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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

March 23, 1990

PRESS CONFERENCE BY THE PRESIDENT
WITH REGIONAL MEDIA

The East Room

1:06 P.M. EST

THE PRESIDENT: Well, once again, let me say welcome to the White House. I'm delighted you all are here. Sometimes I'm asked about traveling, why I do it so much, and I must tell you that I really do like to travel outside of the beltway to the rest of this country. And I'm delighted that all of you have traveled here to the White House.

I'm pleased to meet with such a broad cross-section of journalists. Wherever you're from -- whether you came all the way in from the West Coast -- and some did -- or whether your organization is based right here in Washington, I'm just delighted that you're here. The organizations you represent are part of a proud journalistic tradition, serving every state, every city, community across this country. In a moment, I'll be glad to take some questions, but just a brief statement.

I'll begin with a matter critical to the future of democracy in this hemisphere. All of us have followed the unfolding of freedom in Eastern Europe, and together with Congress, we've moved to offer American assistance to support those emergency* democracies in the East. Now, that assistance is crucial; it will continue. But there's work to be done -- work that I feel is every bit as important in support of democracy right here in our own hemisphere.

Panama and Nicaragua stand at a historic moment -- on the threshold of democracy. In both nations, the people have spoken in favor of freedom, but the difficult work of democracy building remains. This hemisphere -- the Americas -- can become the first where democracy prevails from north to south. But it cannot happen if we in the United States fail to add our strength and support to the forces of democracy.

I'm pleased you're here today because this is a matter of tremendous interest to all Americans. Whether it's out in El Paso, or Paducah, Kentucky; or Rochester, New York; or Jackson Hole, Wyoming, Angus -- the American people believe that what this nation stands for depends on whether we stand with people who seek freedom and democracy.

Last week, I asked the Congress to act, and act quickly, on the aid package that I've proposed to Nicaragua and Panama. I renew that call today. And let me say to Congress: if agreement cannot be reached on finding the money that is needed for this "Fund for Democracy," I am ready to make the hard choices. With Congress' authorization -- and it would require that -- I am ready to select offsets from the defense budget, break the logjam and get these much needed resources moving into the region. With democracy at stake, we really cannot afford delay.

* emerging

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Let me turn now just briefly to another part of the world I know you all are interested in -- Lithuania. The brave men and women of Lithuania have made known their desire to reestablish the sovereignty of the Republic of Lithuania. The United States stands with them and supports their right to self-determination. This is a complex and sensitive time when realistic, level-headed leadership is required on all sides. Lithuanian leaders have consistently demonstrated their capacity in this regard, and the United States will do nothing that will make their task more difficult.

We've repeatedly urged the Soviet Union -- Soviet government -- to enter into immediate negotiations with the Lithuanian government, which has itself called for those talks. We know that the Soviet Union has a long-standing interest in Lithuania, but those interests can only be addressed through dialogue and negotiation. Any attempt to coerce, or intimidate, or forcibly intervene against the Lithuanian people is bound to backfire. That is inevitable.

The Soviet leadership has said again and again that it will not use force. And we welcome that. And let me repeat, we have made clear to the Soviet Union that the situation in Lithuania can only be solved peacefully.

Now I'll be glad to take some questions. Right here.

Q Mr. President, we've read your lips and we've heard your words, no new taxes. Back home in Western Pennsylvania, our government leaders are saying no new taxes that you want to be blamed for. For example, your new transportation policy would cause taxes to go up in our area, would cause transit fares to go up in our area, and our government leaders say it's a disaster. The government -- the federal government doesn't want to take any -- share any more credit in this, but they want the local governments to take more of a burden and, therefore, local taxes will have to raise -- therefore, if you can fulfill your promise.

THE PRESIDENT: And they feel if the federal government spent it all, why, then it wouldn't cost anybody at home -- is that right? They're wrong. They're just as wrong as they can be. And I was very pleased that our transportation policy was endorsed by the National Association -- I believe it was -- State Legislators. Wasn't it, John? So there's a difference. I mean, I know some take the line that you asked about, but we don't feel that way at all.

We think that by removing some of the impediments to development and leaving some of the financial responsibility in the hands of the states, that's the way to go. That's the federal system. There is a good deal of federal money involved in our national transportation program.

Q You mentioned Lithuania and Eastern Europe. I want to go back to the South African question, especially considering Secretary Baker's travels there. A lot of people now are comparing de Klerk to Gorbachev in terms of reform, but they're still concerned about the position on sanctions. Could you address that in terms of whether --

THE PRESIDENT: Position on what, sir?

Q Position on sanctions.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q Are we going to hold the line and keep them?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, our law requires holding the line. We've made this very clear to the South Africans. I've invited both Mr. de Klerk and Mr. Mandela to come here. We have no dates set for either one. I strongly support the Secretary of State in the

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dialogue he has established, not only with Mandela and other leaders of the ANC, but with Mr. de Klerk. But I don't think this is the time to change the policy on sanctions.

There's some legislation in the Congress introduced by Ron Dellums which would add to the sanction base, and I don't believe that he's going to press that legislation at all. I met with him and Bill Gray and Dean Gallo and a bipartisan delegation that was in South Africa. All of them -- and they presented this to me as a unanimous view -- were impressed with what they heard from Mr. de Klerk, certainly impressed with what they heard from Mr. Mandela. So I don't think this is a time to change in either direction. But I want to see more progress.

Q Mr. President, on the local level, in New York State, Mario Cuomo is running for election this year. The Republican Party, your party, can't even find a candidate to go up against him --

THE PRESIDENT: This is depressing me. (Laughter.)

Q Is Mario Cuomo that unbeatable? Can you give your assessment of this man and do you have any plans to help out your party in New York State?

THE PRESIDENT: I will certainly try to help out the party in the state. I hope we can find a good, strong candidate. And, yes, the man is a formidable political opponent -- there's no question about that. So I'm not standing up here to knock Mario Cuomo.

But I'd like to have the party find a strong opponent for him and have competitive races, not just in New York State, but in every state. But I think you've got it sized up just about where it stands right now. I'd like to think that there would be a strong opponent for him.

Q -- would you be willing to help? Do you have any suggestions --

THE PRESIDENT: No, I don't. I've got all the problems that I can handle right here, without trying to second-guess the party in New York. But it is something that I'm interested in, of course. These gubernatorial races have a tremendous impact on my line of work -- the federal government -- because of the redistricting that will take place after the '90 elections. So there are some key governors races across this country to which I will devote attention and time in the fall.

Q Mr. President, I'm from Miami so my question has to do about Cuba. Tell us the policy of the United States as of now toward Cuba as the last military regime in this hemisphere? And also if the United States would be willing to help the new Cuban government after Castro is gone like it's helping Panama and Nicaragua.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, your question implies that Castro will be gone, but clearly the United States would rejoice in being able to help a democratically-elected government in Cuba. I am convinced that the people of Cuba want the same thing that the people of Nicaragua demonstrated that they wanted, the people of Panama demonstrated that they wanted and the rest of the countries in the hemisphere have demonstrated that they want -- democracy and freedom.

And Castro has not changed. Indeed, he's swimming against the tide. And I don't believe there would be any resistance from any quarter to helping the people of Cuba once they had the right to express themselves in free and fair elections.

I don't think it will do much good, but I would encourage Castro to move toward free and fair elections. I would encourage him to lighten up on the question of human rights, where he's been

unwilling to even welcome the U.N. back to take a look again. And I am not going to change the policy of the United States government towards Mr. Castro. We're going to continue to try to bring the truth to Cuba, just as we did to Czechoslovakia and Poland and other countries.

Q Your administration is opposed to a provision in the Rural Economic Development Act that would provide \$30 million in loans to people living in along the Texas-Mexico border. These loans would be used to install indoor plumbing. The Texas Senate is taking up the resolution today, a plea for the administration to reconsider its opposition. These people, about 300,000, live without running water and sewage facilities -- (inaudible.) If the administration won't make available loans, is there any other help that you might be able to offer these people?

THE PRESIDENT: I know of the problem. I must say, with some embarrassment, I don't know of exactly where that provision stands in terms of support or not support from the administration. But it is a serious problem, and it concerns people on both sides of our border, and it's a health question. And I will try to get back to you, in El Paso, with an answer to what we might do if this provision is not supported for budgetary reasons.

Q We asked our readers to bring their questions to you, and the question that seemed to come up most was -- you referred to it today -- in the face of all the problems the United States faces, homelessness, et cetera, why are we spending so much money overseas? Why don't we spend some of that money at home? Secondly, many also asked if you want to fight the war on drugs and be the environment president and the education president, where do you plan to find the money to do that and is it time to start reading their lips and think about raising taxes?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I've had very few people writing in to say, please raise my taxes. But nevertheless, on why do we establish the priorities the way we do -- I think it is in our own national interest to see the fledgling democracies of Eastern Europe and of this hemisphere prevail. I think in a final analysis, it will be to our financial interest as well because we will help create stable democracies that will actively trade with the United States.

Secondly, I realize, having been a member of Congress, that foreign aid is not the most popular account to vote for. I understand that. Never has been. In terms of the total percentage of the budget, it still remains a relatively small percent.

What was the other part of it?

Q The idea that you want to --

THE PRESIDENT: Why don't we raise -- yes. Well, I think --

Q I don't think they were asking specifically for taxes, but they are questioning where you plan to get --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes. Well, I believe that our National Strategy II -- and I see Bill Bennett here -- is receiving very strong support. We've had a tremendous increase in the amount of federal funds that are going into the drug fight. It's close to \$10 billion. What is the exact increase?

MR. BENNETT: A 70-percent increase since you took office.

THE PRESIDENT: Since I've taken office. People don't realize this. But the exciting thing on the drug fight -- I salute Bill Bennett and his efforts for what we are doing -- but I honestly can say to the American people I think we are beginning to make significant progress. And I'm not simply pointing to the decline in high school senior use of cocaine. That's an important figure --

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down by one-third. But we're beginning -- I think there's an awareness, a national awareness now that is going to inevitably lead to success in the war against drugs. There is certainly an international awareness that we didn't have a couple of years ago. And I was involved in it a couple of years ago -- the fight.

We're getting strong cooperation from countries around the world. We are trying to encourage the Congress to go forward with a strong law enforcement package. But I will take this opportunity to say I really do believe in my heart of hearts that we are starting to make significant progress and we are going to keep the pressure on.

But the money that's spent by the federal government is a tiny percentage of the work that is being done at the state, at the local level, and also at what I think is the "points of light" level. The dynamism of individuals participating is fantastic.

Q Hi, I'm from California, from Los Angeles. And tomorrow, Saturday, is the first-year anniversary of the nation's worst oil spill, and just last month we in California averted what could have been a disaster in Huntington Beach. And experts are telling us that another one is inevitable -- What is the federal government doing to guarantee the people of Southern California that their beaches are going to be protected?

THE PRESIDENT: I think the federal government with the Coast Guard and our Department of Energy are working very cooperatively with the environmental -- and our EPA -- working closely with the environmental officials in the State of California. But may I answer your question by a question? Is it proposed that we have no more tankers going into California? And if the answer to that is, yes, do we then -- how do you get heat? How do you get energy?

And so what we're trying to do in this regard is to have a whole new look in the Coast Guard, Department of Transportation, EPA looking at it as to shipping lanes to see what is the best -- whether there's a way to shift the shipping lanes to avert proximity to the beaches as much as possible.

It isn't going to be possible to deny access to tankers. And we don't want that. So what the answer is, make it as safe as possible. But if you're saying to me, can the federal government guarantee that no tanker will ever again have a leak or spill oil, no, I can't do that. And I don't think any reasonable person can suggest that be done. But we can go the extra mile in terms of environmental protection, safeguarding the sea lanes and all of that.

Q What about double-hulled tankers and --

THE PRESIDENT: They're moving towards that, yes. But everything we do has a price tag, and you have to look at every suggestion -- the cost benefit. Fortunately, the most recent spill I am told does not appear to have lasting environmental damage, and I hope that proves to be right for the people of Huntington Beach.

I'm watching very closely the situation in Alaska because I think we would all agree that the reports at this time last year were total disaster to the environment in Alaska. Now we're beginning to get a little different view of that, and I hope there's reason to be somewhat more optimistic, although there is still -- that was an unacceptable incident. And that is in the courts right now, so I guess I shouldn't say too much more about it.

But we will try, because I am committed to a sensitivity in anything that has to do with the environment. But I'm not going to throw everybody in America out of work. P.S., please support the compromise -- the clean air bill that's up before the Senate.

Q Mr. President, as you're developing your administration's responses to the emerging democracies in Eastern

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Europe, how much of a help or hindrance has the activities of Senator Helms been on Capitol Hill?

THE PRESIDENT: I have great respect for Senator Helms, as you know, and I will add friendship, as well. And in terms of Eastern Europe, Jesse Helms has been out in front for a long time as a proponent of democracy in Eastern Europe. And I don't expect he's going to change his view, and I hope he doesn't.

Q Mr. President, I'm from Rochester, New York, and one of the issues that came up in your last visit was promotion of Kodak for its involvement in the relationship between the private sector, school boards, and the public sector. Is your administration making progress with getting enough companies directly involved in the public-private partnership, and what kind of progress have you had so far?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, we are. And, again, it's exhortation. There is an example of what I talk about when I talk about involvement, private company being involved in helping others, or an individual being helped -- those monitors or those people that Kodak lends to the school community out there on their own helping others. And we are seeing progress being made -- another example I could cite to you that I've seen personally is Procter & Gamble's efforts in that regard in the city of Cincinnati, and we're seeing it happen in Kansas City.

So it's breaking out all across this country. And Kodak, to its credit, through that marvelous program of almost a magnet school concept, went into a place -- what he's talking about -- went into a place where the school was just -- people were fleeing it, they were escaping. Not only was it -- they weren't performing academically, but the whole environment was one of fear for the kids. And this company, along with, I might add, an enlightened school board approach, decided to do something about it. Rolled up their sleeves. They didn't come up to Washington and say, "please pay for it all," and it was good. It's worked just beautifully.

Yes, right here, and then I'm told we've got three or four -- let's take five more. This is one. Then I'll go peacefully.

Q Mr. President, I understand from your National Security Advisor there are rumors of a possible event tomorrow in Lithuania. Is the potential for Soviet activity in Lithuania over this weekend of particular concern right now, having seen that intelligence?

THE PRESIDENT: I see a lot of the intelligence on this. I know of no -- at this moment, I can't say I'm predicting some kind of conflagration over the weekend. And I hope not. And that's why I will continue to urge, through any forum possible, a peaceful resolution to this question. I am somewhat heartened by Shevardnadze's statement to Jim Baker just the other day in that regard. But it is a matter of considerable tension, and I hope those tensions can be released through negotiation.

Q Mr. President, you talk a lot about support for democracies around the world. There are people who think the District of Columbia ought to be one of those democracies receiving your support. There are signs that have gone up, pointing out that D.C. is the last colony. How far is your administration willing to go in supporting full voting representation for the Nation's Capitol in Congress, or even statehood?

THE PRESIDENT: I'm opposed to it.

Q Even any further voting representation?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I'd be willing to discuss something of that nature. But I am opposed to statehood. This is a federal city, and in my view it should remain that. Its funds come almost exclusively from the federal government. And so put me down as

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unsympathetic to that particular case.

Q Mr. President, there's been a lot of flack lately about the National Endowment for the Arts and its grants to numerous groups that rile some conservatives. Your administration apparently is not proposing any direct specific standards on content for future NEA grants, and I'd like you to explain that, if possible.

THE PRESIDENT: I will. I'd be glad to. First place, I have full confidence in John Frohnmayer, whom I've appointed -- came here from Oregon to run the NEA. That's number one. Two, I am deeply offended by some of the filth that I see and to which federal money has gone. And some of the sacriligious, blasphemous depictions that are portrayed by some to be art. And so I will speak strongly out opposed to that.

But I would prefer to have this matter handled by a very sensitive, knowledgeable man of the arts, John Frohnmayer, than risk censorship, or getting the federal government into telling every artist what he or she can paint, or how he or she might express themselves. So I am against censorship, but I will try to convince those who feel differently in terms of legislation that we will do everything in our power to stop pure blasphemy. And I don't want to offend the American people by citing two horrendous examples of what I would call blasphemous material that has no business getting one cent of the taxpayers' money.

Having said that, I don't know of anybody in the government or government agency that should be set up to censor what you write, or what you paint, or how you express yourself.

Q This is a local issue involving a lot of jobs in Philadelphia. There's a major effort underway right now to save the Philadelphia Navy Yard, which is apparently on the Pentagon hit list of base closings. Do you get involved with those kinds of decisions? Will you?

THE PRESIDENT: I get involved in them by recognizing that when you're trying to curtail spending and to protect the American taxpayer across this country, there are going to be some tough decisions. The adage remains the same: Cut spending, but cut it in the other guy's congressional district. Be sure to cut it in somebody else's state. Don't cut it here. So I get into it in a broad sense of saying to the Secretary of Defense, you make the tough calls; you go to the military and work with our able Chairman of the Joint Chiefs General Powell, and you come with a list of where you can save the taxpayers money, given the changed requirements for defense around the world. You make the list, and I will support you. And I will support them, and we'll see how it works out.

Now -- Congress -- they have a major say in all of this. But I must say, I am not sympathetic with the concept that some of our severest dove critics suddenly turn out to be tremendous hawks if you try to curtail expenditure in their own districts. And I'm not talking about the Philadelphia Navy Yard.

Q Mr. President, on a quite different topic, the Oscars are this Monday, and I'm wondering if you think "Driving Miss Daisy" will win Best Picture?

THE PRESIDENT: Now we're talking about some hard balls. I'll tell you this -- and I'm going to get into trouble because -- maybe I'd better not inject myself into this. But I will just -- you asked about one movie. I saw it and I enjoyed it. But the thing that interests me -- and please, Academy of Sciences, or Arts wherever you are, discount this -- I have a lot of respect for Morgan Freeman, and he came here the other night, right in this room -- and in a very emotional presentation, gave of his time one of the "thousand points of light," to help kids in this country be inspired to learn to read. And that made a profound impression on me that somebody with this notoriety, this fame, this acclaim as one of the great actors of our time, was willing to take his time to help some

little kid somewhere out across this country.

Last one. Right here.

Q Mr. President, residents of coastlands are concerned about the pollution that has washed up on their shores. Your budget cuts the reconstruction plans and states say they can't make up the difference. What assurance can you give them that that --

THE PRESIDENT: My answer is we're doing far better in terms of maritime pollution than I had thought we would after one year. And don't cite -- don't take my word for it, talk to the EPA Administrator Bill Reilly, because I read a report card -- this one from environmentalists, objectively critiquing my record -- and in it they were knocking, with a low mark, the progress -- the marine pollution and pollution of the waters. And so I said to Bill Reilly, what is this? I thought we were doing better in this field. And he gave me a very stirring advocacy of the program that is doing a lot better. So I can't address myself in terms of dollars to your question -- we've got a big, fat budget and I don't know the numbers -- but I do think it's a very important area and, I think, we've made dramatic progress.

And thank you all very much. I hate to cut it out here, with all these questions left, but I really do have to push on. And thank you for coming to the White House.

One more -- we have what is known as the shouted question as I go by. (Laughter.)

END

1:34 P.M. EST

REGIONAL MEDIA LUNCHEON / STATE DINING ROOM
MARCH 23, 1990 / 12:00 Noon

WELCOME TO THE WHITE HOUSE. // YOU KNOW, AS OFTEN AS I CAN, I TRAVEL OUT BEYOND THE BELTWAY, TO THE REST OF AMERICA -- THE REAL AMERICA -- I'M TEMPTED TO SAY. AND I'M DELIGHTED THAT TODAY ALL OF YOU HAVE TRAVELED HERE TO THE WHITE HOUSE.

I'M ALWAYS PLEASED TO MEET WITH SUCH A BROAD CROSS-SECTION OF OUR NATION'S JOURNALISTS.

- 2 -

WHEREVER YOU'RE FROM -- WHETHER YOU CAME IN ALL THE WAY FROM THE WEST COAST, OR WHETHER YOUR ORGANIZATION IS BASED RIGHT HERE IN WASHINGTON -- I'M DELIGHTED TO HAVE YOU HERE. THE ORGANIZATIONS YOU REPRESENT ARE PART OF A PROUD JOURNALISTIC TRADITION, SERVING EVERY STATE, EVERY CITY AND COMMUNITY ACROSS THIS COUNTRY.

IN A MOMENT, WE'LL OPEN THINGS UP FOR Q&A. BUT BEFORE I DO, I WANT TO MAKE A BRIEF STATEMENT.

- 3 -

I'LL BEGIN WITH A MATTER CRITICAL TO THE FUTURE OF DEMOCRACY IN THIS HEMISPHERE. ALL OF US HAVE FOLLOWED THE UNFOLDING OF FREEDOM IN EASTERN EUROPE -- AND TOGETHER WITH CONGRESS, WE'VE MOVED TO OFFER AMERICAN ASSISTANCE TO SUPPORT THOSE EMERGING DEMOCRACIES IN THE EAST. // THAT ASSISTANCE IS CRUCIAL -- AND IT WILL CONTINUE. BUT THERE IS WORK TO BE DONE -- WORK EVERY BIT AS IMPORTANT -- IN SUPPORT OF DEMOCRACY RIGHT HERE IN OUR OWN HEMISPHERE.

- 4 -

PANAMA AND NICARAGUA STAND AT A HISTORIC MOMENT -- ON THE THRESHOLD OF DEMOCRACY. IN BOTH NATIONS, THE PEOPLE HAVE SPOKEN IN FAVOR OF FREEDOM -- BUT THE DIFFICULT WORK OF DEMOCRACY BUILDING REMAINS. THIS HEMISPHERE -- THE AMERICAS -- CAN BECOME THE FIRST WHERE DEMOCRACY PREVAILS FROM NORTH TO SOUTH. BUT IT CANNOT HAPPEN IF WE IN THE UNITED STATES FAIL TO ADD OUR STRENGTH AND SUPPORT TO THE FORCES OF DEMOCRACY.

- 5 -

I'M PLEASED YOU'RE HERE TODAY -- BECAUSE THIS IS A MATTER OF TREMENDOUS INTEREST TO ALL AMERICANS. WHETHER ITS OUT IN EL PASO. OR PADUCAH, KENTUCKY. ROCHESTER, NEW YORK, OR JACKSON HOLE, WYOMING -- THE AMERICAN PEOPLE BELIEVE THAT WHAT THIS NATION STANDS FOR DEPENDS ON WHETHER WE STAND WITH PEOPLE WHO SEEK FREEDOM AND DEMOCRACY.

- 6 -

LAST WEEK, I ASKED THE CONGRESS TO ACT -- AND ACT QUICKLY -- ON THE AID PACKAGE I'VE PROPOSED TO NICARAGUA AND PANAMA. I RENEW THAT CALL TODAY. //

AND LET ME SAY TO CONGRESS: IF AGREEMENT CANNOT BE REACHED ON FINDING THE MONEY NEEDED FOR THIS FUND FOR DEMOCRACY, I AM READY TO MAKE THE HARD CHOICES. WITH CONGRESS'S AUTHORIZATION, I AM READY TO SELECT OFFSETS FROM THE DEFENSE BUDGET -- BREAK THE LOGJAM -- AND GET THESE MUCH NEEDED RESOURCES MOVING INTO THE REGION.

- 7 -

WITH DEMOCRACY AT STAKE -- WE CAN'T AFFORD TO
DELAY. //

LET ME TURN NOW TO ANOTHER PART OF THE WORLD, WHERE
WE ARE ALL FOLLOWING EVENTS WITH GREAT INTEREST.

LITHUANIA. //

THE BRAVE MEN AND WOMEN OF LITHUANIA HAVE MADE
KNOWN THEIR DESIRE TO REESTABLISH THE SOVEREIGNTY OF
THE REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA. THE UNITED STATES STANDS
WITH THEM AND SUPPORTS THEIR RIGHT TO SELF-
DETERMINATION.

- 8 -

THIS IS A COMPLEX AND SENSITIVE TIME -- WHEN REALISTIC,
LEVEL-HEADED LEADERSHIP IS REQUIRED ON ALL SIDES.
LITHUANIAN LEADERS HAVE CONSISTENTLY DEMONSTRATED THEIR
CAPACITY IN THIS REGARD -- AND THE UNITED STATES WILL
DO NOTHING THAT WILL MAKE THEIR TASK MORE
DIFFICULT. //

WE HAVE REPEATEDLY URGED THE SOVIET GOVERNMENT TO
ENTER INTO IMMEDIATE NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE LITHUANIAN
GOVERNMENT -- WHICH HAS ITSELF CALLED FOR THOSE TALKS.

- 9 -

WE KNOW THAT THE SOVIET UNION HAS LONG-STANDING INTERESTS IN LITHUANIA -- BUT THOSE INTERESTS CAN ONLY BE ADDRESSED THROUGH DIALOGUE AND NEGOTIATION. // ANY ATTEMPT TO COERCE, OR INTIMIDATE, OR FORCIBLY INTERVENE AGAINST THE LITHUANIAN PEOPLE IS BOUND TO BACK-FIRE. //

- 10 -

THE SOVIET LEADERSHIP HAS SAID AGAIN AND AGAIN THAT IT WILL NOT USE FORCE. // AND LET ME REPEAT: WE HAVE MADE CLEAR TO THE SOVIET UNION THAT THE SITUATION IN LITHUANIA CAN ONLY BE SOLVED PEACEFULLY. //

I'LL STOP THERE, AND TAKE YOUR QUESTIONS.

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