AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

2 weeks—sort of the body language that the Israelis and the Palestinians, the way they relate to each other. They know each other. They call each other by their first names. They know they're neighbors, whether they like it or not. They know their future is together, whether they would always want it to be or not. And they know their children are going to have to be partners and hopefully friends; and I think they'll find a way. I do believe that.

I think it's just a question of making sure that we keep pushing them. When you deal with issues this difficult and this painful, it's like going to the dentist without having your gums deadened. You're not going to do it unless somebody herds you on, and you do it.

But the calendar is working against them a little bit, because they have pledged to finish by the 13th of September. And that puts all kind of pressure, especially on the Palestinians. So they've got to keep working right now. They've got to do everything they can to get as much as they can done over the next 6 weeks.

I think they will, and America's role is just to help. They've got to make the decisions and live with them, but we'll do everything we can to help.

Ms. Ring. Will you try to bring them back to Camp David?

The President. I can't say yet. It's too premature to make a decision. What I will try to do is do whatever I can to get the peace process up and going and to bring it to a speedy conclusion. But I do not know, honestly do not know, as we sit here and talk, what would be the most helpful.

Thanks.

Ms. Ring. Thank you very much for doing this.

The President. Okay.

NOTE: The interview was taped at 3:30 p.m. in the Presidential Suite at the Hyatt Regency Westshore for later broadcast. In his remarks, the President referred to Republican Presidential candidate Gov. George W. Bush of Texas and Vice Presidential candidate Dick Cheney; Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; and Bill Nelson, Democratic candidate for U.S. Senate from Florida. Ms. Ring referred to Gov. Jeb Bush of Florida. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

Statement on the National Debt

July 31, 2000

When I came into office, the debt had quadrupled since 1980 and was projected to rise even further. As a result of the 1993 and 1997 budget agreements and tough choices every year, we have been able to turn this situation around. Today the Department of the Treasury is announcing that the United States will pay off $221 billion of debt this year—the largest one-year debt paydown in American history. This will be the third consecutive year of debt reduction, bringing the 3-year total to $360 billion.

This positive news is further confirmation that we should stay on the path of fiscal discipline and not endanger the longest economic expansion in history with a series of expensive tax cuts which would spend every single dime of our projected surplus. The Republican tax plan leaves nothing for strengthening Social Security and Medicare, nothing for a real voluntary Medicare prescription drug benefit, and nothing for education. And the Republican plan would take us off the path of paying off the entire national debt by 2012. This is the wrong approach for America.

Remarks at a Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Reception in Palm Beach, Florida

July 31, 2000

Thank you very much. I am so happy to be here. All of you know I love Florida. A good portion of my wife's family has lived down here for the last 15 years and more. I got my start in Florida twice, once in December of 1991—everyone knows about that—when the Florida straw poll came out with a majority for me against six opponents and got me started, and I'm very grateful for that. But once, maybe only one person in this room remembers, and that was in early 1981 when I had the distinction of being the youngest former Governor in the history of America, when I was defeated in the Reagan