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Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:38 p.m. in the courtyard at the International Antarctic Centre. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Jennifer Shipley, her husband, Burton, and their children, Anna and Ben; Sir Edmund Hillary, polar explorer and first man to climb Mount Everest, and his wife, June; U.S. Ambassador to New Zealand Josiah H. Beeman, and his wife Susan; New Zealand Ambassador to the U.S. James B. Bolger, and his wife, Joan; Mayor Gary Moore of Christchurch; Karl A. Erb, Director, Office of Polar Programs, and Rita R. Colwell, Director, National Science Foundation; Richard Benton, General Manager, Visitor Centre, International Antarctic Centre; Christopher Mace, Chairman, Antarctic New Zealand; and New Zealand weather forecaster Augie Auer.

The President's News Conference With Prime Minister Jennifer Shipley of New Zealand in Christchurch

September 15, 1999

Prime Minister Shipley. Ladies and gentlemen, I'm pleased to report that we have held very successful talks this afternoon in Christchurch. These talks have ranged over many issues, regional issues—urgent regional issues—international issues and, of course, bilateral issues. I view them as extraordinarily satisfactory from New Zealand's point of view.

For me, President Clinton's visit to New Zealand has been an opportunity for this region to make real progress on pressing international issues. This afternoon we were able to discuss the matter of East Timor, and I was able to thank the President for his leadership while in this country in helping to mobilize international support and opinion for restoring order and relieving the humanitarian crisis that exists in Timor. The plight of the displaced people in Timor has and is at the uppermost part of our minds at this time.

New Zealand is making urgent preparations to contribute our defense force capability and personnel to the U.N. force in East Timor. We appreciated the opportunity this afternoon to review the most recent developments in New York, and the President was able to give us his most recent advice.

I would also like to take this opportunity while we're here to publicly say how much we appreciate the leadership role that Australia is playing at this present time in evacuating the refugees from East Timor and also for providing such a major contribution to the U.N. force.

New Zealand's Navy and Air Force are already on hand, working with the Australians. The New Zealand Cabinet will hold a special meeting tomorrow afternoon to review the latest developments and also to consider how and when we will deploy our troops to the area, if requested by the U.N. I've also asked that Parliament be called together on Friday, so that this important matter can be discussed.

In our discussions with the President, we were able to consider where our current position on defense force personnel and our defense relationship was up to. I valued the opportunity for that discussion to take place, and I believe that good progress has been made.

We reviewed the outlook for global trade. I think we felt that there was a real satisfaction in the achievements that the APEC meeting this week were able to make. There has been a clear sign that there is a commitment from the APEC region to see the launch of a highly successful WTO round, and the Auckland Challenge laid down the challenge to the rest of the world to come to the talks in Seattle with something decisive and clear to put on the table.

As you are aware, APEC represents half of the world's population and half of the world's economy. New Zealand particularly values free and open trade, and we believe that strong markets are the most able way in which we can deliver a social dividend to the people within our respective economies.

Mr. President, we wish you well in the preparations for the WTO round. It is a very important next step in achieving free and open trade globally, and many people depend on success being achieved in these talks.

Finally, on the bilateral issue, I believe that the relationship between the New Zealand Government and the U.S. is in very good heart. There are so many shared values which see us working together across such areas of

the environment, world trade, peacekeeping, and, of course, the promotion of human rights.

We also remain committed to working closely together on any trade matters between us that have some difficulties, such as the safeguard action on our lamb exports to the U.S. via the mechanism that's available to us through the WTO. That is, of course, how good friends should work these things through, and that is how it will remain in New Zealand.

Mr. President, it's been a real pleasure and a privilege to have you in our country. Your own warmth has won the hearts of most New Zealanders, and we want to thank you for your leadership on policy issues that have seen very effective steps forward this week on pressing international issues of our time.

I now invite you to make some comments.

President Clinton. Thank you, Prime Minister. Let me begin by thanking you, your Government, and the people of New Zealand for the wonderful welcome that I and my family and our entire delegation have received. I also am very grateful for the tremendous leadership that you gave to the APEC summit. It was quite a success, and, I think, thanks in no small measure to your efforts.

As you mentioned, we have a lot of shared values, and I believe that the world is moving toward a consensus around freer and more open trade but coupled with policies that leave no one behind, that invest in the education and health care and empowerment of people, that protect the economy while growing the environment, that promote democracy and human rights.

As we see, however, in East Timor, there's one thing to say that there is such consensus and quite another to turn it into reality. We are working together to address the urgent and difficult tasks there. The people are still vulnerable to attack. Many have fled their homes; many are short of food, not only those who have left the country but those who are displaced within East Timor.

As all of you know, the Security Council is now moving on a resolution that would provide a strong mandate for an effective international security force. I expect it to be approved. Meanwhile, we continue to receive reports of violence and intimidation, which Indonesia has a responsibility to prevent. And also, Indonesia has a responsibility to allow relief organizations access to the refugees now.

Now, we know that this international peacekeeping force will face some stiff challenges. But we have affirmed together that we will meet those challenges. With our support, the people of East Timor can have the independence and the democracy they have voted for. By fostering stability there and in helping Indonesia to resume its progress in undergoing the profound transitions at work there, we can make our whole community of nations more secure.

Let me say I'm very proud that the United States and New Zealand will be standing together to defend freedom and human rights once again. We will participate together in the force. As I told the Prime Minister earlier, based on our experience elsewhere, I think it is quite important that Australia, New Zealand, the United States, and the other countries that will be participating, prepare through joint exercises that will help us to get ready to do what has to be done together in East Timor.

On trade, in addition to what the Prime Minister has said about APEC, which we have said over and over and over again, which is that we're pleased with the agenda we embraced and we hope it will be embraced at the WTO ministerial in Seattle, I also want to say that I'm very excited that the whole world will soon benefit from the leadership of New Zealand's Mike Moore at the WTO.

If we can keep pushing for freer and more open trade, if we can make that embrace at the WTO ministerial, once again we will see in the example of New Zealand how a small country can lead by the power of its example.

Again, Madam Prime Minister, thank you for your hospitality, your leadership, and for all that your country is doing to build a better world. Thank you.

Prime Minister Shipley. There are to be a couple of questions either side, and we'll take them side by side.

New Zealand-U.S. Military Exercises

Q. Mr. President, could I just ask you, is there any possibility of the United States allowing the resumption of military exercises with New Zealand, given that we're currently barred from those? And if not, isn't that an anomaly when New Zealand works so closely with the United States in areas such as Iraq and the Gulf and also in East Timor?

President Clinton. Well, I think we should do exercises in the specific context of East Timor. That's what I just said. And we will do—if I have anything to say about it, we will, along with the Australians and others have joint exercises as part of our preparation for East Timor.

Q. What about other military exercises?

President Clinton. I would deal with them on a case by case basis.

Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Hurricane Floyd

Q. Mr. President, you spoke earlier today about Floyd being one of the most serious hurricanes ever to threaten the United States. You've been briefed by the Federal Emergency Management Agency. Can you tell us what they've told you and what everybody can expect? And sir, are you satisfied that Federal and State agencies have done everything possible in the way of mobilizing personnel and equipment?

President Clinton. Well, I think we've done everything we know to do. Let me say, I just got off the phone with Dan Goldin, our NASA Administrator, and we were going over all that has been done in the event Floyd strikes Cape Canaveral. And as I'm sure you all know now, there are essentially two problems that literally threaten our space program. One is that we have our space shuttles in those big silos that are protected, and they're built to withstand 125 miles an hour winds. Right now, Floyd is coming in at about 145 miles an hour. Even if they withstand, which I think there's a good chance they will, the other thing we had to worry about is the flooding. We can get several feet of floodwaters in the Cape Canaveral area. And the NASA people have been working furiously to lift everything they can possibly lift as high as they can possibly lift it.

As you know, a lot of individual citizens have been boarding up their homes. There have been a lot of relocation, a lot of evacuation. We have granted preemptive emergency declarations, which is virtually unheard of. I think it was absolutely the right thing to do. The Governors of Florida and Georgia were strongly for it; I think South Carolina will join.

All I can tell you now, Terry, is I think we have to wait and see what happens. We have taken every step that I am aware of we can take. I had a long talk with the Vice President and James Lee Witt today; they're on top of it.

The key will be, I think, when this storm hits—and it won't be long now—where does it come in? Will it come in as far south as Cape Canaveral and move up, or will it hit further north? How long will it last? And we'll just have to keep working, and things may occur as it goes on. But I think there's been a truly extraordinary effort to prepare for this by State and local and national officials. We've worked together; we've done the best we could.

Situation in East Timor

Q. Mr. President, in relation to East Timor, in order to make sure this is not another Rwanda, how can we shortcut negotiations in New York to make sure humanitarian aid gets to East Timor immediately?

President Clinton. Well, let me say, I think we're moving as fast as possible. And the Prime Minister and I talked—we would like to see the first contingent of troops there in a matter of a couple of days, as soon as the resolution passes. And we think that will happen tomorrow, New York time.

You know, we know the Australians are ready to go. We can be ready to go, and we have airlift, and we can bring in others who have made their commitments. So I don't think you have to worry about it. Also—I don't mean there won't be more people killed and more terrible things happen, but what happened in Rwanda was—first, there won't be another 100 days, and not everybody has a machete. So there may be some terrible things happen, but we are moving as fast as we can.

Now, the other thing I would say, though, to make the point you made, it's not just a question of stopping the violence—we've got to get the NGO's and others in there who can provide humanitarian relief to people who are within the country. There are a lot of displaced persons who did not leave East Timor. And we know it, we know what we have to do. All I can tell you is, we'll do the best we can.

Lori [Lori Santos, United Press International].

Q. Sir, you said that Indonesia had the responsibility to prevent the systematic killing. What would you like to see them do, and why haven't they stepped up to the plate?

President Clinton. Well, the why—frankly, I don't think we're going to know that for a while, until we get the people on the ground, and people begin to talk. You know, it's not clear whether some elements of the military were encouraging what has happened or whether they felt they couldn't stop it. It's not clear what the designs were. There are a lot of things about that we don't know. A few days ago I stopped worrying about why and started worrying about how to change it. So, I don't know.

What I would like them to do, now that they have asked the United Nations to come in, is simply to stop the most egregious forms of violence and let the NGO's in to provide humanitarian relief right now. Within—it may become a moot point within 72 to 96 hours. But in 2 or 3 days, a lot of people could die, and they don't have to die if they work with us.

Prime Minister Shipley. From the New Zealand side.

New Zealand-U.S. Trade

Q. Mr. President, we know that the United States are the champions of free trade, and yet, recently tariffs were put on our lamb imports to the United States. How do you equate one with the other? And can you give us your views on P5?

President Clinton. Yes. First, we are a champion of free trade. During the recent Asian financial crisis, when we lost huge agricultural and other markets, we kept our markets open and sustained the largest trade deficits in our history, while we were running the largest budget surpluses in our history, two things which don't normally go together.

I said in the meeting that during this period we bought 10 times as much steel from Japan and Russia as all of Europe did.

Now, I think you understand, in the American system, we have an International Trade Commission. People can bring complaints before it. The Commission makes a ruling. They made a recommendation. After they made a recommendation for some action in the case of the lamb, the Prime Minister called me; I called her back. She expressed some—obviously, the concerns of New Zealand. I did as much as I could to take those into account, including calling for a 3- rather than a 4-year period of action and saying that I would review it in the middle of the timeframe. So I believe what I did was WTO-consistent, and I believe that what I did was appropriate, given the recommendation I was made under our laws, just like I think you have a perfect right to appeal the decision. And if I were in your position, that's exactly what I'd do.

Q. And your view on P5?

President Clinton. On P5, I think it's a very interesting idea. I have asked the Prime Minister to give me 10 to 14 days to go home, talk to all of our people about it, have a chance to think it through. I had hoped to have a well-formulated position by the time I got here. But as you know, all of us have been completely swamped by developments in East Timor, and we honestly haven't had the time to work it through. So I told her I'd get back to her in a couple of weeks, and I will.

Prime Minister Shipley. Can I just comment on the issue of lamb, briefly, before the next question? Perhaps the last question needs to be taken. We have fed the President as much fine New Zealand lamb as we could possibly fit in. And—[*laughter*]——

President Clinton. And I've eaten it all. Not so much as a scrap has escaped my attention. [*Laughter*]

Prime Minister Shipley. This is an issue that New Zealand felt keenly. The WTO is the right forum. We will pursue that actively. But it does not spill over into what we view as not only a very valuable market for New

Zealand agricultural exports but also a very warm relationship.

China-U.S. Trade

Q. [*Inaudible*]—WTO, are the U.S.-China trade talks proving more difficult than you had hoped? When and where will the next round of talks take place? And are you disappointed that there hasn't been a breakthrough?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I think, on balance, this has been quite a good week for the United States in Asia, in the Asia-Pacific region. I did have a good meeting with President Jiang; we talked about things other than trade. One of our common interests, North Korea and avoiding the missile launch, appears to be headed in the right direction. We had progress in East Timor, and with the Prime Minister's leadership, we made the right commitments here at APEC. So I think this is good.

Now, on the Chinese-WTO talks, we have reengaged, and each side will now do whatever it thinks is right. You know, I don't totally control the timetable there, but I'm neither optimistic nor pessimistic about it. I am satisfied that we have reengaged, and we will do the best we can to just deal with this on the merits. We only had one or two issues before us when we couldn't quite get there in Washington. I still think it would be a better thing for China and a better thing for the world if they were in the WTO, but that is, of course, ultimately a decision that they have to make, not me. But we're talking; we're working; and I feel good about it.

Prime Minister Shipley. Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President's 180th news conference began at 3:30 p.m. in the courtyard at the Sign of the Takahe, a historic landmark and restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to Mike Moore, Director General, World Trade Organization; Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida; Gov. Roy Barnes of Georgia; and President Jiang Zemin of China. The President also referred to P5, Pacific 5, a proposed free trade area, which would include Australia, Chile, New Zealand, Singapore, and the United States. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this news conference.

Remarks at a State Dinner Hosted by Prime Minister Shipley in Christchurch

September 15, 1999

Thank you very much. Forgive my hoarseness.

First, Prime Minister, to you, your family, your government, and the people of New Zealand, I cannot thank you enough for the wonderful welcome that our party and my family members have received here. I apologize for having to rush home, but all of you know of the great storm that is now hitting the American coast. We had to move over 2.5 million people today in an attempt to minimize the loss of life. So I hope you'll forgive me, but let me say I have had a wonderful time here.

I'm glad that the fashion people approved of the way I wore the beautiful outfit you gave me. [*Laughter*] You know, I've been President 7 years now; I've been all over the world; I've received any number of items of clothing. And when you go to these meetings, very often the people who are there get the native dress, and we wear them. And usually, when I go home, there is someone making fun of how I looked in the dress of whatever country I was. This is the smartest outfit I've ever been given.

In the calendar cycle, we in the Northern Hemisphere are moving in the opposite direction, so we're coming into fall and winter. And if you watch the television, I'll probably be in your outfit several times more before the end of the year.

Let me say from the bottom of my heart, this has been a magical trip. I think every person, when he or she is young, dreams of finding some enchanted place, of beautiful mountains and breathtaking coastline and clear lakes and amazing wildlife, and most people give up on it because they never get to New Zealand. This has been an amazing thing for me and for all of us.

You might be interested to know that on the front page of the Washington Post today, there is a picture of my National Economic Adviser bungee jumping. [*Laughter*] We all had to remind him that he wasn't supposed to be Houdini and slip the cords, you know.