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SUBJECT: Daily Digest 11/18: LATIN AMERICA'S 'COMMITMENT TO DEMOCRACY'

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TEXT:

A roundup of Latin American, Caribbean and European views on the Ibero-American summit of November 10-11 in Chile, last week's visit to Argentina by Mexican President Zedillo, elections in Nicaragua and the progress achieved in solving the Peru-Ecuador border dispute revealed that the media believes the region's "will to consolidate democracy" remains strong, as does its commitment to free trade, economic development and the peaceful settlement of disputes.

IBERO-AMERICAN SUMMIT--The development capturing the most attention at the annual gathering of heads of state of Latin America, Spain and Portugal was the meeting's "firm rejection" of the Helms-Burton Act, the U.S. anti-Castro trade legislation. With few exceptions, most writers hastened to stress that rejection of the U.S. measure does not entail "solidarity toward the Castro regime," but "the decision to safeguard the principle of freedom of trade and respect for (the)...international legal order." Nevertheless, Havana's Radio

Rebelde hailed the summit statement as "one of the most categorical rejections of the Helms-Burton Act." The brouhaha over the summit's stance on the Castro dictatorship sparked many arguments among analysts, with some agreeing with centrist Diario 16 of Madrid that the participants' handling of the situation had, "regrettably," turned the spotlight on the Cuban leader and turned the occasion into another "Castro summit." Others doubted that the Ibero-American leaders had sufficiently impressed upon Mr. Castro the need for democracy in Cuba. La Paz's pro-business La Razon chided the summit participants for their "cowardice," adding they were "lukewarm...in telling Castro that if he wants to remain in the company of democratic governments and countries...the only path he has left is to really democratize." Dailies in Chile and Argentina emphasized the meeting's objective of showcasing its members' desire to contribute to a "new international order on the basis of shared development." The independent Buenos Aires Herald saw the challenge for area governments as that of addressing the problems of poverty, corruption and drug trafficking, all of which might undermine Latin American democracies.

THE NEW ORDER: DEMOCRACY, TRADE, PEACEKEEPING AND 'CLINTON II'--The November 12-14 visit of Mr. Zedillo to Argentina was seen in Buenos Aires's papers as a sign that Mexico and its southern neighbors might work for an "expansion of regional agreements," principally through NAFTA and MERCOSUR. Commentators welcomed the holding of democratic elections in Nicaragua, but said its problems of national reconciliation and poverty are not helped by the "indifference" of the U.S. and Latin America. Pundits in Ecuador and Peru looked positively on the Santiago accord on their countries' border dispute, stressing that its solution is important to a continent that helped mediate the crisis. Journalists called attention to the need by the second-term Clinton administration to turn "a new page" on Cuba and Haiti, and to negotiate with Panama on the canal question. Nevertheless, leading Clarin of Buenos Aires feared that Latin America, the "forgotten continent during the campaign," will continue to be ignored during the next four years.

This survey is based on 42 reports from 15 countries, Oct. 22-Nov. 17.

EDITOR: Mildred Sola Neely

IBERO-AMERICAN SUMMIT

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN

CHILE: "Spain, Following Its Proposal On Castro"

An editorial in influential, conservative El Mercurio (11/17) said, "Following the line set forth by (Spanish Prime Minister) Jose Maria Aznar in a conversation with Fidel Castro during the recent VI Ibero American Summit held in Santiago, Spain has proposed the European Union harden its policy toward Cuba, to achieve tangible progress toward a participatory democracy and more respect for human rights in (Cuba)...."

"Aznar's initiative is congruent with the participatory democracy embraced by the rest of the countries in our hemisphere, and of all European Union members. For this reason, it is of merit that his government proposes the application of such principles to Cuba, where they don't exist. However, it seems unlikely that Fidel Castro will modify the character of his government in response to foreign political pressures."

"Ibero-America's Ability To Contribute To New International Order"

Conservative, mass-circulation La Tercera (11/7) observed editorially, "It is believed that some Chilean groups have made obvious efforts to center the Ibero-American summit on Fidel Castro. Spokesmen for these groups have even acknowledged receiving funds from Miami-based anti-Castroist groups to promote the campaign to be unleashed on occasion of Fidel Castro's presence in Chile.... The fact that Chile is hosting a meeting of countries with a population of 500 million, spread over two continents which share traditions spanning over 500 years of history, is a very important event that should not be tarnished. This is why the government should have reasserted that it will not allow any type of demonstrations, either in favor or against, that do not comply with the law.

"These summits have been instrumental in showing the rest of the world that the Ibero-American community of nations is able to contribute effectively to outline a new international order on the basis of shared development. Within this context, the summit on this occasion will approve agreements to strengthen regional and multilateral organizations, particularly the United Nations, and empower it to prevent and resolve conflicts, combat extreme poverty, define strategies for sustainable economic and social development, and to defend democracy. In sum, the Chilean people must, once again, be cordial with their guests and avoid making Chile the site of conflicts that must be resolved by those responsible for them."

ARGENTINA: "It's Not Cuba That Matters, But Social Neglect In Region"

An editorial in the independent, English-language Buenos Aires Herald (11/14) opined, "Since (Argentine) President Carlos Menem insisted on renewing his onslaught against Cuban dictator Fidel Castro,...it is high time to inform him of the counterproductive nature of this obsession.... All Menem has achieved is to shed more limelight on a Cuba already receiving attention out of all proportion to its importance at the Santiago summit. A despot of 37 years' standing like Fidel Castro was already lucky to be allowed to be signing a joint statement with his elected colleagues.... As an extra bonus, Castro received the summit's support against the Helms-Burton U.S. embargo against Cuba....

"In fact, Cuba hardly matters outside the Caribbean area. The real challenge facing Latin America's democracies is not so much to bring the region's last surviving dictatorship to an end as to address the social neglect which has been the inevitable price of economic liberalism. Failure to lend socio-economic substance to democracy runs the risk of leading not so much to

(Chile's) Pinochet-style military dictatorship or Castro's socialism as, perhaps, toward an equally pernicious and insidious danger: populism."

"Ibero-America's Will To Consolidate Democracy"

An editorial in daily-of-record La Nacion said (11/13), "The 23 chiefs of state and government who participated in the Sixth Ibero-American Summit held in Chile, confirmed their countries' commitment to 'democracy, the rule of law, pluralism, respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms.'... Beyond the

paradoxical fact that such a declaration has been signed by Fidel Castro,...it should also be celebrated that the community of Ibero-American nations has emphasized, once again, its will to consolidate democracy as a way of life.

"It is also encouraging to see progress in the exchange of ideas regarding what is being called the 'governability of democracy,' revealing the growing concern of many political leaders about the difficulties occasionally encountered by the democratic system, frequently threatened by the lack of successful economic policies or the governments' inability to stop the increase of corruption, drug trafficking, terrorism or other equally destabilizing scourges.

"The Cuba issue has become, once again, the source of controversy. On one hand, Fidel Castro's presence caused strong demands--headed, as on other occasions, by (Argentine) President Carlos Menem--in favor of a change of conditions on the island that would lead to the substitution of the present totalitarian state by a regime that would guarantee respect of human rights and the establishment of democracy. Such claims emphasized again Castro's isolation from the international community....

"In spite of this, the heads of state...reiterated their protest against the Helms-Burton law.... It would be a mistake to suppose that the position taken by the summit on this issue expresses or covers up an attitude of solidarity toward the Castro regime. What has prevailed is the decision to safeguard the principle of freedom of trade and respect for an unquestionable international legal order.

"On the other hand, even if it can be considered that, objectively speaking, Castro came out ahead through this declaration, it is evident that other statements of the summit far from benefit him. A point that has been definitely hostile (toward Castro)--even if neither Cuba nor its government is clearly named--is the one that defines the indispensable elements of all democracies, 'the independence of powers, their mutual control, an adequate representation of majorities and minorities, freedom of expression and free, periodic and transparent elections.'"

"Upholding Commitment To Democracy"

The independent, English-language Buenos Aires Herald's editorial held (11/12) "Perhaps the major underlying theme of this summit has been political, inasmuch as the countries have largely committed themselves to upholding the principle of democracy for the Latin American region. Yet little progress has been made in finding sustainable ways to redress the chronic scourges that undermine democracy throughout the continent, such as poverty, corruption or drug trafficking. Unless these very immediate challenges can be met and successfully dealt with, the region has very little chance of ever getting into a position from where it can concentrate solely on integration.

"The challenge is there and must be faced, and, while it would be suicidal to push ahead at an unrealistic pace, letting unresolved disputes drag on endlessly is unlikely to serve any useful purpose. Ultimately Latin America will probably have to break new ground slowly where it can, and if this slow but relentless process can be kept for long enough, it should ultimately be successful.

"This must be good news for all countries involved, despite the deep historical differences that still exist."

BOLIVIA: "Missing: An Adequate Message For Castro"

In the editorial view of La Paz's pro-business La Razon (11/14), "As was expected from the beginning, condemnation of the American Helms-Burton law, which affects trade with Cuba, was a kind of counterweight to the explicit or implicit censure that Fidel Castro's dictatorship would have received.

"But the topic of the Castro dictatorship perhaps would have gone almost unnoticed had it not been for Jose Maria Aznar, since it is clear that a poor understanding of solidarity or prudence, or consideration on the part of the host and even, perhaps, a certain cowardice with regard to the firm presentation of the principles in which they believe--all the Ibero-American countries are today democratic except for Cuba--led Chile...and the rest of the participants to show themselves to be too weak, insecure or lukewarm in telling Castro that if he wants to remain in the company of democratic governments and countries in these meetings, the only path he has left is to really democratize his regime. Therefore, an adequate message was missing in the final summit declaration."

"Castro's Presence: Incredible And Cynical"

Samuel Mendoza maintained in conservative El Diario of La Paz (11/14), "The presence of Cuban Communist dictator Fidel Castro at the sixth Ibero-American Summit, which took place in Chile and which had as its central theme 'governability for an efficient and participatory democracy,' was, from all points of view, incredible and certainly cynical. What business did a sinister character like [Castro], who has tortured the Cuban people for more than 35 years through a regime that understands nothing about democracy, have there?

"Incredibly, it would seem that the Santiago summit was custom-made for Fidel Castro, since a lot was said about the American Helms-Burton law, condemning it for being against the Cuban regime, and very little about the importance and need to return liberty to the Cuban people by democratizing the country.... Apparently, the Ibero-American presidents, who are democrats in effect, do not care much about the dramatic situation of the Cuban people, whose elemental rights and liberties continue to be trampled by the dictator and his clique."

"Stubborn U.S. Embargo Incomprehensible"

La Paz's left-leaning Presencia commented editorially (11/8), "American stubbornness in maintaining an economic embargo against Cuba is, at this time in history, incomprehensible. Cuba has given signals of its willingness to normalize its relations with the United States, but it has always...run into a wall. During that time, all the American presidents predicted the fall of the Cuban regime, while reality showed that they were the ones who were changed. Aside from that, Latin America has overcome old fears and prejudices with regard to Cuba and has adopted, with more and more firmness, solidarity with the Cuban people."

BRAZIL: "Cuba Poses No Threat To Continent"

An editorial (11/12) in Brasilia's pro-government Correio Brasiliense maintained, "The sixth Ibero-American summit held in Santiago has dealt a harsh blow to the U.S. economic embargo on Cuba.... It has been a long time since the U.S. government has faced such strong criticism.... International rejection of the embargo on Cuba proves that Clinton will have to reconsider his policy as soon as possible. Otherwise, the United States will no longer be the indispensable nation of the re-elected president's dreams...."

"For a long time now, Cuba has posed no threat to the stability of institutions. The revolutionary who worried many chiefs of state of the continent has changed. The beard of the Sierra Maestra subversive has grayed, and so have his political ideas."

CUBA: "Positive Results Of Ibero-American Summit"

Havana's Radio Rebelde aired these remarks (11/12) by Orlando Contreras from Santiago de Chile: "The sixth Ibero-American summit yielded positive results regarding certain fundamental principles of coexistence between countries, and left on record one of the most categorical rejections of the Helms-Burton Act.... The heads of state and government of 21 Latin American countries also vowed to honor the principles of sovereignty, nonintervention and juridical equality of the states, which are the basis of international law. Regarding self-determination, the sixth summit recognizes the right of all peoples to freely construct their political system and institutions in peace, stability and justice...."

"For his part, Spanish Prime Minister Jose Maria Aznar may have felt that Fidel's realistic assessment of the current world situation was alarmist [catastrofista]. Aznar then called for a full democracy in all countries of the continent, without exception, apparently alluding to the fact that Cuba does not assume the full democracy that Aznar fancies. The facts, not rhetoric, show Aznar's democracy favors the rich and falls short in emotion and social solidarity.... Socialism has shown it is imperfect, but capitalism is not only imperfect but also unfair."

ECUADOR: "Time For U.S. To Reconsider Cuba Policy"

Leading, centrist El Comercio commented (11/11): "In Santiago, once again, this democratic exercise allowed...the presence of Fidel Castro--the only dictator of the region--and, moreover, permitted him to end up a victor, thanks to the condemnation of the U.S. Helms-Burton law. It is, apparently, a sui generis situation. The disagreement among the Ibero-American majority is only explicable by their fear that the Cuban blockade might be extended and affect other countries. Aside from this, it is time for the United States to analyze the increasing opposition to this law, reluctantly approved by President Clinton in a crucial moment during his electoral campaign. Now that the elections are over, certain surprises in the relations between those two countries might be expected."

MEXICO: "Non-Intervention, Cuba And Helms-Burton"

In the editorial view of centrist Excelsior (11/12), "President Zedillo rejected in Chile any possibility that Mexico might use 'its political and economic muscle' to provoke an alleged transition to democracy in Cuba.... Non-intervention has been the key to sovereignty and independence for Latin American nations. As a matter of fact, it represents a very important shield against the stupid attitudes of economic powers such as the United States, which try to impose their will on other countries beyond their borders. President Zedillo expressed his rejection of the implementation of the Helms-Burton law.... Only unity will be able to stop the arrogance of an empire that is obsolete."

URUGUAY: "Castro's Anachronistic Words Refuted"

Business-economic El Observador's editorial (11/12) said, "Castro's views, which, like his dictatorship, belong to an anachronistic past, were clearly refuted by (Uruguayan President) Sanguinetti, who described Latin America as a continent striving forward, a continent with great achievements during the last few years, and one which confronted corruption as well as many other essential issues with decisiveness and realism. His words were like a response to those of Fidel Castro, who had described Latin America's situation as gloomy and exploited by a two-headed monster: the United States and the big international companies."

EUROPE

SPAIN: "The Castro Summit"

Centrist Diario 16 argued (11/14): "Once again, the Ibero-American summit has regrettably become the 'Castro summit.' It condemned the Helms-Burton legislation, basically rebuking Clinton for a law which Ibero-American, as well as European countries, reject. Although the goal of democratizing Cuba is shared by all, Aznar, the Spanish prime minister, has gone too far in his frontal opposition to Castro, which breaks from the official Spanish diplomatic line...and gives the impression of following Washington in its support of the most extreme of the Cuban opposition groups."

"Pressuring Castro While Objecting To Helms-Burton"

An editorial in independent El Mundo (11/13) concluded, "By establishing limits on economic aid from Spain to Cuba based on an authentic democratization of Cuba, the Spanish prime minister is advancing (the cause of) freedom in Cuba.... However this increased firmness must not be confused with bowing to the United States or Mas Canosa's extremist positions...."

"A policy of diplomatic and political pressure on Castro is perfectly compatible with rejecting the Helms-Burton legislation, which violates the principle of sovereignty of nations. It is also compatible with maintaining economic and trade relations and supplying humanitarian aid to ease the misery of the people."

"Aznar Made Summit Focus On Cuba"

Liberal El Pais countered (11/12) in an editorial, "Spanish Prime Minister

Aznar has managed, with his comment, 'I have nothing against Cuba, but everything against its regime,' to make the summit once again focus on Cuba.... Whether it was his intention or not, Aznar is favoring not only Mas Canosa, through the Cuban-American Foundation, but the United States, which is never very sympathetic to meetings to which it has not been invited."

"Vina del Mar Final Declaration"

Under the headline above, conservative ABC (11/12) insisted, "Nobody can ignore that there is something extraordinary in the fact that, among all of the authentically democratic leaders of Ibero-America, Fidel Castro confirmed, just before signing (the final declaration), his desire to uphold a Communist dictatorship supported by a single party and the police. Castro's farce of repeatedly signing commitments he will never fulfill raises the need for Ibero-American governments to think about the uselessness in believing what he (Castro) signs. Castro, by himself, will never initiate a democratic transition, and it is time that this reality be accepted as fact and to end the charade of believing that only by talking to the dictator can tyranny on the island be eased."

"Little To Do With Reality"

Readers of independent El Mundo (11/12) saw this editorial: "The final document of the Ibero-American summit is a perfect combination of vague and general topics for whose achievement nothing and nobody is accountable. This final text has little to do with reality."

BRITAIN: "Singeing Castro's Beard"

Under the headline above, the independent weekly Economist (11/16) suggested that Castro, by attending the summit, "got more than he bargained for."

"What he wanted was condemnation of the U.S.'s siege of Cuba's economy. Most Latin American governments dislike that kind of bullying and they duly decried it.... But they also dislike Mr. Castro's dictatorship. And this time they said so with unusual clarity."

RUSSIA: "Latin American Democracy Still Illusionary In Many Ways"

Centrist Nezavisimaya Gazeta (11/13) carried an article by Karen Khachaturov on the recent sixth meeting of heads of state and government of Ibero-American states in Chile: "The participants in the summit discussed American-Cuban relations, first of all the negative impact of the Helms-Burton Act on the economies of Ibero-American countries. Spain, for instance, holds first place among European investors in Cuba and, together with the Latin American countries, rightly demands an abolition of this unlawful legislation which, to boot, is extra-territorial in its application. That is why the sanctions against Cuba were roundly condemned."

Assessing the summit, the author writes: "The discussion of the main theme [of the forum] in Chile showed that in Latin America democracy is still illusionary in many ways."

THE NEW ORDER: DEMOCRACY, TRADE, PEACEKEEPING AND 'CLINTON II'

ARGENTINA: "Mexico And MERCOSUR: Difficult Four-Plus-One Sum"

Left-of-center Pagina 12 (11/13) ran this assessment by political analyst Maria O'Donnell: "President Zedillo's visit to Argentina marks a change in Mexico's foreign policy. Diplomats agree that, until the 'tequila crisis,' Mexico did not appear too interested in the rest of Latin America.... Before traveling to Buenos Aires, Zedillo tried to achieve a 'rapprochement' with Fernando Cardoso and proposed starting a 'special relationship' between Mexico and Brazil. But Cardoso answered evasively.... Only after his failed attempt with Cardoso did Zedillo aim at Menem,...who also favors MERCOSUR but is easily tempted by shortcuts which lead to the United States."

"Argentina And Mexico, MERCOSUR And NAFTA"

An editorial in leading Clarin said (11/13), "President Zedillo's visit, with the purpose of creating a political and economic alliance with Argentina, is a good opportunity for both nations to strengthen their historical links and achieve better relative conditions vis-a-vis the world market. The importance of the Mexican economy to Latin America is undoubted, and the clearest example of this was the shock resulting from the...'tequila effect' in countries of the region. Argentina, precisely, was one of those which suffered most from the drain of capital by frightened investors."

"Nevertheless, trade relations between the two countries are far from significant.... Part of President Zedillo's proposal is to change this situation of trade imbalance, caused partially by Mexico's accession to NAFTA...and the expansion of trade horizons.... The consolidation and extension of MERCOSUR and the expansion of regional agreements with countries as important as Mexico must help Argentina, therefore, to generate better possibilities of growth."

"A Good Starting Point"

Daily-of-record La Nacion (11/15) stressed, "Mexico's positive wish (to join MERCOSUR) may contribute to the improvement of regional organization and also leave the door partially open to move forward later on to new proposals of association between MERCOSUR and NAFTA, already outlined as long-term political goals, in the North and here... The fact that Mexico has looked South with interest...on this region is a good starting point."

"Latin America, A Forgotten Continent"

Araceli Viceconte, on assignment in Washington for leading Clarin (11/5) remarked, "Latin America has been a kind of forgotten continent during the campaign...and the absence of the territory south of the Rio Grande from the American policy may continue whichever the winner of these elections may be...."

"There are hopes that...the trade issue may be picked up again, but it will be slow and depend on the composition of the Congress. Beyond the good will

expressed by Bill Clinton as well as by Bob Dole, and the consensus of the moderate sectors of both parties, times do not seem to forecast great initiatives. Chile may join NAFTA, although it is not a very large nor attractive market. Cuba will continue to be a headache, especially regarding the enforcement of the last clause of the Helms-Burton law that strengthens the economic embargo. The main American frustrations, those related to drug trafficking and security, may bring either complications or news. Of the rest, little is to be said.

"(Secretary of Defense) Perry said 'There is mistrust in Latin American countries. Argentina's position five years ago, or even three years ago, could have allowed it to join NAFTA together with Chile, or after Chile. But, even with MERCOSUR, South Americans will never be a big trade bloc. Besides, in a bloc with Brazil, Argentina, Uruguay and Paraguay, there is not a 'big' helper should problems arise.' (Perry) emphasized that the political instability in those countries (either President Menem's succession, or Brazil's post-Cardoso era) is another key factor that prevents any kind of negotiation."

"New Faces In Central America"

An editorial in leading Clarin said (10/25), "Neither threatening military hierarchies nor former guerrilla commanders are the political protagonists in Central America today. The presidential elections in Nicaragua...add their characteristics to this new scene--civilian, and, at the same time, notably incomplete...."

"The first transition to elected governments in the history of Nicaragua was a clear example of this difficult learning process as much as of its limited results.... Neither the Sandinistas' nor Violeta Chamorro's governments were able to introduce structural changes to overcome extreme underdevelopment and this explains the victory...of Arnolando Aleman, a lawyer and coffee planter businessman who ran with the advantages of his relative novelty, Managua's regulatory administration and the promise of economic investment.

"Everyone is aware, anyway, of how much is still to be done outside the parameters of these imperfect political systems: Sectors that are excluded from pluralistic exchange and constitutional legislation, the portions of society that are deprived of political order and production, the realities that are not represented in their institutions. It is here, rather than in their administrative centers, where the biggest challenges to Central American countries lie."

"A Hard Task Awaits Aleman"

Managua correspondent Patricio Bernabe filed for daily-of-record La Nacion (10/25), "Governability will be Arnolando Aleman's greatest challenge once he takes over power in January next year. Aleman's Liberal Alliance must face unpredictable opposition from the Sandinistas, which suffered on Sunday their second consecutive defeat in the ballots.... Aleman is also regarded as the most capable candidate to tackle upcoming economic challenges, receive support from private enterprise, Nicaraguans in exile, in Miami, and from the Catholic Church.... A hard task awaits the next president: to finally reconcile his country and fight unemployment and poverty, two scourges which are affecting Nicaragua relentlessly."

"An Uncertain Future"

Telma Luzzani, on special assignment in Managua for leading Clarin, opined (10/22), "If the victory of the Sandinista revolution in 1979 marked the decline of lifelong dictatorships in Latin America, the predictable victory of Arnoldo Aleman is the confirmation that the new millennium will find a world ruled by the right wing.... Social differences will deepen in the world. In Nicaragua, such social division is also the result of its history of confrontation. Aleman's eventual presidency opens a new cycle of fear for a large portion of Nicaraguans: The return from exile of the former Somoza elite and the possibility of the redistribution of confiscated property....

"Even though Daniel Ortega's defeat is a hard blow to him as a national political figure, the FSLN has not lost its appeal nor its political power. Nevertheless, another uncertainty these elections present is the future of the Front."

BARBADOS: "What Will Clinton II Bring For Caribbean?"

Columnist Rickey Singh commented in the moderate Nation (11/8), "A question of immediate relevance for us in the Caribbean is whether this return in U.S. politics will mean much of the same old 'trade and aid' problems we have been facing from a Clinton administration in its choreography with a Republican Congress for political survival. Or will there be a more flexible and sympathetic approach in Washington to our concerns?

"What Clinton and a Republican-controlled Congress seem to have in common is hardly comforting for us in the Caribbean. That includes a hostile policy towards Cuba, with all its attendant consequences of political tension and instability in a region that bridges the two Americas.... On other trade and economic issues, there remains the insistence by the United States on dismantling of the EU's banana imports regime, which gives limited preferential treatment to bananas from the Caribbean. There is also CARICOM's desire to access long-sought after parity concessions with NAFTA.... The Community's heads of government have also considered for priority action a first-ever CARICOM-U.S. summit. Such a summit could result in a useful contribution by small Caribbean states to helping President Clinton honor his campaign pledge to 'build bridges' into the 21st century."

CHILE: "Sandinista Defeat In Nicaragua"

Mass-appeal, conservative La Segunda (10/22) said in an editorial, "What affects Nicaragua the most is the indifference regarding its desperate situation, especially from the United States, whose historical responsibility was crucial in the support of dynastic dictatorships which, for a long time, were convenient to North American politics. Reagan's efforts towards helping Nicaraguans gain back their freedom have not been followed up adequately in terms of economic cooperation by the Clinton administration. The rest of the continent has not shown much solidarity with Nicaragua either.... We can only hope that Aleman's strong victory is adequately appreciated by the international financial system in order to assist in the restoration of Nicaragua, the second poorest country of the continent after Haiti."

ECUADOR: "Time Favors Peru"

In his opinion column, Pedro Saad wrote in Guayaquil's center-left *Expreso* (11/3), the most anti-Peru paper among the major dailies: "Like it or not, Ecuador has recognized the force of the Rio Protocol. There is no turning back.... Ecuador enjoyed a big enough success during the military conflict in the Cenepa to irritate Peru, but not big enough to modify the relation of forces in the long run.... Time favors Peru. It is the stronger structurally and might achieve military superiority if enough resources are earmarked and it has time to re-educate its top

officers in the handling of state of the art technology.... Consequently, we have little time to achieve a negotiating framework on the level with our military success in the Cenepa....

"This is reality. And, after freely accepting the force of the protocol and abandoning the idea of papal arbitration, the only thing left in this scenario is that the guarantors demand the closing of the border, providing (maybe) a small territorial concession to Ecuador. But it is going to be almost impossible to have this path lead us to 'compensation,' such as a sovereign corridor to the Amazon."

"The Need To End The Ecuador-Peru Conflict"

Quito's leading, centrist *El Comercio* (10/31) noted, "If the signature of the Santiago agreement between the ministers of Ecuador and Peru was expedited, it was not a coincidence. The guarantors have performed detailed work and have exercised pressure. There are various results: Aside from the statements of various diplomats and the visits of Luigi Einaudi--the U.S. representative--to Quito and Lima; the proposal of the four guarantor countries (Argentina, Brazil, Chile and the United States) was the foundation for the signature of the document in Chile. These actions, as well as their good will, make evident the need to end the conflict between Ecuador and Peru, because of its interconnection to the whole continent."

"Unite Behind Accord"

The front-page editorial of influential, center-left *Hoy* of Quito (10/31) said, "The conflict with Peru is a century old and finally we are about to arrive at a solution, which should find the country reasonably unified. Not so much around one idea--there is no uniformity in a democracy--but with every sector willing to talk and listen, to disagree but also to understand. The border negotiations are a matter of state and not one of government. Friends and enemies of the administration should act in harmony, without political maneuvering and partisanship."

"U.S. Has Been Especially Important"

Quito's leading, centrist *El Comercio* (10/30) remarked, "The guarantors succeeded in adjusting the clocks of Ecuador and Peru in order to initiate important territorial negotiations. The United States has been especially important, through its representative, Luigi Einaudi, who performed a detailed

job coordinating with the diplomats of the six countries."

JAMAICA: "Clinton's Opportunity To Write New Page On Cuba, Haiti"

Barbados-based journalist Rickey Singh wrote in the moderate, influential Sunday Gleaner (11/10), "The Caribbean region...offers the challenge to a victorious second-term President Bill Clinton to make a remarkable impact on U.S. foreign policy in the Western hemisphere as the last American president of the 20th century. That challenge is linked to future U.S. policy initiatives on Cuba and Haiti.... Mr. Clinton now has the opportunity to write himself into U.S. history as the politician who succeeded in restoring normal relations between the United States and Fidel Castro's Cuba...."

"The Caribbean Community (CARICOM), though small in size and resources, is nevertheless in a good position to help in fostering improved Cuba-U.S. relations and also play a role with the United States in encouraging the growth of democratic institutions and political stability in Haiti."

PANAMA: "Canal Negotiations: One Of First Tests For Second Term"

Washington correspondent Henry Raymont filed for conservative El Panama America (11/15), pointing out that, even though relations are still good, prospects are less favorable now than

they were a year ago for arriving at an agreement on a post-2000 U.S. presence in Panama: "The general opinion is that the delay has allowed criticism to build domestically and with prominent foreign opinion leaders.... Panamanian sources say the Clinton administration has not yet signaled it is ready to start serious discussions.... Clinton is not interested in reaching a consensus in the Pentagon to keep the bases.... It is expected that the negotiations will be one of the first tests of the new bipartisan foreign policy hoped for in the second Clinton presidential term. Ironically, one possible and positive step in this direction is the re-election of Senator Helms, the author of the resolution urging the administration to negotiate a continued U.S. military presence in Panama."

"Clinton's Re-Election Will Not Bring Major Changes For Us"

Conservative El Panama America (11/9) front-paged this editorial, "For Panama, Clinton's re-election will not represent major changes in its relationship.... Historically, foreign policy in the United States has been independent of the party living in the White House. The appointment by Clinton of Republican Negroponte confirms this."

PERU: "A Step Forward"

Economic Gestion (10/31) commented, "The Santiago accord...is a step forward. (It represents) the end of the border demarcation (as defined by the) Rio Protocol and the end of the echoes of the last military conflict. However, the end of the road is still long and difficult. It is easy to foresee that Ecuador will insist on some of its previous demands. This will probably be the crucial moment of the negotiations. It is (also) evident that Peru will uphold its position of not granting territorial concessions, and therefore respecting the Rio Protocol."

"White House Satisfaction With Santiago Accord"

The editor-in-chief of center-right Expreso, Manuel D'Ornellas, wrote in his daily column (10/31), "The White House has shown its satisfaction with the signing of the Santiago accord in an unusual press communique. Less than one week before the U.S. elections, U.S. pleasure with the outcome seems to be part of Bill Clinton's re-election 'final push.' Clinton wanted this Peru-Ecuador joint decision--to begin 'conversations of a substantive nature' before the end of the year in Brasilia--as a new foreign policy 'feather in his hat.' The electoral objective is obvious.

"For the Ecuadoreans, what is under discussion is the 'delimitation,' while for Peru it is 'demarcation.' The U.S. government--which is obviously the most important among the guarantor countries--at last has supported the Peruvian thesis in this crucial point. The above will necessarily mean that either (the United States) will abandon Luigi Einaudi's efforts to get Peru's granting of territorial concessions to Ecuador or (Ecuador's will) to submit the drafting of the border line to the ukase of an 'eminent person,' such as the Pope or Jimmy Carter."

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===== ATTACHMENT 1 =====

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===== END ATTACHMENT 2 =====

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 2, 1996

PRESS BRIEFING BY
MIKE MCCURRY

The Briefing Room

1:40 P.M. EST

MR. MCCURRY: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.
Welcome back to the White House after, I hope, a blissful
Thanksgiving weekend. Any subjects you're interested in?

Q Can you tell us if the President is getting close to naming his national security team? (Laughter.)

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Blitzer, the President was just having a very good laugh at your most recent report moments ago. The conversation he was having with Mr. Panetta and Mr. Bowles made it manifestly clear that what you reported on the air was not true.

Q Uh-oh.

Q Which part?

Q What did he say?

Q -- being carried live on CNN. (Laughter.)

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Blitzer was ranking the various rumored candidates for Secretary of State and got the latest speculation wrong.

Q What did the President say?

MR. MCCURRY: The President said much of what he told you earlier, that he spent four days with his family. He clearly had gone through the recommendations, the binder that Mr. Bowles had presented to him. This was the first substantive conversation the President has had with his transition leaders since last Wednesday, before Thanksgiving. And I won't change what I said earlier, that his thinking on the national security cluster is fairly well-advanced, but it was fairly clear that there is no final decisions to announce. And as the President indicated, when there are final decisions he will make the announcement accordingly. In the meantime, you're all free to speculate.

Q Do you have more on the President's schedule this week? You said there are going to be more public appearances than were listed in that little skeleton schedule.

MR. MCCURRY: I've got -- the only additions I have to the week in review that we've already put out are two for tomorrow. I expect the President will have a briefing on AIDS research by Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala and by the NIH Director Ramos tomorrow at some point. There also is an interagency conference call concerning the civil disturbances in St. Petersburg, a conference call that Secretary Cisneros will lead, but we expect the President to participate at some point during that call.

Q These are public events?

MR. MCCURRY: Those are public events, yes.

Q Any travel? There has been some speculation of

something like next weekend or something? Do you --

MR. MCCURRY: Travel? Haven't we had enough of that this year? I'm not aware of any, no. Do we -- no, I'm not aware of any. No travel plans that I'm aware of.

Q Mike, is President Menem coming in to see the President?

MR. MCCURRY: The President of Argentina, Carlos Menem, will be here at the White House on Thursday for a brief visit with the President. He is here in the United States on a private visit. The President looks forward to an exchange of views with President Menem that will cover hemispheric issues, issues related to the growth of both democracy and market economics in this hemisphere.

Q Mike, how about the letter referenced in today's Wall Street Journal's story from Mr. Riady in 1993?

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Riady's letter -- Mr. Mochtar Riady's letter.

Q Yes. Do you have plans to -- I mean, do you intend to release that letter?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes, as the President indicated we will release that letter publicly once we've made it available to Congress. We have been assembling a variety of materials for members of Congress that are interested in such matters. And I understand from the Legal Counsel's Office that they continue to work to assemble things.

One of the things they're doing is looking through presidential records, the group that manages presidential records, looking for any relevant correspondence or data or memoranda so they can make a thorough submission to Congress at the appropriate time.

Q But not today, though?

MR. MCCURRY: No, it will not be today.

Q Will the other materials be released as well to the public -- or to the press when they're submitted to Congress?

MR. MCCURRY: Our intent is to make available publicly what we make available to the Congress. Now, we have simultaneously been entertaining questions from various news organizations looking into these matters as the Journal did. They were interested in correspondence. I told them about a March 1993 letter that Mr. Mochtar Riady sent to the President that congratulated the President on his economic program, on his plans for engagement with Asia, and made some recommendations concerning policy towards Asia, contained in the letter. And as the President indicated today, nothing that was that much different from what we were hearing from others in the

business community.

Q Mike, let me follow this question. In 1992 the President criticized George Bush specifically for accepting soft you contributions of \$100,000 or more, and then doing the bidding -- not the bidding, but then following the policy that these people asked him to do. And he said, at the very least it creates the impression that the White House is for rent, for sale. The President obviously heard a lot of sides on the Vietnam thing. But is the President unaware that this looks exactly like what he criticized Bush for -- big contributions and then the people ask for something and then they get it?

MR. MCCURRY: For a policy matter that was as contentious, as hotly debated and as thoroughly public as U.S. relations towards Vietnam, to suggest that any particular individual's views, whether it be a financial contributor or not, would have a disproportionate thinking on the work of the administration is a little bit less than credible.

Q Well, wait a minute. What about the money, Mike? Can't that be seen as making -- he's asking how it looks.

MR. MCCURRY: The question is about what is the impact of contributions, and the point I would make is that there is not any public record that suggests that any financial contributor had a disproportionate influence on policy.

Q Well, what about the Bush case? Where is the public record on that?

MR. MCCURRY: As how it looks, that's up to you to characterize. I think there is a problem --

Q How is it different in terms of how it looks from what he criticized in '92?

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not going to characterize how things look. You're in the business of doing that.

Q Well, the President showed no reluctance to do that himself.

Q Let me follow. Mike, in '92, Bill Daniels bundled soft money -- he was the cable television guy, he was a friend of Bush. It was sort of an equivalent relationship. They went back --he wrote this letter saying thanks for your help on the cable bill. Riady had contributed \$100,000 to the Inauguration. I think John Huang had done the same thing. Less than two months later, they get this letter. Shortly thereafter, America starts on a brand new policy towards Vietnam. Now, a lot of people think that was right, but John McCain, of course, called for this. There were a lot of voices on that side. But the impression that was created in the President's mind when he was governor by Bill Daniels' big

contribution was that, at the very least, an ordinary American would think, gee, if you get \$100,000, you get what you want.

MR. MCCURRY: I believe that U.S. policy towards Vietnam throughout the last four years has been one of the most heavily covered and thoroughly accessible subjects on our entire foreign policy agenda. What interpretations you make of an individual letter from a prominent businessperson is up to you to render your own judgments about it. You can characterize that as you see fit. I would just like to stick with the facts as I've just established them.

Q How do we know for sure the \$100,000 grand had nothing to do with it? How do you know for sure?

MR. MCCURRY: Because there is a very complete public record about the administration's consideration of normalization of relations with Vietnam, as was very heavily covered --

Q There's always a large public record --

MR. MCCURRY: Very heavily covered, very heavily briefed, numerous discussions that occurred and that were briefed publicly about it. And, frankly, it is up --

Q But at the end of the day the President had to make a decision in his own mind, didn't he?

MR. MCCURRY: The President had to make a judgment based on U.S. national interests, the interests of the American people as we engage in that region.

Q Let me try this a different way. Is the President concerned that there seems to be no way to separate the appearance of possible impropriety here from the fact?

MR. MCCURRY: I think the President is largely concerned about the appearances that arise from soft money donations. You'll recall that during the campaign period he spoke directly to that subject, made a series of proposals, strongly backed legislation which we hope will now be introduced in the 105 Congress that would ban exactly those types of contributions.

Q He hasn't changed his mind about how these things look?

MR. MCCURRY: He's spoken publicly and has not changed his point of view about the perception that exists based on these contributions and the need to eradicate that type of contribution from our system of campaign finance.

Q So he would agree that somebody could draw the same

kind of conclusion from his interaction with Riady that Bush --

MR. MCCURRY: He would agree with the expectation that many of you will draw your own conclusions, and so will the American people.

Q Just on the documents, Mike, is your thinking about releasing them that you want to get as many as you can, have a complete set, rather than piecemeal day after day of documents --

MR. MCCURRY: That's exactly right. We've -- not only the President, but we are interested in what other correspondence that exists. We've looked through those records, we've got a substantial amount of that available, and I've been entertaining requests from those news organizations that have pursued some of those questions and telling them what we know about that correspondence.

Q Was this particular letter, though, available and in your hands -- before the election, and shouldn't it have been made public, given that --

MR. MCCURRY: The existence of the letter I believe was largely known because, if I'm not mistaken, I've heard from other reporters that Mr. Riady's representative made reference himself to the letter having been sent. I think we never formally disputed the notion that there was such a piece of correspondence from Mr. Mochtar Riady, but we have not -- we did not elect to make piecemeal disclosures of any correspondence or brief reporters in a piecemeal fashion on correspondence until we had more of the record available. We've been able to do that within the last couple of days, as various news organizations have turned their attention to that specific question.

Q Do you maintain it had no more influence on the President than the opinions of somebody who didn't give \$100,000, and who also might have written the President about Asia policy or Vietnam policy?

MR. MCCURRY: People from the private sector who are in prominent positions in the business community can speak with some authority as to the value of U.S. engagement towards Asia. And as the President indicated this morning, he said tens of thousands, but certainly hundreds and hundreds of such leaders have written to the President, some contributors, some not contributors, some, frankly, contributors to the other party. But the authority comes from having some knowledge of the operation of U.S. economic interests in that region and the value of promoting a policy of engagement with Asia, which is one that this President actively pursued almost from the first days of the administration.

Q Are you trying to say that the amount of the contribution, certainly sizeable, had absolutely no influence on the way the request was considered?

MR. MCCURRY: I think that --

Q How can you say that?

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not saying that. I'm saying contributions are welcome. For those who have to run political campaigns, you're thankful to your supporters for rendering that kind of support. But the President has made it clear that he has the responsibility to conduct foreign policy consistent with what the interests of the American people are -- all the American people. And that's the way he has conducted his policy towards Asia, on any of the matters that this individual has written about, or, indeed, any of the matters that affect the interests of America around the world.

Q Mike, on another subject --

Q No, can I ask one more?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes.

Q You said you don't want to make piecemeal disclosures, but the impression coming out from you and the White House was that it was a social relationship with Riady.

MR. MCCURRY: I don't believe that's true. I believe that there were some in the White House who characterized meetings that the President had with Mr. Mochtar Riady's son as being social. And the record, I think, stands up pretty well that that's an accurate characterization.

Q An accurate --

MR. MCCURRY: Yes, an accurate characterization. They were largely social visits. The President has spoken publicly on the occasions in which there may have been a policy element to those conversations. But you can't escape the fact that by and large they appear to have been social visits by two individuals who had known each other for some time.

Q You said the full set of letters won't be ready today for release. Do you have a sense of when it is going to be ready? Will it be this week?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, there are questions well beyond correspondence. I mean, we've been briefing news organizations as to the number of visits that Mr. James Riady and some of his associates had here at the White House, the nature of the contact that existed between the President and Mr. Riady -- this would be Mr. James Riady -- other aspects of this. And we're in a position to help news organizations inquiring in this, because the President has directed all of us to be forthcoming and candid in responding. But as to documentation we think it's more appropriate to provide the documentation first to Congress and then to release it publicly.

Q Do you think that's going to be this week, or do you have some sense of the timing?

MR. MCCURRY: I can check for you. First of all, remember that, because Congress is just forming itself for the work it will do in its 105th session, there has been no formal schedule of hearings or formal calling of particular witnesses at this point. We imagine they will be setting about that work very shortly.

Q The Chief of Staff earlier took action with respect to Mark Middleton and questions about the appearance of whether he was trading in on his White House relationship after leaving. The L.A. Times over the weekend had the story about this Chinese American in Los Angeles. Is the White House considering any sort of broader review of its policies about -- to prevent this kind of problem?

MR. MCCURRY: These matters have occasioned that type of review, and have led to very strict admonition by the Chief of Staff to all the department heads of the White House to be very conscious of the admission of outside individuals to the White House who may appear to use their access to the White House for their own private commercial gain. He's cautioned all of us to just know who we are admitting to the White House complex, and for what purpose, and who will accompany them on those occasions.

Q If these people were higher up they'd be covered by the revolving door law, isn't that correct?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, no, we're talking in this case about visitors from the outside. If there are White House officials who are -- or former White House officials who are no longer working here, they are covered by the administration's voluntary ethics guidelines that apply to those with the rank of deputy assistant to the President, or assistant to the President, or who earned in excess of \$100,000 a year. Now, that would not cover the individual you mentioned, Mr. Mark Middleton, but there is some sense here that we should look at that issue and make sure that even those who are at more junior levels in the White House staffing structure are not in a position to appear to use their access for any of their own personal private purposes.

Now, as you know, Mr. Middleton has denied that he has done that in a statement that he can make available to you, or he has made available to many of your news organizations.

Q Does the President think it's a good idea for James Carville to be mounting his attacks on Ken Starr?

MR. MCCURRY: The President has not rendered any opinion on that. Mr. Carville is certainly someone who speaks for himself and has made it clear he will speak for himself, regardless of what

the White House says.

Q Earlier today you said --

Q Does the President believe that if he asks Mr. Carville to desist that Mr. Carville would continue?

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Carville has indicated that, first, he has not discussed the matter with the President, and second, he will pursue the course of action that he thinks he needs to pursue, regardless of what anyone at the White House, including the President, has to say.

Q This morning you were going to ask the President -- you said you asked him and he said he has no opinion, or he has yet to -- you were going to try to find out what he thought about this matter.

MR. MCCURRY: I told you he has not rendered an opinion on the subject.

Q Are you saying here that what Mr. Carville is saying does not represent the President's thinking?

MR. MCCURRY: That does not represent the President's thinking. The President on this matter will speak for himself or instruct those of us who speak on his behalf to indicate whatever he wants said, and he's indicated that the work of the Independent Counsel ought to be treated respectfully and with the proper "no comment."

Q Well, wouldn't it be appropriate if he thinks that to ask one of his dear friends and a man who has been his chief political advisor to knock it off if that's what he thinks?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, as I just said, Mr. Carville is an outspoken individual and has made it clear that he intends to speak out.

Q Regardless of what the President says?

MR. MCCURRY: Regardless of what anyone at the White House says.

Q Do you seriously believe that? Do you expect the public to believe that?

MR. MCCURRY: The public can believe whatever the public wants to believe.

Q Do you believe that?

MR. MCCURRY: Do I believe that?

Q Yes, do you believe that?

MR. MCCURRY: I believe that Mr. Carville would continue to make whatever points he felt compelled to make regardless of what anyone at the White House thought about it.

Q Even if the President asked him to stop? Are you serious?

MR. MCCURRY: I am serious, yes.

Q Did you ask the President about this today? You said you were going to.

MR. MCCURRY: I had a very brief conversation with him.

Q And what was his response?

Q What did he say?

MR. MCCURRY: I think I've just reflected his sentiments.

Q He said, I don't have a response to that?

Q I'm not going to render any --

Q Has the President discussed it with Carville at all?

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MR. MCCURRY: Not to -- he has not had a discussion with Mr. Carville about it.

Q About it -- or about Carville's plans? I mean, he knew nothing about it?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it's been -- Mr. Carville has been very public about his intentions to speak out.

Q If he doesn't like what he's doing, why doesn't he ask him to stop?

MR. MCCURRY: Just he's not in a position to dissuade Mr. Carville from pursuing the course that Mr. Carville has --

Q He's the President of the United States of America.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, Mr. Carville, the most prominent political consultant in America, has made it clear that's what he's going to do.

Q -- this is not helpful to you, or do you think it

is helpful to you? What do you think of Carville's --

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not rendering an opinion on it.

Q Has Carville talked to someone other than the President here at the White House about this endeavor?

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't asked every individual here at the White House. I don't -- he may have. I just don't know.

Q What about those you have asked?

MR. MCCURRY: Of those that I have, no one, to my knowledge, had any extensive discussion with Mr. Carville about the merits of --

Q Well, wait a minute. What does that mean?

MR. MCCURRY: -- pursuing this course of action.

Q Did they have any discussions, and if so who, and what was said?

MR. MCCURRY: Brit, I don't -- I'm not going to answer a question that I don't have 100 percent information on. I haven't gone around and canvassed every single person who knows --

Q Well, what about those you have canvassed?

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't found anyone --

Q We'll accept your version of those you have talked to about it.

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't found anyone who said that they tried to dissuade James from doing what he's doing.

Q I'll bet. But the question is, has anybody encouraged him, to your knowledge?

MR. MCCURRY: Not to my knowledge.

Q Has anybody in any sense discouraged him?

MR. MCCURRY: Not to my knowledge.

Q It's a remarkable, look-ma-no-hands operation here that Carville is carrying on, isn't it?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, you can characterize it as you see fit, and I'm sure you will.

Q Mike, you said that Carville had no extensive discussions with anyone at the White House. Did he have any not extensive discussions with someone at the White House about it?

MR. MCCURRY: Again, Susan, there are a lot of people who work here. There are 1,500 people who work at the White House.

Q That you know of.

MR. MCCURRY: There are a lot of people who know James. I haven't gone and talked to each individual who knows James and said, what was the nature of your conversation with Mr. Carville on a given date. So I want to be very careful --

Q What about those you have talked to?

MR. MCCURRY: I just -- you just asked and answered those questions.

Q Asked and not answered.

Q Do you think anybody has made it clear to him how wretchedly miserable it's made your lot here today? (Laughter).

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Carville is aware of how wretchedly miserable my pitiful life is, I'm sure. (Laughter.)

Q The President has to make some decisions on cutting back Social Security for disabled children. Do you know when he's going to make that decision? Certain categories of disabled kids.

MR. MCCURRY: You mean related to welfare reform fixes? There's no change in what we told you last week. That's an issue that's got budgetary impact for FY98. It is being looked at very carefully by the President and his economic and budget advisers. The President is interested in addressing those shortcomings that he found in the welfare reform bill -- significant discussions underway about how best to do that and what the likely budget impact will be.

Q Are you going to change your mind on that after what Moynihan had to say about potential -- a likelihood of changes in welfare reform?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, Senator Moynihan is a distinguished member of the Senate, particularly on this subject, but it doesn't necessarily reflect the sentiments of all 100 senators.

Q But you have essentially the Democratic leadership on that issue, in Moynihan and Nickles, up there saying, it's done, nothing is going to be considered.

MR. MCCURRY: Of who and who?

Q Nickles and Moynihan, both of them.

MR. MCCURRY: I think there are a lot of sentiments within the Democratic Caucus in the Senate that shortcomings in the welfare reform bill ought to be addressed. Senator Moynihan's view is that that was not likely to occur, but that is not necessarily the only view that exists within the Senator Caucus or here at the White House.

Q And those shortcomings will be addressed within the context of a budget proposal on the legal --

MR. MCCURRY: There's budgetary impact on those issues and we continue to assess how best to address those issues.

Q Is the White House still discussing 25 percent replenishment of the funds that were already designated --

MR. MCCURRY: We are taking steps. I'll have to look into that. We are looking at some specific steps on addressing those more emergency type situations and that can be done within current budget authority. I think there has been some reporting on that already.

Q He's talking about the Times story.

MR. MCCURRY: Oh, you mean the differential that exists between the President's balanced budget proposals and the impact of the welfare reform bill? They made a -- there is sort of a rough calculation for initial policy discussion purposes that was made and the figure I think is in the neighborhood of \$13 billion. That does not necessarily equate to the price tag of those things that would be recommended by the President. Again, those discussions are still underway.

Q What is your view that legal immigrants could receive benefits simply by becoming U.S. citizens?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, those legal immigrants who go through the process of naturalization are entitled as U.S. citizens to a different range of benefits. I mean, that's the law.

Q No, but I mean as an answer rather than trying to make changes --

MR. MCCURRY: Well, that seems to be occurring. I mean, there are -- it seems in practice that that process is speeding up because there are some cases where people have had legal residence status are attempting to convert to legal citizenship status, in part, it is believed by some experts, because of the impact of this law.

Q Mike, over the weekend Secretary Perry signed a

series of agreements in Japan designed to reduce the impact of the U.S. military presence on Okinawa, including what is most important in the eyes of the Japanese of moving a Marine helicopter base off-shore. How does the White House feel about the accords, and will these issues related to the military presence on Okinawa continue to get White House attention?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, we are obviously pleased that we have been able to work with the government of Japan to reduce the burden on Okinawa in ways that do not fundamentally alter the U.S.-Japan security relationship or affect the readiness of our forward-deployed troops in that region.

The satisfactory arrangement that was concluded by the Secretary of Defense really works through a lot of those recommendations from the Special Advisory Committee on Okinawa which looked at the question, particularly the Futenma facility. They've arrived at what the Secretary believes is an adequate conclusion, an agreement that satisfies our own security interests and also our strong force posture in the region, a commitment that the United States has made and will continue to make to the security of that region.

Q Mike, will the President endorse the recommendation of the panel looking at the CPI and will he implement them?

MR. MCCURRY: The Boskin Group has made a recommendation or is about to make a recommendation on CPI calculations. There are a number of people in the area of labor, economics and economists looking at the question of how best to measure inflationary impacts across the economy. The Boskin Group has certainly been impaneled to do that by a congressional committee. BLS has been looking at much the same issue with respect to how best to take into account inflationary pressures when you calculate things like benefits to individual Americans under entitlement programs. All of these expert opinions will be very carefully considered by the administration because the President believes this is a decision that ultimately is one best based on scientific economic expert calculation as opposed to some political measurement with respect to the budget.

Q Isn't this a scientific panel? Isn't this what this is? And doesn't he have --

MR. MCCURRY: Well, that group is -- was asked by I believe the Senate Finance Committee, right, to look at CPI calculations. BLS has been doing much the same thing. There are others. It's been a very vibrant debate in the academic community about how best to calculate and measure the impact of inflation, and we are going to consider all those views as we look at their work.

Q Is it accurate to say the administration is willing to consider the Boskin Group's recommendations as far as they might call for changes in the technical procedures made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, but that something along the line of what Moynihan

wants to do legislatively is something you would oppose?

MR. MCCURRY: That's a technical question beyond my ability to answer. There is a variety of ways which you go about calculating that. I think we're going to look at the whole question of how best to measure inflationary impacts, what that suggests with respect to the CPI, how you apply the CPI to the calculation of benefit increases and then make some judgments accordingly.

Q But in their interim report, this group suggested that the CPI is inflated by about one percent and --

MR. MCCURRY: There have been different measurements of what the over-estimation of the inflationary effect have been. And Senator Moynihan's got a different view. The BLS economists are looking at much the same question. I'm not going to speculate on where the number will come out.

Q Mike, bipartisan commission on Medicare reform -- how's the President going to make that happen?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it's -- a couple of different stages in the process. There's health care -- the provision of health care commission, which he's pledged to appoint and which we have not yet named -- correct? -- that is under consideration. The President has also suggested in the short-term we need to proceed with Medicare savings by slowing the rate of increase in spending for those programs consistent with what he's put forward in his balanced budget proposal. Now, that would extend the solvency of the trust fund into the next century by a number of years.

And then the longer-terms questions related to Medicare solvency are ones which during the campaign period the President suggested might be amenable to consideration by a bipartisan panel. Now we are much farther down the road in looking at the quality of health care, looking at what the short-term budgetary impacts are going to be on the solvency of the Medicare fund and then the longer range issues that kick in. The President will address at a later date on how you begin to structure a bipartisan commission if, in fact, we continue to see sentiment for doing that as we work with Congress.

Q Well, are you seeing any sentiment? It didn't sound like there was a whole lot.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it's been mixed. There are some leaders in Congress who said they don't think that's an idea that's worth exploring at this point. There are others that have said that's the only practical way we're ever going to get at the issue of entitlements. And I'm sure the President will consider these views and it will be a subject that will certainly be a part of our economic decision-making in the coming term.

Q Mike, there's growing concern among many arms

control analysts about the fate of START II in the Russian Parliament. And in that connection, there's a proposal floating around to have the President and Yeltsin take an initiative to get it off dead center and spell out what a START III treaty might look like in terms of lower limits so that the Russians don't have big expense on the START II of reconfiguring their land-based -- is there anything along these lines under consideration, or is the President merely waiting for the Russians to do their thing in the Duma?

MR. MCCURRY: No, we have had a very active dialogue with the Russian Federation on the question of START II ratification by the Duma. I would not suggest that we've been waiting for some plan to try to get it off dead center. The President has actively encouraged President Yeltsin to do so. We have engaged a number of diplomats at a high level from the Russian Federation on that subject and stressed the importance of ratification by the Duma of START II.

But there have also been discussions among arms control experts on both sides about how to structure further arms reductions and limitations consistent with a START III approach. The momentum that would be created by a START II ratification would lend itself to further arms control efforts. But I'm not aware of any specific plan to structure that one-two step as you said, other than to say that there have been a very consistent effort on the part of our side to stress the importance of Duma ratification.

Q Mike, many women's groups are eager that a woman fill one of the upcoming vacancies on the President's national security team. As he looks at the candidates, is that a factor at all, or is it not a factor compared to experience and whatever other qualities he's looking for?

MR. MCCURRY: There are a number of factors that go into the consideration, and the President, as he has said publicly, is stressing how the team works together. Obviously, there is rampant speculation at least one of the candidates under serious consideration is of the female gender, so we'll have to wait and see.

Q Is that a positive attribute for that candidate in addition to the other things, as far as being --

MR. MCCURRY: It is an attribute, and how people work together is driven I think more by personality than by gender. And we just happen to have someone who is a very highly qualified, successful candidate for one of those positions, or at least we have rumors to that effect, and I wouldn't dissuade you from thinking that.

Q As the President adds up the pluses and minuses, is gender considered a plus, or is it not a factor?

MR. MCCURRY: I think diversity has always been considered a plus as the President considers appointments. But I don't want to apply that to any specific consideration.

Q Speaking of diversity, is the President going to meet with the rest of the Cabinet that has not resigned, and specifically when is he meeting with Janet Reno?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes. He will continue his one-by-one discussions with members of the Cabinet, those that he has not yet seen -- I think he's seen about half the Cabinet so far, and we'll let you know when he sees individual members. I'm not aware of any schedule for the remainder of those consultations at this point.

Q Getting back to this Social Security thing, this is a question that I've been asked to ask. Apparently --

Q Whoa!!!

Q My editors made me do it. (Laughter.)

Q Give the disclaimer. (Laughter.)

Q What are the families of those disabled kids --

MR. MCCURRY: Leo put you up to this question, didn't he?

Q When are the families of the disabled kids who are no longer going to receive certain Social Security benefits for their disabilities going to be notified that they're no longer going to get a Social Security supplemental check?

MR. MCCURRY: I have no idea. We'll have to look into that. Do you know? It's all part of the review of how you address the welfare reform legislation.

Q They're certainly reviewing -- whether to tell them.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, you have to know what to tell them before you --

MR. TOIV: The Social Security Administration is reviewing individual cases.

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Toiv tells me that the Social Security Administration is looking at individual cases on a case by case basis.

Q That will keep them busy for a long time, won't it?

MR. MCCURRY: Why don't we come back to that, Wolf, when I can get more information.

Q Just to follow John's question about diversity. I mean, is having a Cabinet that looks like America as important this

time as it was last time, or has it somehow shifted and --

MR. MCCURRY: It's important to the President to have a Cabinet that looks like America and to have diversity reflected in his appointments.

Q So last time he spent an inordinate amount of effort making sure that that happens.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, last time it was a new administration after a period in which Democrats had not occupied the White House and there had to be more effort to reach out to people who are not instantly on the radar screen for appointment. We've now had four years, four successful years in office in which a number of candidates present themselves having served in the administration in various capacities. It's a different equation this time because it's an incumbent administration. I think you have to take into account it's a different situation.

Now, that said, the transition team that the President empaneled has -- one of the results of their work, reaching out around the country and generating new names, was to really present the President with some options for Cabinet appointment that he's now in the process of considering that do reflect considerable gender, racial, ethnic diversity.

Q Is that less a consideration than it was four years ago?

MR. MCCURRY: It's a consideration, but we're four years later, it's an incumbent administration. There are people that now have had experience serving in the first term that, you know, because of that experience, rise to the top of those who might be considered, clearly. So it's a different -- somewhat different kind of equation, but not any more or less important than it was four years ago.

Q You're suggesting that that could push gender or racial considerations out of the picture.

MR. MCCURRY: No, I'm not at all. I said that diversity continues to be a very important guidepost for the President as he considers these appointments.

Q Mike, can we go back to Starr for a minute? He's kind of gone on a counteroffensive. He sat down with Newsweek for three hours. I believe his deputy in Little Rock, Hickman Ewing, said an attack like Carville's is a sign of guilt. Do you think it's helpful to have Carville out attacking?

MR. MCCURRY: I've repeatedly refused to render a judgment on that and I won't do it again. Mr. Starr has to speak for himself. Mr. Carville has to speak for himself. And all of their

debate will be judged in the court of public opinion, no doubt.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END

2:15 P.M. EST

#279-12/02

Message Sent

To:

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MELLODY_A @ A1@CD@LNGTWY
SUNTUM_M @ A1@CD@LNGTWY
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BURKE_D @ A1@CD@LNGTWY
CAPLAN_P @ A1@CD@LNGTWY
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TEXT:

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 2, 1996

PRESS BRIEFING BY
MIKE MCCURRY

The Briefing Room

1:40 P.M. EST

MR. MCCURRY: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome back to the White House after, I hope, a blissful Thanksgiving weekend. Any subjects you're interested in?

Q Can you tell us if the President is getting close to naming his national security team? (Laughter.)

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Blitzer, the President was just having a very good laugh at your most recent report moments ago. The conversation he was having with Mr. Panetta and Mr. Bowles made it manifestly clear that what you reported on the air was not true.

Q Uh-oh.

Q Which part?

Q What did he say?

Q -- being carried live on CNN. (Laughter.)

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Blitzer was ranking the various rumored candidates for Secretary of State and got the latest speculation wrong.

Q What did the President say?

MR. MCCURRY: The President said much of what he told you earlier, that he spent four days with his family. He clearly had gone through the recommendations, the binder that Mr. Bowles had presented to him. This was the first substantive conversation the President has had with his transition leaders since last Wednesday, before Thanksgiving. And I won't change what I said earlier, that his thinking on the national security cluster is fairly well-advanced, but it was fairly clear that there is no final decisions to announce. And as the President indicated, when there are final decisions he will make the announcement accordingly. In

the meantime, you're all free to speculate.

Q Do you have more on the President's schedule this week? You said there are going to be more public appearances than were listed in that little skeleton schedule.

MR. MCCURRY: I've got -- the only additions I have to the week in review that we've already put out are two for tomorrow. I expect the President will have a briefing on AIDS research by Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala and by the NIH Director Ramos tomorrow at some point. There also is an interagency conference call concerning the civil disturbances in St. Petersburg, a conference call that Secretary Cisneros will lead, but we expect the President to participate at some point during that call.

Q These are public events?

MR. MCCURRY: Those are public events, yes.

Q Any travel? There has been some speculation of something like next weekend or something? Do you --

MR. MCCURRY: Travel? Haven't we had enough of that this year? I'm not aware of any, no. Do we -- no, I'm not aware of any. No travel plans that I'm aware of.

Q Mike, is President Menem coming in to see the President?

MR. MCCURRY: The President of Argentina, Carlos Menem, will be here at the White House on Thursday for a brief visit with the President. He is here in the United States on a private visit. The President looks forward to an exchange of views with President Menem that will cover hemispheric issues, issues related to the growth of both democracy and market economics in this hemisphere.

Q Mike, how about the letter referenced in today's Wall Street Journal's story from Mr. Riady in 1993?

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Riady's letter -- Mr. Mochtar Riady's letter.

Q Yes. Do you have plans to -- I mean, do you intend to release that letter?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes, as the President indicated we will release that letter publicly once we've made it available to Congress. We have been assembling a variety of materials for members of Congress that are interested in such matters. And I understand from the Legal Counsel's Office that they continue to work to assemble things.

One of the things they're doing is looking through presidential records, the group that manages presidential records, looking for any relevant correspondence or data or memoranda so they can make a thorough submission to Congress at the appropriate time.

Q But not today, though?

MR. MCCURRY: No, it will not be today.

Q Will the other materials be released as well to the public -- or to the press when they're submitted to Congress?

MR. MCCURRY: Our intent is to make available publicly what we make available to the Congress. Now, we have simultaneously been entertaining questions from various news organizations looking into these matters as the Journal did. They were interested in correspondence. I told them about a March 1993 letter that Mr. Mochtar Riady sent to the President that congratulated the President on his economic program, on his plans for engagement with Asia, and made some recommendations concerning policy towards Asia, contained in the letter. And as the President indicated today, nothing that was that much different from what we were hearing from others in the business community.

Q Mike, let me follow this question. In 1992 the President criticized George Bush specifically for accepting soft you contributions of \$100,000 or more, and then doing the bidding -- not the bidding, but then following the policy that these people asked him to do. And he said, at the very least it creates the impression that the White House is for rent, for sale. The President obviously heard a lot of sides on the Vietnam thing. But is the President unaware that this looks exactly like what he criticized Bush for -- big contributions and then the people ask for something and then they get it?

MR. MCCURRY: For a policy matter that was as contentious, as hotly debated and as thoroughly public as U.S. relations towards Vietnam, to suggest that any particular individual's views, whether it be a financial contributor or not, would have a disproportionate thinking on the work of the administration is a little bit less than credible.

Q Well, wait a minute. What about the money, Mike? Can't that be seen as making -- he's asking how it looks.

MR. MCCURRY: The question is about what is the impact of contributions, and the point I would make is that there is not any public record that suggests that any financial contributor had a disproportionate influence on policy.

Q Well, what about the Bush case? Where is the public record on that?

MR. MCCURRY: As how it looks, that's up to you to

characterize. I think there is a problem --

Q How is it different in terms of how it looks from what he criticized in '92?

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not going to characterize how things look. You're in the business of doing that.

Q Well, the President showed no reluctance to do that himself.

Q Let me follow. Mike, in '92, Bill Daniels bundled soft money -- he was the cable television guy, he was a friend of Bush. It was sort of an equivalent relationship. They went back --he wrote this letter saying thanks for your help on the cable bill. Riady had contributed \$100,000 to the Inauguration. I think John Huang had done the same thing. Less than two months later, they get this letter. Shortly thereafter, America starts on a brand new policy towards Vietnam. Now, a lot of people think that was right, but John McCain, of course, called for this. There were a lot of voices on that side. But the impression that was created in the President's mind when he was governor by Bill Daniels' big contribution was that, at the very least, an ordinary American would think, gee, if you get \$100,000, you get what you want.

MR. MCCURRY: I believe that U.S. policy towards Vietnam throughout the last four years has been one of the most heavily covered and thoroughly accessible subjects on our entire foreign policy agenda. What interpretations you make of an individual letter from a prominent businessperson is up to you to render your own judgments about it. You can characterize that as you see fit. I would just like to stick with the facts as I've just established them.

Q How do we know for sure the \$100,000 grand had nothing to do with it? How do you know for sure?

MR. MCCURRY: Because there is a very complete public record about the administration's consideration of normalization of relations with Vietnam, as was very heavily covered --

Q There's always a large public record --

MR. MCCURRY: Very heavily covered, very heavily briefed, numerous discussions that occurred and that were briefed publicly about it. And, frankly, it is up --

Q But at the end of the day the President had to make a decision in his own mind, didn't he?

MR. MCCURRY: The President had to make a judgment based on U.S. national interests, the interests of the American people as

we engage in that region.

Q Let me try this a different way. Is the President concerned that there seems to be no way to separate the appearance of possible impropriety here from the fact?

MR. MCCURRY: I think the President is largely concerned about the appearances that arise from soft money donations. You'll recall that during the campaign period he spoke directly to that subject, made a series of proposals, strongly backed legislation which we hope will now be introduced in the 105 Congress that would ban exactly those types of contributions.

Q He hasn't changed his mind about how these things look?

MR. MCCURRY: He's spoken publicly and has not changed his point of view about the perception that exists based on these contributions and the need to eradicate that type of contribution from our system of campaign finance.

Q So he would agree that somebody could draw the same kind of conclusion from his interaction with Riady that Bush --

MR. MCCURRY: He would agree with the expectation that many of you will draw your own conclusions, and so will the American people.

Q Just on the documents, Mike, is your thinking about releasing them that you want to get as many as you can, have a complete set, rather than piecemeal day after day of documents --

MR. MCCURRY: That's exactly right. We've -- not only the President, but we are interested in what other correspondence that exists. We've looked through those records, we've got a substantial amount of that available, and I've been entertaining requests from those news organizations that have pursued some of those questions and telling them what we know about that correspondence.

Q Was this particular letter, though, available and in your hands -- before the election, and shouldn't it have been made public, given that --

MR. MCCURRY: The existence of the letter I believe was largely known because, if I'm not mistaken, I've heard from other reporters that Mr. Riady's representative made reference himself to the letter having been sent. I think we never formally disputed the notion that there was such a piece of correspondence from Mr. Mochtar Riady, but we have not -- we did not elect to make piecemeal disclosures of any correspondence or brief reporters in a piecemeal fashion on correspondence until we had more of the record available. We've been able to do that within the last couple of days, as various news organizations have turned their attention to that specific

question.

Q Do you maintain it had no more influence on the President than the opinions of somebody who didn't give \$100,000, and who also might have written the President about Asia policy or Vietnam policy?

MR. MCCURRY: People from the private sector who are in prominent positions in the business community can speak with some authority as to the value of U.S. engagement towards Asia. And as the President indicated this morning, he said tens of thousands, but certainly hundreds and hundreds of such leaders have written to the President, some contributors, some not contributors, some, frankly, contributors to the other party. But the authority comes from having some knowledge of the operation of U.S. economic interests in that region and the value of promoting a policy of engagement with Asia, which is one that this President actively pursued almost from the first days of the administration.

Q Are you trying to say that the amount of the contribution, certainly sizeable, had absolutely no influence on the way the request was considered?

MR. MCCURRY: I think that --

Q How can you say that?

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not saying that. I'm saying contributions are welcome. For those who have to run political campaigns, you're thankful to your supporters for rendering that kind of support. But the President has made it clear that he has the responsibility to conduct foreign policy consistent with what the interests of the American people are -- all the American people. And that's the way he has conducted his policy towards Asia, on any of the matters that this individual has written about, or, indeed, any of the matters that affect the interests of America around the world.

Q Mike, on another subject --

Q No, can I ask one more?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes.

Q You said you don't want to make piecemeal disclosures, but the impression coming out from you and the White House was that it was a social relationship with Riady.

MR. MCCURRY: I don't believe that's true. I believe that there were some in the White House who characterized meetings that the President had with Mr. Mochtar Riady's son as being social. And the record, I think, stands up pretty well that that's an accurate characterization.

Q An accurate --

MR. MCCURRY: Yes, an accurate characterization. They were largely social visits. The President has spoken publicly on the occasions in which there may have been a policy element to those conversations. But you can't escape the fact that by and large they appear to have been social visits by two individuals who had known each other for some time.

Q You said the full set of letters won't be ready today for release. Do you have a sense of when it is going to be ready? Will it be this week?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, there are questions well beyond correspondence. I mean, we've been briefing news organizations as to the number of visits that Mr. James Riady and some of his associates had here at the White House, the nature of the contact that existed between the President and Mr. Riady -- this would be Mr. James Riady -- other aspects of this. And we're in a position to help news organizations inquiring in this, because the President has directed all of us to be forthcoming and candid in responding. But as to documentation we think it's more appropriate to provide the documentation first to Congress and then to release it publicly.

Q Do you think that's going to be this week, or do you have some sense of the timing?

MR. MCCURRY: I can check for you. First of all, remember that, because Congress is just forming itself for the work it will do in its 105th session, there has been no formal schedule of hearings or formal calling of particular witnesses at this point. We imagine they will be setting about that work very shortly.

Q The Chief of Staff earlier took action with respect to Mark Middleton and questions about the appearance of whether he was trading in on his White House relationship after leaving. The L.A. Times over the weekend had the story about this Chinese American in Los Angeles. Is the White House considering any sort of broader review of its policies about -- to prevent this kind of problem?

MR. MCCURRY: These matters have occasioned that type of review, and have led to very strict admonition by the Chief of Staff to all the department heads of the White House to be very conscious of the admission of outside individuals to the White House who may appear to use their access to the White House for their own private commercial gain. He's cautioned all of us to just know who we are admitting to the White House complex, and for what purpose, and who will accompany them on those occasions.

Q If these people were higher up they'd be covered by the revolving door law, isn't that correct?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, no, we're talking in this case about

visitors from the outside. If there are White House officials who are -- or former White House officials who are no longer working here, they are covered by the administration's voluntary ethics guidelines that apply to those with the rank of deputy assistant to the President, or assistant to the President, or who earned in excess of \$100,000 a year. Now, that would not cover the individual you mentioned, Mr. Mark Middleton, but there is some sense here that we should look at that issue and make sure that even those who are at more junior levels in the White House staffing structure are not in a position to appear to use their access for any of their own personal private purposes.

Now, as you know, Mr. Middleton has denied that he has done that in a statement that he can make available to you, or he has made available to many of your news organizations.

Q Does the President think it's a good idea for James Carville to be mounting his attacks on Ken Starr?

MR. MCCURRY: The President has not rendered any opinion on that. Mr. Carville is certainly someone who speaks for himself and has made it clear he will speak for himself, regardless of what the White House says.

Q Earlier today you said --

Q Does the President believe that if he asks Mr. Carville to desist that Mr. Carville would continue?

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Carville has indicated that, first, he has not discussed the matter with the President, and second, he will pursue the course of action that he thinks he needs to pursue, regardless of what anyone at the White House, including the President, has to say.

Q This morning you were going to ask the President -- you said you asked him and he said he has no opinion, or he has yet to -- you were going to try to find out what he thought about this matter.

MR. MCCURRY: I told you he has not rendered an opinion on the subject.

Q Are you saying here that what Mr. Carville is saying does not represent the President's thinking?

MR. MCCURRY: That does not represent the President's thinking. The President on this matter will speak for himself or instruct those of us who speak on his behalf to indicate whatever he wants said, and he's indicated that the work of the Independent Counsel ought to be treated respectfully and with the proper "no comment."

Q Well, wouldn't it be appropriate if he thinks that

to ask one of his dear friends and a man who has been his chief political advisor to knock it off if that's what he thinks?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, as I just said, Mr. Carville is an outspoken individual and has made it clear that he intends to speak out.

Q Regardless of what the President says?

MR. MCCURRY: Regardless of what anyone at the White House says.

Q Do you seriously believe that? Do you expect the public to believe that?

MR. MCCURRY: The public can believe whatever the public wants to believe.

Q Do you believe that?

MR. MCCURRY: Do I believe that?

Q Yes, do you believe that?

MR. MCCURRY: I believe that Mr. Carville would continue to make whatever points he felt compelled to make regardless of what anyone at the White House thought about it.

Q Even if the President asked him to stop? Are you serious?

MR. MCCURRY: I am serious, yes.

Q Did you ask the President about this today? You said you were going to.

MR. MCCURRY: I had a very brief conversation with him.

Q And what was his response?

Q What did he say?

MR. MCCURRY: I think I've just reflected his sentiments.

Q He said, I don't have a response to that?

Q I'm not going to render any --

Q Has the President discussed it with Carville at all?

MR. MCCURRY: Not to -- he has not had a discussion with Mr. Carville about it.

Q About it -- or about Carville's plans? I mean, he knew nothing about it?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it's been -- Mr. Carville has been very public about his intentions to speak out.

Q If he doesn't like what he's doing, why doesn't he ask him to stop?

MR. MCCURRY: Just he's not in a position to dissuade Mr. Carville from pursuing the course that Mr. Carville has --

Q He's the President of the United States of America.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, Mr. Carville, the most prominent political consultant in America, has made it clear that's what he's going to do.

Q -- this is not helpful to you, or do you think it is helpful to you? What do you think of Carville's --

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not rendering an opinion on it.

Q Has Carville talked to someone other than the President here at the White House about this endeavor?

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't asked every individual here at the White House. I don't -- he may have. I just don't know.

Q What about those you have asked?

MR. MCCURRY: Of those that I have, no one, to my knowledge, had any extensive discussion with Mr. Carville about the merits of --

Q Well, wait a minute. What does that mean?

MR. MCCURRY: -- pursuing this course of action.

Q Did they have any discussions, and if so who, and what was said?

MR. MCCURRY: Brit, I don't -- I'm not going to answer a question that I don't have 100 percent information on. I haven't gone around and canvassed every single person who knows --

Q Well, what about those you have canvassed?

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't found anyone --

Q We'll accept your version of those you have talked

to about it.

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't found anyone who said that they tried to dissuade James from doing what he's doing.

Q I'll bet. But the question is, has anybody encouraged him, to your knowledge?

MR. MCCURRY: Not to my knowledge.

Q Has anybody in any sense discouraged him?

MR. MCCURRY: Not to my knowledge.

Q It's a remarkable, look-ma-no-hands operation here that Carville is carrying on, isn't it?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, you can characterize it as you see fit, and I'm sure you will.

Q Mike, you said that Carville had no extensive discussions with anyone at the White House. Did he have any not extensive discussions with someone at the White House about it?

MR. MCCURRY: Again, Susan, there are a lot of people who work here. There are 1,500 people who work at the White House.

Q That you know of.

MR. MCCURRY: There are a lot of people who know James. I haven't gone and talked to each individual who knows James and said, what was the nature of your conversation with Mr. Carville on a given date. So I want to be very careful --

Q What about those you have talked to?

MR. MCCURRY: I just -- you just asked and answered those questions.

Q Asked and not answered.

Q Do you think anybody has made it clear to him how wretchedly miserable it's made your lot here today? (Laughter).

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Carville is aware of how wretchedly miserable my pitiful life is, I'm sure. (Laughter.)

Q The President has to make some decisions on cutting back Social Security for disabled children. Do you know when he's going to make that decision? Certain categories of disabled kids.

MR. MCCURRY: You mean related to welfare reform fixes?

There's no change in what we told you last week. That's an issue that's got budgetary impact for FY98. It is being looked at very carefully by the President and his economic and budget advisers. The President is interested in addressing those shortcomings that he found in the welfare reform bill -- significant discussions underway about how best to do that and what the likely budget impact will be.

Q Are you going to change your mind on that after what Moynihan had to say about potential -- a likelihood of changes in welfare reform?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, Senator Moynihan is a distinguished member of the Senate, particularly on this subject, but it doesn't necessarily reflect the sentiments of all 100 senators.

Q But you have essentially the Democratic leadership on that issue, in Moynihan and Nickles, up there saying, it's done, nothing is going to be considered.

MR. MCCURRY: Of who and who?

Q Nickles and Moynihan, both of them.

MR. MCCURRY: I think there are a lot of sentiments within the Democratic Caucus in the Senate that shortcomings in the welfare reform bill ought to be addressed. Senator Moynihan's view is that that was not likely to occur, but that is not necessarily the only view that exists within the Senator Caucus or here at the White House.

,

Q And those shortcomings will be addressed within the context of a budget proposal on the legal --

MR. MCCURRY: There's budgetary impact on those issues and we continue to assess how best to address those issues.

Q Is the White House still discussing 25 percent replenishment of the funds that were already designated --

MR. MCCURRY: We are taking steps. I'll have to look into that. We are looking at some specific steps on addressing those more emergency type situations and that can be done within current budget authority. I think there has been some reporting on that already.

Q He's talking about the Times story.

MR. MCCURRY: Oh, you mean the differential that exists between the President's balanced budget proposals and the impact of the welfare reform bill? They made a -- there is sort of a rough calculation for initial policy discussion purposes that was made and the figure I think is in the neighborhood of \$13 billion. That does

not necessarily equate to the price tag of those things that would be recommended by the President. Again, those discussions are still underway.

Q What is your view that legal immigrants could receive benefits simply by becoming U.S. citizens?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, those legal immigrants who go through the process of naturalization are entitled as U.S. citizens to a different range of benefits. I mean, that's the law.

Q No, but I mean as an answer rather than trying to make changes --

MR. MCCURRY: Well, that seems to be occurring. I mean, there are -- it seems in practice that that process is speeding up because there are some cases where people have had legal residence status are attempting to convert to legal citizenship status, in part, it is believed by some experts, because of the impact of this law.

Q Mike, over the weekend Secretary Perry signed a series of agreements in Japan designed to reduce the impact of the U.S. military presence on Okinawa, including what is most important in the eyes of the Japanese of moving a Marine helicopter base off-shore. How does the White House feel about the accords, and will these issues related to the military presence on Okinawa continue to get White House attention?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, we are obviously pleased that we have been able to work with the government of Japan to reduce the burden on Okinawa in ways that do not fundamentally alter the U.S.-Japan security relationship or affect the readiness of our forward-deployed troops in that region.

The satisfactory arrangement that was concluded by the Secretary of Defense really works through a lot of those recommendations from the Special Advisory Committee on Okinawa which looked at the question, particularly the Futenma facility. They've arrived at what the Secretary believes is an adequate conclusion, an agreement that satisfies our own security interests and also our strong force posture in the region, a commitment that the United States has made and will continue to make to the security of that region.

Q Mike, will the President endorse the recommendation of the panel looking at the CPI and will he implement them?

MR. MCCURRY: The Boskin Group has made a recommendation or is about to make a recommendation on CPI calculations. There are a number of people in the area of labor, economics and economists looking at the question of how best to measure inflationary impacts across the economy. The Boskin Group has certainly been impaneled to do that by a congressional committee. BLS has been looking at much

the same issue with respect to how best to take into account inflationary pressures when you calculate things like benefits to individual Americans under entitlement programs. All of these expert opinions will be very carefully considered by the administration because the President believes this is a decision that ultimately is one best based on scientific economic expert calculation as opposed to some political measurement with respect to the budget.

Q Isn't this a scientific panel? Isn't this what this is? And doesn't he have --

MR. MCCURRY: Well, that group is -- was asked by I believe the Senate Finance Committee, right, to look at CPI calculations. BLS has been doing much the same thing. There are others. It's been a very vibrant debate in the academic community about how best to calculate and measure the impact of inflation, and we are going to consider all those views as we look at their work.

Q Is it accurate to say the administration is willing to consider the Boskin Group's recommendations as far as they might call for changes in the technical procedures made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, but that something along the line of what Moynihan wants to do legislatively is something you would oppose?

MR. MCCURRY: That's a technical question beyond my ability to answer. There is a variety of ways which you go about calculating that. I think we're going to look at the whole question of how best to measure inflationary impacts, what that suggests with respect to the CPI, how you apply the CPI to the calculation of benefit increases and then make some judgments accordingly.

Q But in their interim report, this group suggested that the CPI is inflated by about one percent and --

MR. MCCURRY: There have been different measurements of what the over-estimation of the inflationary effect have been. And Senator Moynihan's got a different view. The BLS economists are looking at much the same question. I'm not going to speculate on where the number will come out.

Q Mike, bipartisan commission on Medicare reform -- how's the President going to make that happen?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it's -- a couple of different stages in the process. There's health care -- the provision of health care commission, which he's pledged to appoint and which we have not yet named -- correct? -- that is under consideration. The President has also suggested in the short-term we need to proceed with Medicare savings by slowing the rate of increase in spending for those programs consistent with what he's put forward in his balanced budget proposal. Now, that would extend the solvency of the trust fund into the next century by a number of years.

And then the longer-terms questions related to Medicare

solvency are ones which during the campaign period the President suggested might be amenable to consideration by a bipartisan panel. Now we are much farther down the road in looking at the quality of health care, looking at what the short-term budgetary impacts are going to be on the solvency of the Medicare fund and then the longer range issues that kick in. The President will address at a later date on how you begin to structure a bipartisan commission if, in fact, we continue to see sentiment for doing that as we work with Congress.

Q Well, are you seeing any sentiment? It didn't sound like there was a whole lot.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it's been mixed. There are some leaders in Congress who said they don't think that's an idea that's worth exploring at this point. There are others that have said that's the only practical way we're ever going to get at the issue of entitlements. And I'm sure the President will consider these views and it will be a subject that will certainly be a part of our economic decision-making in the coming term.

Q Mike, there's growing concern among many arms control analysts about the fate of START II in the Russian Parliament. And in that connection, there's a proposal floating around to have the President and Yeltsin take an initiative to get it off dead center and spell out what a START III treaty might look like in terms of lower limits so that the Russians don't have big expense on the START II of reconfiguring their land-based -- is there anything along these lines under consideration, or is the President merely waiting for the Russians to do their thing in the Duma?

MR. MCCURRY: No, we have had a very active dialogue with the Russian Federation on the question of START II ratification by the Duma. I would not suggest that we've been waiting for some plan to try to get it off dead center. The President has actively encouraged President Yeltsin to do so. We have engaged a number of diplomats at a high level from the Russian Federation on that subject and stressed the importance of ratification by the Duma of START II.

But there have also been discussions among arms control experts on both sides about how to structure further arms reductions and limitations consistent with a START III approach. The momentum that would be created by a START II ratification would lend itself to further arms control efforts. But I'm not aware of any specific plan to structure that one-two step as you said, other than to say that there have been a very consistent effort on the part of our side to stress the importance of Duma ratification.

Q Mike, many women's groups are eager that a woman fill one of the upcoming vacancies on the President's national security team. As he looks at the candidates, is that a factor at all, or is it not a factor compared to experience and whatever other qualities he's looking for?

MR. MCCURRY: There are a number of factors that go into the consideration, and the President, as he has said publicly, is stressing how the team works together. Obviously, there is rampant speculation at least one of the candidates under serious consideration is of the female gender, so we'll have to wait and see.

Q Is that a positive attribute for that candidate in addition to the other things, as far as being --

MR. MCCURRY: It is an attribute, and how people work together is driven I think more by personality than by gender. And we just happen to have someone who is a very highly qualified, successful candidate for one of those positions, or at least we have rumors to that effect, and I wouldn't dissuade you from thinking that.

Q As the President adds up the pluses and minuses, is gender considered a plus, or is it not a factor?

MR. MCCURRY: I think diversity has always been considered a plus as the President considers appointments. But I don't want to apply that to any specific consideration.

Q Speaking of diversity, is the President going to meet with the rest of the Cabinet that has not resigned, and specifically when is he meeting with Janet Reno?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes. He will continue his one-by-one discussions with members of the Cabinet, those that he has not yet seen -- I think he's seen about half the Cabinet so far, and we'll let you know when he sees individual members. I'm not aware of any schedule for the remainder of those consultations at this point.

Q Getting back to this Social Security thing, this is a question that I've been asked to ask. Apparently --

Q Whoa!!!

Q My editors made me do it. (Laughter.)

Q Give the disclaimer. (Laughter.)

Q What are the families of those disabled kids --

MR. MCCURRY: Leo put you up to this question, didn't he?

Q When are the families of the disabled kids who are no longer going to receive certain Social Security benefits for their disabilities going to be notified that they're no longer going to get a Social Security supplemental check?

MR. MCCURRY: I have no idea. We'll have to look into that. Do you know? It's all part of the review of how you address

the welfare reform legislation.

Q They're certainly reviewing -- whether to tell them.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, you have to know what to tell them before you --

MR. TOIV: The Social Security Administration is reviewing individual cases.

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Toiv tells me that the Social Security Administration is looking at individual cases on a case by case basis.

Q That will keep them busy for a long time, won't it?

MR. MCCURRY: Why don't we come back to that, Wolf, when I can get more information.

Q Just to follow John's question about diversity. I mean, is having a Cabinet that looks like America as important this time as it was last time, or has it somehow shifted and --

MR. MCCURRY: It's important to the President to have a Cabinet that looks like America and to have diversity reflected in his appointments.

Q So last time he spent an inordinate amount of effort making sure that that happens.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, last time it was a new administration after a period in which Democrats had not occupied the White House and there had to be more effort to reach out to people who are not instantly on the radar screen for appointment. We've now had four years, four successful years in office in which a number of candidates present themselves having served in the administration in various capacities. It's a different equation this time because it's an incumbent administration. I think you have to take into account it's a different situation.

Now, that said, the transition team that the President empaneled has -- one of the results of their work, reaching out around the country and generating new names, was to really present the President with some options for Cabinet appointment that he's now in the process of considering that do reflect considerable gender, racial, ethnic diversity.

Q Is that less a consideration than it was four years ago?

MR. MCCURRY: It's a consideration, but we're four years

later, it's an incumbent administration. There are people that now have had experience serving in the first term that, you know, because of that experience, rise to the top of those who might be considered, clearly. So it's a different -- somewhat different kind of equation, but not any more or less important than it was four years ago.

Q You're suggesting that that could push gender or racial considerations out of the picture.

MR. MCCURRY: No, I'm not at all. I said that diversity continues to be a very important guidepost for the President as he considers these appointments.

Q Mike, can we go back to Starr for a minute? He's kind of gone on a counteroffensive. He sat down with Newsweek for three hours. I believe his deputy in Little Rock, Hickman Ewing, said an attack like Carville's is a sign of guilt. Do you think it's helpful to have Carville out attacking?

MR. MCCURRY: I've repeatedly refused to render a judgment on that and I won't do it again. Mr. Starr has to speak for himself. Mr. Carville has to speak for himself. And all of their debate will be judged in the court of public opinion, no doubt.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END 2:15 P.M. EST

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Crumley@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
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TO: Carolyn Curiel (CURIEL_C) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Carolyn
Curiel@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Suzanne E. Dale (DALE_S) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Suzanne
Dale@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Marilyn DiGiacobbe (DIGIACOBBE_M) (WHO)
READ: 2-DEC-1996 15:15:23.20

TO: James A. Dorskind (DORSKIND_J) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Chris Dorval (DORVAL_C) (OPD)
READ: 2-DEC-1996 16:11:08.12

TO: James T. Edmonds (EDMONDS_J) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (James T.
Edmonds@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Anne M. Edwards (EDWARDS_A) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Anne M.
Edwards@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Rahm Emanuel (EMANUEL_R) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Rahm Emanuel@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
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TO: James L. Fetig (FETIG_J) (NSC)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Deborah L. Fine (FINE_D) (OPD)
READ:10-DEC-1996 19:53:54.97

TO: Karen E. Finney (FINNEY_K) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Ben Freeland (FREELAND_B) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Ben A. Freeland@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Jeremy M. Gaines (GAINES_J) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Craig Gardenswartz (GARDENSWAR_C) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (craig gardenswartz@EOP@LNGTWY@EOPMRX) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Michael A. Gill (GILL_M) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Michael A. Gill@OVP@EOP@LNGTWY@EOPMRX) (VPO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Jason S. Goldberg (GOLDBERG_JS) (OPD)
READ: 2-DEC-1996 15:33:43.28

TO: John Gribben (GRIBBEN_J) (OMB)
READ: 2-DEC-1996 15:14:56.69

TO: Christopher M. Gruin (GRUIN_C)
READ:NOT READ

TO: LAWRENCE J. HAAS (HAAS_L) (OMB)
READ: 3-DEC-1996 09:07:03.01

TO: Alexis M. Herman (HERMAN_A) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: William C. Hornish (HORNISH_W) (OA)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Russell W. Horwitz (HORWITZ_R) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Russell W. Horwitz@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Erika Hovland (HOVLAND_E) (WHO)
READ: 5-DEC-1996 09:40:55.16

TO: Annette E. Johnson (JOHNSON_AE) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Annette E.

Johnson@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Brian J. Johnson (JOHNSON_BJ) (CEQ)
READ:NOT READ

TO: David T. Johnson (JOHNSON_DT) (NSC)
READ: 2-DEC-1996 15:56:50.23

TO: Wayne C. Johnson (JOHNSON_WC) (OA)
READ: 4-DEC-1996 08:29:37.08

TO: Angus S. King (KING_A) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Angus S.
King@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Joshua A. King (KING_J) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Joshua A.
King@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Nick B. Kirkhorn (KIRKHORN_N) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Nicholas B.
Kirkhorn@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Catherine T. Kitchen (KITCHEN_C) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Catherine T.
Kitchen@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: James Kohlenberger (KOHLEN_J) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Jim
Kohlenberger@OVP@EOP@LNGTWY@EOPMRX (VPO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Heidi Kukis (KUKIS_H) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Heidi
Kukis@OVP@EOP@LNGTWY@EOPMRX) (VPO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Karin Kullman (KULLMAN_K) (WHO)
READ: 2-DEC-1996 15:19:32.27

TO: G. N. Lattimore (LATTIMORE_G) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (G N.
Lattimore@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Peggy A. Lewis (LEWIS_P) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Patricia F. Lewis (LEWIS_PF) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Patricia F.
Lewis@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Evelyn S. Lieberman (LIEBERMAN_E) (WHO)
READ: 2-DEC-1996 15:18:38.85

TO: Cynthia J. Lizik (LIZIK_C) (OA)

READ: 5-DEC-1996 13:00:51.15

TO: Gordon Li (LI_G) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Gordon
Li@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Michael D. Malone (MALONE_M) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Michael D.
Malone@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Melissa Marshall (MARSHALL_M)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Doris O. Matsui (MATSUI_D) (WHO)
READ: 2-DEC-1996 16:19:56.82

TO: Anne E. McGuire (MCGUIRE_A) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Anne E.
McGuire@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Cheryl D. Mills (MILLS_C) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Cheryl D.
Mills@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Julia Moffett (MOFFETT_J) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Elizabeth A. Montoya (MONTOYA_E) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Elizabeth A.
Montoya@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Kevin Moran (MORAN_K1) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Kevin
Moran@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Sara Morris (MORRIS_S) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Melissa M. Murray (MURRAY_MM) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Melissa M.
Murray@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Steven J. Naplan (NAPLAN_S) (NSC)
READ: 2-DEC-1996 22:37:07.61

TO: Jonathan Orszag (ORSZAG_J) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (
orz@alfa.princeton.edu@INET) (OPD)
READ:NOT READ

TO: David Pinto (PINTO_D) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Jonathan M. Prince (PRINCE_J) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Jonathan
Prince@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)

READ:NOT READ

TO: Franklin S. Reeder (REEDER_F) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Franklin S.
Reeder@eop@lngtwy@eopmr) (OA)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Renee C. Riley (RILEY_R) (OA)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Christa T. Robinson (ROBINSON_C) (WHO)
READ: 2-DEC-1996 15:41:25.20

TO: Roger V. Salazar (SALAZAR_R) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Roger
Salazar@eop@lngtwy@eopmr) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Victoria L. Schaefer (SCHAEFER_V) (OMB)
READ: 3-DEC-1996 12:59:09.10

TO: Stuart Schear (SCHEAR_S) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Stuart
Schear@eop@lngtwy@eopmr) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Jill A. Schuker (SCHUKER_J) Autoforward to: Steven J. Naplan (NAPLAN_S) (NSC)
READ: 2-DEC-1996 22:37:07.61

TO: Jennifer Senan (SENAN_J) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Jennifer
Senan@eop@lngtwy@eopmr) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Douglas S. Sheorn (SHEORN_D) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Douglas S.
Sheorn@eop@lngtwy@eopmr) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Susan P. Shepard (SHEPARD_S) (OA)
READ: 3-DEC-1996 07:10:59.00

TO: Jane C. Sherburne (SHERBURNE_J) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Jane C.
Sherburne@eop@lngtwy@eopmr) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: David Shipley (SHIPLEY_D) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (David
Shipley@eop@lngtwy@eopmr) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Douglas B. Sosnik (SOSNIK_D) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Douglas B.
Sosnik@eop@lngtwy@eopmr) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Todd Stern (STERN_T) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Todd
Stern@eop@lngtwy@eopmr) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Diane A. Stumpf (STUMPF_D) (DON)

READ: 4-DEC-1996 10:08:25.13

TO: Mike Sullivan (SULLIVAN_M) (WHO)
READ: 2-DEC-1996 15:20:48.83

TO: Lisa Jordan Tamagni (TAMAGNI_L) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Lisa
Tamagni@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Virginia M. Terzano (TERZAN_V) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Virginia M.
Terzano@ovp@eop@lngtwy@eopm (VPO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Shana E. Tesler (TESLER_S) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Lynda D. Thomas (THOMAS_L) (WHO)
READ: 2-DEC-1996 15:14:57.42

TO: Terri I. Tingen (TINGEN_T) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (terri
tingen@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Barry J. Toiv (TOIV_B) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Barry J.
Toiv@EOP@LNGTWY@EOPMRX) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Jodie R. Torkelson (TORKELSON_J) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Jodie R.
Torkelson@EOP@LNGTWY@EOPMRX) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Dag Vega (VEGA_D) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Lorraine A. Voles (VOLES_L) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Lorraine A.
Voles@ovp@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx (VPO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Michael Waldman (WALDMAN_M) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Michael
Waldman@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Angelina Walker (WALKER_L) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Angelina
Walker@ovp@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (VPO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Robert S. Weiner (WEINER_R) (DON)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Teresa Wildman (WILDMAN_T) Autoforward to: Remote Addressee (Teresa
Wildman@eop@lngtwy@eopmrx) (WHO)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Barbara Woolley (WOOLEY_B)

READ:NOT READ

TO: Natalie S. Wozniak (WOZNIAK_N) (NSC)
READ: 2-DEC-1996 16:00:48.84

TO: Remote Addressee (usia01@access.digex.com@INET)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Remote Addressee (1=US@2=WESTERN
UNION@3=@5=ATT.COM@*ELN\62955104@MRX@EOPMRX)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Remote Addressee (62955104@eln.attmail.com@INET)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Remote Addressee (73030.21@compuserve.com@INET)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Manager Infomgt (INFOMGT) (SYS)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Remote Addressee (newsdesk@usnewswire.com@INET)
READ:NOT READ

TO: Remote Addressee (usnwire@access.digex.com@INET)
READ:NOT READ

TEXT:
PRINTER FONT 10_POINT_COURIER
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PRINTER FONT 12_POINT_COURIER
THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release December 2, 1996

PRESS BRIEFING BY
MIKE MCCURRY

The Briefing Room

1:40 P.M. EST

MR. MCCURRY: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen.
Welcome back to the White House after, I hope, a blissful

Thanksgiving weekend. Any subjects you're interested in?

Q Can you tell us if the President is getting close to naming his national security team? (Laughter.)

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Blitzer, the President was just having a very good laugh at your most recent report moments ago. The conversation he was having with Mr. Panetta and Mr. Bowles made it manifestly clear that what you reported on the air was not true.

Q Uh

-oh.

Q Which part?

Q What did he say?

Q -- being carried live on CNN. (Laughter.)

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Blitzer was ranking the various rumored candidates for Secretary of State and got the latest speculation wrong.

Q What did the President say?

MR. MCCURRY: The President said much of what he told you earlier, that he spent four days with his family. He clearly had gone through the recommendations, the binder that Mr. Bowles had presented to him. This was the first substantive conversation the President has had with his transition leaders since last Wednesday, before Thanksgiving. And I won't change what I said earlier, that his thinking on the national security cluster is fairly well

-advanced, but it was fairly clear that there is no final decisions to announce. And as the President indicated, when there are final decisions he will make the announcement accordingly. In the meantime, you're all free to speculate.

Q Do you have more on the President's schedule this week? You said there are going to be more public appearances than were listed in that little skeleton schedule.

MR. MCCURRY: I've got -- the only additions I have to the week in review that we've already put out are two for tomorrow. I expect the President will have a briefing on AIDS research by Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala and by the NIH Director Ramos tomorrow at some point. There also is an interagency
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conference call concerning the civil disturbances in St. Petersburg, a conference call that Secretary Cisneros will lead, but we expect

the President to participate at some point during that call.

Q These are public events?

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MR. MCCURRY: Those are public events, yes.

Q Any travel? There has been some speculation of something like next weekend or something? Do you --

MR. MCCURRY: Travel? Haven't we had enough of that this year? I'm not aware of any, no. Do we -- no, I'm not aware of any. No travel plans that I'm aware of.

Q Mike, is President Menem coming in to see the President?

MR. MCCURRY: The President of Argentina, Carlos Menem, will be here at the White House on Thursday for a brief visit with the President. He is here in the United States on a private visit. The President looks forward to an exchange of views with President Menem that will cover hemispheric issues, issues related to the growth of both democracy and market economics in this hemisphere.

Q Mike, how about the letter referenced in today's Wall Street Journal's story from Mr. Riady in 1993?

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Riady's letter -- Mr. Mochtar Riady's letter.

Q Yes. Do you have plans to -- I mean, do you intend to release that letter?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes, as the President indicated we will release that letter publicly once we've made it available to Congress. We have been assembling a variety of materials for members of Congress that are interested in such matters. And I understand from the Legal Counsel's Office that they continue to work to assemble things.

One of the things they're doing is looking through presidential records, the group that manages presidential records, looking for any relevant correspondence or data or memoranda so they can make a thorough submission to Congress at the appropriate time.

Q But not today, though?

MR. MCCURRY: No, it will not be today.

Q Will the other materials be released as well to the public -- or to the press when they're submitted to Congress?

MR. MCCURRY: Our intent is to make available publicly what we make available to the Congress. Now, we have simultaneously been entertaining questions from various news organizations looking into these matters as the Journal did. They were interested in

correspondence. I told them about a March 1993 letter that Mr. Mochtar Riady sent to the President that congratulated the President on his economic program, on his plans for engagement with Asia, and made some recommendations concerning policy towards Asia, contained in the letter. And as the President indicated today, nothing that was that much different from what we were hearing from others in the business community.

Q Mike, let me follow this question. In 1992 the President criticized George Bush specifically for accepting soft you contributions of \$100,000 or more, and then doing the bidding -- not the bidding, but then following the policy that these people asked him to do. And he said, at the very least it creates the impression that the White House is for rent, for sale. The President obviously heard a lot of sides on the Vietnam thing. But is the President unaware that this looks exactly like what he criticized Bush for -- TOP ODD - \p -

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big contributions and then the people ask for something and then they get it?

MR. MCCURRY: For a policy matter that was as contentious, as hotly debated and as thoroughly public as U.S. relations towards Vietnam, to suggest that any particular individual's views, whether it be a financial contributor or not, would have a disproportionate thinking on the work of the administration is a little bit less than credible.

Q Well, wait a minute. What about the money, Mike? Can't that be seen as making -- he's asking how it looks.

MR. MCCURRY: The question is about what is the impact of contributions, and the point I would make is that there is not any public record that suggests that any financial contributor had a disproportionate influence on policy.

Q Well, what about the Bush case? Where is the public record on that?

MR. MCCURRY: As how it looks, that's up to you to characterize. I think there is a problem --

Q How is it different in terms of how it looks from what he criticized in '92?

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not going to characterize how things look. You're in the business of doing that.

Q Well, the President showed no reluctance to do that himself.

Q Let me follow. Mike, in '92, Bill Daniels bundled

soft money -- he was the cable television guy, he was a friend of Bush. It was sort of an equivalent relationship. They went back

-he wrote this letter saying thanks for your help on the cable bill. Riady had contributed \$100,000 to the Inauguration. I think John Huang had done the same thing. Less than two months later, they get this letter. Shortly thereafter, America starts on a brand new policy towards Vietnam. Now, a lot of people think that was right, but John McCain, of course, called for this. There were a lot of voices on that side. But the impression that was created in the President's mind when he was governor by Bill Daniels' big contribution was that, at the very least, an ordinary American would think, gee, if you get \$100,000, you get what you want.

MR. MCCURRY: I believe that U.S. policy towards Vietnam throughout the last four years has been one of the most heavily covered and thoroughly accessible subjects on our entire foreign policy agenda. What interpretations you make of an individual letter from a prominent businessperson is up to you to render your own judgments about it. You can characterize that as you see fit. I would just like to stick with the facts as I've just established them.

Q How do we know for sure the \$100,000 grand had nothing to do with it? How do you know for sure?

MR. MCCURRY: Because there is a very complete public record about the administration's consideration of normalization of relations with Vietnam, as was very heavily covered --

Q There's always a large public record --

MR. MCCURRY: Very heavily covered, very heavily briefed, numerous discussions that occurred and that were briefed publicly about it. And, frankly, it is up --

Q But at the end of the day the President had to make a decision in his own mind, didn't he?

MR. MCCURRY: The President had to make a judgment based on U.S. national interests, the interests of the American people as we engage in that region.

Q Let me try this a different way. Is the President concerned that there seems to be no way to separate the appearance of possible impropriety here from the fact?

MR. MCCURRY: I think the President is largely concerned about the appearances that arise from soft money donations. You'll recall that during the campaign period he spoke directly to that subject, made a series of proposals, strongly backed legislation which we hope will now be introduced in the 105 Congress that would

ban exactly those types of contributions.

Q He hasn't changed his mind about how these things look?

MR. MCCURRY: He's spoken publicly and has not changed his point of view about the perception that exists based on these contributions and the need to eradicate that type of contribution from our system of campaign finance.

Q So he would agree that somebody could draw the same kind of conclusion from his interaction with Riady that Bush --

MR. MCCURRY: He would agree with the expectation that many of you will draw your own conclusions, and so will the American people.

Q Just on the documents, Mike, is your thinking about releasing them that you want to get as many as you can, have a complete set, rather than piecemeal day after day of documents --

MR. MCCURRY: That's exactly right. We've -- not only the President, but we are interested in what other correspondence that exists. We've looked through those records, we've got a substantial amount of that available, and I've been entertaining requests from those news organizations that have pursued some of those questions and telling them what we know about that correspondence.

Q Was this particular letter, though, available and in your hands -- before the election, and shouldn't it have been made public, given that --

MR. MCCURRY: The existence of the letter I believe was largely known because, if I'm not mistaken, I've heard from other reporters that Mr. Riady's representative made reference himself to the letter having been sent. I think we never formally disputed the notion that there was such a piece of correspondence from Mr. Mochtar Riady, but we have not -- we did not elect to make piecemeal disclosures of any correspondence or brief reporters in a piecemeal fashion on correspondence until we had more of the record available. We've been able to do that within the last couple of days, as various news organizations have turned their attention to that specific question.

Q Do you maintain it had no more influence on the President than the opinions of somebody who didn't give \$100,000, and who also might have written the President about Asia policy or Vietnam policy?

MR. MCCURRY: People from the private sector who are in prominent positions in the business community can speak with some authority as to the value of U.S. engagement towards Asia. And as the President indicated this morning, he said tens of thousands, but

certainly hundreds and hundreds of such leaders have written to the President, some contributors, some not contributors, some, frankly, contributors to the other party. But the authority comes from having some knowledge of the operation of U.S. economic interests in that region and the value of promoting a policy of engagement with Asia, which is one that this President actively pursued almost from the first days of the administration.

Q Are you trying to say that the amount of the contribution, certainly sizeable, had absolutely no influence on the way the request was considered?

MR. MCCURRY: I think that --

Q How can you say that?

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not saying that. I'm saying contributions are welcome. For those who have to run political campaigns, you're thankful to your supporters for rendering that kind of support. But the President has made it clear that he has the responsibility to conduct foreign policy consistent with what the interests of the American people are -- all the American people. And that's the way he has conducted his policy towards Asia, on any of the matters that this individual has written about, or, indeed, any of the matters that affect the interests of America around the world.

Q Mike, on another subject --

Q No, can I ask one more?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes.

Q You said you don't want to make piecemeal disclosures, but the impression coming out from you and the White House was that it was a social relationship with Riady.

MR. MCCURRY: I don't believe that's true. I believe that there were some in the White House who characterized meetings that the President had with Mr. Mochtar Riady's son as being social. And the record, I think, stands up pretty well that that's an accurate characterization.

Q An accurate --

MR. MCCURRY: Yes, an accurate characterization. They were largely social visits. The President has spoken publicly on the occasions in which there may have been a policy element to those conversations. But you can't escape the fact that by and large they appear to have been social visits by two individuals who had known each other for some time.

Q You said the full set of letters won't be ready today for release. Do you have a sense of when it is going to be ready? Will it be this week?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, there are questions well beyond correspondence. I mean, we've been briefing news organizations as to the number of visits that Mr. James Riady and some of his associates had here at the White House, the nature of the contact that existed between the President and Mr. Riady -- this would be Mr. James Riady -- other aspects of this. And we're in a position to help news organizations inquiring in this, because the President has directed

all of us to be forthcoming and candid in responding. But as to documentation we think it's more appropriate to provide the documentation first to Congress and then to release it publicly.

Q Do you think that's going to be this week, or do you have some sense of the timing?

MR. MCCURRY: I can check for you. First of all, remember that, because Congress is just forming itself for the work it will do in its 105th session, there has been no formal schedule of hearings or formal calling of particular witnesses at this point. We imagine they will be setting about that work very shortly.

Q The Chief of Staff earlier took action with respect to Mark Middleton and questions about the appearance of whether he was trading in on his White House relationship after leaving. The L.A. Times over the weekend had the story about this Chinese American in Los Angeles. Is the White House considering any sort of broader review of its policies about -- to prevent this kind of problem?

MR. MCCURRY: These matters have occasioned that type of review, and have led to very strict admonition by the Chief of Staff to all the department heads of the White House to be very conscious of the admission of outside individuals to the White House who may appear to use their access to the White House for their own private commercial gain. He's cautioned all of us to just know who we are admitting to the White House complex, and for what purpose, and who will accompany them on those occasions.

Q If these people were higher up they'd be covered by the revolving door law, isn't that correct?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, no, we're talking in this case about visitors from the outside. If there are White House officials who are -- or former White House officials who are no longer working here, they are covered by the administration's voluntary ethics guidelines that apply to those with the rank of deputy assistant to the President, or assistant to the President, or who earned in excess of \$100,000 a year. Now, that would not cover the individual you mentioned, Mr. Mark Middleton, but there is some sense here that we should look at that issue and make sure that even those who are at more junior levels in the White House staffing structure are not in a position to appear to use their access for any of their own personal private purposes.

Now, as you know, Mr. Middleton has denied that he has done that in a statement that he can make available to you, or he has made available to many of your news organizations.

Q Does the President think it's a good idea for James Carville to be mounting his attacks on Ken Starr?

MR. MCCURRY: The President has not rendered any opinion on that. Mr. Carville is certainly someone who speaks for himself

and has made it clear he will speak for himself, regardless of what the White House says.

Q Earlier today you said --

Q Does the President believe that if he asks Mr. Carville to desist that Mr. Carville would continue?

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Carville has indicated that, first, he has not discussed the matter with the President, and second, he will pursue the course of action that he thinks he needs to pursue, regardless of what anyone at the White House, including the President, has to say.

Q This morning you were going to ask the President -- you said you asked him and he said he has no opinion, or he has yet to -- you were going to try to find out what he thought about this matter.

MR. MCCURRY: I told you he has not rendered an opinion on the subject.

Q Are you saying here that what Mr. Carville is saying does not represent the President's thinking?

MR. MCCURRY: That does not represent the President's thinking. The President on this matter will speak for himself or instruct those of us who speak on his behalf to indicate whatever he wants said, and he's indicated that the work of the Independent Counsel ought to be treated respectfully and with the proper "no comment."

Q Well, wouldn't it be appropriate if he thinks that to ask one of his dear friends and a man who has been his chief political advisor to knock it off if that's what he thinks?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, as I just said, Mr. Carville is an outspoken individual and has made it clear that he intends to speak out.

Q Regardless of what the President says?

MR. MCCURRY: Regardless of what anyone at the White House says.

Q Do you seriously believe that? Do you expect the public to believe that?

MR. MCCURRY: The public can believe whatever the public wants to believe.

Q Do you believe that?

MR. MCCURRY: Do I believe that?

Q Yes, do you believe that?

MR. MCCURRY: I believe that Mr. Carville would continue to make whatever points he felt compelled to make regardless of what anyone at the White House thought about it.

Q Even if the President asked him to stop? Are you serious?

MR. MCCURRY: I am serious, yes.

Q Did you ask the President about this today? You said you were going to.

MR. MCCURRY: I had a very brief conversation with him.

Q And what was his response?

Q What did he say?

MR. MCCURRY: I think I've just reflected his sentiments.

Q He said, I don't have a response to that?

Q I'm not going to render any --

Q Has the President discussed it with Carville at all?

MR. MCCURRY: Not to -- he has not had a discussion with Mr. Carville about it.

Q About it -- or about Carville's plans? I mean, he knew nothing about it?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it's been -- Mr. Carville has been very public about his intentions to speak out.

Q If he doesn't like what he's doing, why doesn't he ask him to stop?

MR. MCCURRY: Just he's not in a position to dissuade Mr. Carville from pursuing the course that Mr. Carville has --

Q He's the President of the United States of America.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, Mr. Carville, the most prominent political consultant in America, has made it clear that's what he's going to do.

Q -- this is not helpful to you, or do you think it is helpful to you? What do you think of Carville's --

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not rendering an opinion on it.

Q Has Carville talked to someone other than the President here at the White House about this endeavor?

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't asked every individual here at the White House. I don't -- he may have. I just don't know.

Q What about those you have asked?

MR. MCCURRY: Of those that I have, no one, to my

knowledge, had any extensive discussion with Mr. Carville about the merits of --

Q Well, wait a minute. What does that mean?

MR. MCCURRY: -- pursuing this course of action.

Q Did they have any discussions, and if so who, and what was said?

MR. MCCURRY: Brit, I don't -- I'm not going to answer a question that I don't have 100 percent information on. I haven't gone around and canvassed every single person who knows --

Q Well, what about those you have canvassed?

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't found anyone --

Q We'll accept your version of those you have talked to about it.

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't found anyone who said that they tried to dissuade James from doing what he's doing.

Q I'll bet. But the question is, has anybody encouraged him, to your knowledge?

MR. MCCURRY: Not to my knowledge.

Q Has anybody in any sense discouraged him?

MR. MCCURRY: Not to my knowledge.

Q It's a remarkable, look

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that Carville is carrying on, isn't it?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, you can characterize it as you see fit, and I'm sure you will.

Q Mike, you said that Carville had no extensive discussions with anyone at the White House. Did he have any not extensive discussions with someone at the White House about it?

MR. MCCURRY: Again, Susan, there are a lot of people who work here. There are 1,500 people who work at the White House.

Q That you know of.

MR. MCCURRY: There are a lot of people who know James. I haven't gone and talked to each individual who knows James and said, what was the nature of your conversation with Mr. Carville on a given date. So I want to be very careful --

Q What about those you have talked to?

MR. MCCURRY: I just -- you just asked and answered those questions.

Q Asked and not answered.

Q Do you think anybody has made it clear to him how wretchedly miserable it's made your lot here today? (Laughter).

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Carville is aware of how wretchedly miserable my pitiful life is, I'm sure. (Laughter.)

Q The President has to make some decisions on cutting back Social Security for disabled children. Do you know when he's going to make that decision? Certain categories of disabled kids.

MR. MCCURRY: You mean related to welfare reform fixes? There's no change in what we told you last week. That's an issue

that's got budgetary impact for FY98. It is being looked at very carefully by the President and his economic and budget advisers. The President is interested in addressing those shortcomings that he found in the welfare reform bill -- significant discussions underway about how best to do that and what the likely budget impact will be.

Q Are you going to change your mind on that after what Moynihan had to say about potential -- a likelihood of changes in welfare reform?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, Senator Moynihan is a distinguished member of the Senate, particularly on this subject, but it doesn't necessarily reflect the sentiments of all 100 senators.

Q But you have essentially the Democratic leadership on that issue, in Moynihan and Nickles, up there saying, it's done, nothing is going to be considered.

MR. MCCURRY: Of who and who?

Q Nickles and Moynihan, both of them.

MR. MCCURRY: I think there are a lot of sentiments within the Democratic Caucus in the Senate that shortcomings in the welfare reform bill ought to be addressed. Senator Moynihan's view is that that was not likely to occur, but that is not necessarily the only view that exists within the Senator Caucus or here at the White House.

Q And those shortcomings will be addressed within the context of a budget proposal on the legal --

MR. MCCURRY: There's budgetary impact on those issues and we continue to assess how best to address those issues.

Q Is the White House still discussing 25 percent replenishment of the funds that were already designated --

MR. MCCURRY: We are taking steps. I'll have to look into that. We are looking at some specific steps on addressing those more emergency type situations and that can be done within current budget authority. I think there has been some reporting on that already.

Q He's talking about the Times story.

MR. MCCURRY: Oh, you mean the differential that exists between the President's balanced budget proposals and the impact of the welfare reform bill? They made a -- there is sort of a rough calculation for initial policy discussion purposes that was made and the figure I think is in the neighborhood of \$13 billion. That does not necessarily equate to the price tag of those things that would be recommended by the President. Again, those discussions are still underway.

Q What is your view that legal immigrants could receive benefits simply by becoming U.S. citizens?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, those legal immigrants who go through the process of naturalization are entitled as U.S. citizens to a different range of benefits. I mean, that's the law.

Q No, but I mean as an answer rather than trying to make changes --

MR. MCCURRY: Well, that seems to be occurring. I mean, there are -- it seems in practice that that process is speeding up because there are some cases where people have had legal residence status are attempting to convert to legal citizenship status, in part, it is believed by some experts, because of the impact of this law.

Q Mike, over the weekend Secretary Perry signed a series of agreements in Japan designed to reduce the impact of the U.S. military presence on Okinawa, including what is most important in the eyes of the Japanese of moving a Marine helicopter base off

-shore. How does the White House feel about the accords, and will these issues related to the military presence on Okinawa continue to get White House attention?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, we are obviously pleased that we have been able to work with the government of Japan to reduce the burden on Okinawa in ways that do not fundamentally alter the U.S.

-Japan security relationship or affect the readiness of our forward

-deployed troops in that region.

The satisfactory arrangement that was concluded by the Secretary of Defense really works through a lot of those recommendations from the Special Advisory Committee on Okinawa which looked at the question, particularly the Futenma facility. They've arrived at what the Secretary believes is an adequate conclusion, an agreement that satisfies our own security interests and also our strong force posture in the region, a commitment that the United States has made and will continue to make to the security of that region.

Q Mike, will the President endorse the recommendation of the panel looking at the CPI and will he implement them?

MR. MCCURRY: The Boskin Group has made a recommendation or is about to make a recommendation on CPI calculations. There are a number of people in the area of labor, economics and economists looking at the question of how best to measure inflationary impacts across the economy. The Boskin Group has certainly been impaneled to do that by a congressional committee. BLS has been looking at much the same issue with respect to how best to take into account inflationary pressures when you calculate things like benefits to individual Americans under entitlement programs. All of these expert opinions will be very carefully considered by the administration because the President believes this is a decision that ultimately is one best based on scientific economic expert calculation as opposed to some political measurement with respect to the budget.

Q Isn't this a scientific panel? Isn't this what this is? And doesn't he have --

MR. MCCURRY: Well, that group is -- was asked by I believe the Senate Finance Committee, right, to look at CPI calculations. BLS has been doing much the same thing. There are others. It's been a very vibrant debate in the academic community about how best to calculate and measure the impact of inflation, and we are going to consider all those views as we look at their work.

Q Is it accurate to say the administration is willing to consider the Boskin Group's recommendations as far as they might call for changes in the technical procedures made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, but that something along the line of what Moynihan wants to do legislatively is something you would oppose?

MR. MCCURRY: That's a technical question beyond my ability to answer. There is a variety of ways which you go about calculating that. I think we're going to look at the whole question of how best to measure inflationary impacts, what that suggests with respect to the CPI, how you apply the CPI to the calculation of benefit increases and then make some judgments accordingly.

Q But in their interim report, this group suggested that the CPI is inflated by about one percent and --

MR. MCCURRY: There have been different measurements of what the over

-estimation of the inflationary effect have been. And Senator Moynihan's got a different view. The BLS economists are looking at much the same question. I'm not going to speculate on where the number will come out.

Q Mike, bipartisan commission on Medicare reform -- how's the President going to make that happen?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it's -- a couple of different stages in the process. There's health care -- the provision of health care commission, which he's pledged to appoint and which we have not yet named -- correct? -- that is under consideration. The President has also suggested in the short

-term we need to proceed with Medicare savings by slowing the rate of increase in spending for those programs consistent with what he's put forward in his balanced budget proposal. Now, that would extend the solvency of the trust fund into the next century by a number of years.

And then the longer

-terms questions related to Medicare solvency are ones which during the campaign period the President suggested might be amenable to consideration by a bipartisan panel.

Now we are much farther down the road in looking at the quality of health care, looking at what the short

-term budgetary impacts are going to be on the solvency of the Medicare fund and then the longer range issues that kick in. The President will address at a later date on how you begin to structure a bipartisan commission if, in fact, we continue to see sentiment for doing that as we work with Congress.

Q Well, are you seeing any sentiment? It didn't sound like there was a whole lot.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it's been mixed. There are some leaders in Congress who said they don't think that's an idea that's worth exploring at this point. There are others that have said that's the only practical way we're ever going to get at the issue of entitlements. And I'm sure the President will consider these views and it will be a subject that will certainly be a part of our economic decision

-making in the coming term.

Q Mike, there's growing concern among many arms control analysts about the fate of START II in the Russian Parliament. And in that connection, there's a proposal floating around to have the President and Yeltsin take an initiative to get it off dead center and spell out what a START III treaty might look like in terms of lower limits so that the Russians don't have big expense on the START II of reconfiguring their land

-based -- is there anything along these lines under consideration, or is the President merely waiting for the Russians to do their thing in the Duma?

MR. MCCURRY: No, we have had a very active dialogue with the Russian Federation on the question of START II ratification by the Duma. I would not suggest that we've been waiting for some plan to try to get it off dead center. The President has actively encouraged President Yeltsin to do so. We have engaged a number of diplomats at a high level from the Russian Federation on that subject and stressed the importance of ratification by the Duma of START II.

But there have also been discussions among arms control experts on both sides about how to structure further arms reductions and limitations consistent with a START III approach. The momentum that would be created by a START II ratification would lend itself to further arms control efforts. But I'm not aware of any specific plan to structure that one

-two step as you said, other than to say that there have been a very consistent effort on the part of our side to stress the importance of Duma ratification.

Q Mike, many women's groups are eager that a woman fill one of the upcoming vacancies on the President's national security team. As he looks at the candidates, is that a factor at all, or is it not a factor compared to experience and whatever other qualities he's looking for?

MR. MCCURRY: There are a number of factors that go into the consideration, and the President, as he has said publicly, is stressing how the team works together. Obviously, there is rampant speculation at least one of the candidates under serious consideration is of the female gender, so we'll have to wait and see.

Q Is that a positive attribute for that candidate in addition to the other things, as far as being --

MR. MCCURRY: It is an attribute, and how people work together is driven I think more by personality than by gender. And we just happen to have someone who is a very highly qualified, successful candidate for one of those positions, or at least we have rumors to that effect, and I wouldn't dissuade you from thinking that.

Q As the President adds up the pluses and minuses, is gender considered a plus, or is it not a factor?

MR. MCCURRY: I think diversity has always been considered a plus as the President considers appointments. But I don't want to apply that to any specific consideration.

Q Speaking of diversity, is the President going to meet with the rest of the Cabinet that has not resigned, and specifically when is he meeting with Janet Reno?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes. He will continue his one

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discussions with members of the Cabinet, those that he has not yet seen -- I think he's seen about half the Cabinet so far, and we'll let you know when he sees individual members. I'm not aware of any schedule for the remainder of those consultations at this point.

Q Getting back to this Social Security thing, this is a question that I've been asked to ask. Apparently --

Q Whoa!!!

Q My editors made me do it. (Laughter.)

Q Give the disclaimer. (Laughter.)

Q What are the families of those disabled kids --

MR. MCCURRY: Leo put you up to this question, didn't he?

Q When are the families of the disabled kids who are no longer going to receive certain Social Security benefits for their disabilities going to be notified that they're no longer going to get a Social Security supplemental check?

MR. MCCURRY: I have no idea. We'll have to look into that. Do you know? It's all part of the review of how you address the welfare reform legislation.

Q They're certainly reviewing -- whether to tell them.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, you have to know what to tell them before you --

MR. TOIV: The Social Security Administration is reviewing individual cases.

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Toiv tells me that the Social Security Administration is looking at individual cases on a case by case basis.

Q That will keep them busy for a long time, won't it?

MR. MCCURRY: Why don't we come back to that, Wolf, when I can get more information.

Q Just to follow John's question about diversity. I mean, is having a Cabinet that looks like America as important this time as it was last time, or has it somehow shifted and --

MR. MCCURRY: It's important to the President to have a Cabinet that looks like America and to have diversity reflected in his appointments.

Q So last time he spent an inordinate amount of effort making sure that that happens.

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MR. MCCURRY: Well, last time it was a new administration after a period in which Democrats had not occupied the White House and there had to be more effort to reach out to people who are not instantly on the radar screen for appointment. We've now had four years, four successful years in office in which a number of candidates present themselves having served in the administration in various capacities. It's a different equation this time because it's an incumbent administration. I think you have to take into account

it's a different situation.

Now, that said, the transition team that the President empaneled has -- one of the results of their work, reaching out around the country and generating new names, was to really present the President with some options for Cabinet appointment that he's now in the process of considering that do reflect considerable gender, racial, ethnic diversity.

Q Is that less a consideration than it was four years ago?

MR. MCCURRY: It's a consideration, but we're four years later, it's an incumbent administration. There are people that now have had experience serving in the first term that, you know, because of that experience, rise to the top of those who might be considered, clearly. So it's a different -- somewhat different kind of equation, but not any more or less important than it was four years ago.

Q You're suggesting that that could push gender or racial considerations out of the picture.

MR. MCCURRY: No, I'm not at all. I said that diversity continues to be a very important guidepost for the President as he considers these appointments.

Q Mike, can we go back to Starr for a minute? He's kind of gone on a counteroffensive. He sat down with Newsweek for three hours. I believe his deputy in Little Rock, Hickman Ewing, said an attack like Carville's is a sign of guilt. Do you think it's helpful to have Carville out attacking?

MR. MCCURRY: I've repeatedly refused to render a judgment on that and I won't do it again. Mr. Starr has to speak for himself. Mr. Carville has to speak for himself. And all of their debate will be judged in the court of public opinion, no doubt.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END 2:15 P.M. EST

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 2, 1996

PRESS BRIEFING BY
MIKE MCCURRY

The Briefing Room

1:40 P.M. EST

MR. MCCURRY: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome back to the White House after, I hope, a blissful Thanksgiving weekend. Any subjects you're interested in?

Q Can you tell us if the President is getting close to naming his national security team? (Laughter.)

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Blitzer, the President was just having a very good laugh at your most recent report moments ago. The conversation he was having with Mr. Panetta and Mr. Bowles made it manifestly clear that what you reported on the air was not true.

Q Uh-oh.

Q Which part?

Q What did he say?

Q -- being carried live on CNN. (Laughter.)

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Blitzer was ranking the various rumored candidates for Secretary of State and got the latest speculation wrong.

Q What did the President say?

MR. MCCURRY: The President said much of what he told you earlier, that he spent four days with his family. He clearly had

gone through the recommendations, the binder that Mr. Bowles had presented to him. This was the first substantive conversation the President has had with his transition leaders since last Wednesday, before Thanksgiving. And I won't change what I said earlier, that his thinking on the national security cluster is fairly well-advanced, but it was fairly clear that there is no final decisions to announce. And as the President indicated, when there are final decisions he will make the announcement accordingly. In the meantime, you're all free to speculate.

Q Do you have more on the President's schedule this week? You said there are going to be more public appearances than were listed in that little skeleton schedule.

MR. MCCURRY: I've got -- the only additions I have to the week in review that we've already put out are two for tomorrow. I expect the President will have a briefing on AIDS research by Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala and by the NIH Director Ramos tomorrow at some point. There also is an interagency conference call concerning the civil disturbances in St. Petersburg, a conference call that Secretary Cisneros will lead, but we expect the President to participate at some point during that call.

Q These are public events?

MR. MCCURRY: Those are public events, yes.

Q Any travel? There has been some speculation of something like next weekend or something? Do you --

MR. MCCURRY: Travel? Haven't we had enough of that this year? I'm not aware of any, no. Do we -- no, I'm not aware of any. No travel plans that I'm aware of.

Q Mike, is President Menem coming in to see the President?

MR. MCCURRY: The President of Argentina, Carlos Menem, will be here at the White House on Thursday for a brief visit with the President. He is here in the United States on a private visit. The President looks forward to an exchange of views with President Menem that will cover hemispheric issues, issues related to the growth of both democracy and market economics in this hemisphere.

Q Mike, how about the letter referenced in today's Wall Street Journal's story from Mr. Riady in 1993?

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Riady's letter -- Mr. Mochtar Riady's letter.

Q Yes. Do you have plans to -- I mean, do you intend to release that letter?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes, as the President indicated we will release that letter publicly once we've made it available to Congress. We have been assembling a variety of materials for members of Congress that are interested in such matters. And I understand from the Legal Counsel's Office that they continue to work to assemble things.

One of the things they're doing is looking through presidential records, the group that manages presidential records, looking for any relevant correspondence or data or memoranda so they can make a thorough submission to Congress at the appropriate time.

Q But not today, though?

MR. MCCURRY: No, it will not be today.

Q Will the other materials be released as well to the public -- or to the press when they're submitted to Congress?

MR. MCCURRY: Our intent is to make available publicly what we make available to the Congress. Now, we have simultaneously been entertaining questions from various news organizations looking into these matters as the Journal did. They were interested in correspondence. I told them about a March 1993 letter that Mr. Mochtar Riady sent to the President that congratulated the President on his economic program, on his plans for engagement with Asia, and made some recommendations concerning policy towards Asia, contained in the letter. And as the President indicated today, nothing that was that much different from what we were hearing from others in the business community.

Q Mike, let me follow this question. In 1992 the President criticized George Bush specifically for accepting soft you contributions of \$100,000 or more, and then doing the bidding -- not the bidding, but then following the policy that these people asked him to do. And he said, at the very least it creates the impression that the White House is for rent, for sale. The President obviously heard a lot of sides on the Vietnam thing. But is the President unaware that this looks exactly like what he criticized Bush for -- big contributions and then the people ask for something and then they get it?

MR. MCCURRY: For a policy matter that was as contentious, as hotly debated and as thoroughly public as U.S. relations towards Vietnam, to suggest that any particular individual's views, whether it be a financial contributor or not, would have a disproportionate thinking on the work of the administration is a little bit less than credible.

Q Well, wait a minute. What about the money, Mike? Can't that be seen as making -- he's asking how it looks.

MR. MCCURRY: The question is about what is the impact

of contributions, and the point I would make is that there is not any public record that suggests that any financial contributor had a disproportionate influence on policy.

Q Well, what about the Bush case? Where is the public record on that?

MR. MCCURRY: As how it looks, that's up to you to characterize. I think there is a problem --

Q How is it different in terms of how it looks from what he criticized in '92?

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not going to characterize how things look. You're in the business of doing that.

Q Well, the President showed no reluctance to do that himself.

Q Let me follow. Mike, in '92, Bill Daniels bundled soft money -- he was the cable television guy, he was a friend of Bush. It was sort of an equivalent relationship. They went back --he wrote this letter saying thanks for your help on the cable bill. Riady had contributed \$100,000 to the Inauguration. I think John Huang had done the same thing. Less than two months later, they get this letter. Shortly thereafter, America starts on a brand new policy towards Vietnam. Now, a lot of people think that was right, but John McCain, of course, called for this. There were a lot of voices on that side. But the impression that was created in the President's mind when he was governor by Bill Daniels' big contribution was that, at the very least, an ordinary American would think, gee, if you get \$100,000, you get what you want.

MR. MCCURRY: I believe that U.S. policy towards Vietnam throughout the last four years has been one of the most heavily covered and thoroughly accessible subjects on our entire foreign policy agenda. What interpretations you make of an individual letter from a prominent businessperson is up to you to render your own judgments about it. You can characterize that as you see fit. I would just like to stick with the facts as I've just established them.

Q How do we know for sure the \$100,000 grand had nothing to do with it? How do you know for sure?

MR. MCCURRY: Because there is a very complete public record about the administration's consideration of normalization of relations with Vietnam, as was very heavily covered --

Q There's always a large public record --

MR. MCCURRY: Very heavily covered, very heavily briefed, numerous discussions that occurred and that were briefed publicly about it. And, frankly, it is up --

Q But at the end of the day the President had to make a decision in his own mind, didn't he?

MR. MCCURRY: The President had to make a judgment based on U.S. national interests, the interests of the American people as we engage in that region.

Q Let me try this a different way. Is the President concerned that there seems to be no way to separate the appearance of possible impropriety here from the fact?

MR. MCCURRY: I think the President is largely concerned about the appearances that arise from soft money donations. You'll recall that during the campaign period he spoke directly to that subject, made a series of proposals, strongly backed legislation which we hope will now be introduced in the 105 Congress that would ban exactly those types of contributions.

Q He hasn't changed his mind about how these things look?

MR. MCCURRY: He's spoken publicly and has not changed his point of view about the perception that exists based on these contributions and the need to eradicate that type of contribution from our system of campaign finance.

Q So he would agree that somebody could draw the same kind of conclusion from his interaction with Riady that Bush --

MR. MCCURRY: He would agree with the expectation that many of you will draw your own conclusions, and so will the American people.

Q Just on the documents, Mike, is your thinking about releasing them that you want to get as many as you can, have a complete set, rather than piecemeal day after day of documents --

MR. MCCURRY: That's exactly right. We've -- not only the President, but we are interested in what other correspondence that exists. We've looked through those records, we've got a substantial amount of that available, and I've been entertaining requests from those news organizations that have pursued some of those questions and telling them what we know about that correspondence.

Q Was this particular letter, though, available and in your hands -- before the election, and shouldn't it have been made public, given that --

MR. MCCURRY: The existence of the letter I believe was largely known because, if I'm not mistaken, I've heard from other

reporters that Mr. Riady's representative made reference himself to the letter having been sent. I think we never formally disputed the notion that there was such a piece of correspondence from Mr. Mochtar Riady, but we have not -- we did not elect to make piecemeal disclosures of any correspondence or brief reporters in a piecemeal fashion on correspondence until we had more of the record available. We've been able to do that within the last couple of days, as various news organizations have turned their attention to that specific question.

Q Do you maintain it had no more influence on the President than the opinions of somebody who didn't give \$100,000, and who also might have written the President about Asia policy or Vietnam policy?

MR. MCCURRY: People from the private sector who are in prominent positions in the business community can speak with some authority as to the value of U.S. engagement towards Asia. And as the President indicated this morning, he said tens of thousands, but certainly hundreds and hundreds of such leaders have written to the President, some contributors, some not contributors, some, frankly, contributors to the other party. But the authority comes from having some knowledge of the operation of U.S. economic interests in that region and the value of promoting a policy of engagement with Asia, which is one that this President actively pursued almost from the first days of the administration.

Q Are you trying to say that the amount of the contribution, certainly sizeable, had absolutely no influence on the way the request was considered?

MR. MCCURRY: I think that --

Q How can you say that?

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not saying that. I'm saying contributions are welcome. For those who have to run political campaigns, you're thankful to your supporters for rendering that kind of support. But the President has made it clear that he has the responsibility to conduct foreign policy consistent with what the interests of the American people are -- all the American people. And that's the way he has conducted his policy towards Asia, on any of the matters that this individual has written about, or, indeed, any of the matters that affect the interests of America around the world.

Q Mike, on another subject --

Q No, can I ask one more?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes.

Q You said you don't want to make piecemeal disclosures, but the impression coming out from you and the White House was that it was a social relationship with Riady.

MR. MCCURRY: I don't believe that's true. I believe that there were some in the White House who characterized meetings that the President had with Mr. Mochtar Riady's son as being social. And the record, I think, stands up pretty well that that's an accurate characterization.

Q An accurate --

MR. MCCURRY: Yes, an accurate characterization. They were largely social visits. The President has spoken publicly on the occasions in which there may have been a policy element to those conversations. But you can't escape the fact that by and large they appear to have been social visits by two individuals who had known each other for some time.

Q You said the full set of letters won't be ready today for release. Do you have a sense of when it is going to be ready? Will it be this week?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, there are questions well beyond correspondence. I mean, we've been briefing news organizations as to the number of visits that Mr. James Riady and some of his associates had here at the White House, the nature of the contact that existed between the President and Mr. Riady -- this would be Mr. James Riady -- other aspects of this. And we're in a position to help news organizations inquiring in this, because the President has directed all of us to be forthcoming and candid in responding. But as to documentation we think it's more appropriate to provide the documentation first to Congress and then to release it publicly.

Q Do you think that's going to be this week, or do you have some sense of the timing?

MR. MCCURRY: I can check for you. First of all, remember that, because Congress is just forming itself for the work it will do in its 105th session, there has been no formal schedule of hearings or formal calling of particular witnesses at this point. We imagine they will be setting about that work very shortly.

Q The Chief of Staff earlier took action with respect to Mark Middleton and questions about the appearance of whether he was trading in on his White House relationship after leaving. The L.A. Times over the weekend had the story about this Chinese American in Los Angeles. Is the White House considering any sort of broader review of its policies about -- to prevent this kind of problem?

MR. MCCURRY: These matters have occasioned that type of review, and have led to very strict admonition by the Chief of Staff to all the department heads of the White House to be very conscious of the admission of outside individuals to the White House who may appear to use their access to the White House for their own private

commercial gain. He's cautioned all of us to just know who we are admitting to the White House complex, and for what purpose, and who will accompany them on those occasions.

Q If these people were higher up they'd be covered by the revolving door law, isn't that correct?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, no, we're talking in this case about visitors from the outside. If there are White House officials who are -- or former White House officials who are no longer working here, they are covered by the administration's voluntary ethics guidelines that apply to those with the rank of deputy assistant to the President, or assistant to the President, or who earned in excess of \$100,000 a year. Now, that would not cover the individual you mentioned, Mr. Mark Middleton, but there is some sense here that we should look at that issue and make sure that even those who are at more junior levels in the White House staffing structure are not in a position to appear to use their access for any of their own personal private purposes.

Now, as you know, Mr. Middleton has denied that he has done that in a statement that he can make available to you, or he has made available to many of your news organizations.

Q Does the President think it's a good idea for James Carville to be mounting his attacks on Ken Starr?

MR. MCCURRY: The President has not rendered any opinion on that. Mr. Carville is certainly someone who speaks for himself and has made it clear he will speak for himself, regardless of what the White House says.

Q Earlier today you said --

Q Does the President believe that if he asks Mr. Carville to desist that Mr. Carville would continue?

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Carville has indicated that, first, he has not discussed the matter with the President, and second, he will pursue the course of action that he thinks he needs to pursue, regardless of what anyone at the White House, including the President, has to say.

Q This morning you were going to ask the President -- you said you asked him and he said he has no opinion, or he has yet to -- you were going to try to find out what he thought about this matter.

MR. MCCURRY: I told you he has not rendered an opinion on the subject.

Q Are you saying here that what Mr. Carville is saying does not represent the President's thinking?

MR. MCCURRY: That does not represent the President's thinking. The President on this matter will speak for himself or instruct those of us who speak on his behalf to indicate whatever he wants said, and he's indicated that the work of the Independent Counsel ought to be treated respectfully and with the proper "no comment."

Q Well, wouldn't it be appropriate if he thinks that to ask one of his dear friends and a man who has been his chief political advisor to knock it off if that's what he thinks?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, as I just said, Mr. Carville is an outspoken individual and has made it clear that he intends to speak out.

Q Regardless of what the President says?

MR. MCCURRY: Regardless of what anyone at the White House says.

Q Do you seriously believe that? Do you expect the public to believe that?

MR. MCCURRY: The public can believe whatever the public wants to believe.

Q Do you believe that?

MR. MCCURRY: Do I believe that?

Q Yes, do you believe that?

MR. MCCURRY: I believe that Mr. Carville would continue to make whatever points he felt compelled to make regardless of what anyone at the White House thought about it.

Q Even if the President asked him to stop? Are you serious?

MR. MCCURRY: I am serious, yes.

Q Did you ask the President about this today? You said you were going to.

MR. MCCURRY: I had a very brief conversation with him.

Q And what was his response?

Q What did he say?

MR. MCCURRY: I think I've just reflected his sentiments.

Q He said, I don't have a response to that?

Q I'm not going to render any --

Q Has the President discussed it with Carville at all?

MR. MCCURRY: Not to -- he has not had a discussion with Mr. Carville about it.

Q About it -- or about Carville's plans? I mean, he knew nothing about it?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it's been -- Mr. Carville has been very public about his intentions to speak out.

Q If he doesn't like what he's doing, why doesn't he ask him to stop?

MR. MCCURRY: Just he's not in a position to dissuade Mr. Carville from pursuing the course that Mr. Carville has --

Q He's the President of the United States of America.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, Mr. Carville, the most prominent political consultant in America, has made it clear that's what he's going to do.

Q -- this is not helpful to you, or do you think it is helpful to you? What do you think of Carville's --

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not rendering an opinion on it.

Q Has Carville talked to someone other than the President here at the White House about this endeavor?

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't asked every individual here at the White House. I don't -- he may have. I just don't know.

Q What about those you have asked?

MR. MCCURRY: Of those that I have, no one, to my knowledge, had any extensive discussion with Mr. Carville about the merits of --

Q Well, wait a minute. What does that mean?

MR. MCCURRY: -- pursuing this course of action.

Q Did they have any discussions, and if so who, and what was said?

MR. MCCURRY: Brit, I don't -- I'm not going to answer a

question that I don't have 100 percent information on. I haven't gone around and canvassed every single person who knows --

Q Well, what about those you have canvassed?

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't found anyone --

Q We'll accept your version of those you have talked to about it.

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't found anyone who said that they tried to dissuade James from doing what he's doing.

Q I'll bet. But the question is, has anybody encouraged him, to your knowledge?

MR. MCCURRY: Not to my knowledge.

Q Has anybody in any sense discouraged him?

MR. MCCURRY: Not to my knowledge.

Q It's a remarkable, look-ma-no-hands operation here that Carville is carrying on, isn't it?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, you can characterize it as you see fit, and I'm sure you will.

Q Mike, you said that Carville had no extensive discussions with anyone at the White House. Did he have any not extensive discussions with someone at the White House about it?

MR. MCCURRY: Again, Susan, there are a lot of people who work here. There are 1,500 people who work at the White House.

Q That you know of.

MR. MCCURRY: There are a lot of people who know James. I haven't gone and talked to each individual who knows James and said, what was the nature of your conversation with Mr. Carville on a given date. So I want to be very careful --

Q What about those you have talked to?

MR. MCCURRY: I just -- you just asked and answered those questions.

Q Asked and not answered.

Q Do you think anybody has made it clear to him how wretchedly miserable it's made your lot here today? (Laughter).

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Carville is aware of how wretchedly miserable my pitiful life is, I'm sure. (Laughter.)

Q The President has to make some decisions on cutting back Social Security for disabled children. Do you know when he's going to make that decision? Certain categories of disabled kids.

MR. MCCURRY: You mean related to welfare reform fixes? There's no change in what we told you last week. That's an issue that's got budgetary impact for FY98. It is being looked at very carefully by the President and his economic and budget advisers. The President is interested in addressing those shortcomings that he found in the welfare reform bill -- significant discussions underway about how best to do that and what the likely budget impact will be.

Q Are you going to change your mind on that after what Moynihan had to say about potential -- a likelihood of changes in welfare reform?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, Senator Moynihan is a distinguished member of the Senate, particularly on this subject, but it doesn't necessarily reflect the sentiments of all 100 senators.

Q But you have essentially the Democratic leadership on that issue, in Moynihan and Nickles, up there saying, it's done, nothing is going to be considered.

MR. MCCURRY: Of who and who?

Q Nickles and Moynihan, both of them.

MR. MCCURRY: I think there are a lot of sentiments within the Democratic Caucus in the Senate that shortcomings in the welfare reform bill ought to be addressed. Senator Moynihan's view is that that was not likely to occur, but that is not necessarily the only view that exists within the Senator Caucus or here at the White House.

Q And those shortcomings will be addressed within the context of a budget proposal on the legal --

MR. MCCURRY: There's budgetary impact on those issues and we continue to assess how best to address those issues.

Q Is the White House still discussing 25 percent replenishment of the funds that were already designated --

MR. MCCURRY: We are taking steps. I'll have to look into that. We are looking at some specific steps on addressing those more emergency type situations and that can be done within current budget authority. I think there has been some reporting on that already.

Q He's talking about the Times story.

MR. MCCURRY: Oh, you mean the differential that exists between the President's balanced budget proposals and the impact of the welfare reform bill? They made a -- there is sort of a rough calculation for initial policy discussion purposes that was made and the figure I think is in the neighborhood of \$13 billion. That does not necessarily equate to the price tag of those things that would be recommended by the President. Again, those discussions are still underway.

Q What is your view that legal immigrants could receive benefits simply by becoming U.S. citizens?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, those legal immigrants who go through the process of naturalization are entitled as U.S. citizens to a different range of benefits. I mean, that's the law.

Q No, but I mean as an answer rather than trying to make changes --

MR. MCCURRY: Well, that seems to be occurring. I mean, there are -- it seems in practice that that process is speeding up because there are some cases where people have had legal residence status are attempting to convert to legal citizenship status, in part, it is believed by some experts, because of the impact of this law.

Q Mike, over the weekend Secretary Perry signed a series of agreements in Japan designed to reduce the impact of the U.S. military presence on Okinawa, including what is most important in the eyes of the Japanese of moving a Marine helicopter base off-shore. How does the White House feel about the accords, and will these issues related to the military presence on Okinawa continue to get White House attention?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, we are obviously pleased that we have been able to work with the government of Japan to reduce the burden on Okinawa in ways that do not fundamentally alter the U.S.-Japan security relationship or affect the readiness of our forward-deployed troops in that region.

The satisfactory arrangement that was concluded by the Secretary of Defense really works through a lot of those recommendations from the Special Advisory Committee on Okinawa which looked at the question, particularly the Futenma facility. They've arrived at what the Secretary believes is an adequate conclusion, an agreement that satisfies our own security interests and also our strong force posture in the region, a commitment that the United States has made and will continue to make to the security of that region.

Q Mike, will the President endorse the recommendation

of the panel looking at the CPI and will he implement them?

MR. MCCURRY: The Boskin Group has made a recommendation or is about to make a recommendation on CPI calculations. There are a number of people in the area of labor, economics and economists looking at the question of how best to measure inflationary impacts across the economy. The Boskin Group has certainly been impaneled to do that by a congressional committee. BLS has been looking at much the same issue with respect to how best to take into account inflationary pressures when you calculate things like benefits to individual Americans under entitlement programs. All of these expert opinions will be very carefully considered by the administration because the President believes this is a decision that ultimately is one best based on scientific economic expert calculation as opposed to some political measurement with respect to the budget.

Q Isn't this a scientific panel? Isn't this what this is? And doesn't he have --

MR. MCCURRY: Well, that group is -- was asked by I believe the Senate Finance Committee, right, to look at CPI calculations. BLS has been doing much the same thing. There are others. It's been a very vibrant debate in the academic community about how best to calculate and measure the impact of inflation, and we are going to consider all those views as we look at their work.

Q Is it accurate to say the administration is willing to consider the Boskin Group's recommendations as far as they might call for changes in the technical procedures made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, but that something along the line of what Moynihan wants to do legislatively is something you would oppose?

MR. MCCURRY: That's a technical question beyond my ability to answer. There is a variety of ways which you go about calculating that. I think we're going to look at the whole question of how best to measure inflationary impacts, what that suggests with respect to the CPI, how you apply the CPI to the calculation of benefit increases and then make some judgments accordingly.

Q But in their interim report, this group suggested that the CPI is inflated by about one percent and --

MR. MCCURRY: There have been different measurements of what the over-estimation of the inflationary effect have been. And Senator Moynihan's got a different view. The BLS economists are looking at much the same question. I'm not going to speculate on where the number will come out.

Q Mike, bipartisan commission on Medicare reform -- how's the President going to make that happen?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it's -- a couple of different stages in the process. There's health care -- the provision of health care commission, which he's pledged to appoint and which we have not yet

named -- correct? -- that is under consideration. The President has also suggested in the short-term we need to proceed with Medicare savings by slowing the rate of increase in spending for those programs consistent with what he's put forward in his balanced budget proposal. Now, that would extend the solvency of the trust fund into the next century by a number of years.

And then the longer-terms questions related to Medicare solvency are ones which during the campaign period the President suggested might be amenable to consideration by a bipartisan panel. Now we are much farther down the road in looking at the quality of health care, looking at what the short-term budgetary impacts are going to be on the solvency of the Medicare fund and then the longer range issues that kick in. The President will address at a later date on how you begin to structure a bipartisan commission if, in fact, we continue to see sentiment for doing that as we work with Congress.

Q Well, are you seeing any sentiment? It didn't sound like there was a whole lot.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it's been mixed. There are some leaders in Congress who said they don't think that's an idea that's worth exploring at this point. There are others that have said that's the only practical way we're ever going to get at the issue of entitlements. And I'm sure the President will consider these views and it will be a subject that will certainly be a part of our economic decision-making in the coming term.

Q Mike, there's growing concern among many arms control analysts about the fate of START II in the Russian Parliament. And in that connection, there's a proposal floating around to have the President and Yeltsin take an initiative to get it off dead center and spell out what a START III treaty might look like in terms of lower limits so that the Russians don't have big expense on the START II of reconfiguring their land-based -- is there anything along these lines under consideration, or is the President merely waiting for the Russians to do their thing in the Duma?

MR. MCCURRY: No, we have had a very active dialogue with the Russian Federation on the question of START II ratification by the Duma. I would not suggest that we've been waiting for some plan to try to get it off dead center. The President has actively encouraged President Yeltsin to do so. We have engaged a number of diplomats at a high level from the Russian Federation on that subject and stressed the importance of ratification by the Duma of START II.

But there have also been discussions among arms control experts on both sides about how to structure further arms reductions and limitations consistent with a START III approach. The momentum that would be created by a START II ratification would lend itself to further arms control efforts. But I'm not aware of any specific plan to structure that one-two step as you said, other than to say that there have been a very consistent effort on the part of our side to

stress the importance of Duma ratification.

Q Mike, many women's groups are eager that a woman fill one of the upcoming vacancies on the President's national security team. As he looks at the candidates, is that a factor at all, or is it not a factor compared to experience and whatever other qualities he's looking for?

MR. MCCURRY: There are a number of factors that go into the consideration, and the President, as he has said publicly, is stressing how the team works together. Obviously, there is rampant speculation at least one of the candidates under serious consideration is of the female gender, so we'll have to wait and see.

Q Is that a positive attribute for that candidate in addition to the other things, as far as being --

MR. MCCURRY: It is an attribute, and how people work together is driven I think more by personality than by gender. And we just happen to have someone who is a very highly qualified, successful candidate for one of those positions, or at least we have rumors to that effect, and I wouldn't dissuade you from thinking that.

Q As the President adds up the pluses and minuses, is gender considered a plus, or is it not a factor?

MR. MCCURRY: I think diversity has always been considered a plus as the President considers appointments. But I don't want to apply that to any specific consideration.

Q Speaking of diversity, is the President going to meet with the rest of the Cabinet that has not resigned, and specifically when is he meeting with Janet Reno?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes. He will continue his one-by-one discussions with members of the Cabinet, those that he has not yet seen -- I think he's seen about half the Cabinet so far, and we'll let you know when he sees individual members. I'm not aware of any schedule for the remainder of those consultations at this point.

Q Getting back to this Social Security thing, this is a question that I've been asked to ask. Apparently --

Q Whoa!!!

Q My editors made me do it. (Laughter.)

Q Give the disclaimer. (Laughter.)

Q What are the families of those disabled kids --

MR. MCCURRY: Leo put you up to this question, didn't he?

Q When are the families of the disabled kids who are no longer going to receive certain Social Security benefits for their disabilities going to be notified that they're no longer going to get a Social Security supplemental check?

MR. MCCURRY: I have no idea. We'll have to look into that. Do you know? It's all part of the review of how you address the welfare reform legislation.

Q They're certainly reviewing -- whether to tell them.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, you have to know what to tell them before you --

MR. TOIV: The Social Security Administration is reviewing individual cases.

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Toiv tells me that the Social Security Administration is looking at individual cases on a case by case basis.

Q That will keep them busy for a long time, won't it?

MR. MCCURRY: Why don't we come back to that, Wolf, when I can get more information.

Q Just to follow John's question about diversity. I mean, is having a Cabinet that looks like America as important this time as it was last time, or has it somehow shifted and --

MR. MCCURRY: It's important to the President to have a Cabinet that looks like America and to have diversity reflected in his appointments.

Q So last time he spent an inordinate amount of effort making sure that that happens.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, last time it was a new administration after a period in which Democrats had not occupied the White House and there had to be more effort to reach out to people who are not instantly on the radar screen for appointment. We've now had four years, four successful years in office in which a number of candidates present themselves having served in the administration in various capacities. It's a different equation this time because it's an incumbent administration. I think you have to take into account it's a different situation.

Now, that said, the transition team that the President empaneled has -- one of the results of their work, reaching out around the country and generating new names, was to really present

the President with some options for Cabinet appointment that he's now in the process of considering that do reflect considerable gender, racial, ethnic diversity.

Q Is that less a consideration than it was four years ago?

MR. MCCURRY: It's a consideration, but we're four years later, it's an incumbent administration. There are people that now have had experience serving in the first term that, you know, because of that experience, rise to the top of those who might be considered, clearly. So it's a different -- somewhat different kind of equation, but not any more or less important than it was four years ago.

Q You're suggesting that that could push gender or racial considerations out of the picture.

MR. MCCURRY: No, I'm not at all. I said that diversity continues to be a very important guidepost for the President as he considers these appointments.

Q Mike, can we go back to Starr for a minute? He's kind of gone on a counteroffensive. He sat down with Newsweek for three hours. I believe his deputy in Little Rock, Hickman Ewing, said an attack like Carville's is a sign of guilt. Do you think it's helpful to have Carville out attacking?

MR. MCCURRY: I've repeatedly refused to render a judgment on that and I won't do it again. Mr. Starr has to speak for himself. Mr. Carville has to speak for himself. And all of their debate will be judged in the court of public opinion, no doubt.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END 2:15 P.M. EST

#279-12/02

Message Sent

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TESLER_S @ A1@CD@LNGTWY
THOMAS_L @ A1@CD@LNGTWY
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SUBJECT: SSI kids are mentioned in 2 spots, near the end FYI

TO: William White (WHITE_WI) (WHO)

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TEXT:

===== ATTACHMENT 1 =====

ATT CREATION TIME/DATE: 2-DEC-1996 20:28:00.00

ATT BODYPART TYPE:B

ATT CREATOR: Pauline M. Abernathy

ATT SUBJECT: FYI mccurry breifing -- he got alot of qs on SSI kids

ATT TO: Diana M. Fortuna (FORTUNA_D)

TEXT:

===== END ATTACHMENT 1 =====

===== ATTACHMENT 2 =====

ATT CREATION TIME/DATE: 2-DEC-1996 15:11:00.00

ATT CREATOR: Margaret M. Suntum

ATT SUBJECT: 12-2-96 McCurry Briefing

ATT TO: Remote Addressee (wolfems@js.pentagon.mil)

ATT TO: Mary Ellen Glynn (GLYNN_M)

ATT TO: Marlene A. MacDonald (MACDONALD_M)

ATT TO: Julie E. Mason (MASON_J)

ATT TO: Kathy McKiernan (MCKIERNAN_K)

ATT TO: APRIL K. MELLODY (MELLODY_A)

ATT TO: A. Victoria Rivas-Vazquez (RIVASVAZQU_A)

ATT TO: Darby Stott (STOTT_D)

ATT TO: Margaret M. Suntum (SUNTUM_M)

ATT TO: Virginia M. Terzano	(TERZANO_V)
ATT TO: C. Patricia Cogdell	(COGDELL_C)
ATT TO: Julia R. Green	(GREEN_J)
ATT TO: Lorraine McHugh	(MCHUGH_L)
ATT TO: Rica F. Rodman	(RODMAN_R)
ATT TO: Laura D. Schwartz	(SCHWARTZ_L)
ATT TO: Joshua Silverman	(SILVERMAN_J)
ATT TO: Allison Wilkie	(WILKIE_A)
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ATT TO: Pauline M. Abernathy	(ABERNATHY_P)
ATT TO: Karin J. Abramson	(ABRAMSON_K)
ATT TO: Lori E. Abrams	(ABRAMS_L)
ATT TO: Lori L. Anderson	(ANDERSON_L)
ATT TO: Brenda Anders	(ANDERS_B)
ATT TO: Karen L. Barbuschak	(BARBUSCHAK_K)
ATT TO: Todd A. Bartholow	(BARTHOLOW_T)
ATT TO: David S. Beaubaire	(BEAUBAIRE_D)
ATT TO: Elizabeth Berman	(BERMAN_E)
ATT TO: Daniel E. Bernal	(BERNAL_D)
ATT TO: Marsha E. Berry	(BERRY_ME)
ATT TO: Antony J. Blinken	(BLINKEN_A)
ATT TO: Dennis Burke	(BURKE_D)
ATT TO: Phillip M. Caplan	(CAPLAN_P)
ATT TO: Laura Capps	(CAPPS_L)
ATT TO: Matthew H. Catapano	(CATAPANO_M)
ATT TO: Joseph W. Cerrell	(CERREL_J)

ATT TO: Steven A. Cohen	(COHEN_SA)
ATT TO: Michelle Crisci	(CRISCI_M)
ATT TO: Amanda Crumley	(CRUMLEY_A)
ATT TO: Carolyn Curiel	(CURIEL_C)
ATT TO: Suzanne E. Dale	(DALE_S)
ATT TO: Marilyn DiGiacobbe	(DIGIACOBBE_M)
ATT TO: James A. Dorskind	(DORSKIND_J)
ATT TO: Chris Dorval	(DORVAL_C)
ATT TO: James T. Edmonds	(EDMONDS_J)
ATT TO: Anne M. Edwards	(EDWARDS_A)
ATT TO: Rahm Emanuel	(EMANUEL_R)
ATT TO: James L. Fetig	(FETIG_J)
ATT TO: Deborah L. Fine	(FINE_D)
ATT TO: Karen E. Finney	(FINNEY_K)
ATT TO: Ben Freeland	(FREELAND_B)
ATT TO: Jeremy M. Gaines	(GAINES_J)
ATT TO: Craig Gardenswartz	(GARDENSWAR_C)
ATT TO: Michael A. Gill	(GILL_M)
ATT TO: Jason S. Goldberg	(GOLDBERG_JS)
ATT TO: John Gribben	(GRIBBEN_J)
ATT TO: Christopher M. Gruin	(GRUIN_C)
ATT TO: LAWRENCE J. HAAS	(HAAS_L)
ATT TO: Alexis M. Herman	(HERMAN_A)
ATT TO: William C. Hornish	(HORNISH_W)
ATT TO: Russell W. Horwitz	(HORWITZ_R)
ATT TO: Erika Hovland	(HOVLAND_E)
ATT TO: Annette E. Johnson	(JOHNSON_AE)

ATT TO: Brian J. Johnson	(JOHNSON_BJ)
ATT TO: David T. Johnson	(JOHNSON_DT)
ATT TO: Wayne C. Johnson	(JOHNSON_WC)
ATT TO: Angus S. King	(KING_A)
ATT TO: Joshua A. King	(KING_J)
ATT TO: Nick B. Kirkhorn	(KIRKHORN_N)
ATT TO: Catherine T. Kitchen	(KITCHEN_C)
ATT TO: James Kohlenberger	(KOHLEN_J)
ATT TO: Heidi Kukis	(KUKIS_H)
ATT TO: Karin Kullman	(KULLMAN_K)
ATT TO: G. N. Lattimore	(LATTIMORE_G)
ATT TO: Peggy A. Lewis	(LEWIS_P)
ATT TO: Patricia F. Lewis	(LEWIS_PF)
ATT TO: Evelyn S. Lieberman	(LIEBERMAN_E)
ATT TO: Cynthia J. Lizik	(LIZIK_C)
ATT TO: Gordon Li	(LI_G)
ATT TO: Michael D. Malone	(MALONE_M)
ATT TO: Melissa Marshall	(MARSHALL_M)
ATT TO: Doris O. Matsui	(MATSUI_D)
ATT TO: Anne E. McGuire	(MCGUIRE_A)
ATT TO: Cheryl D. Mills	(MILLS_C)
ATT TO: Julia Moffett	(MOFFETT_J)
ATT TO: Elizabeth A. Montoya	(MONTOYA_E)
ATT TO: Kevin Moran	(MORAN_K1)
ATT TO: Sara Morris	(MORRIS_S)
ATT TO: Melissa M. Murray	(MURRAY_MM)
ATT TO: Steven J. Naplan	(NAPLAN_S)

ATT TO: Jonathan Orszag	(ORSZAG_J)
ATT TO: David Pinto	(PINTO_D)
ATT TO: Jonathan M. Prince	(PRINCE_J)
ATT TO: Franklin S. Reeder	(REEDER_F)
ATT TO: Renee C. Riley	(RILEY_R)
ATT TO: Christa T. Robinson	(ROBINSON_C)
ATT TO: Roger V. Salazar	(SALAZAR_R)
ATT TO: Victoria L. Schaefer	(SCHAEFER_V)
ATT TO: Stuart Schear	(SCHEAR_S)
ATT TO: Jill A. Schuker	(SCHUKER_J)
ATT TO: Jennifer Senan	(SENAN_J)
ATT TO: Douglas S. Sheorn	(SHEORN_D)
ATT TO: Susan P. Shepard	(SHEPARD_S)
ATT TO: Jane C. Sherburne	(SHERBURNE_J)
ATT TO: David Shipley	(SHIPLEY_D)
ATT TO: Douglas B. Sosnik	(SOSNIK_D)
ATT TO: Todd Stern	(STERN_T)
ATT TO: Diane A. Stumpf	(STUMPF_D)
ATT TO: Mike Sullivan	(SULLIVAN_M)
ATT TO: Lisa Jordan Tamagni	(TAMAGNI_L)
ATT TO: Virginia M. Terzano	(TERZAN_V)
ATT TO: Shana E. Tesler	(TESLER_S)
ATT TO: Lynda D. Thomas	(THOMAS_L)
ATT TO: Terri I. Tingen	(TINGEN_T)
ATT TO: Barry J. Toiv	(TOIV_B)
ATT TO: Jodie R. Torkelson	(TORKELSON_J)
ATT TO: Dag Vega	(VEGA_D)

ATT TO: Lorraine A. Voles (VOLES_L)
ATT TO: Michael Waldman (WALDMAN_M)
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-12/02

PRINTER FONT 12_POINT_COURIER
THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

December 2, 1996

PRESS BRIEFING BY
MIKE MCCURRY

The Briefing Room

1:40 P.M. EST

MR. MCCURRY: Good afternoon, ladies and gentlemen. Welcome back to the White House after, I hope, a blissful Thanksgiving weekend. Any subjects you're interested in?

Q Can you tell us if the President is getting close to naming his national security team? (Laughter.)

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Blitzer, the President was just having a very good laugh at your most recent report moments ago. The conversation he was having with Mr. Panetta and Mr. Bowles made it manifestly clear that what you reported on the air was not true.

Q Uh

-oh.

Q Which part?

Q What did he say?

Q -- being carried live on CNN. (Laughter.)

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Blitzer was ranking the various rumored candidates for Secretary of State and got the latest speculation wrong.

Q What did the President say?

MR. MCCURRY: The President said much of what he told you earlier, that he spent four days with his family. He clearly had gone through the recommendations, the binder that Mr. Bowles had presented to him. This was the first substantive conversation the President has had with his transition leaders since last Wednesday, before Thanksgiving. And I won't change what I said earlier, that his thinking on the national security cluster is fairly well

-advanced, but it was fairly clear that there is no final decisions to announce. And as the President indicated, when there are final decisions he will make the announcement accordingly. In the meantime, you're all free to speculate.

Q Do you have more on the President's schedule this week? You said there are going to be more public appearances than were listed in that little skeleton schedule.

MR. MCCURRY: I've got -- the only additions I have to the week in review that we've already put out are two for tomorrow. I expect the President will have a briefing on AIDS research by Secretary of Health and Human Services Donna Shalala and by the NIH Director Ramos tomorrow at some point. There also is an interagency
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conference call concerning the civil disturbances in St. Petersburg, a conference call that Secretary Cisneros will lead, but we expect the President to participate at some point during that call.

Q These are public events?

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MR. MCCURRY: Those are public events, yes.

Q Any travel? There has been some speculation of something like next weekend or something? Do you --

MR. MCCURRY: Travel? Haven't we had enough of that this year? I'm not aware of any, no. Do we -- no, I'm not aware of any. No travel plans that I'm aware of.

Q Mike, is President Menem coming in to see the President?

MR. MCCURRY: The President of Argentina, Carlos Menem, will be here at the White House on Thursday for a brief visit with the President. He is here in the United States on a private visit. The President looks forward to an exchange of views with President Menem that will cover hemispheric issues, issues related to the growth of both democracy and market economics in this hemisphere.

Q Mike, how about the letter referenced in today's Wall Street Journal's story from Mr. Riady in 1993?

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Riady's letter -- Mr. Mochtar Riady's letter.

Q Yes. Do you have plans to -- I mean, do you intend to release that letter?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes, as the President indicated we will release that letter publicly once we've made it available to Congress. We have been assembling a variety of materials for members of Congress that are interested in such matters. And I understand from the Legal Counsel's Office that they continue to work to assemble things.

One of the things they're doing is looking through presidential records, the group that manages presidential records, looking for any relevant correspondence or data or memoranda so they can make a thorough submission to Congress at the appropriate time.

Q But not today, though?

MR. MCCURRY: No, it will not be today.

Q Will the other materials be released as well to the public -- or to the press when they're submitted to Congress?

MR. MCCURRY: Our intent is to make available publicly what we make available to the Congress. Now, we have simultaneously

been entertaining questions from various news organizations looking into these matters as the Journal did. They were interested in correspondence. I told them about a March 1993 letter that Mr. Mochtar Riady sent to the President that congratulated the President on his economic program, on his plans for engagement with Asia, and made some recommendations concerning policy towards Asia, contained in the letter. And as the President indicated today, nothing that was that much different from what we were hearing from others in the business community.

Q Mike, let me follow this question. In 1992 the President criticized George Bush specifically for accepting soft you contributions of \$100,000 or more, and then doing the bidding -- not the bidding, but then following the policy that these people asked him to do. And he said, at the very least it creates the impression that the White House is for rent, for sale. The President obviously heard a lot of sides on the Vietnam thing. But is the President unaware that this looks exactly like what he criticized Bush for -- TOP ODD - \p -

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big contributions and then the people ask for something and then they get it?

MR. MCCURRY: For a policy matter that was as contentious, as hotly debated and as thoroughly public as U.S. relations towards Vietnam, to suggest that any particular individual's views, whether it be a financial contributor or not, would have a disproportionate thinking on the work of the administration is a little bit less than credible.

Q Well, wait a minute. What about the money, Mike? Can't that be seen as making -- he's asking how it looks.

MR. MCCURRY: The question is about what is the impact of contributions, and the point I would make is that there is not any public record that suggests that any financial contributor had a disproportionate influence on policy.

Q Well, what about the Bush case? Where is the public record on that?

MR. MCCURRY: As how it looks, that's up to you to characterize. I think there is a problem --

Q How is it different in terms of how it looks from what he criticized in '92?

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not going to characterize how things look. You're in the business of doing that.

Q Well, the President showed no reluctance to do that himself.

Q Let me follow. Mike, in '92, Bill Daniels bundled soft money -- he was the cable television guy, he was a friend of Bush. It was sort of an equivalent relationship. They went back

-he wrote this letter saying thanks for your help on the cable bill. Riady had contributed \$100,000 to the Inauguration. I think John Huang had done the same thing. Less than two months later, they get this letter. Shortly thereafter, America starts on a brand new policy towards Vietnam. Now, a lot of people think that was right, but John McCain, of course, called for this. There were a lot of voices on that side. But the impression that was created in the President's mind when he was governor by Bill Daniels' big contribution was that, at the very least, an ordinary American would think, gee, if you get \$100,000, you get what you want.

MR. MCCURRY: I believe that U.S. policy towards Vietnam throughout the last four years has been one of the most heavily covered and thoroughly accessible subjects on our entire foreign policy agenda. What interpretations you make of an individual letter from a prominent businessperson is up to you to render your own judgments about it. You can characterize that as you see fit. I would just like to stick with the facts as I've just established them.

Q How do we know for sure the \$100,000 grand had nothing to do with it? How do you know for sure?

MR. MCCURRY: Because there is a very complete public record about the administration's consideration of normalization of relations with Vietnam, as was very heavily covered --

Q There's always a large public record --

MR. MCCURRY: Very heavily covered, very heavily briefed, numerous discussions that occurred and that were briefed publicly about it. And, frankly, it is up --

Q But at the end of the day the President had to make a decision in his own mind, didn't he?

MR. MCCURRY: The President had to make a judgment based on U.S. national interests, the interests of the American people as we engage in that region.

Q Let me try this a different way. Is the President concerned that there seems to be no way to separate the appearance of possible impropriety here from the fact?

MR. MCCURRY: I think the President is largely concerned about the appearances that arise from soft money donations. You'll recall that during the campaign period he spoke directly to that

subject, made a series of proposals, strongly backed legislation which we hope will now be introduced in the 105 Congress that would ban exactly those types of contributions.

Q He hasn't changed his mind about how these things look?

MR. MCCURRY: He's spoken publicly and has not changed his point of view about the perception that exists based on these contributions and the need to eradicate that type of contribution from our system of campaign finance.

Q So he would agree that somebody could draw the same kind of conclusion from his interaction with Riady that Bush --

MR. MCCURRY: He would agree with the expectation that many of you will draw your own conclusions, and so will the American people.

Q Just on the documents, Mike, is your thinking about releasing them that you want to get as many as you can, have a complete set, rather than piecemeal day after day of documents --

MR. MCCURRY: That's exactly right. We've -- not only the President, but we are interested in what other correspondence that exists. We've looked through those records, we've got a substantial amount of that available, and I've been entertaining requests from those news organizations that have pursued some of those questions and telling them what we know about that correspondence.

Q Was this particular letter, though, available and in your hands -- before the election, and shouldn't it have been made public, given that --

MR. MCCURRY: The existence of the letter I believe was largely known because, if I'm not mistaken, I've heard from other reporters that Mr. Riady's representative made reference himself to the letter having been sent. I think we never formally disputed the notion that there was such a piece of correspondence from Mr. Mochtar Riady, but we have not -- we did not elect to make piecemeal disclosures of any correspondence or brief reporters in a piecemeal fashion on correspondence until we had more of the record available. We've been able to do that within the last couple of days, as various news organizations have turned their attention to that specific question.

Q Do you maintain it had no more influence on the President than the opinions of somebody who didn't give \$100,000, and who also might have written the President about Asia policy or Vietnam policy?

MR. MCCURRY: People from the private sector who are in prominent positions in the business community can speak with some

authority as to the value of U.S. engagement towards Asia. And as the President indicated this morning, he said tens of thousands, but certainly hundreds and hundreds of such leaders have written to the President, some contributors, some not contributors, some, frankly, contributors to the other party. But the authority comes from having some knowledge of the operation of U.S. economic interests in that region and the value of promoting a policy of engagement with Asia, which is one that this President actively pursued almost from the first days of the administration.

Q Are you trying to say that the amount of the contribution, certainly sizeable, had absolutely no influence on the way the request was considered?

MR. MCCURRY: I think that --

Q How can you say that?

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not saying that. I'm saying contributions are welcome. For those who have to run political campaigns, you're thankful to your supporters for rendering that kind of support. But the President has made it clear that he has the responsibility to conduct foreign policy consistent with what the interests of the American people are -- all the American people. And that's the way he has conducted his policy towards Asia, on any of the matters that this individual has written about, or, indeed, any of the matters that affect the interests of America around the world.

Q Mike, on another subject --

Q No, can I ask one more?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes.

Q You said you don't want to make piecemeal disclosures, but the impression coming out from you and the White House was that it was a social relationship with Riady.

MR. MCCURRY: I don't believe that's true. I believe that there were some in the White House who characterized meetings that the President had with Mr. Mochtar Riady's son as being social. And the record, I think, stands up pretty well that that's an accurate characterization.

Q An accurate --

MR. MCCURRY: Yes, an accurate characterization. They were largely social visits. The President has spoken publicly on the occasions in which there may have been a policy element to those conversations. But you can't escape the fact that by and large they appear to have been social visits by two individuals who had known each other for some time.

Q You said the full set of letters won't be ready today for release. Do you have a sense of when it is going to be ready? Will it be this week?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, there are questions well beyond correspondence. I mean, we've been briefing news organizations as to the number of visits that Mr. James Riady and some of his associates had here at the White House, the nature of the contact that existed between the President and Mr. Riady -- this would be Mr. James Riady

-- other aspects of this. And we're in a position to help news organizations inquiring in this, because the President has directed all of us to be forthcoming and candid in responding. But as to documentation we think it's more appropriate to provide the documentation first to Congress and then to release it publicly.

Q Do you think that's going to be this week, or do you have some sense of the timing?

MR. MCCURRY: I can check for you. First of all, remember that, because Congress is just forming itself for the work it will do in its 105th session, there has been no formal schedule of hearings or formal calling of particular witnesses at this point. We imagine they will be setting about that work very shortly.

Q The Chief of Staff earlier took action with respect to Mark Middleton and questions about the appearance of whether he was trading in on his White House relationship after leaving. The L.A. Times over the weekend had the story about this Chinese American in Los Angeles. Is the White House considering any sort of broader review of its policies about -- to prevent this kind of problem?

MR. MCCURRY: These matters have occasioned that type of review, and have led to very strict admonition by the Chief of Staff to all the department heads of the White House to be very conscious of the admission of outside individuals to the White House who may appear to use their access to the White House for their own private commercial gain. He's cautioned all of us to just know who we are admitting to the White House complex, and for what purpose, and who will accompany them on those occasions.

Q If these people were higher up they'd be covered by the revolving door law, isn't that correct?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, no, we're talking in this case about visitors from the outside. If there are White House officials who are -- or former White House officials who are no longer working here, they are covered by the administration's voluntary ethics guidelines that apply to those with the rank of deputy assistant to the President, or assistant to the President, or who earned in excess of \$100,000 a year. Now, that would not cover the individual you mentioned, Mr. Mark Middleton, but there is some sense here that we should look at that issue and make sure that even those who are at more junior levels in the White House staffing structure are not in a position to appear to use their access for any of their own personal private purposes.

Now, as you know, Mr. Middleton has denied that he has done that in a statement that he can make available to you, or he has made available to many of your news organizations.

Q Does the President think it's a good idea for James Carville to be mounting his attacks on Ken Starr?

MR. MCCURRY: The President has not rendered any opinion on that. Mr. Carville is certainly someone who speaks for himself and has made it clear he will speak for himself, regardless of what the White House says.

Q Earlier today you said --

Q Does the President believe that if he asks Mr. Carville to desist that Mr. Carville would continue?

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Carville has indicated that, first, he has not discussed the matter with the President, and second, he will pursue the course of action that he thinks he needs to pursue, regardless of what anyone at the White House, including the President, has to say.

Q This morning you were going to ask the President -- you said you asked him and he said he has no opinion, or he has yet to -- you were going to try to find out what he thought about this matter.

MR. MCCURRY: I told you he has not rendered an opinion on the subject.

Q Are you saying here that what Mr. Carville is saying does not represent the President's thinking?

MR. MCCURRY: That does not represent the President's thinking. The President on this matter will speak for himself or instruct those of us who speak on his behalf to indicate whatever he wants said, and he's indicated that the work of the Independent Counsel ought to be treated respectfully and with the proper "no comment."

Q Well, wouldn't it be appropriate if he thinks that to ask one of his dear friends and a man who has been his chief political advisor to knock it off if that's what he thinks?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, as I just said, Mr. Carville is an outspoken individual and has made it clear that he intends to speak out.

Q Regardless of what the President says?

MR. MCCURRY: Regardless of what anyone at the White House says.

Q Do you seriously believe that? Do you expect the public to believe that?

MR. MCCURRY: The public can believe whatever the public wants to believe.

Q Do you believe that?

MR. MCCURRY: Do I believe that?

Q Yes, do you believe that?

MR. MCCURRY: I believe that Mr. Carville would continue to make whatever points he felt compelled to make regardless of what anyone at the White House thought about it.

Q Even if the President asked him to stop? Are you serious?

MR. MCCURRY: I am serious, yes.

Q Did you ask the President about this today? You said you were going to.

MR. MCCURRY: I had a very brief conversation with him.

Q And what was his response?

Q What did he say?

MR. MCCURRY: I think I've just reflected his sentiments.

Q He said, I don't have a response to that?

Q I'm not going to render any --

Q Has the President discussed it with Carville at all?

MR. MCCURRY: Not to -- he has not had a discussion with Mr. Carville about it.

Q About it -- or about Carville's plans? I mean, he knew nothing about it?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it's been -- Mr. Carville has been very public about his intentions to speak out.

Q If he doesn't like what he's doing, why doesn't he ask him to stop?

MR. MCCURRY: Just he's not in a position to dissuade Mr. Carville from pursuing the course that Mr. Carville has --

Q He's the President of the United States of America.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, Mr. Carville, the most prominent political consultant in America, has made it clear that's what he's going to do.

Q -- this is not helpful to you, or do you think it is helpful to you? What do you think of Carville's --

MR. MCCURRY: I'm not rendering an opinion on it.

Q Has Carville talked to someone other than the President here at the White House about this endeavor?

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't asked every individual here at the White House. I don't -- he may have. I just don't know.

Q What about those you have asked?

MR. MCCURRY: Of those that I have, no one, to my knowledge, had any extensive discussion with Mr. Carville about the merits of --

Q Well, wait a minute. What does that mean?

MR. MCCURRY: -- pursuing this course of action.

Q Did they have any discussions, and if so who, and what was said?

MR. MCCURRY: Brit, I don't -- I'm not going to answer a question that I don't have 100 percent information on. I haven't gone around and canvassed every single person who knows --

Q Well, what about those you have canvassed?

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't found anyone --

Q We'll accept your version of those you have talked to about it.

MR. MCCURRY: I haven't found anyone who said that they tried to dissuade James from doing what he's doing.

Q I'll bet. But the question is, has anybody encouraged him, to your knowledge?

MR. MCCURRY: Not to my knowledge.

Q Has anybody in any sense discouraged him?

MR. MCCURRY: Not to my knowledge.

Q It's a remarkable, look

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-no

-hands operation here

that Carville is carrying on, isn't it?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, you can characterize it as you see fit, and I'm sure you will.

Q Mike, you said that Carville had no extensive discussions with anyone at the White House. Did he have any not extensive discussions with someone at the White House about it?

MR. MCCURRY: Again, Susan, there are a lot of people who work here. There are 1,500 people who work at the White House.

Q That you know of.

MR. MCCURRY: There are a lot of people who know James. I haven't gone and talked to each individual who knows James and said, what was the nature of your conversation with Mr. Carville on a given date. So I want to be very careful --

Q What about those you have talked to?

MR. MCCURRY: I just -- you just asked and answered those questions.

Q Asked and not answered.

Q Do you think anybody has made it clear to him how wretchedly miserable it's made your lot here today? (Laughter).

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Carville is aware of how wretchedly miserable my pitiful life is, I'm sure. (Laughter.)

Q The President has to make some decisions on cutting back Social Security for disabled children. Do you know when he's going to make that decision? Certain categories of disabled kids.

MR. MCCURRY: You mean related to welfare reform fixes? There's no change in what we told you last week. That's an issue that's got budgetary impact for FY98. It is being looked at very carefully by the President and his economic and budget advisers. The President is interested in addressing those shortcomings that he found in the welfare reform bill -- significant discussions underway about how best to do that and what the likely budget impact will be.

Q Are you going to change your mind on that after what Moynihan had to say about potential -- a likelihood of changes in welfare reform?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, Senator Moynihan is a distinguished member of the Senate, particularly on this subject, but it doesn't necessarily reflect the sentiments of all 100 senators.

Q But you have essentially the Democratic leadership on that issue, in Moynihan and Nickles, up there saying, it's done, nothing is going to be considered.

MR. MCCURRY: Of who and who?

Q Nickles and Moynihan, both of them.

MR. MCCURRY: I think there are a lot of sentiments within the Democratic Caucus in the Senate that shortcomings in the welfare reform bill ought to be addressed. Senator Moynihan's view is that that was not likely to occur, but that is not necessarily the only view that exists within the Senator Caucus or here at the White House.

Q And those shortcomings will be addressed within the context of a budget proposal on the legal --

MR. MCCURRY: There's budgetary impact on those issues and we continue to assess how best to address those issues.

Q Is the White House still discussing 25 percent replenishment of the funds that were already designated --

MR. MCCURRY: We are taking steps. I'll have to look into that. We are looking at some specific steps on addressing those more emergency type situations and that can be done within current budget authority. I think there has been some reporting on that already.

Q He's talking about the Times story.

MR. MCCURRY: Oh, you mean the differential that exists between the President's balanced budget proposals and the impact of the welfare reform bill? They made a -- there is sort of a rough calculation for initial policy discussion purposes that was made and the figure I think is in the neighborhood of \$13 billion. That does not necessarily equate to the price tag of those things that would be recommended by the President. Again, those discussions are still underway.

Q What is your view that legal immigrants could receive benefits simply by becoming U.S. citizens?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, those legal immigrants who go through the process of naturalization are entitled as U.S. citizens to a different range of benefits. I mean, that's the law.

Q No, but I mean as an answer rather than trying to

make changes --

MR. MCCURRY: Well, that seems to be occurring. I mean, there are -- it seems in practice that that process is speeding up because there are some cases where people have had legal residence status are attempting to convert to legal citizenship status, in part, it is believed by some experts, because of the impact of this law.

Q Mike, over the weekend Secretary Perry signed a series of agreements in Japan designed to reduce the impact of the U.S. military presence on Okinawa, including what is most important in the eyes of the Japanese of moving a Marine helicopter base off

-shore. How does the White House feel about the accords, and will these issues related to the military presence on Okinawa continue to get White House attention?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, we are obviously pleased that we have been able to work with the government of Japan to reduce the burden on Okinawa in ways that do not fundamentally alter the U.S.

-Japan security relationship or affect the readiness of our forward

-deployed troops in that region.

The satisfactory arrangement that was concluded by the Secretary of Defense really works through a lot of those recommendations from the Special Advisory Committee on Okinawa which looked at the question, particularly the Futenma facility. They've arrived at what the Secretary believes is an adequate conclusion, an agreement that satisfies our own security interests and also our strong force posture in the region, a commitment that the United States has made and will continue to make to the security of that region.

Q Mike, will the President endorse the recommendation of the panel looking at the CPI and will he implement them?

MR. MCCURRY: The Boskin Group has made a recommendation or is about to make a recommendation on CPI calculations. There are a number of people in the area of labor, economics and economists looking at the question of how best to measure inflationary impacts across the economy. The Boskin Group has certainly been impaneled to do that by a congressional committee. BLS has been looking at much the same issue with respect to how best to take into account inflationary pressures when you calculate things like benefits to individual Americans under entitlement programs. All of these expert opinions will be very carefully considered by the administration because the President believes this is a decision that ultimately is one best based on scientific economic expert calculation as opposed

to some political measurement with respect to the budget.

Q Isn't this a scientific panel? Isn't this what this is? And doesn't he have --

MR. MCCURRY: Well, that group is -- was asked by I believe the Senate Finance Committee, right, to look at CPI calculations. BLS has been doing much the same thing. There are others. It's been a very vibrant debate in the academic community about how best to calculate and measure the impact of inflation, and we are going to consider all those views as we look at their work.

Q Is it accurate to say the administration is willing to consider the Boskin Group's recommendations as far as they might call for changes in the technical procedures made by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, but that something along the line of what Moynihan wants to do legislatively is something you would oppose?

MR. MCCURRY: That's a technical question beyond my ability to answer. There is a variety of ways which you go about calculating that. I think we're going to look at the whole question of how best to measure inflationary impacts, what that suggests with respect to the CPI, how you apply the CPI to the calculation of benefit increases and then make some judgments accordingly.

Q But in their interim report, this group suggested that the CPI is inflated by about one percent and --

MR. MCCURRY: There have been different measurements of what the over

-estimation of the inflationary effect have been. And Senator Moynihan's got a different view. The BLS economists are looking at much the same question. I'm not going to speculate on where the number will come out.

Q Mike, bipartisan commission on Medicare reform -- how's the President going to make that happen?

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it's -- a couple of different stages in the process. There's health care -- the provision of health care commission, which he's pledged to appoint and which we have not yet named -- correct? -- that is under consideration. The President has also suggested in the short

-term we need to proceed with Medicare savings by slowing the rate of increase in spending for those programs consistent with what he's put forward in his balanced budget proposal. Now, that would extend the solvency of the trust fund into the next century by a number of years.

And then the longer

-terms questions related to Medicare

solvency are ones which during the campaign period the President suggested might be amenable to consideration by a bipartisan panel. Now we are much farther down the road in looking at the quality of health care, looking at what the short

-term budgetary impacts are going to be on the solvency of the Medicare fund and then the longer range issues that kick in. The President will address at a later date on how you begin to structure a bipartisan commission if, in fact, we continue to see sentiment for doing that as we work with Congress.

Q Well, are you seeing any sentiment? It didn't sound like there was a whole lot.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, it's been mixed. There are some leaders in Congress who said they don't think that's an idea that's worth exploring at this point. There are others that have said that's the only practical way we're ever going to get at the issue of entitlements. And I'm sure the President will consider these views and it will be a subject that will certainly be a part of our economic decision

-making in the coming term.

Q Mike, there's growing concern among many arms control analysts about the fate of START II in the Russian Parliament. And in that connection, there's a proposal floating around to have the President and Yeltsin take an initiative to get it off dead center and spell out what a START III treaty might look like in terms of lower limits so that the Russians don't have big expense on the START II of reconfiguring their land

-based -- is there anything along these lines under consideration, or is the President merely waiting for the Russians to do their thing in the Duma?

MR. MCCURRY: No, we have had a very active dialogue with the Russian Federation on the question of START II ratification by the Duma. I would not suggest that we've been waiting for some plan to try to get it off dead center. The President has actively encouraged President Yeltsin to do so. We have engaged a number of diplomats at a high level from the Russian Federation on that subject and stressed the importance of ratification by the Duma of START II.

But there have also been discussions among arms control experts on both sides about how to structure further arms reductions and limitations consistent with a START III approach. The momentum that would be created by a START II ratification would lend itself to further arms control efforts. But I'm not aware of any specific plan to structure that one

-two step as you said, other than to say that there have been a very consistent effort on the part of our side to

stress the importance of Duma ratification.

Q Mike, many women's groups are eager that a woman fill one of the upcoming vacancies on the President's national security team. As he looks at the candidates, is that a factor at all, or is it not a factor compared to experience and whatever other qualities he's looking for?

MR. MCCURRY: There are a number of factors that go into the consideration, and the President, as he has said publicly, is stressing how the team works together. Obviously, there is rampant speculation at least one of the candidates under serious consideration is of the female gender, so we'll have to wait and see.

Q Is that a positive attribute for that candidate in addition to the other things, as far as being --

MR. MCCURRY: It is an attribute, and how people work together is driven I think more by personality than by gender. And we just happen to have someone who is a very highly qualified, successful candidate for one of those positions, or at least we have rumors to that effect, and I wouldn't dissuade you from thinking that.

Q As the President adds up the pluses and minuses, is gender considered a plus, or is it not a factor?

MR. MCCURRY: I think diversity has always been considered a plus as the President considers appointments. But I don't want to apply that to any specific consideration.

Q Speaking of diversity, is the President going to meet with the rest of the Cabinet that has not resigned, and specifically when is he meeting with Janet Reno?

MR. MCCURRY: Yes. He will continue his one

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discussions with members of the Cabinet, those that he has not yet seen -- I think he's seen about half the Cabinet so far, and we'll let you know when he sees individual members. I'm not aware of any schedule for the remainder of those consultations at this point.

Q Getting back to this Social Security thing, this is a question that I've been asked to ask. Apparently --

Q Whoa!!!

Q My editors made me do it. (Laughter.)

Q Give the disclaimer. (Laughter.)

Q What are the families of those disabled kids --

MR. MCCURRY: Leo put you up to this question, didn't he?

Q When are the families of the disabled kids who are no longer going to receive certain Social Security benefits for their disabilities going to be notified that they're no longer going to get a Social Security supplemental check?

MR. MCCURRY: I have no idea. We'll have to look into that. Do you know? It's all part of the review of how you address the welfare reform legislation.

Q They're certainly reviewing -- whether to tell them.

MR. MCCURRY: Well, you have to know what to tell them before you --

MR. TOIV: The Social Security Administration is reviewing individual cases.

MR. MCCURRY: Mr. Toiv tells me that the Social Security Administration is looking at individual cases on a case by case basis.

Q That will keep them busy for a long time, won't it?

MR. MCCURRY: Why don't we come back to that, Wolf, when I can get more information.

Q Just to follow John's question about diversity. I mean, is having a Cabinet that looks like America as important this time as it was last time, or has it somehow shifted and --

MR. MCCURRY: It's important to the President to have a Cabinet that looks like America and to have diversity reflected in his appointments.

Q So last time he spent an inordinate amount of effort making sure that that happens.

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BOTTOM ALL

MR. MCCURRY: Well, last time it was a new administration after a period in which Democrats had not occupied the White House and there had to be more effort to reach out to people who are not instantly on the radar screen for appointment. We've now had four years, four successful years in office in which a number of candidates present themselves having served in the administration in

various capacities. It's a different equation this time because it's an incumbent administration. I think you have to take into account it's a different situation.

Now, that said, the transition team that the President empaneled has -- one of the results of their work, reaching out around the country and generating new names, was to really present the President with some options for Cabinet appointment that he's now in the process of considering that do reflect considerable gender, racial, ethnic diversity.

Q Is that less a consideration than it was four years ago?

MR. MCCURRY: It's a consideration, but we're four years later, it's an incumbent administration. There are people that now have had experience serving in the first term that, you know, because of that experience, rise to the top of those who might be considered, clearly. So it's a different -- somewhat different kind of equation, but not any more or less important than it was four years ago.

Q You're suggesting that that could push gender or racial considerations out of the picture.

MR. MCCURRY: No, I'm not at all. I said that diversity continues to be a very important guidepost for the President as he considers these appointments.

Q Mike, can we go back to Starr for a minute? He's kind of gone on a counteroffensive. He sat down with Newsweek for three hours. I believe his deputy in Little Rock, Hickman Ewing, said an attack like Carville's is a sign of guilt. Do you think it's helpful to have Carville out attacking?

MR. MCCURRY: I've repeatedly refused to render a judgment on that and I won't do it again. Mr. Starr has to speak for himself. Mr. Carville has to speak for himself. And all of their debate will be judged in the court of public opinion, no doubt.

THE PRESS: Thank you.

END 2:15 P.M. EST

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===== END ATTACHMENT 2 =====