the peace. So I don't think Mr. Milosevic is under any illusion that if NATO has an action order outstanding, that we won't activate it. And I would be astonished to believe that our allies would back away from a commitment we had made.

I think what happened at Rambouillet was quite important and justified the request, not of Serbia but of both parties—both parties—for some more time to try to sell this agreement, to ruminate on it, to decide how to respond to it. The Kosovars themselves wanted that. Finally we have an agreement, not in every single point but in large measure, between the Serbs and the Kosovars on what the nature of autonomy would be over the next 3 years. That's quite an astonishing achievement.

And so my perception is quite the reverse. I think we were facing a humanitarian disaster in Kosovo last summer. We came in with the threat of force, and it worked, and we averted it. And we didn't have to use force because we averted the tragedy; we got what we wanted. Were there violations of the cease-fire? Yes, but they were violations from both sides.

And there were problems there. But that's why we started this new process with the new NATO action order. It became clear we had to do more because, particularly, of the terrible killings in one village in Kosovo, that were precipitated by the Serbs.

Now, I do not believe that, at least at the present point, Mr. Milosevic could be under any illusion, based on what happened in Bosnia that—from the point of the view of the United States, anyway, and what NATO has said—that we will keep our word. And I think we did the right thing to give both parties the time they asked for at Rambouillet to try to figure out how to get to "yes." The most important thing here is how to get to "yes." It's a good agreement. It will save lives. It will stabilize Kosovo. It will move us toward genuine autonomy, which was working there, I might add, before it was taken away a decade ago.

Now, on the ABM Treaty, let me say, doing the research on a missile defense system, which is not a violation of the ABM treaty—it is theoretically possible that we could develop a missile defense system that, either by its nature or by where it was deployed, would be a violation of the ABM Treaty. I, personally, have told the Russians over and over again I have no intention of abrogating the ABM Treaty. Anything we do, we will do together.

But the only threat we have—excuse me—the threat that the United States is likely to face 10 or 20 years from now from missiles coming in is by no means—not just from North Korea. It is a fact that many countries with whom we have serious differences now are making vigorous efforts either to build or to buy missiles with increasing ranges, that go distances far beyond anything that would be necessary to protect their own territory.

General Shelton has said that this missile defense is tough; it's like trying to hit a bullet with a bullet. That's what missile defense is. I think if we believe that the technology might be there, we owe it to ourselves and to all of our allies, not just our old allies but some of our post-cold-war allies, to try to develop that, along with an adequate warning system, to try to prevent countries that are desperately trying to get missiles, that they could not possibly need to defend their own territory, from ever taking offensive action against us or anyone else.

But I have no intention of supporting or initiating a unilateral abrogation of the ABM Treaty. I will not do that. We have been very candid with the Russians. We have talked to them about what we are going. We have talked about what kinds of information we might share in the future. But I have never advocated, initiated, encouraged, sanctioned, or blinked at the possibility that we could unilaterally abrogate the ABM Treaty. I personally would be very opposed to that.

Status of NATO Bases in Italy

Q. Prime Minister D'Alema, next Wednesday you will have to answer the questions by the Members of Parliament. Can you say as of today that your government will not have to revise the legal status of NATO bases? And I have a question for President Clinton. What is your answer to the many Members of the Italian Parliament who are asking for a revision of the status of the NATO bases?

Prime Minister D'Alema. We very clearly stated that we intend to revise the rules and very seriously go through and check all the rules relating to military actions, exercises, training, movements, flights, in order to ensure high and certain standards of safety for the civilian population. So to some extent, this does not concern the legal status of the military personnel, which is, as you know, regulated by a 1952 convention. It should be revised by all the countries that signed it if it is to be revised. But this is a way to respond to the need to reconcile the function of these military bases, which are not a concession to someone else; they are a tool to defend our own security and our common security.

It is a way to reconcile this with the safety of our citizens. We shall discuss this. I don't know what you meant by legal status or position. Legally speaking, the United States has asked to abide by the convention, to implement the convention according to which military personnel working in military bases abroad, in case of charges, should be tried by the country of origin. This convention applies to all countries. It is not an American privilege. For example, when the Italian pilots were charged for the Ramstadt accident, they were tried in Italy. We required that the 1952 convention be applied, exactly like the United States has asked to apply the 1952 convention for the Cavalese accident.

Naturally, the convention must be respected and complied with, because it exists. But we will be much happier to comply with it if our citizens and our public opinions are reassured that by adopting these procedures, justice is done.

The President. I'm not sure I have a great deal to add to what the Prime Minister said. I agree with what he said.

If the question that many Italian officials are asking is, shouldn't there be an agreed-upon set of changes in the procedures for the movements and training of American military personnel to make them safer for the people of Italy, I agree with that. If the question is, should our very presence there be reexamined, and the agreement under which Americans charged with offenses should be tried in American jurisdiction, my answer is just what the Prime Minister said.

I believe it serves both our interests; for example, when we were establishing our presence in Bosnia, I flew into Aviano, into our base there. And I took a C–17, one of our supply planes and flew into Bosnia. I also flew up to Hungary from there, the place where we had our base, from which we moved our people in there. And it seemed to me that our presence there, in that way, furthered Italy's interest, Europe's interest, NATO's interest, and not simply American interest. That, of course, is a judgment that every country and all the decisionmakers make, in a way, on an annual basis. They decide. They continue to support these things.

But I believe that the larger partnership has served the United States and Italy very well.

Larry [Larry McQuillan, Reuters].

Monica Lewinsky/Italian Investigation of Alps Incident

Q. Mr. President, more than 70 million Americans watched Monica Lewinsky's recent television interview, and a number of people are buying a book that she's put out. I'm just wondering, do you have any thoughts on it that you can share with us that perhaps might bring closure to this? And do you have any problem with the idea that she's actually making money off that relationship?

And Prime Minister, some of your countrymen are suggesting that NATO ought to conduct a review, an investigation of this accident. Do you support that idea, to just ensure a sense of impartiality?

The President. Well, let me answer your question. First of all, I did not see the interview, so I can't really comment on that. What I hope is that she will be permitted to go on with her life, and I hope it will be a good life. And I hope that the efforts that I have made and that I continue to make every day—at home and at work—will bear fruit. And I hope that all the people who have been hurt by this, including totally innocent people who have massive legal bills, will get the help they need. And I'm determined to do what I can to help them.

But the important thing is that the American people are virtually screaming at us to get on with their lives and their business and to do their business. And I'm going to do my best to do that, as well as I possibly can. But you know, this was a pretty tough thing for everybody involved, and I wish her well. I hope it works out all right for her.

Q. So the money is okay?

The President. You know, that's not a decision for me to make. I think that my—I can only—one of the things I've learned, that I've had to relearn all over again in this last 4-year episode, is that all I can control in life is what I do and what I say. And if I do and say the right things, then that's the thing that's best for me and my family and for the American people. And that's what I'm concentrating on doing.

And I don't wish anyone ill who was caught up in this. And she paid quite a high price for a long time, and I feel badly for that. So I just hope it works out all right.

Prime Minister D'Alema. I think that at present we should follow with attention and respect the proceedings and the judicial process which is envisaged in the United States. As President Clinton mentioned, two more trials have to be held concerning these events at Cavalese. When this process is over, when we have a complete picture of responsibilities and punishment for the events, then we shall evaluate what to do, once it is made clear who is responsible and these people are punished. But at this time, I don't think it would be right to examine other possibilities and put forward new ideas that do not seem well-founded as yet.

Domestic Economies/Trade Issues/U.N. Security Council

Q. Prime Minister, you talked about American, European, and Italian values. There are some criticisms toward American values. These American values have created 18 million new jobs in the last years. How many of these are you willing to learn to create new jobs in Italy and in Europe, if any?

Mr. President, the problem with Italian public opinion is a little bit more widespread than just the crisis, the accident, that happened yesterday. We have a crisis on trade, and Italy somehow feels to be a target within the U.S. So what can you say to reassure Italians, and what actions are you going to take? Because the public opinion is rather upset, not just for that, but for the fact that Italian products are constantly, constantly, whenever there is a trade war, on target. And on other issues like the Security Council, the U.S. is against the Italian position, while Italy seems to be having a position very much in sync on G–8 and NATO position with the U.S. What do you say to that? What do you say to the public opinion? What will you do?

Prime Minister D'Alema. It is not the first time that I have expressed great interest for the dynamic nature of the American society and economy. I think that when exchanging views and ideas and suggestions it is certainly useful for Europe to learn some lessons

from—some important lessons—from the experience of the United States.

And more specifically, I think that one of the features that impressed me most is their speed in terms of innovation, the ability to innovate, and the amount of investment in education. Last night I was talking about this with the Secretary of Education of the United States. And I think that, undoubtedly, this is a strategic issue. The speed of innovation, the investment in human capital certainly are strategic options. And these are some of the things—there are other things, as well—that we are interested in, in the American experience. And Europe, which has a more rigid, heavier, less dynamic system—and so does Italy—must learn from them.

The President. If I might just say I will answer the question you asked me, but I would like to also comment on the question you asked the Prime Minister. The great struggle every serious country faces is how to reap the benefits of the astonishing revolution in technology and the globalization of the economy, and to minimize the disruptions so that you can have some sort of stable family and community life.

Now, what we had to do when I took office was to get rid of this terrible deficit we had, which kept interest rates high for us and too high for you and was taking too much money out of the global economy, and to focus on some areas where we really needed to do better with our own economy. And it is true that we are blessed in this country with a very dynamic system. Of the 18.1 million new jobs we've had, almost 17 million of them were created in the private sector; they were non-governmental jobs. An enormous percentage of them were created in small businesses.

But I wouldn't say that you have nothing to look to within Italy. I told the Prime Minister, when I was a Governor, I came to Italy 10 years ago to study the economic organizations of small businesses in Northern Italy that grew out of the medieval artisans' guilds. And I think—and they are quite flexible; they have individual businessowners working together to market their products, to develop new products, to advertise their products. There are all kinds of exciting options which will be job-creating if you can figure out how to multiply them.

And what we are trying to do in America, now—by strengthening our family leave law, by strengthening our child care support system, by moving people from welfare to work, but making sure they keep the health care for their children—is to get the benefits of having a social contract that recognizes the need for families and communities to get support, and the benefits of the dynamic economy.

You're coming at it from a different direction. What you need to do is to keep as many of the benefits of the social contract as you can but to make the economy as dynamic as possible, because you know that you have a country full of intelligent, innovative people who could generate more jobs than they're generating.

But understand that this is the dilemma that every single country is facing from some perspective or another. And no one has all the answers. And what I would hope that the people of Italy will give the Prime Minister the ability to do is to try some new ideas to support him in admitting that no one has solved this problem perfectly, and that we should want responsible leaders to have serious thoughts about new ideas and to try them out without having someone try to derail every effort that they make. I think he deserves some support in addressing this issue, because for any of us to pretend that we either shouldn't address it or have all the answers, I think both approaches would be quite wrong.

Now, let me just say a word on the trade issue. First of all, the specific issue you mentioned must feel strange to Italy, since the Italians have not really been at the forefront of this decade-long dispute between the EU and the United States over the banana issue. It's not really about bananas; it's about rules.

I'm trying now—right now—to get the United States, through the authority of the Congress, to take the lead in further market-opening measures. I have done my best to keep our markets open during this very difficult period for the Asian economy and for much of the Latin American economy. We had a record trade deficit last year. I thought that, except for where I thought our laws

were being violated, like in steel—where we were having steel dumped—I felt that we should try to do that, that that should be our contribution, because we were doing well, and we ought to try to help these countries as much as we could.

But we cannot maintain an open trading system, which I am convinced is essential for global prosperity, unless we also have rules that are abided by. Twice—just twice since I've been President, we've won this case in the EU. I think we've won it 4 times over the last 10 years. It has gone on—somehow the rules have to work. That's what this is about.

And since it's the EU—I had nothing to do, by the way, with drawing up the details of what would be in the package of countervailing tariffs or duties. But I think our Trade Ambassador's office must have felt that since it was an EU dispute, there had to be some—we couldn't just pick out countries and play favorites in that way.

But I regret this very much. And we still have time to fix this. We can still fix this and it can be avoided, and I hope very much we will, in the next few weeks, get a resolution of this. But it's been going on 10 years. And we lose cases in the WTO all the time, and we just take a deep breath and face the fact that we lost. It happens. Now, so I would say to the people of Italy, don't—it's not a unilateral issue.

Now, on the—you asked me about the United Nations. Let me just say—I can't—there are very few countries in the world, in the years that I've been President, who have shown more consistent leadership, even through a successive change of governments, than Italy. For us, it's a critical country in so many ways. And I was delighted that the Prime Minister would come here today. I would do anything I could to increase the responsibility and reach of Italy.

The United States has had a long-standing policy in favor of expanding the Security Council to include Japan and Germany, largely because of the size of their economies and their influence and their importance for that reason. And we have been—we have recognized that there are countries in the developing world that believe they should have more permanent membership. So we have been for an expansion in the size of the Security Council, generally, to guarantee certain continents and regions a permanent position.

The position we have taken should not be viewed as an anti-Italian position. We've tried to calculate how many people can you have on the Security Council and still have it function. That's basically where we've been. I'm not obsessed with any—there is no magic number. But what we're trying to do is not to hold back anyone but to keep the Security Council as a functioning body. But I doubt very seriously that there's another leader of any other country in the world that has a higher opinion of the international responsibility and capacity of the Italian Government and the Italian people than I do, after having observed it for 6 years.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 170th news conference began at 5:15 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to former Prime Minister Romano Prodi and Minister of Defense Carlo Scognamiglio of Italy; President Jacques Chiraq of France; President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); and Monica Lewinsky, subject of Independent Counsel Kenneth Starr's expanded investigation. He also referred to the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty. Prime Minister D'Alema spoke in Italian, and his remarks were translated by an interpreter. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom.

Statement on the Kennedy-Murray Amendments to Proposed Education Flexibility Partnership Legislation

March 5, 1999

I strongly support the efforts of Senators Murray and Kennedy to offer a class size amendment to the ed-flex bill. We must make a long-term commitment now to hire 100,000 new, well-prepared teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. The Republican leadership is wrong to try to shut down debate on this bill before a class size amendment can be voted on. I urge them to allow an up-or-down vote on this amendment, and I urge every Senator to vote for it.