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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

July 21, 1999

PRESS CONFERENCE BY THE PRESIDENT

The East Room

2:35 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon.

Q Mr. President, you don't know it, but there is such a bright light on you -- we can't see you for the light. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: I've been waiting a long time for the halo to appear. (Laughter.)

Let me say, ladies and gentlemen, I have a brief opening statement, but before I make that and take questions, I'd like to say that, as you might imagine, I have been briefed on this morning's developments in the search off Martha's Vineyard. Again, let me commend the Coast Guard and all the officials at the local, state and national level for the fine work they have done under extremely difficult

circumstances.

Again, I think we should keep our thoughts with the families as events unfold, and my thoughts and prayers are with them.

Today I want to make a brief statement about the choice we face here in Washington and in our country about how best to move forward into the new century and what to do with the surplus. When we look toward the future, it is helpful to remember at least the recent past. Six and a half years ago, the budget deficit was \$290 billion and rising. Wages were stagnant, inequality was growing, social conditions were worsening.

In the 12 years before I took office, unemployment averaged more than 7 percent. It's almost difficult to remember what it was like. No one really thought we could turn it around, let alone bring unemployment to a 29-year low, or turn decades of deficits, during which time the debt of our country was quadrupled in only 12 years, into a surplus of \$99 billion.

Our nation has made a seismic shift in the last six years, from recession to recovery, from a crisis of confidence to a renewal of resolve, from economic disorder to a fiscal house finally in order. Now as we debate what to do with our prosperity, we face a critical choice -- whether to move forward with the fiscal discipline that got us to where we are today, or return to the kind of risk-taking that got us into recessions and deficits before.

We must decide whether to invest the surplus, to strengthen America over the long-term, or to squander it for the short-term. I think the right course is clear. And a bigger surplus only means that the mistake could be bigger, and the missed opportunity greater if we take the wrong course.

I have proposed a balanced budget that puts first things first. I believe we must maintain our sound economic strategy, and invest the surplus in long-term goals -- saving Social Security, saving and strengthening Medicare, modernizing it by providing a long overdue drug benefit, and continuing to meet our basic responsibilities in education, defense, the environment, biomedical research.

Tomorrow I will release a report that shows a great and growing need for prescription drug coverage. What the study shows is that 75 percent of our older Americans lack decent, dependable private-sector coverage of prescription drugs. That's three out of every four seniors. Clearly, America needs a prescription drug plan that is simple, universal and voluntary. Anyone who says we don't I believe is out of date and out of touch.

As I've described, my plan meets these national priorities, while paying off the debt by 2015; while investing in America's new markets, the places that have not yet felt our prosperity; and while providing substantial tax relief -- \$250 billion of it targeted to help families save for retirement, pay for child care, long-term care, for modern schools.

So let's be clear about something. We're not debating whether to have tax cuts or not -- we should have tax cuts, but tax cuts that provide for us first to save Social Security and Medicare, not undermine them; tax cuts we can afford, not ones that would demand drastic cuts in defense, education, agriculture, the environment; tax cuts in the national

interest, not special interest.

Now, these are the risks that are posed by the Republican tax plan that the House is about to vote on. Let me tell you what their plan would do. It would pile up \$3 trillion in debt over the next two decades, right when the baby boomers start to retire -- that's what it costs -- right when Social Security and Medicare feel the crunch.

Because of the cost of the tax plan over the next two decades, I should say what it doesn't do. It doesn't do anything to extend the solvency of Social Security, to extend the solvequire significant -- significant -- cuts from where we are today in education, defense, biomedical research, the environment and other critical areas.

If we don't save Social Security it's not because we can't. If we don't strengthen Medicare and add the prescription drug benefit, it's not because we can't. If we don't meet these clear national needs, it's because we choose not to do so. It will be because, instead, we choose to reward ourselves today by risking our prosperity tomorrow.

I hope Congress will make the right choice. When members cast their ballots on the Republican tax plan, they're really voting also on whether to save Social Security and Medicare. They're voting on whether to pay off the national debt for the first time in over 150 years -- something that would guarantee us lower interest rates, higher investment, more jobs, higher incomes, and for average citizens, lower home mortgage payments, car payments, credit card payments, college loan payments.

They're voting whether to meet our most pressing national priorities in education, defense, nearly every other domain in our people's lives. I think the choice is clear between the plan the Republican leadership has outlined and the national priorities of the American people. I hope we can still work together across party lines to save Social Security and Medicare, to safeguard our priorities and have the right kind of tax cut.

If Congress passes the wrong kind, of course, I will not sign it. I will not allow a risky plan to become law. And as I said, we now have six and a half years of evidence. This is not really a debate that's just about ideas without any evidence. We clearly know what works now, and we ought to stay with it.

As I said, I will work with any member of any party willing to put first things first. We can have a tax cut and do the right thing for the long-term in America. That is my commitment, and I hope that together we can fulfill it for our people.

Thank you very much. Helen.

Q Mr. President, in U.S. treaty relations, is it obligated to defend Taiwan militarily if it abandons the one China policy? And would the U.S. continue military aid if it pursues separatism?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let me say, first of all, a lot of those questions are governed by the Taiwan Relations Act, which we intend to honor. Our policy is clear: We favor the one China policy; we favor the cross-strait dialogues. The understanding we have had all along with both China and Taiwan is that the differences between them would be resolved peacefully. If that were not to be the case, under the Taiwan Relations Act we would be required to view it with the gravest concern.

But I believe that both China and Taiwan understand this. I believe that they want to stay on a path to prosperity and dialogue. And we have dispatched people today, as the morning press reports, to do what we can to press that case to all sides. This is something that we don't want to see escalate, and I believe that what Mr. Lee said yesterday was trying to move in that direction. We all understand how difficult this is, but I think that the pillars of the policy are still the right ones. The one China policy is right; the cross-strait dialogue is right; the peaceful approach is right. And neither side, in my judgment, should depart from any of those elements.

Q So we would still have to go to war with China if it decided to break away?

THE PRESIDENT: I will say what I've already said -- the Taiwan Relations Act governs our policy. We made it clear. And I have -- as you remember, a few years ago we had a physical expression of that, that we don't believe there should be any violent attempts to resolve this, and we would view it very seriously. But I don't believe there will be. I think that both sides understands what needs to be done.

Terry?

Q Mr. President, do you think that President Lee was unnecessarily provocative in trying to redefine the nature of the Taiwan-Chinese relationship? And is the United States trying to send a signal by delaying a Pentagon mission which was going to Taiwan to assess its air defense needs? And, further, finally, you said that you still believe in a one China policy. How do you address Senator Helms' criticism that that policy is "a puzzling fiction"?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't think it's a puzzling fiction. But if Senator Helms means that today they're not, in fact, unified, then that's true. But the Chinese tend to take a long view of these things and have made clear a sensitivity to the different system that exists on Taiwan, and a willingness to find ways to accommodate it, as they did in working with Hong Kong, and, perhaps, even going beyond that.

So I think the important thing is to let -- they need to take the time necessary to work this out between themselves in a peaceful way. That is clearly in both their interests. And I'm still not entirely sure, because I have read things which seem to resonate both ways on this, exactly what the Lee statements were entitled -- trying to convey.

But I think that both sides are now quite aware of the fact that they need to find a way to pursue their destinies within the framework that we have followed these last several years, which I might add, has allowed both places to prosper and to grow, to do better and to have more contacts, more investment, and underneath the rhetoric, quite a bit more reconciliation. So I would hope that we would stay with what is working and not depart from it.

Q Is that the meaning of the delay of the Pentagon mission to assess the --

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't think this was the best time to do something which might excite either one side or the other and imply that a military solution is an acceptable alternative. If you really think about what's at stake here, it would be unthinkable. And I want -- I don't want

to depart from any of the three pillars. I think we need to stay with one China; I think we need to stay with the dialogue; and I think that no one should contemplate force here.

Randy.

Q Economists have been calling on you to indicate now whether you intend to reappoint Alan Greenspan in order to avoid having the issue to become mired in election year politics and upsetting financial markets next year. Would you like to see the Chairman stay on, and has he given you any indication of his plans?

THE PRESIDENT: I have, as you know, enjoyed a very good relationship, both personally and professionally, with Mr. Greenspan. I think he has done a terrific job. I have no idea whether he would even be willing to serve another term. I will make the decision in a timely fashion. I do not expect it to become embroiled in election year politics; there's no evidence of that.

You heard -- I think the Vice President said yesterday or the day before that he thought he was doing an excellent job. So we believe that as long as the United States is fiscally responsible, then the Fed will respond to developments in our own economy and in the world economy in a way that is clear, transparent, and I think designed to keep our growth going. So I'm not concerned about it.

Peter, go ahead.

Q -- I think the Vice President indicated he was sending a signal by saying that Chairman Greenspan had been doing an excellent job. Do you endorse that interpretation?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know, all I know is he said he was doing a great job, and I agree with him.

Go ahead.

Q Mr. President, you mentioned the Kennedy tragedy at the beginning of the news conference. Could you please give us a better understanding of what the White House role has been in the conduct of the recovery operation and the decision-making on the release of information about it?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think that -- I am unaware of any role we have played in the decision-making of the release of information, except, let me say that today a lot of things are breaking in a hurry, and I believe there are some decisions that ought to be announced by the Kennedy family, and others that ought to be properly announced by either the Coast Guard or the NTSB.

So we have not tried -- to the best of my knowledge, had any role in the timing or substance of release of information. And we have had no role in the conduct of the operation except that I did talk to Admiral Larrabee, I think it was the day before yesterday, at a time when the operation might normally have ceased, and he said, I think we have a chance to find something else because of the equipment we have here, even though it's difficult and I'm inclined to believe because of the circumstances here and because who's involved that we ought to go on a little more. And I said that I would support it and defend it. And I think it was the right decision.

Q Mr. President, if you'll allow me to ask about two different topics. On the Kennedy search, sir, there have been conflicting reports about whether or not Mr. Kennedy's body has, in fact, been recovered. I understand that based upon the answer you just gave, that might not be a question that you'd want to address, but, perhaps, given the fact that there is this conflicting information you could answer that question.

And, secondly, sir, on this notion of a drug benefit, prescription drug benefit, you chided the Republicans about targeting tax cuts at the wealthy, saying that they're too steered in that direction. How do you reconcile that philosophically with allowing rich Americans, rich older Americans, to get a prescription drug benefit which even you just said this new study will show one in four don't need?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, it's voluntary. And most wealthy Americans are well taken care of under the present program they have and won't exercise it. So that's the first point I want to make.

The second thing I would like to say is I don't think most people know this, even some of you may have forgotten, but in the 11th hour of the deficit reduction package negotiations in 1993, in order to get up to \$500 billion in cuts in the deficit projected over five years -- we did much better, as all of you know -- the cap was taken off. The income cap was taken off of the Medicare tax, which means virtually every single upper-income person in America will pay far more into the Medicare program than they will ever draw out in health care or benefits.

They are making a net significant contribution today because, unlike Social Security taxes where there is still an earnings cap, there is no longer an earnings cap on Medicare. And I think a lot of folks have forgotten that -- so that in that sense, this is the most progressive program we have. The upper-income people, particularly once you get over about \$250,000 in income, they're paying far more into this program over the course of their life than they could ever draw out if they were sick every day from the time they're 65 on.

Q Sir, a question --

THE PRESIDENT: I just don't think I should make an announcement about that. I am aware of what the Coast Guard has done and what they have found as of five minutes before I came out here. But I simply -- I just don't think it's appropriate for me -- I'll be glad to comment on whatever they want to say, but I think I should leave it for them to talk.

Q Sir, you talk about how expensive the Republican tax cuts would be. But the Congressional Budget Office has now just come out with a report saying that even with their tax cuts, almost \$800 billion in tax cuts, they would save about \$277 billion over a 10-year period, whereby your program would save only about \$50 billion. That's about \$227 billion difference. How do you reconcile that? And, you know, people on the Hill listen to the CBO.

THE PRESIDENT: They listen to the CBO except where it's inconvenient for them, like the patients' bill of rights. The Republicans have freed us all now to question the CBO, since they ignored the CBO in the patients' bill of rights; they have discredited their own CBO.

Let me say, I haven't seen that CBO accounting. All I can tell

you is that all of our budget people were rolling their eyes and saying that it was a very creative study.

Let me just say this: You have six and a half years of experience with the numbers we have given you and the estimates we have made. And every single year, our numbers have not only been accurate, but we have done better than we said we would do -- every single year, for six and a half years now.

Our studies show that their tax cut over the next two decades will cost, first, a trillion dollars and then \$3 trillion in the second decade, and that -- then an enormous loss to the American people in interest savings. That is, we'll have to keep spending more and more of our tax money paying interest on the debt, and it will require huge cuts in education and defense and other things.

You cannot -- they simply cannot credibly make that statement. And they don't put any new money into the Medicare program. And they don't have a Medicare reform package out there. So unless they just simply propose to bankrupt all the teaching hospitals and a lot of the other hospitals in the country, and let the Medicare program wither away, as one of the previous leaders so eloquently put it -- they can't possibly finance this tax program without doing serious damage. I can't comment on the CBO study, but it doesn't make any sense to anybody I've talked to about it.

Q May I just follow up --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q The CBO estimates the cost of your Medicare reforms are more than twice what you say they are.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, again you have evidence. Let me just say this: In the 1997 Balanced Budget Agreement -- okay? -- and this is the reason all these teaching hospitals are in trouble today -- we agreed to a Medicare savings figure. And we said, okay, here is our health information -- this is what we do in the Executive Branch, we deal with these hospitals -- here are the changes you need to make in the Medicare program to achieve the savings that the Republicans and the Democrats in Congress and the White House agreed on.

And the CBO said, no, no, no, no, that won't come close; you need these changes plus these changes. And we said, okay, we're following the CBO, we put it in there. What happened? And that's one of the reasons the surplus is somewhat bigger than it otherwise would be -- the cuts in Medicare were far more severe, our numbers were right, their numbers were wrong and that's why you've got all these hospitals all over America, every place I go, talking about how they're threatened with bankruptcy.

So when it comes to estimating Medicare costs, again, we have evidence. And whenever there's been a difference between us and the CBO, we've been right and they've been wrong. That's all I can tell you. No serious person -- so what are they going to do about Medicare? They say our drug program will cost more -- they don't put a red cent into it. What are they going to do about it? Even if you don't have a drug program, if you adopt their tax cut program they won't be able to do anything to extend the solvency of Medicare and they will have to have huge cuts.

For them to produce those savings they are going to -- they can't even fund my defense budget, much less the one they say they want. They're going to have cuts in defense, cuts in education, cuts in the environment. That's all their savings assumed that they're going to stay with the present budget levels, which they, themselves, are trying to get out of even as we speak here today. So this is -- the American people are not -- I mean, this is not rocket science, this is arithmetic.

And we've been dealing with -- we went from creative supply-side mathematics to elemental arithmetic in 1993. And it has served us very well. And all I'm trying to do is stick with basic arithmetic and get this country out of debt, save Social Security and Medicare, provide this prescription drug benefit, keep us moving forward.

Q Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Next. Let me take John's first, then I'll take you, Sarah.

Q Sir, in your conversation with Chairman Arafat this morning, did you ask him to take any specific steps to advance what you believe is new momentum toward peace, and did you discuss with him his complaints yesterday that he found Prime Minister Barak's 15-month timetable unacceptable?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I told him only this. I said that -- I generally described my meetings with Prime Minister Barak to him. I told him that he was committed to working in partnership with Chairman Arafat and honoring any agreements that had been made to this point, and that any modifications they made going forward to the benefit of either or both sides would have to be done by mutual agreement; that I thought he was completely committed to resolve all the issues outstanding in the peace process in an expeditious manner. And what I urged him to do was to have this one-on-one meeting, hear him out, think it through, and if he wanted to talk to me again after the meeting occurred, that I would be happy to talk to him.

So I went out of my way not to describe Prime Minister Barak's proposals or to advocate or not advocate, but simply to say that I was convinced they were being made in complete good faith, and that the peace process would be revitalized, and whatever they did from here on out is something that they would do together. And I think he felt good about that. And I did say, after you have the meeting, if you want to talk again about this -- I'll be glad to talk to you. And he said he did. So that's where we are.

Sarah. Go ahead, Sarah.

Q Sir, your microphone is not working apparently; it seems like you're talking very low, we can barely hear you. But in the meantime, don't you think it would be a good idea if we announced for the country's sake the list of conferences to be held at the White House each day, and the list of the people whom the President has appointments with?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I never thought about it. Don't you have a list of the conferences we have every day here?

Q No, indeed. We do -- and what if we find out you haven't any?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think I ought to talk to our folks about it, but I will consider that.

Go ahead.

Q Will you be taking any concrete contributions with you to the Balkan summit on investment next week? And you've said that you would give only humanitarian aid to Yugoslavia as long as Milosevic is in power. Will you have any trouble defining that? Will that cause any problems in distinguishing between humanitarian and other aid?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let me say that I hope very much that there will be some positive, concrete commitments that come out of the meeting that we're going to have. I do not believe -- I do not believe we can achieve the future we want in the Balkans and avoid future ethnic conflicts unless there is a unifying vision which both brings the Balkan states closer together in their economic and political self-interests, and then brings the region as a whole closer to Europe.

And so I think that we have to have some incentives to move in that direction. And there are direct -- there are also indirect things the United States can do to help to contribute to that goal. And because of all the other things that have been going on -- you know it's been a very busy two or three weeks -- we haven't actually had an opportunity to sit down and go through what our options are, so I can't give you a more specific answer.

But I will say this -- if what we have done in Bosnia, and what we have done in Kosovo, is to have lasting benefits, we have got to find a way to create closer unity among the Balkan states themselves, and then with the region and Europe. And that is what I am working on.

And what was the second question you asked?

Q On the humanitarian aid, how will you define it?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes. There may be -- frankly, there may be some differences of opinion. As you know, I tend to take a rather narrow view of it because I don't think that we should, in effect, reward Mr. Milosevic's political control by doing things which are not humanitarian in nature. But based on the virtual daily reports I get about where we all are on this and where we are operating in Kosovo, I now no longer expect them to be big debates. I don't expect there will be a big difference of opinion.

Yes, go ahead, John.

Q Mr. President, the House of Representatives appears to be on the verge of terminating funding for the F-22 fighter. Will the White House fight hard for full funding for that program, even if it means sacrificing other Pentagon airplane programs or even pay for servicemen?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't think we should sacrifice the pay for our service personnel because we now are getting back in the ball game in recruitment. You know, we've really been -- the good economy and the increased deployments and the low pay all combined we're making it hard for us to both recruit and retain people. And the people are still the most important part of our military -- their quality and their training and their morale and their commitment and the condition of their families. So I don't think that.

Now, the Congress every year puts other things into the defense budget which are not priorities for the Pentagon, and are priorities for the Congress. We can fund the F-22, we can fund the plane without compromising the basic priorities of our national defense within the funds set aside, and that is what I will fight to do. I think it would be a mistake to abandon the project. I think it has real potential to add to our national defense. I have always supported it and I hope that it can be preserved.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. You had some fun, recently, with George W. Bush and his slogan of "compassionate conservatism." But you went beyond the notion that he's not offering many details as policy, and seemed to ridicule his slogan and even question his sincerity. Were you just trying to help Mr. Gore's candidacy or were you taking the opportunity maybe to just needle the leading Republican candidate?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I was just having a little fun. (Laughter.) You know, that's a long time -- if we don't have any laughs it's going to be a very tedious struggle between now and November of 2000.

Let me say this. I think that every person struggles to find a phrase or something that will sort of stand for what he or she is trying to do. So I was really just having a little fun.

I think the most important thing is that all the candidates make their positions clear on the great debates going on now, and make their positions clear on what they would do if they got the job. To me, that's the most important thing. You know, I am not involved in this campaign as a candidate, and I have a full-time job, so I'm not involved in any sort of full-time consulting role. (Laughter.) So I look at this -- I look at this more from the point of view of the average American voter -- what will change the lives of America.

For example, every candidate should tell us, are you for the patients' bill of rights are you for closing the gun show loophole; are you for raising the minimum wage; are you for the House Republican tax plan, or do you favor our plan on Social Security and saving Social Security and Medicare and making America debt-free and having a smaller tax cut that enables us to continue to fund education and defense and these other things? What are you going to do if you get elected?

To me, the best thing the Vice President has done is to talk about dramatically intensifying the war on cancer, making pre-school universal, increasing access to college by helping people save without tax consequences; what he would do to make America a safer country, what he would do in communities to have faith-based organizations cooperate with governments more. I think these are interesting ideas about how you build on the progress the country has made the last six and a half years.

So I would say to everyone -- you know, use whatever slogans you want, but tell us where you stand. I think that's the most important thing.

Susan?

Q Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I'll come over here. I know I'm left leaning, but I will give you -- (laughter) --

Q Mr. President, the economy is going great. In a new USA

Today-CNN poll this week, your approval rating was at a very healthy 58 percent. But that same poll showed that by 50 percent to 38 percent, Americans said they wanted to see a change from Clinton administration policies -- not a continuation of them. What do you think accounts for that sentiment for change, and do you think it means that you present something of a mixed blessing to Mrs. Clinton and Vice President Gore in their campaigns next year?

THE PRESIDENT: I think what that means people think things are going well, but they want a change in policy. I think that's right. If you asked me that question, and you worded it in that way, I'd be in the 50 percent, because I think that -- my own view is that, particularly in a dynamic time, where things are changing, you should want continued change. But is change -- the question is, should we change in a way that builds on what has been done and goes beyond it -- which is what I would argue -- or should you change and go back to the policies we were following when we had \$290-billion deficits and we averaged over 7 percent unemployment for 12 years. I mean, I think that's really the question the American people have to ask themselves.

I think change is good. The great thing about this country is that it works best when it's sort of in a perpetual stage of renewal. So I would, myself, as a citizen, I would vote against somebody who said, vote for me and I'll keep it just like it is; everything that Bill Clinton did is exactly what I'll do. I would vote against that candidate, because I do not believe that is the right thing to do.

But what I think we should do is we should build on the progress of the last six years and go beyond it, and not adopt a completely different approach which has been proven not to work. So all I want the American people to do is to remember what it was like before, think what it's like now, recognize that ideas and policies have consequences. And the American people usually get it right; that's why we're all still around here after more than 200 years.

Q -- (inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q -- for Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Gore?

THE PRESIDENT: No, because I -- no, he has done -- look at what the Vice President's done. He's staked out new issues here. He said, here's how I'm going to change what we're doing in cancer research; here's how I'm going to change what we're doing in education; here's how I'm going to change what we're doing in crime -- but not to reverse what we've done, but to build on it and go beyond it. So I think that's very, very -- that's the sort of thing that's worthy of debate. That's not the same; that is change.

What the American people have to decide is what kind of change do they want. Do they want to build on what has worked for the last six and a half years, or do they want to abandon it and go back to what failed them for 12 years before. That will be the decision they have to make.

Yes, go ahead.

Q In your last press conference, sir, with Prime Minister Ehud Barak, you mentioned you wanted better, normalized relations with Syria. Now, have you received any response, positive response or indication from Syria towards that? And, on Iran, can you share with us

the administration's views of -- events and administrations in Iran?
Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, on Syria let me say, the only thing I can tell you is that the statements, at least, that have been coming out of Syria have been quite encouraging in terms of the regard that President Assad seems to have for Prime Minister Barak, and the willingness, the openness that there is to negotiating and moving toward peace. So I'm encouraged by that.

And on Iran, frankly, I'm reluctant to say anything for fear that it will be used in a way that's not helpful to the forces of openness and reform. I think that people everywhere, particularly younger people, hope that they will be able to pursue their religious convictions and their personal dreams in an atmosphere of greater freedom, that still allows them to be deeply loyal to their nation. And I think the Iranian people obviously love their country and are proud of its history and have enormous potential. And I just hope they find a way to work through all this, and I believe they will.

Q You mentioned the patients' bill of rights. It seems like that was an argument by both parties over providing more for people who already are lucky enough to have health insurance. And, in fact, neither party dealt with some very fundamental issues that energized you and the First Lady five and six years ago. The question is, with such a robust economy and the budget surpluses, if not now, when, and if not you, who, would provide the leadership to provide for those folks?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, but I think the bigger question is how. That is, it is true that just as we've predicted in 1993 and 1994, that the percentage of people who have health insurance on the job is going down, just as we said it would, if nothing was done. So what we have tried to do is to isolate discrete populations that seem to be most in need and try to offer them help.

In the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, we reached bipartisan agreement on a proposal that would fund providing health insurance for up to 5 million more children through state-designed programs. Now, I've been a little disappointed -- and I'm not being critical of any of the states, either, here -- but I've been a little disappointed that the uptake on the program has been a little slow. That is, I would have thought by now we'd have almost 3 million of those 5 million children enrolled already, because we've got the money there, and we're well behind that.

So we are looking at whether there are things that we can do at the national level to work with the states to simplify access to the children's health insurance programs that the states have set up. But -- and I also had a talk with Senator Kennedy, the other day who believes that for little or no more extra money, we could actually adjust the program and take in several million more children. So the children are the biggest group.

Then, I have a proposal, as you know, that's part of my Medicare reform proposal that I didn't mention today, but I want to reiterate it, that would allow the most vulnerable group of people without health insurance, people between the ages of 55 and 65, to buy into the Medicare system in a way that would not compromise the integrity of the system. So I think that is quite important.

In addition to that, there are a lot of states -- there are some

states -- Tennessee was the first state to do this under the former governor -- they started it -- which are allowing lower-income working families to buy into their Medicaid programs on a sliding scale.

So if all these things were done, we would dramatically reduce the number of people without health insurance and we'll eventually probably get down to, if we keep pushing in this direction, get down to the point where the largest group of people without health insurance are young, single people who believe that they're going to live forever and be healthy forever and don't want to bear the cost. And we'll have to think about, then, what to do.

But I think the best thing to do is try to get as many kids as we can covered, and then try to get these people who are out of the work force who are older, but they're not old enough to get Medicare, to get them at least where they can all afford on a sliding scale to buy into the Medicare program.

Go ahead, Scott.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. On the Kennedy tragedy, sir, will you authorize the Navy to participate in a burial at sea ceremony? Why do you believe it's justified to spend so many federal resources on this tragedy? And, finally, sir, I wonder if you would give us your thoughts on Mr. Kennedy's last visit here to the White House. I understand you and the First Lady took him on a tour.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we have received -- I have received no official word, personal word from the family what burial arrangements they want. Until they make a statement about it, I just don't feel that I can say anything.

Secondly, I will say that until just a couple of days ago the recovery efforts -- the rescue, then the recovery efforts that were undertaken were consistent with what would have been done in any other case. Because the Coast Guard felt that they had the capacity to succeed in this if they had a few more days, and because of the role of the Kennedy family in our national lives, and because of the enormous losses that they have sustained in our lifetimes, I thought it was appropriate to give them a few more days. And if anyone believes that was wrong, the Coast Guard is not at fault; I am. It was because I thought it was the right thing to do under the circumstances.

Now, you asked about -- John Kennedy had actually not been back to the White House since his father was killed, until I became President. First, he was on an advisory committee that made a report to me and he came back to the Oval Office, where he saw the desk that he took the famous picture in, coming through the gate, for the first time since he was a little boy.

And then last year -- maybe you would have a better memory than I would, but it seems to me it was last May, when we had the event at the White House celebrating the series that HBO did on the Apollo program. Do you remember they did a series on the space program that was done after the movie came out? And Tom Hanks came, a lot of people came. And he was invited because of his father's role in starting the space program. And he and Carolyn came. And afterward I asked them if they would like to go upstairs, and he said he would. So I took him upstairs and showed him the residence, which he'd not seen since he was a tiny boy.

And I showed him some of my -- the memorabilia that I had from his father's service. I have a picture of his father speaking to the Irish Parliament, and a number of other things which he thought were very interesting. And we took a -- we had a very nice evening. And I sent him the pictures from it. And then, in return, he sent me a signed copy of his favorite picture of his father, which is now upstairs. It's John Kennedy campaigning in Virginia, in Charlottesville in 1960. It's quite a lovely picture -- interesting picture.

But it was a nice night. I think that he really wanted to kind of come to terms with all of it. And I think he and Carolyn, they were delightful young people, and they had a great time here that night. And Hillary and I loved having them here. It was quite a great night.

Q To just follow on that, sir, just one question, if I may. Is there anything that Mr. Kennedy said to you that night that particularly struck you?

THE PRESIDENT: We just had a friendly conversation. You know, I knew him pretty well by then. We'd been -- I met him years ago when he was a law student, doing a summer internship with Mickey Kantor's law firm out in Los Angeles, long before I ever thought I'd be here and before I ever thought we'd have any other contacts. He just happened to be -- Mickey asked me if I'd speak to his law clerks, because I was in LA to give an education speech, and I went by and visited with them and he was there. And we had been together on many occasions since then.

The thing that struck me was I thought he was -- he said he was glad to be back. And I think he -- he was a very deliberate person, as many people have noticed, about when he would be publicly exposed and all of that. He had his mother's care for having a private life. And I think that he had not -- I'm not sure he had really felt he wanted to come back to the White House before he did. But especially in light of everything that's happened, I'm glad he had the chance to come back here one more time and see the residence and know where he was when he was a little boy. I'm glad he did that. I'm grateful that that happened.

Yes, go ahead. Yes, yes, please.

Q On Colombia, the Pastrana administration are asking the United States for \$500 million to support the military against the guerrillas. Is your administration ready to respond to that request? And, also, the Colombians are asking for more direct intervention from the United States. Are you considering this possibility? And, also, Mexico, you're going to meet with President Zedillo in October. And the Mexican government is still rejecting the extraditions of major drug lords. What are you going to ask him -- you're going to get assurance from him to extradite these big narcotic traffickers to the United States?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you know, we had no extraditions between Mexico and the United States for a long time, and we've actually had some now. So we're moving in the right direction. And President Zedillo and I have been pretty successful in continuing to move our relationship in the right direction, so we'll work on that.

On Colombia, I'm not prepared to make any kind of dollar commitment today. But let me say, I have stayed in close touch with President Pastrana, and I admire the fact that he has really thrown himself into trying to end the civil conflicts in Colombia, to stop the insurgency. The people in the United States have a real interest in that

because I think that until the civil discord in Colombia is brought to an end, it is going to be much, much harder for us to restrain the activities of the narco-traffickers there, and their reach.

So, in addition to wanting a neighbor and a democracy in Latin America to be free of the kind of violence and heartbreak that the Colombian people have undergone because of this, it is also very much in our national security interest to do what we can, if we can be helpful in ending the civil conflict so that Colombia can be about the business of freeing itself of the influence of the narco-traffickers in ways that would be good for Colombians and good for us as well.

Q Another question about the presidential race. Aside from asking George W. Bush to come forward and give specifics on the issues that you mentioned, could you tell us what you find objectionable about his trying to present a new moderate face for his party, just like you did for the Democrats? And could you tell us whether you're worried whether he will figure out how the Republicans can occupy the center of American politics?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q You don't think he can?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no, I don't think I'll answer those questions. (Laughter.) I will say -- no, look, let me say again, I wouldn't even agree with the characterization you gave of my first answer.

When I ran for President, in 1991, the first thing I did was tell the American people what I thought was going on in our country and what I would do. And if you remember, the late Senator Paul Tsongas and I were actually almost ridiculed at the time because we both put out these very detailed plans of what we would do. If you go back and get one of those plans now, you'll see that virtually everything we said we'd do we did do, except for the things we tried to do and were defeated on.

And my view is that there are a lot of things that count in a presidential election toward a successful presidency, but it is -- that go beyond specific issues, and judgment plays a role in it, and crises will always come up and things can be learned and all that. But it really matters where you stand on the big issues that everybody knows about that are going on right now, and it matters where we're going in the future.

So that's the only point I want to make. And I think any -- I would say that applies to every candidate. I don't want to answer the questions you ask me because that's not my job. My job is not to handicap this horse race, not to comment on it, not to comment on the candidates. My job is to work for the American people. But I'm going to answer these questions from the point of view of Joe Citizen. That's -- every political question you asked me from now on, I'm going to pretend that I'm living back in Little Rock already and I'm working on my presidential library and I'm sitting here as a voter saying, where do they stand, what will they do -- all of them. And I do believe the Vice President has done the best job of telling the American people what he would do and -- to go back to Susan's formulation -- how he would change the country in a positive way.

George.

Q Mr. President, as the nation has celebrated the 30th anniversary of the moon landing, a lot of the former astronauts have lamented that no President after Kennedy set a kind of national goal like President Kennedy did of landing on the moon. Do you think that -- in your view, is the country not receptive today to that kind of goal-setting by a President, or is it something a President should do, set a goal of landing on Mars?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we are planning to land on Mars. But I think -- for one thing, when I became President, the space program was actually in peril. And we -- the space station was certainly at risk. And I have fought for it and I believe in it. And one of the things I talked to -- Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins were in to see me yesterday, and we talked about where we could go with this. And Dan Goldin was there, the NASA Administrator; and Dr. Neal Lane, my Science Advisor. And we talked about how we could use the coming of the millennium as -- you know, the First Lady sponsored all these other lectures here. And I told him about Stephen Hawking's lecture and what he said. And we talked yesterday about how we could set some goals for the space program, capture the imagination of the American people and broaden the support for it.

And one of the things that I suggested that I think would be quite helpful that we're going to work on now is what we can do to dramatize for the American people -- you mentioned Mars, but I think what is more likely to capture the imagination of the American people are the benefits to us here on Earth of continued advances in space. And some of them, particularly in the health field, are likely to be breath-taking. They're principally in the area of the environment and health.

So I asked our people to start working on that and they said they would be willing to help us. I have to tell you that it was a great day for me yesterday to have them come by the White House. They also gave me a moon rock, by the way -- but only on loan. (Laughter.) And the moon rock is 3.6 billion years old. So when I feel very tired, I'll look at it and feel young again. (Laughter.)

Yes, go ahead. We had an Irish question first, I promised. Go ahead, what's the Irish question?

Q Thank you, sir. Given the --

THE PRESIDENT: You want to ask one, too?

Q We both have a -- given the various meetings underway with Mo Mowlam here, and George Mitchell there, has any progress been made on the Irish situation? And is one side more to blame than the other on it?

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Why don't we take both Irish questions at once. What's your Irish question?

Q Last week, you seemed to kind of get fired up when you were talking to the teenagers from Colorado. You said that the politicians in Northern Ireland were behaving akin to school children. Do you feel, after all the work that you've done on this project, that perhaps it was misplaced and you should have perhaps pushed in a place more like Africa, where they have thousands of people dying from ethnic strife, instead of 3,500 over 30 years?

Q And if I can have a third Irish question, what role, if

any, do you expect to play, Mr. President, in breaking the deadlock?

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, let me answer the Irish questions, then I'll come back to the "should we have done something else."

I've talked to Senator Mitchell, and he is willing to spend some time -- he can't go back full-time for another year or two, but I'd like to put this in some -- at least I'd like to tell you how I look at it.

Obviously, I am very disappointed at the breakdown of the process here. But I do think it's important to note that neither side wants to abandon the Good Friday Agreement. And that's very important. It's also important to note that everybody agrees on what their responsibilities are and what the other side's responsibilities are, and everybody agrees that it all has to be done by a date certain.

So they have agreed to break out the two areas causing problems, the decommissioning and the standing up to the executive, and try to figure out how they can unlock that, and Mo Mowlam, as you pointed out, is working hard on it, and they've asked Senator Mitchell to come back and do some work on it, and my instinct is that it will be resolved.

Now, let me say in terms of your characterization, here's the problem. To the outsiders -- I told the parties that to the outsiders -- no one, none of us outside, even somebody like me that's been so involved in this, no one will understand if this thing breaks down over who goes first; that that did sound like the kind of argument that young people have, you know -- who goes first.

Underneath that, there's something deeper: The Protestants are afraid that they IRA will never disarm if they let the Sinn Fein go into the executive branch, and the IRA do not believe -- since the agreement did not require decommissioning as a condition of getting into the executive branch, they don't want to have to spend the rest of their lives being told that it wasn't the vote of the people, it wasn't the Good Friday Accord, it was what the Unionists and Great Britain did to force them to give up their arms that got them to disarm. They believe that would, in effect, require them to disavow what they've done for 30 years.

And what they're saying is, when we surrender our arms, we're surrendering to our people. Our people voted for this. We are surrendering to the will of the people that we represent. So when you put it in that textured way on both sides, it makes it clear why it becomes a difficult issue. And I can't think of anybody better to try to work through it than George Mitchell, because he's got it all in his head and he's put three years into it. But my instinct is that we will get this worked out.

Now, you asked about did I think we had misplaced our energies. I don't think so. We have -- for one thing, we don't have a stronger partner in the world than Great Britain, and for another, we don't have a bigger ethnic group in America than the Irish, and we're tied by blood and emotion to the Irish struggle.

I also think that it has enormous symbolism, beyond the size of the country and the number who have died. And if it can be resolved, I think it will give great impetus to the forces of peace throughout the world. So I don't believe for a moment we made a mistake.

But let me also say I think we should be more involved in Africa

and I've tried to involve us more in Africa. I did everything I could to head off that civil war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. It's not a civil war, they are two separate countries, but they once were together and they're basically now arguing over the divorce settlement. And I don't mean to trivialize it in that characterization. And we are still actively involved in trying to stop that.

Reverend Jackson played a significant role in trying to end the awful carnage in Sierra Leone, and I'm very grateful for that. We're now working, and we're able to work with Nigeria to try to stabilize the region. We are training African militaries and the Africa Crisis Response Corps, so that we can, hopefully, prevent further carnage. So I believe the United States should be more involved in Africa.

And, of course, the announcement that the Vice President made on our behalf the other day of our new AIDS initiative in some ways may be the most important thing we can do to save lives there.

So I agree that we should be more involved. But I don't agree that we misplaced our energies in Ireland. I'm proud of every late-night phone call and every frustrating hour I've spent on it.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, go ahead.

Q -- can I ask about you --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't want to talk about me.

Q Oh, come on.

THE PRESIDENT: I'm not a candidate for anything.

Go ahead, what? Go ahead. All right, one more.

Q Listen, Mr. President, with due respect, in another development, I know that you are for Africa, and you know that I support -- Africa, my friend, the President of the Dominican Republic -- we are Afro-Latino. But I am not concerned at this moment about Mars. I am concerned about place where I have been for 20 years, the White House, that is going to celebrate 200 year next year. I wonder if you would tell the people of the United States what you are going to plan for that big celebration?

And another thing, Mr. President -- I am disgusted with you -- you have been hiding something extraordinary -- the performance -- or the trade promotional coordinating committee that has been carried out in the last year -- are the participants in the prospective of this economy. Why don't you speak about the success of that initiative? It's a sin that you -- you talk about a lot of things that is -- another thing that is good for America and the world.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, a lot of the things that are good for America don't make good news for them, you see.

Q And I have a follow-up. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: No, let me just say -- (laughter) -- a follow-up? (Laughter.) Now, that's really good. That is really -- Oh, God, is that good.

Let me just say that we will have a lot of celebrations of the 200th birthday of the White House next year, and it's neat that coincides with the first year of the new century and the millennium. So we'll have -- I'm not prepared to announce them yet, because I want others who deserve more credit than I do to be able to do that. But it will be a signal honor for us to be living here in that year, and we'll be able to do a lot -- and I hope we'll have even more American citizens coming to the White House next year to be a part of it.

Go ahead. Just that follow up -- that showed a lot of guts.
(Laughter.) If this is a follow up, I'll give you another question.
(Laughter.)

Q Sir, you've stressed that you have plenty to do, and yet for some time, your political career has enjoyed the benefits of support from two people in particular -- the Vice President and the First Lady -- two people who are now in a position to expect some support from you. I'm wondering what you feel you owe those two people in terms of political support, and as you plan your schedule in the weeks and months ahead, how you'll balance that assistance against your job as President, and finally, how you personally are adjusting to what people might think is an interesting shift in role.

Q I have a follow-up to his question. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Now, I believe that. (Laughter.)

Well, I will do whatever I'm asked to do, basically. I'll try to be helpful. And if I can be helpful, I will be. But I think the best thing I can do for anyone who generally shares our ideas, is part of our party, trying to move the country forward, is to continue to be a good President and take care of our country.

But I don't mind hard work and I don't mind long hours, and I find myself, apparently unlike some of my predecessors -- but just read what you all say about it -- but I don't feel myself winding down, I feel myself keying up. I want to do more. I want to try to make sure that I give the American people as much as I can every day. So I've got plenty of energy and I'll do whatever I'm asked to do.

I owe them a great deal. I think Al Gore -- everybody in this room knows that he's had far more responsibility and gotten more done than any Vice President in history. Nobody's ever had a role that even approximates that. I don't think the American people know that yet, but I know that. And he deserves a lot of credit for what he's done and he has my friendship and my support. But I also think that it's a mixed blessing, as you say, because people want to see any Vice President out there on his own. If you go back and look at where Richard Nixon was in 1959, you will see the same sort of thing. So I think I see this as a rhythmic process.

I think he'll do fine. But the reason I think that has nothing to do with the questions you ask me. The reasons I think that are, A, he's a good man with a good record, but most importantly, he's out there telling the American people how he would change the country for the better. And I think that's important.

I did an interview and I talked about Hillary and this -- if she decides to do this I will do whatever I can do. And if she's successful I will happily go to the Senate spouses meeting if that's part of the job.

I have never known anybody who didn't run for office who was a more effective, more consistently committed, completely passionate public citizen than her. So if she decides to do it, and if the people of New York decide that they want her to do it, that's a decision for them to make and they have to deal with that, and she's trying to deal with that, you know, the whole question of moving there.

It is true that shortly after we came here I said, you get to decide where we live from now on for the rest of our lives. And she said, I want to go to New York -- in, like, '93. This is just something that happened later. So I'll be dividing my time between home -- I'm going to go home and build my library and build my center -- I'll divide my time between there and New York, whatever she does about this Senate race.

But if I can help her in any way, I will, because I think it would be a great thing for the country -- not only because of what I owe her, because she just -- what she knows and how she's lived and what she's done. I mean, it's very unusual to find somebody like that who has that much knowledge and background and passion all packed into one place. I mean, I know that you think I'm a biased observer, but I think I could support it with evidence.

Go ahead, Bill.

Q In that same vein, sir -- (laughter) -- as the spotlight shifts from you to your Vice President and to your wife, are you likely to be content, drifting slowly offstage, or do you think that someday you will want to run for office, some office again? Or are you willing to tell us this afternoon, sir, that you will never again run for elective office?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't have any idea. (Laughter.) Really, I don't know. Let me just say this. I love this job. I love it. Even on the bad days -- you can do something good for the country, you can do something good for the future. I have loved doing this. And I have given it every ounce of my energy and ability and judgment. And I feel very fortunate. But we have a system that I, frankly, agree with, even though I'm in pretty good shape -- we have a system that says a President gets two terms and then the President has to go find something else to do with his life. And there are lots of other worthy things to do.

And I was a very happy person before I became President. I never have had any trouble finding something interesting to do that I believed in. And I will do my best to use the opportunity and the gift the American people gave me to serve in this position to be a useful citizen of my country and the world for the rest of my life, and I have no doubt that there will be some way I can do that. And I'm, frankly, kind of excited about it. I mean, it's a new challenge. I'll have to think in a different way and do a different way.

Will I miss a lot of the things about this job? Yes. I'll even miss all of you, believe it or not. But I'm just grateful that I've had the chance to serve and that the results have been good for our people and for our country and I think for the world.

And, you know, that's part of life. Life has its rhythms. And the people that are most satisfied and most happy in life take the rhythms of life and make the most of them, instead of sitting around moping and wishing the rhythms were something other than they are. That's just not the way the life works. And, listen, I'm way ahead and I'm very grateful.

Thank you very much.

END 3:45 P.M. EDT

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RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Richard Socarides (CN=Richard Socarides/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

CREATION DATE/TIME:26-JUL-1999 10:08:09.00

SUBJECT: Commentary: HRC and Al Gore

TO: Elizabeth J. Potter (CN=Elizabeth J. Potter/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: jtrammel@hillandknowlton.com (jtrammel@hillandknowlton.com [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Philip G Dufour (CN=Philip G Dufour/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

----- Forwarded by Richard Socarides/WHO/EOP on 07/26/99
10:07 AM -----

Doug.Case@sdsu.edu
07/26/99 12:54:00 AM

Record Type: Record

To: Richard Socarides@EOP
cc:
Subject: Commentary: HRC and Al Gore

Forwarded Message From: GHunt1234@aol.com

I was amused to hear Elizabeth Birch state that while Mr. Bradley had voted all the right ways on gay and lesbian issues while in office, he &is not a stand-out 8 on gay and lesbian issues." Bill Bradley may not be the answer, but if we are going to make comparisons let's compare him to the Clinton/Gore administration: Giving Gore a free ride hardly benefits our community. Remember and consider this:

Clinton/Gore Administration signed legislation denying HIV+ service members health benefits after leaving the service despite their publicly stated opposition to such legislation (it was later repealed).

Clinton/Gore Administration promised a White House Conference on HIV/AIDS once they got elected. It wasn't until the fourth year of their first term that they got around to it. Meanwhile, the Administration has White House Conferences on . . . Tourism.

More Service Members are kicked out annually from the Service for being Homosexual now than before the "Don't Ask, Don't Tell" policy as a result of drastic increases in witch hunts.

Clinton/Gore declined to attend the 1993 March on Washington for Gay, Lesbian and Transgendered Rights.

AIDS activist protested Reagan's White House policies on HIV/AIDS by sitting in silent protest on Pennsylvania Avenue. Clinton/Gore merely closed Pennsylvania Avenue.

Clinton/Gore administration signed Congressional legislation that restricted Domestic Partner benefits authorized by the DC city council.

Clinton/Gore administration signed Congressional legislation that forbid needle exchange programs in the District of Columbia even though City Council passed such legislation.

Clinton/Gore administration declined to file a "friend of the Court" brief challenging Colorado's Amendment 2, the amendment that would forbid state and local governments in Colorado from ever considering laws protecting gays and lesbians by stating there is no Constitution federal interest in the case. The Supreme Court disagreed and overturned the homophobic legislation.

In *RENO, ATTORNEY GENERAL OF THE UNITED STATES, et al. v. AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION et al.*, the Clinton/Gore administration defended two provisions of the Communications Decency Act of 1996 that were later overturned by the Supreme Court.

The Clinton/Gore Presidential Advisory Council in 1996 called on the White House to show "greater courage and leadership" in taking steps to prevent HIV transmission and to protect people with the virus from discrimination according to reports in The New York Times.

Clinton/Gore promised an all out 'Manhattan-project' research effort to find a cure for AIDS. After 7 years and thousands dead, the only Manhattan project is Hillary Rodham's trips to New York.

After 1992 promises for a powerful AIDS CZAR to lead this nation's war on AIDS, Clinton/Gore set up a powerless AIDS Policy Office that serves mainly as a public relations bureau for the White House.

Clinton/Gore fired Surgeon General Joycelyn Elders for saying that masturbation is safe sex.

Clinton/Gore have performed practically no oversight as millions of AIDS dollars have been misused and embezzled by AIDS Fat Cats and Clinton/Gore political supporters, including Puerto Rican Governor Pedro Rossello (Gore's reported choice to head HHS)

Clinton/Gore signed into law the Defense of Marriage Act in 1996, citing "moral" objections to same-sex marriage, and ran boasting campaign ads in 1996.

Clinton/Gore retreated from support of needle exchange, condemning tens of thousands of IDUs, their partners, and their children, to death.

Clinton/Gore signed into law travel restrictions and an immigration ban for

HIV+ non-citizens, resulting in deportations, boarder checks, and keeping hundreds of HIV-infected Haitians fleeing repression confined in squalid detention camps, until a court ordered their release.

After promising to support universal health care in their 1992 campaign, Clinton/Gore offered a reform plan in 1993 which was a gift to the largest insurance companies. Clinton/Gore's "managed care" proposal would have excluded many Americans and offered "high-risk" communities inferior care. Clinton/Gore and Hillary Rodham continue to lead the fight against a single-payer, Canadian-style system.

Clinton/Gore oppose sick and dying patient's use of medical marijuana -- and have directed the Department of Justice to block the enactment of DC's Initiative 59, a medical marijuana ballot measure.

Clinton/Gore signed into law the 1996 Welfare Reform Act, eliminating financial relief for millions of children and thousands of people with AIDS.

Clinton/Gore's Antiterrorism Act weakened habeas corpus rules, allowing secret evidence to be entered in certain court cases, and authorized more than double the number of wiretaps of the Reagan and Bush administrations.

Clinton/Gore dropped nominee Lani Guinere to the nation's top civil rights post, because of her support for proportional representation and other electoral strategies that would grant queers and other minorities increased representation in government.

The Clinton Administration, under Gore's lead, now defends the "right" of corporate drug profiteers to impose name-brand prices on nations like South Africa, India, and Thailand, where the epidemic has devastated populations too poor to afford expensive drugs.

I'm not sure who the best candidate is yet, but I think an early, automatic embracement of Al Gore is misguided, counterproductive and hardly provides us with leverage to effect social policy and real change. It's just another example, in my opinion, of how HRC is so out of touch with our community.

Below is Mubarak S. Dahir's article in the July 22-28 issue of the Boston's Bay Windows regarding Al Gore and HRC. Thanks to Michael Petrelis for forwarding it.

July 22 - July 28, 1999
Bay Windows
Boston, MA

Hey, Mr. Gore, not so fast! Buy me a drink first!
by Mubarak S. Dahir

It ,s 16 months before the next presidential election, but as a gay voter, I ,m already bored.

In many ways, a recently-held gay and lesbian fund-raiser for Al Gore, headed by wife Tipper, reflected a lot of the frustrations I already feel, and am sure will only intensify as the election draws closer.

Historically, 16 months prior to a presidential election is too early for voters of any ilk to be interested, much less bored. But in today ,s

political climate, it ,s never too early. News reports show that front runners in both parties have already raised about a gazillion bucks for their presidential campaigns. Indeed, raising all that money is precisely what has allowed some of them, such as Texas Governor George W. Bush, to be anointed a front runner. And Democratic front runner Al Gore has not only raised a truck-load of money, he ,s apparently already spent a lot of it, too.

Which only means, of course, that the veep ,s gotta , get out there and raise even more. And that ,s exactly what wife Tipper was doing in mid July in Washington at a fund-raising event the Associated Press dubbed the capital ,s first presidential fundraiser aimed at gay and lesbian voters.

Tipper told a clap-happy audience that &all people, regardless of sexual orientation, should be able to be a part of a loving relationship in a family without fear of recrimination or discrimination. 8 She promised if elected president, her husband would &fight for your dreams. 8 Quickly catching what could have turned into a political faux pax, she corrected herself by adding he would &fight for our dreams. 8 Tipper picked up an estimated \$150,000 in change at the fund-raiser.

On the surface, the event and the words of the Second Lady seem as if they should be encouraging to gays and lesbians: We ,re considered important enough to be courted early on in the political process, and everything that Tipper said was applause-approved. And, hey, the ridiculous sums of money it takes to get elected in this country is independent of the question of gay and lesbian rights, so better to be a part of it than left out, right?

My worry is that, despite the appearances, gay and lesbian voters are going to be left out anyway.

For example, while everything Tipper said at the event may have been given a thumbs up, not everything her husband is saying and doing deserves the same. For example, Tipper cleverly used the word &family 8 in addressing gay and lesbian relationships. But her husband has already said he does not believe gay and lesbian unions deserve the same status as heterosexual marriages. As soon as I heard the words fall out of Tipper ,s mouth, I couldn ,t help but be cynical that this was jut another example of the husband-and-wife team playing good cop-bad cop and sending coded messages to different audiences: Al trying to assure his hetero masses he ,s not a leftist loony; Tipper trying to assuage the gay and lesbian true believers that she and the presidential wanna-be will not forsake them.

Sure, the game is nothing new, especially for gay and lesbian voters so taken for granted by a Democratic party that, despite the Log Cabin Republicans, still basks in the reality that the majority of us as gay and lesbian voters have little alternate to the party of donkeys, even if some of them are jackasses.

You ,d think maybe we could at least be as smart as the religious Right when it comes to influencing politicians in our default political party. Here ,s what the Right does: They know that, in a general election, the politicians are going to move to the center, to appeal to as many people as possible. So they concentrate their efforts in the primaries, pushing the debate further and further right on the topics that matter most to them.

But we ,re just so dang-gone pleased to be invited to raise money for the next potential president, we don ,t even make them court our votes, even this far ahead in the dance. To wit: Elizabeth Birch, executive director of the Human Rights Campaign, was at Al Gore ,s fund-raiser, listed as a contributor at the &gold level. 8 Of course, she denied this meant that the Human Rights Campaign would endorse Gore automatically * it ,s way too early for that. But when a reporter asked her about Bill Bradley, the former New Jersey Senator and Al Gore ,s only possible rival for the party ,s nomination, she said that while Mr. Bradley had voted all the right ways on gay and lesbian issues while in office, he &is not a stand-out 8 on gay and lesbian issues.

As if there are so many others who are knocking themselves over to win presidential nominations by standing out as the candidate of choice for gay and lesbian voters.

There is little doubt in my mind that the Human Rights Campaign * and the vast majority of other gay and lesbian political and activist groups * will end up backing Gore. Gore won ,t have to concede anything, whether it ,s about gay marriage or cheap generic drugs to help people with AIDS in South Africa. He won ,t have to cede any points, because gay and lesbian voters, and the organizations that represent them, won ,t even ask him any hard questions. They ,ll just provide the polite applause, thank you.

That ,s why I ,m already bored: It ,s still so early, and I already feel like Al ,s the guy who comes up to you in a bar and asks to take you home and fuck you, without even buying you a drink.

(Mubarak Dahir ,s e-mail address is MubarakDah@aol.com.)

RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Richard Socarides (CN=Richard Socarides/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

CREATION DATE/TIME:26-JUL-1999 10:12:01.00

SUBJECT: Newsclip: Jesse Jackson Jr. continues his efforts... (CHICAGO TRIBUNE)

TO: Thomas M. Rosshirt (CN=Thomas M. Rosshirt/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Sandra Thurman (CN=Sandra Thurman/OU=OPD/O=EOP@EOP [OPD])

READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

----- Forwarded by Richard Socarides/WHO/EOP on 07/26/99
10:11 AM -----

Infreader@aol.com

07/25/99 03:00:52 PM

Record Type: Record

To:

cc: Infreader@aol.com

Subject: Newsclip: Jesse Jackson Jr. continues his efforts... (CHICAGO TRIBUNE)

DRUG WAR

The South Side's Democratic Rep. Jesse Jackson Jr. [Chicago] is continuing his efforts on behalf of access to low-cost AIDS medication for sub-Saharan Africa, where the disease is sweeping through the region.

This week he will introduce legislation, originally contained in a broader African development bill the House refused to consider, to prevent the U.S. government from applying sanctions against African nations that allow the manufacture of low-cost generic substitutes for American-made AIDS drugs.

In the name of protecting the intellectual property and research investment of U.S. drug-makers, American trade officials have been waging a campaign against the manufacture of the knockoff drugs.

The cost of a week's dosage of AIDS medication is more than what the average worker in sub-Saharan Africa earns in a year. So the South African parliament passed legislation in 1997 allowing its pharmaceutical companies to ignore overseas patents on AIDS drugs and make generic substitutes available for sale inside the country.

The threat of sanctions so far has kept the low-cost substitutes off the market.

But the plight of the HIV-infected poor in Africa has become a growing

cause among AIDS activists, including demonstrators from ACT-UP who repeatedly disrupted the recent campaign announcement tour of Vice President Al Gore.

[Chicago Tribune, July 25, 1999, Section 4, p. 2. 'D.C. Journal' By Mike Dorning, Washington Bureau (Selected item). Sunday circ.: 1,029,241.]

-End-

Shared with you by: infreader@aol.com (Stephen Hunt) - Chicago, IL., USA
As listed in Marquis Who's Who in the Midwest, & in Who's Who in the World.
Web: <http://ausqrd.queer.org.au/QRD>

RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Margaret M. Suntum (CN=Margaret M. Suntum/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ WHO)

CREATION DATE/TIME:27-JUL-1999 12:22:20.00

SUBJECT: resend of the President's press conference -- some words dropped in the original electronic transmittal (after word "seismic")

TO: Rachel A. Redington (CN=Rachel A. Redington/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: MichaelT (MichaelT @ ag.state.ar.us [UNKNOWN])
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TO: Lindsey E. Huff (CN=Lindsey E. Huff/OU=NSC/O=EOP @ EOP [NSC])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Carolyn T. Wu (CN=Carolyn T. Wu/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Sally Katzen (CN=Sally Katzen/OU=OMB/O=EOP @ EOP [OMB])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Jennifer M. Palmieri (CN=Jennifer M. Palmieri/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TO: Hildy Kuryk (CN=Hildy Kuryk/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TO: Releases@pub.pub.whitehouse.gov@inet (Releases@pub.pub.whitehouse.gov@inet [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Alberto O. Feraren (CN=Alberto O. Feraren/OU=OA/O=EOP @ EOP [OA])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Aprill N. Springfield (CN=Aprill N. Springfield/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

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TO: usnwire (usnwire @ access.digex.com [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: INFOMGT (INFOMGT @ al.eop.gov [UNKNOWN]) (SYS)
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: " ("/R=3\$/C=US/ADMD=WESTERN UNION/O=ATT.COM/DD.ELN=62955104/" @ mrx.eop.gov [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: tingen-terri (tingen-terri @ dol.gov [UNKNOWN])
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TO: Margaret M. Suntum (CN=Margaret M. Suntum/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TO: Lowell A. Weiss (CN=Lowell A. Weiss/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TO: Robert S. Weiner (CN=Robert S. Weiner/OU=ONDCP/O=EOP @ EOP [ONDCP])
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TO: Setti D. Warren (CN=Setti D. Warren/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TO: Dag Vega (CN=Dag Vega/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TO: Loretta M. Ucelli (CN=Loretta M. Ucelli/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TO: "Thomas M. Rosshirt" ("Thomas M. Rosshirt" @ lngate4.eop.gov [UNKNOWN])
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TO: Karen Tramontano (CN=Karen Tramontano/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TO: Barry J. Toiv (CN=Barry J. Toiv/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TO: Tracy F. Sisser (CN=Tracy F. Sisser/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])

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TO: Dana C. Strand (CN=Dana C. Strand/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TO: Maria E. Soto (CN=Maria E. Soto/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TO: Richard Socarides (CN=Richard Socarides/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Jennifer H. Smith (CN=Jennifer H. Smith/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TO: Brian D. Smith (CN=Brian D. Smith/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TO: Richard L. Siewert (CN=Richard L. Siewert/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TO: June Shih (CN=June Shih/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TO: Neal Sharma (CN=Neal Sharma/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Christopher K. Scully (CN=Christopher K. Scully/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TO: NAPLAN_S (NAPLAN_S @ al.eop.gov [UNKNOWN]) (NSC)
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READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Evan Ryan (CN=Evan Ryan/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TO: Peter Rundlet (CN=Peter Rundlet/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TO: Robin M. Roland (CN=Robin M. Roland/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Linda Ricci (CN=Linda Ricci/OU=OMB/O=EOP @ EOP [OMB])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: " ("/R=OPUS/R=MRP/PR-L=AVUOEBOB/PR-U=TDIXON/FFN=Timothy Dixon/" @ mr.eop.gov [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Denver R. Peacock (CN=Denver R. Peacock/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TO: Sean P. O'Shea (CN=Sean P. O'Shea/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TO: "Nathan B. Naylor" ("Nathan B. Naylor" @ lngate4.eop.gov [UNKNOWN])
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TO: Mark D. Neschis (CN=Mark D. Neschis/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Minyon Moore (CN=Minyon Moore/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Sean P. Maloney (CN=Sean P. Maloney/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Reuben L. Musgrave Jr (CN=Reuben L. Musgrave Jr/OU=OSTP/O=EOP @ EOP [OSTP])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Megan C. Moloney (CN=Megan C. Moloney/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Rajiv Y. Mody (CN=Rajiv Y. Mody/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Noa A. Meyer (CN=Noa A. Meyer/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Andrew J. Mayock (CN=Andrew J. Mayock/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Irma L. Martinez (CN=Irma L. Martinez/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Christine N. Macy (CN=Christine N. Macy/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Joseph P. Lockhart (CN=Joseph P. Lockhart/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Erica S. Lepping (CN=Erica S. Lepping/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Sara M. Latham (CN=Sara M. Latham/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: KTORPEY (KTORPEY @ AOL.COM [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Sarah S. Knight (CN=Sarah S. Knight/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Mark A. Kitchens (CN=Mark A. Kitchens/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: David E. Kalbaugh (CN=David E. Kalbaugh/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: John_See (John_See @ ed.gov [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Wayne C. Johnson (CN=Wayne C. Johnson/OU=OA/O=EOP @ EOP [OA])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Thomas D. Janenda (CN=Thomas D. Janenda/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Maureen A. Hudson (CN=Maureen A. Hudson/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Ann C. Hertelendy (CN=Ann C. Hertelendy/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Michael A. Hammer (CN=Michael A. Hammer/OU=NSC/O=EOP @ EOP [NSC])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: "Gina N. Dennis" ("Gina N. Dennis/WHO/EOP" @ EOP.eop.gov [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: GRAY_W (GRAY_W @ al.eop.gov [UNKNOWN]) (NSC)
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Joshua S. Gottheimer (CN=Joshua S. Gottheimer/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Dario J. Gomez (CN=Dario J. Gomez/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Paul D. Glastris (CN=Paul D. Glastris/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: FORDE_R (FORDE_R @ al.eop.gov [UNKNOWN]) {}
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Jennifer Ferguson (CN=Jennifer Ferguson/OU=OMB/O=EOP @ EOP [OMB])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Anne M. Edwards (CN=Anne M. Edwards/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Dorian V. Weaver (CN=Dorian V. Weaver/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Dawn M. Chirwa (CN=Dawn M. Chirwa/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Jackson T. Dunn (CN=Jackson T. Dunn/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: DICKEY_L (DICKEY_L @ al.eop.gov [UNKNOWN]) (WHO)
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Philip J. Crowley (CN=Philip J. Crowley/OU=NSC/O=EOP @ EOP [NSC])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Delia A. Cohen (CN=Delia A. Cohen/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: George G. Caudill (CN=George G. Caudill/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Dominique L. Cano (CN=Dominique L. Cano/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: "Alejandro G. Cabrera" ("Alejandro G. Cabrera" @ lngate4.eop.gov [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Bradley M. Campbell (CN=Bradley M. Campbell/OU=CEQ/O=EOP @ EOP [CEQ])
READ:UNKNOWN

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TO: Barbara D. Woolley (CN=Barbara D. Woolley/OU=WHO/O=EOP @ EOP [WHO])
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TEXT:
THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release
1999

July 21,

PRESS CONFERENCE BY THE PRESIDENT

The East Room

2:35 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon.

Q Mr. President, you don't know it, but there is such a bright light on you -- we can't see you for the light. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: I've been waiting a long time for the halo to appear. (Laughter.)

Let me say, ladies and gentlemen, I have a brief opening statement, but before I make that and take questions, I'd like to say that, as you might imagine, I have been briefed on this morning's developments in the search off Martha's Vineyard. Again, let me commend the Coast Guard and all the officials at the local, state and national level for the fine work they have done under extremely difficult circumstances.

Again, I think we should keep our thoughts with the families as events unfold, and my thoughts and prayers are with them.

Today I want to make a brief statement about the choice we face here in Washington and in our country about how best to move forward into the new century and what to do with the surplus. When we look toward the future, it is helpful to remember at least the recent past. Six and a half years ago, the budget deficit was \$290 billion and rising. Wages were stagnant, inequality was growing, social conditions were worsening.

In the 12 years before I took office, unemployment averaged more than 7 percent. It's almost difficult to remember what it was like. No one really thought we could turn it around, let alone bring unemployment to a 29-year low, or turn decades of deficits, during which time the debt of our country was quadrupled in only 12 years, into a surplus of \$99 billion.

Our nation has made a seismic shift in the last six years, from recession to recovery, from a crisis of confidence to a renewal of resolve, from economic disorder to a fiscal house finally in order. Now as we debate what to do with our prosperity, we face a critical choice -- whether to move forward with the fiscal discipline that got us to where we are today, or return to the kind of risk-taking that got us into recessions and deficits before.

We must decide whether to invest the surplus, to strengthen America over the long-term, or to squander it for the short-term. I think the right course is clear. And a bigger surplus only means that the mistake could be bigger, and the missed opportunity greater if we take the wrong course.

I have proposed a balanced budget that puts first things first. I believe we must maintain our sound economic strategy, and invest the surplus in long-term goals -- saving Social Security, saving and

strengthening Medicare, modernizing it by providing a long overdue drug benefit, and continuing to meet our basic responsibilities in education, defense, the environment, biomedical research.

Tomorrow I will release a report that shows a great and growing need for prescription drug coverage. What the study shows is that 75 percent of our older Americans lack decent, dependable private-sector coverage of prescription drugs. That's three out of every four seniors. Clearly, America needs a prescription drug plan that is simple, universal and voluntary. Anyone who says we don't I believe is out of date and out of touch.

As I've described, my plan meets these national priorities, while paying off the debt by 2015; while investing in America's new markets, the places that have not yet felt our prosperity; and while providing substantial tax relief -- \$250 billion of it targeted to help families save for retirement, pay for child care, long-term care, for modern schools.

So let's be clear about something. We're not debating whether to have tax cuts or not -- we should have tax cuts, but tax cuts that provide for us first to save Social Security and Medicare, not undermine them; tax cuts we can afford, not ones that would demand drastic cuts in defense, education, agriculture, the environment; tax cuts in the national interest, not special interest.

Now, these are the risks that are posed by the Republican tax plan that the House is about to vote on. Let me tell you what their plan would do. It would pile up \$3 trillion in debt over the next two decades, right when the baby boomers start to retire -- that's what it costs -- right when Social Security and Medicare feel the crunch.

Because of the cost of the tax plan over the next two decades, I should say what it doesn't do. It doesn't do anything to extend the solvency of Social Security, to extend the solvency of Medicare, to extend the solvency of the environment, to extend the solvency of biomedical research, the environment and other critical areas.

If we don't save Social Security it's not because we can't. If we don't strengthen Medicare and add the prescription drug benefit, it's not because we can't. If we don't meet these clear national needs, it's because we choose not to do so. It will be because, instead, we choose to reward ourselves today by risking our prosperity tomorrow.

I hope Congress will make the right choice. When members cast their ballots on the Republican tax plan, they're really voting also on whether to save Social Security and Medicare. They're voting on whether to pay off the national debt for the first time in over 150 years -- something that would guarantee us lower interest rates, higher investment, more jobs, higher incomes, and for average citizens, lower home mortgage payments, car payments, credit card payments, college loan payments.

They're voting whether to meet our most pressing national priorities in education, defense, nearly every other domain in our people's lives. I think the choice is clear between the plan the Republican leadership has outlined and the national priorities of the American people. I hope we can still work together across party lines to save Social Security and Medicare, to safeguard our priorities and have the right kind of tax cut.

If Congress passes the wrong kind, of course, I will not sign it. I will not allow a risky plan to become law. And as I said, we now have six and a half years of evidence. This is not really a debate that's just about ideas without any evidence. We clearly know what works now, and we ought to stay with it.

As I said, I will work with any member of any party willing to put first things first. We can have a tax cut and do the right thing for the long-term in America. That is my commitment, and I hope that together we can fulfill it for our people.

Thank you very much. Helen.

Q Mr. President, in U.S. treaty relations, is it obligated to defend Taiwan militarily if it abandons the one China policy? And would the U.S. continue military aid if it pursues separatism?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let me say, first of all, a lot of those questions are governed by the Taiwan Relations Act, which we intend to honor. Our policy is clear: We favor the one China policy; we favor the cross-strait dialogues. The understanding we have had all along with both China and Taiwan is that the differences between them would be resolved peacefully. If that were not to be the case, under the Taiwan Relations Act we would be required to view it with the gravest concern.

But I believe that both China and Taiwan understand this. I believe that they want to stay on a path to prosperity and dialogue. And we have dispatched people today, as the morning press reports, to do what we can to press that case to all sides. This is something that we don't want to see escalate, and I believe that what Mr. Lee said yesterday was trying to move in that direction. We all understand how difficult this is, but I think that the pillars of the policy are still the right ones. The one China policy is right; the cross-strait dialogue is right; the peaceful approach is right. And neither side, in my judgment, should depart from any of those elements.

Q So we would still have to go to war with China if it decided to break away?

THE PRESIDENT: I will say what I've already said -- the Taiwan

Relations Act governs our policy. We made it clear. And I have -- as you remember, a few years ago we had a physical expression of that, that we don't believe there should be any violent attempts to resolve this, and we would view it very seriously. But I don't believe there will be. I think that both sides understands what needs to be done.

Terry?

Q Mr. President, do you think that President Lee was unnecessarily provocative in trying to redefine the nature of the Taiwan-Chinese relationship? And is the United States trying to send a signal by delaying a Pentagon mission which was going to Taiwan to assess its air defense needs? And, further, finally, you said that you still believe in a one China policy. How do you address Senator Helms' criticism that that policy is "a puzzling fiction"?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't think it's a puzzling fiction. But if Senator Helms means that today they're not, in fact, unified, then that's true. But the Chinese tend to take a long view of these things and have made clear a sensitivity to the different system that exists on Taiwan, and a willingness to find ways to accommodate it, as they did in working with Hong Kong, and, perhaps, even going beyond that.

So I think the important thing is to let -- they need to take the time necessary to work this out between themselves in a peaceful way. That is clearly in both their interests. And I'm still not entirely sure, because I have read things which seem to resonate both ways on this, exactly what the Lee statements were entitled -- trying to convey.

But I think that both sides are now quite aware of the fact that they need to find a way to pursue their destinies within the framework that we have followed these last several years, which I might add, has allowed both places to prosper and to grow, to do better and to have more contacts, more investment, and underneath the rhetoric, quite a bit more reconciliation. So I would hope that we would stay with what is working and not depart from it.

Q Is that the meaning of the delay of the Pentagon mission to assess the --

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't think this was the best time to do something which might excite either one side or the other and imply that a military solution is an acceptable alternative. If you really think about what's at stake here, it would be unthinkable. And I want -- I don't want to depart from any of the three pillars. I think we need to stay with one China; I think we need to stay with the dialogue; and I think that no one should contemplate force here.

Randy.

Q Economists have been calling on you to indicate now whether you intend to reappoint Alan Greenspan in order to avoid having the issue to become mired in election year politics and upsetting financial markets next year. Would you like to see the Chairman stay on, and has he given you any indication of his plans?

THE PRESIDENT: I have, as you know, enjoyed a very good relationship, both personally and professionally, with Mr. Greenspan. I think he has done a terrific job. I have no idea whether he would even be willing to serve another term. I will make the decision in a timely fashion. I do not expect it to become embroiled in election year politics; there's no evidence of that.

You heard -- I think the Vice President said yesterday or the day before that he thought he was doing an excellent job. So we believe that as long as the United States is fiscally responsible, then the Fed will respond to developments in our own economy and in the world economy in a way that is clear, transparent, and I think designed to keep our growth going. So I'm not concerned about it.

Peter, go ahead.

Q -- I think the Vice President indicated he was sending a signal by saying that Chairman Greenspan had been doing an excellent job. Do you endorse that interpretation?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know, all I know is he said he was doing a great job, and I agree with him.

Go ahead.

Q Mr. President, you mentioned the Kennedy tragedy at the beginning of the news conference. Could you please give us a better understanding of what the White House role has been in the conduct of the recovery operation and the decision-making on the release of information about it?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think that -- I am unaware of any role we have played in the decision-making of the release of information, except, let me say that today a lot of things are breaking in a hurry, and I believe there are some decisions that ought to be announced by the Kennedy family, and others that ought to be properly announced by either the Coast Guard or the NTSB.

So we have not tried -- to the best of my knowledge, had any role in the timing or substance of release of information. And we have had no role in the conduct of the operation except that I did talk to Admiral Larrabee, I think it was the day before yesterday, at a time when the operation might normally have ceased, and he said, I think we have a

chance to find something else because of the equipment we have here, even though it's difficult and I'm inclined to believe because of the circumstances here and because who's involved that we ought to go on a little more. And I said that I would support it and defend it. And I think it was the right decision.

Q Mr. President, if you'll allow me to ask about two different topics. On the Kennedy search, sir, there have been conflicting reports about whether or not Mr. Kennedy's body has, in fact, been recovered. I understand that based upon the answer you just gave, that might not be a question that you'd want to address, but, perhaps, given the fact that there is this conflicting information you could answer that question.

And, secondly, sir, on this notion of a drug benefit. prescription drug benefit, you chided the Republicans about targeting tax cuts at the wealthy, saying that they're too steered in that direction. How do you reconcile that philosophically with allowing rich Americans, rich older Americans, to get a prescription drug benefit which even you just said this new study will show one in four don't need?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, it's voluntary. And most wealthy Americans are well taken care of under the present program they have and won't exercise it. So that's the first point I want to make.

The second thing I would like to say is I don't think most people know this, even some of you may have forgotten, but in the 11th hour of the deficit reduction package negotiations in 1993, in order to get up to \$500 billion in cuts in the deficit projected over five years -- we did much better, as all of you know -- the cap was taken off. The income cap was taken off of the Medicare tax, which means virtually every single upper-income person in America will pay far more into the Medicare program than they will ever draw out in health care or benefits.

They are making a net significant contribution today because, unlike Social Security taxes where there is still an earnings cap, there is no longer an earnings cap on Medicare. And I think a lot of folks have forgotten that -- so that in that sense, this is the most progressive program we have. The upper-income people, particularly once you get over about \$250,000 in income, they're paying far more into this program over the course of their life than they could ever draw out if they were sick every day from the time they're 65 on.

Q Sir, a question --

THE PRESIDENT: I just don't think I should make an announcement about that. I am aware of what the Coast Guard has done and what they have found as of five minutes before I came out here. But I simply -- I just don't think it's appropriate for me -- I'll be glad to comment on whatever they want to say, but I think I should leave it for them to talk.

Q Sir, you talk about how expensive the Republican tax cuts would be. But the Congressional Budget Office has now just come out with a report saying that even with their tax cuts, almost \$800 billion in tax cuts, they would save about \$277 billion over a 10-year period, whereby your program would save only about \$50 billion. That's about \$227 billion difference. How do you reconcile that? And, you know, people on the Hill listen to the CBO.

THE PRESIDENT: They listen to the CBO except where it's inconvenient for them, like the patients' bill of rights. The Republicans have freed us all now to question the CBO, since they ignored the CBO in the patients' bill of rights; they have discredited their own CBO.

Let me say, I haven't seen that CBO accounting. All I can tell you is that all of our budget people were rolling their eyes and saying that it was a very creative study.

Let me just say this: You have six and a half years of experience with the numbers we have given you and the estimates we have made. And every single year, our numbers have not only been accurate, but we have done better than we said we would do -- every single year, for six and a half years now.

Our studies show that their tax cut over the next two decades will cost, first, a trillion dollars and then \$3 trillion in the second decade, and that -- then an enormous loss to the American people in interest savings. That is, we'll have to keep spending more and more of our tax money paying interest on the debt, and it will require huge cuts in education and defense and other things.

You cannot -- they simply cannot credibly make that statement. And they don't put any new money into the Medicare program. And they don't have a Medicare reform package out there. So unless they just simply propose to bankrupt all the teaching hospitals and a lot of the other hospitals in the country, and let the Medicare program wither away, as one of the previous leaders so eloquently put it -- they can't possibly finance this tax program without doing serious damage. I can't comment on the CBO study, but it doesn't make any sense to anybody I've talked to about it.

Q May I just follow up --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q The CBO estimates the cost of your Medicare reforms are more than twice what you say they are.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, again you have evidence. Let me just say

this: In the 1997 Balanced Budget Agreement -- okay? -- and this is the reason all these teaching hospitals are in trouble today -- we agreed to a Medicare savings figure. And we said, okay, here is our health information -- this is what we do in the Executive Branch, we deal with these hospitals -- here are the changes you need to make in the Medicare program to achieve the savings that the Republicans and the Democrats in Congress and the White House agreed on.

And the CBO said, no, no, no, no, that won't come close; you need these changes plus these changes. And we said, okay, we're following the CBO, we put it in there. What happened? And that's one of the reasons the surplus is somewhat bigger than it otherwise would be -- the cuts in Medicare were far more severe, our numbers were right, their numbers were wrong and that's why you've got all these hospitals all over America, every place I go, talking about how they're threatened with bankruptcy.

So when it comes to estimating Medicare costs, again, we have evidence. And whenever there's been a difference between us and the CBO, we've been right and they've been wrong. That's all I can tell you. No serious person -- so what are they going to do about Medicare? They say our drug program will cost more -- they don't put a red cent into it. What are they going to do about it? Even if you don't have a drug program, if you adopt their tax cut program they won't be able to do anything to extend the solvency of Medicare and they will have to have huge cuts.

For them to produce those savings they are going to -- they can't even fund my defense budget, much less the one they say they want. They're going to have cuts in defense, cuts in education, cuts in the environment. That's all their savings assumed that they're going to stay with the present budget levels, which they, themselves, are trying to get out of even as we speak here today. So this is -- the American people are not -- I mean, this is not rocket science, this is arithmetic.

And we've been dealing with -- we went from creative supply-side mathematics to elemental arithmetic in 1993. And it has served us very well. And all I'm trying to do is stick with basic arithmetic and get this country out of debt, save Social Security and Medicare, provide this prescription drug benefit, keep us moving forward.

Q Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Next. Let me take John's first, then I'll take you, Sarah.

Q Sir, in your conversation with Chairman Arafat this morning, did you ask him to take any specific steps to advance what you believe is new momentum toward peace, and did you discuss with him his complaints yesterday that he found Prime Minister Barak's 15-month timetable unacceptable?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I told him only this. I said that -- I generally described my meetings with Prime Minister Barak to him. I told him that he was committed to working in partnership with Chairman Arafat and honoring any agreements that had been made to this point, and that any modifications they made going forward to the benefit of either or both sides would have to be done by mutual agreement; that I thought he was completely committed to resolve all the issues outstanding in the peace process in an expeditious manner. And what I urged him to do was to have this one-on-one meeting, hear him out, think it through, and if he wanted to talk to me again after the meeting occurred, that I would be happy to talk to him.

So I went out of my way not to describe Prime Minister Barak's proposals or to advocate or not advocate, but simply to say that I was convinced they were being made in complete good faith, and that the peace process would be revitalized, and whatever they did from here on out is something that they would do together. And I think he felt good about that. And I did say, after you have the meeting, if you want to talk again about this -- I'll be glad to talk to you. And he said he did. So that's where we are.

Sarah. Go ahead, Sarah.

Q Sir, your microphone is not working apparently; it seems like you're talking very low, we can barely hear you. But in the meantime, don't you think it would be a good idea if we announced for the country's sake the list of conferences to be held at the White House each day, and the list of the people whom the President has appointments with?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I never thought about it. Don't you have a list of the conferences we have every day here?

Q No, indeed. We do -- and what if we find out you haven't any?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think I ought to talk to our folks about it, but I will consider that.

Go ahead.

Q Will you be taking any concrete contributions with you to the Balkan summit on investment next week? And you've said that you would give only humanitarian aid to Yugoslavia as long as Milosevic is in power. Will you have any trouble defining that? Will that cause any problems in distinguishing between humanitarian and other aid?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let me say that I hope very much that there will be some positive, concrete commitments that come out of the meeting

that we're going to have. I do not believe -- I do not believe we can achieve the future we want in the Balkans and avoid future ethnic conflicts unless there is a unifying vision which both brings the Balkan states closer together in their economic and political self-interests, and then brings the region as a whole closer to Europe.

And so I think that we have to have some incentives to move in that direction. And there are direct -- there are also indirect things the United States can do to help to contribute to that goal. And because of all the other things that have been going on -- you know it's been a very busy two or three weeks -- we haven't actually had an opportunity to sit down and go through what our options are, so I can't give you a more specific answer.

But I will say this -- if what we have done in Bosnia, and what we have done in Kosovo, is to have lasting benefits, we have got to find a way to create closer unity among the Balkan states themselves, and then with the region and Europe. And that is what I am working on.

And what was the second question you asked?

Q On the humanitarian aid, how will you define it?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes. There may be -- frankly, there may be some differences of opinion. As you know, I tend to take a rather narrow view of it because I don't think that we should, in effect, reward Mr. Milosevic's political control by doing things which are not humanitarian in nature. But based on the virtual daily reports I get about where we all are on this and where we are operating in Kosovo, I now no longer expect them to be big debates. I don't expect there will be a big difference of opinion.

Yes, go ahead, John.

Q Mr. President, the House of Representatives appears to be on the verge of terminating funding for the F-22 fighter. Will the White House fight hard for full funding for that program, even if it means sacrificing other Pentagon airplane programs or even pay for servicemen?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't think we should sacrifice the pay for our service personnel because we now are getting back in the ball game in recruitment. You know, we've really been -- the good economy and the increased deployments and the low pay all combined we're making it hard for us to both recruit and retain people. And the people are still the most important part of our military -- their quality and their training and their morale and their commitment and the condition of their families. So I don't think that.

Now, the Congress every year puts other things into the defense budget which are not priorities for the Pentagon, and are priorities for the Congress. We can fund the F-22, we can fund the plane without compromising the basic priorities of our national defense within the funds set aside, and that is what I will fight to do. I think it would be a mistake to abandon the project. I think it has real potential to add to our national defense. I have always supported it and I hope that it can be preserved.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. You had some fun, recently, with George W. Bush and his slogan of "compassionate conservatism." But you went beyond the notion that he's not offering many details as policy, and seemed to ridicule his slogan and even question his sincerity. Were you just trying to help Mr. Gore's candidacy or were you taking the opportunity maybe to just needle the leading Republican candidate?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I was just having a little fun. (Laughter.) You know, that's a long time -- if we don't have any laughs it's going to be a very tedious struggle between now and November of 2000.

Let me say this. I think that every person struggles to find a phrase or something that will sort of stand for what he or she is trying to do. So I was really just having a little fun.

I think the most important thing is that all the candidates make their positions clear on the great debates going on now, and make their positions clear on what they would do if they got the job. To me, that's the most important thing. You know, I am not involved in this campaign as a candidate, and I have a full-time job, so I'm not involved in any sort of full-time consulting role. (Laughter.) So I look at this -- I look at this more from the point of view of the average American voter -- what will change the lives of America.

For example, every candidate should tell us, are you for the patients' bill of rights are you for closing the gun show loophole; are you for raising the minimum wage; are you for the House Republican tax plan, or do you favor our plan on Social Security and saving Social Security and Medicare and making America debt-free and having a smaller tax cut that enables us to continue to fund education and defense and these other things? What are you going to do if you get elected?

To me, the best thing the Vice President has done is to talk about dramatically intensifying the war on cancer, making pre-school universal, increasing access to college by helping people save without tax consequences; what he would do to make America a safer country, what he would do in communities to have faith-based organizations cooperate with governments more. I think these are interesting ideas about how you build on the progress the country has made the last six and a half years.

So I would say to everyone -- you know, use whatever slogans you want, but tell us where you stand. I think that's the most important thing.

Susan?

Q Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I'll come over here. I know I'm left leaning, but I will give you -- (laughter) --

Q Mr. President, the economy is going great. In a new USA Today-CNN poll this week, your approval rating was at a very healthy 58 percent. But that same poll showed that by 50 percent to 38 percent, Americans said they wanted to see a change from Clinton administration policies -- not a continuation of them. What do you think accounts for that sentiment for change, and do you think it means that you present something of a mixed blessing to Mrs. Clinton and Vice President Gore in their campaigns next year?

THE PRESIDENT: I think what that means people think things are going well, but they want a change in policy. I think that's right. If you asked me that question, and you worded it in that way, I'd be in the 50 percent, because I think that -- my own view is that, particularly in a dynamic time, where things are changing, you should want continued change. But is change -- the question is, should we change in a way that builds on what has been done and goes beyond it -- which is what I would argue -- or should you change and go back to the policies we were following when we had \$290-billion deficits and we averaged over 7 percent unemployment for 12 years. I mean, I think that's really the question the American people have to ask themselves.

I think change is good. The great thing about this country is that it works best when it's sort of in a perpetual stage of renewal. So I would, myself, as a citizen, I would vote against somebody who said, vote for me and I'll keep it just like it is; everything that Bill Clinton did is exactly what I'll do. I would vote against that candidate, because I do not believe that is the right thing to do.

But what I think we should do is we should build on the progress of the last six years and go beyond it, and not adopt a completely different approach which has been proven not to work. So all I want the American people to do is to remember what it was like before, think what it's like now, recognize that ideas and policies have consequences. And the American people usually get it right; that's why we're all still around here after more than 200 years.

Q -- (inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q -- for Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Gore?

THE PRESIDENT: No, because I -- no, he has done -- look at what the Vice President's done. He's staked out new issues here. He said, here's how I'm going to change what we're doing in cancer research; here's how I'm going to change what we're doing in education; here's how I'm going to change what we're doing in crime -- but not to reverse what we've done, but to build on it and go beyond it. So I think that's very, very -- that's the sort of thing that's worthy of debate. That's not the same; that is change.

What the American people have to decide is what kind of change do they want. Do they want to build on what has worked for the last six and a half years, or do they want to abandon it and go back to what failed them for 12 years before. That will be the decision they have to make.

Yes, go ahead.

Q In your last press conference, sir, with Prime Minister Ehud Barak, you mentioned you wanted better, normalized relations with Syria. Now, have you received any response, positive response or indication from Syria towards that? And, on Iran, can you share with us the administration's views of -- events and administrations in Iran? Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, on Syria let me say, the only thing I can tell you is that the statements, at least, that have been coming out of Syria have been quite encouraging in terms of the regard that President Assad seems to have for Prime Minister Barak, and the willingness, the openness that there is to negotiating and moving toward peace. So I'm encouraged by that.

And on Iran, frankly, I'm reluctant to say anything for fear that it will be used in a way that's not helpful to the forces of openness and reform. I think that people everywhere, particularly younger people, hope that they will be able to pursue their religious convictions and their personal dreams in an atmosphere of greater freedom, that still allows them to be deeply loyal to their nation. And I think the Iranian people obviously love their country and are proud of its history and have enormous potential. And I just hope they find a way to work through all this, and I believe they will.

Q You mentioned the patients' bill of rights. It seems like that was an argument by both parties over providing more for people who already are lucky enough to have health insurance. And, in fact, neither party dealt with some very fundamental issues that energized you and the First Lady five and six years ago. The question is, with such a robust economy and the budget surpluses, if not now, when, and if not you, who, would provide the leadership to provide for those folks?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, but I think the bigger question is how. That is, it is true that just as we've predicted in 1993 and 1994, that the percentage of people who have health insurance on the job is going down, just as we said it would, if nothing was done. So what we have tried to

do is to isolate discrete populations that seem to be most in need and try to offer them help.

In the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, we reached bipartisan agreement on a proposal that would fund providing health insurance for up to 5 million more children through state-designed programs. Now, I've been a little disappointed -- and I'm not being critical of any of the states, either, here -- but I've been a little disappointed that the uptake on the program has been a little slow. That is, I would have thought by now we'd have almost 3 million of those 5 million children enrolled already, because we've got the money there, and we're well behind that.

So we are looking at whether there are things that we can do at the national level to work with the states to simplify access to the children's health insurance programs that the states have set up. But -- and I also had a talk with Senator Kennedy, the other day who believes that for little or no more extra money, we could actually adjust the program and take in several million more children. So the children are the biggest group.

Then, I have a proposal, as you know, that's part of my Medicare reform proposal that I didn't mention today, but I want to reiterate it. That would allow the most vulnerable group of people without health insurance, people between the ages of 55 and 65, to buy into the Medicare system in a way that would not compromise the integrity of the system. So I think that is quite important.

In addition to that, there are a lot of states -- there are some states -- Tennessee was the first state to do this under the former governor -- they started it -- which are allowing lower-income working families to buy into their Medicaid programs on a sliding scale.

So if all these things were done, we would dramatically reduce the number of people without health insurance and we'll eventually probably get down to, if we keep pushing in this direction, get down to the point where the largest group of people without health insurance are young, single people who believe that they're going to live forever and be healthy forever and don't want to bear the cost. And we'll have to think about, then, what to do.

But I think the best thing to do is try to get as many kids as we can covered, and then try to get these people who are out of the work force who are older, but they're not old enough to get Medicare, to get them at least where they can all afford on a sliding scale to buy into the Medicare program.

Go ahead, Scott.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. On the Kennedy tragedy, sir, will you authorize the Navy to participate in a burial at sea ceremony? Why do you believe it's justified to spend so many federal resources on this tragedy? And, finally, sir, I wonder if you would give us your thoughts on Mr. Kennedy's last visit here to the White House. I understand you and the First Lady took him on a tour.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we have received -- I have received no official word, personal word from the family -- what burial arrangements they want. Until they make a statement about it, I just don't feel that I can say anything.

Secondly, I will say that until just a couple of days ago the recovery efforts -- the rescue, then the recovery efforts that were undertaken were consistent with what would have been done in any other case. Because the Coast Guard felt that they had the capacity to succeed in this if they had a few more days, and because of the role of the Kennedy family in our national lives, and because of the enormous losses that they have sustained in our lifetimes, I thought it was appropriate to give them a few more days. And if anyone believes that was wrong, the Coast Guard is not at fault; I am. It was because I thought it was the right thing to do under the circumstances.

Now, you asked about -- John Kennedy had actually not been back to the White House since his father was killed, until I became President. First, he was on an advisory committee that made a report to me and he came back to the Oval Office, where he saw the desk that he took the famous picture in, coming through the gate, for the first time since he was a little boy.

And then last year -- maybe you would have a better memory than I would, but it seems to me it was last May, when we had the event at the White House celebrating the series that HBO did on the Apollo program. Do you remember they did a series on the space program that was done after the movie came out? And Tom Hanks came, a lot of people came. And he was invited because of his father's role in starting the space program. And he and Carolyn came. And afterward I asked them if they would like to go upstairs, and he said he would. So I took him upstairs and showed him the residence, which he'd not seen since he was a tiny boy.

And I showed him some of my -- the memorabilia that I had from his father's service. I have a picture of his father speaking to the Irish Parliament, and a number of other things which he thought were very interesting. And we took a -- we had a very nice evening. And I sent him the pictures from it. And then, in return, he sent me a signed copy of his favorite picture of his father, which is now upstairs. It's John Kennedy campaigning in Virginia, in Charlottesville in 1960. It's quite a lovely picture -- interesting picture.

But it was a nice night. I think that he really wanted to kind of

come to terms with all of it. And I think he and Carolyn, they were delightful young people, and they had a great time here that night. And Hillary and I loved having them here. It was quite a great night.

Q To just follow on that, sir, just one question, if I may. Is there anything that Mr. Kennedy said to you that night that particularly struck you?

THE PRESIDENT: We just had a friendly conversation. You know, I knew him pretty well by then. We'd been -- I met him years ago when he was a law student, doing a summer internship with Mickey Kantor's law firm out in Los Angeles, long before I ever thought I'd be here and before I ever thought we'd have any other contacts. He just happened to be -- Mickey asked me if I'd speak to his law clerks, because I was in LA to give an education speech, and I went by and visited with them and he was there. And we had been together on many occasions since then.

The thing that struck me was I thought he was -- he said he was glad to be back. And I think he -- he was a very deliberate person, as many people have noticed, about when he would be publicly exposed and all of that. He had his mother's care for having a private life. And I think that he had not -- I'm not sure he had really felt he wanted to come back to the White House before he did. But especially in light of everything that's happened, I'm glad he had the chance to come back here one more time and see the residence and know where he was when he was a little boy. I'm glad he did that. I'm grateful that that happened.

Yes, go ahead. Yes, yes, please.

Q On Colombia, the Pastrana administration are asking the United States for \$500 million to support the military against the guerrillas. Is your administration ready to respond to that request? And, also, the Colombians are asking for more direct intervention from the United States. Are you considering this possibility? And, also, Mexico, you're going to meet with President Zedillo in October. And the Mexican government is still rejecting the extraditions of major drug lords. What are you going to ask him -- you're going to get assurance from him to extradite these big narcotic traffickers to the United States?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you know, we had no extraditions between Mexico and the United States for a long time, and we've actually had some now. So we're moving in the right direction. And President Zedillo and I have been pretty successful in continuing to move our relationship in the right direction, so we'll work on that.

On Colombia, I'm not prepared to make any kind of dollar commitment today. But let me say, I have stayed in close touch with President Pastrana, and I admire the fact that he has really thrown himself into trying to end the civil conflicts in Colombia, to stop the insurgency. The people in the United States have a real interest in that because I think that until the civil discord in Colombia is brought to an end, it is going to be much, much harder for us to restrain the activities of the narco-traffickers there, and their reach.

So, in addition to wanting a neighbor and a democracy in Latin America to be free of the kind of violence and heartbreak that the Colombian people have undergone because of this, it is also very much in our national security interest to do what we can, if we can be helpful in ending the civil conflict so that Colombia can be about the business of freeing itself of the influence of the narco-traffickers in ways that would be good for Colombians and good for us as well.

Q Another question about the presidential race. Aside from asking George W. Bush to come forward and give specifics on the issues that you mentioned, could you tell us what you find objectionable about his trying to present a new moderate face for his party, just like you did for the Democrats? And could you tell us whether you're worried whether he will figure out how the Republicans can occupy the center of American politics?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q You don't think he can?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no. I don't think I'll answer those questions. (Laughter.) I will say -- no, look, let me say again, I wouldn't even agree with the characterization you gave of my first answer.

When I ran for President, in 1991, the first thing I did was tell the American people what I thought was going on in our country and what I would do. And if you remember, the late Senator Paul Tsongas and I were actually almost ridiculed at the time because we both put out these very detailed plans of what we would do. If you go back and get one of those plans now, you'll see that virtually everything we said we'd do we did do, except for the things we tried to do and were defeated on.

And my view is that there are a lot of things that count in a presidential election toward a successful presidency, but it is -- that go beyond specific issues, and judgment plays a role in it, and crises will always come up and things can be learned and all that. But it really matters where you stand on the big issues that everybody knows about that are going on right now, and it matters where we're going in the future.

So that's the only point I want to make. And I think any -- I would say that applies to every candidate. I don't want to answer the questions you ask me because that's not my job. My job is not to handicap this horse race, not to comment on it, not to comment on the candidates. My job is to work for the American people. But I'm going to answer these

questions from the point of view of Joe Citizen. That's -- every political question you asked me from now on, I'm going to pretend that I'm living back in Little Rock already and I'm working on my presidential library and I'm sitting here as a voter saying, where do they stand, what will they do -- all of them. And I do believe the Vice President has done the best job of telling the American people what he would do and -- to go back to Susan's formulation -- how he would change the country in a positive way.

George.

Q Mr. President, as the nation has celebrated the 30th anniversary of the moon landing, a lot of the former astronauts have lamented that no President after Kennedy set a kind of national goal like President Kennedy did of landing on the moon. Do you think that -- in your view, is the country not receptive today to that kind of goal-setting by a President, or is it something a President should do, set a goal of landing on Mars?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we are planning to land on Mars. But I think -- for one thing, when I became President, the space program was actually in peril. And we -- the space station was certainly at risk. And I have fought for it and I believe in it. And one of the things I talked to -- Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins were in to see me yesterday, and we talked about where we could go with this. And Dan Goldin was there, the NASA Administrator; and Dr. Neal Lane, my Science Advisor. And we talked about how we could use the coming of the millennium as -- you know, the First Lady sponsored all these other lectures here. And I told him about Stephen Hawking's lecture and what he said. And we talked yesterday about how we could set some goals for the space program, capture the imagination of the American people and broaden the support for it.

And one of the things that I suggested that I think would be quite helpful that we're going to work on now is what we can do to dramatize for the American people -- you mentioned Mars, but I think what is more likely to capture the imagination of the American people are the benefits to us here on Earth of continued advances in space. And some of them, particularly in the health field, are likely to be breath-taking. They're principally in the area of the environment and health.

So I asked our people to start working on that and they said they would be willing to help us. I have to tell you that it was a great day for me yesterday to have them come by the White House. They also gave me a moon rock, by the way -- but only on loan. (Laughter.) And the moon rock is 3.6 billion years old. So when I feel very tired, I'll look at it and feel young again. (Laughter.)

Yes, go ahead. We had an Irish question first, I promised. Go ahead, what's the Irish question?

Q Thank you, sir. Given the --

THE PRESIDENT: You want to ask one, too?

Q We both have a -- given the various meetings underway with Mo Mowlam here, and George Mitchell there, has any progress been made on the Irish situation? And is one side more to blame than the other on it?

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Why don't we take both Irish questions at once. What's your Irish question?

Q Last week, you seemed to kind of get fired up when you were talking to the teenagers from Colorado. You said that the politicians in Northern Ireland were behaving akin to school children. Do you feel, after all the work that you've done on this project, that perhaps it was misplaced and you should have perhaps pushed in a place more like Africa, where they have thousands of people dying from ethnic strife, instead of 3,500 over 30 years?

Q And if I can have a third Irish question, what role, if any, do you expect to play, Mr. President, in breaking the deadlock?

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, let me answer the Irish questions, then I'll come back to the "should we have done something else."

I've talked to Senator Mitchell, and he is willing to spend some time -- he can't go back full-time for another year or two, but I'd like to put this in some -- at least I'd like to tell you how I look at it.

Obviously, I am very disappointed at the breakdown of the process here. But I do think it's important to note that neither side wants to abandon the Good Friday Agreement. And that's very important. It's also important to note that everybody agrees on what their responsibilities are and what the other side's responsibilities are, and everybody agrees that it all has to be done by a date certain.

So they have agreed to break out the two areas causing problems, the decommissioning and the standing up to the executive, and try to figure out how they can unlock that, and Mo Mowlam, as you pointed out, is working hard on it, and they've asked Senator Mitchell to come back and do some work on it, and my instinct is that it will be resolved.

Now, let me say in terms of your characterization, here's the problem. To the outsiders -- I told the parties that to the outsiders -- no one, none of us outside, even somebody like me that's been so involved in this, no one will understand if this thing breaks down over who goes first; that that did sound like the kind of argument that young people have, you know -- who goes first.

Underneath that, there's something deeper: The Protestants are afraid that they IRA will never disarm if they let the Sinn Fein go into the executive branch, and the IRA do not believe -- since the agreement did not require decommissioning as a condition of getting into the executive branch, they don't want to have to spend the rest of their lives being told that it wasn't the vote of the people, it wasn't the Good Friday Accord, it was what the Unionists and Great Britain did to force them to give up their arms that got them to disarm. They believe that would, in effect, require them to disavow what they've done for 30 years.

And what they're saying is, when we surrender our arms, we're surrendering to our people. Our people voted for this. We are surrendering to the will of the people that we represent. So when you put it in that textured way on both sides, it makes it clear why it becomes a difficult issue. And I can't think of anybody better to try to work through it than George Mitchell, because he's got it all in his head and he's put three years into it. But my instinct is that we will get this worked out.

Now, you asked about did I think we had misplaced our energies. I don't think so. We have -- for one thing, we don't have a stronger partner in the world than Great Britain, and for another, we don't have a bigger ethnic group in America than the Irish, and we're tied by blood and emotion to the Irish struggle.

I also think that it has enormous symbolism, beyond the size of the country and the number who have died. And if it can be resolved, I think it will give great impetus to the forces of peace throughout the world. So I don't believe for a moment we made a mistake.

But let me also say I think we should be more involved in Africa and I've tried to involve us more in Africa. I did everything I could to head off that civil war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. It's not a civil war, they are two separate countries, but they once were together and they're basically now arguing over the divorce settlement. And I don't mean to trivialize it in that characterization. And we are still actively involved in trying to stop that.

Reverend Jackson played a significant role in trying to end the awful carnage in Sierra Leone, and I'm very grateful for that. We're now working, and we're able to work with Nigeria to try to stabilize the region. We are training African militaries and the Africa Crisis Response Corps, so that we can, hopefully, prevent further carnage. So I believe the United States should be more involved in Africa.

And, of course, the announcement that the Vice President made on our behalf the other day of our new AIDS initiative in some ways may be the most important thing we can do to save lives there.

So I agree that we should be more involved. But I don't agree that we misplaced our energies in Ireland. I'm proud of every late-night phone call and every frustrating hour I've spent on it.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, go ahead.

Q -- can I ask about you --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't want to talk about me.

Q Oh, come on.

THE PRESIDENT: I'm not a candidate for anything.

Go ahead, what? Go ahead. All right, one more.

Q Listen, Mr. President, with due respect, in another development, I know that you are for Africa, and you know that I support -- Africa, my friend, the President of the Dominican Republic -- we are Afro-Latino. But I am not concerned at this moment about Mars. I am concerned about place where I have been for 20 years, the White House, that is going to celebrate 200 year next year. I wonder if you would tell the people of the United States what you are going to plan for that big celebration?

And another thing, Mr. President -- I am disgusted with you -- you have been hiding something extraordinary -- the performance -- or the trade promotional coordinating committee that has been carried out in the last year -- are the participants in the prospective of this economy. Why don't you speak about the success of that initiative? It's a sin that you -- you talk about a lot of things that is -- another thing that is good for America and the world.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, a lot of the things that are good for America don't make good news for them, you see.

Q And I have a follow-up. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: No, let me just say -- (laughter) -- a follow-up? (Laughter.) Now, that's really good. That is really -- Oh, God, is that good.

Let me just say that we will have a lot of celebrations of the 200th birthday of the White House next year, and it's neat that coincides with the first year of the new century and the millennium. So we'll have -- I'm not prepared to announce them yet, because I want others who deserve more credit than I do to be able to do that. But it will be a signal honor for us to be living here in that year, and we'll be able to do a lot -- and I hope we'll have even more American citizens coming to

the White House next year to be a part of it.

Go ahead. Just that follow up -- that showed a lot of guts.
(Laughter.) If this is a follow up, I'll give you another question.
(Laughter.)

Q Sir, you've stressed that you have plenty to do, and yet for some time, your political career has enjoyed the benefits of support from two people in particular -- the Vice President and the First Lady -- two people who are now in a position to expect some support from you. I'm wondering what you feel you owe those two people in terms of political support, and as you plan your schedule in the weeks and months ahead, how you'll balance that assistance against your job as President, and finally, how you personally are adjusting to what people might think is an interesting shift in role.

Q I have a follow-up to his question. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Now, I believe that. (Laughter.)

Well, I will do whatever I'm asked to do, basically. I'll try to be helpful. And if I can be helpful, I will be. But I think the best thing I can do for anyone who generally shares our ideas, is part of our party, trying to move the country forward, is to continue to be a good President and take care of our country.

But I don't mind hard work and I don't mind long hours, and I find myself, apparently unlike some of my predecessors -- but just read what you all say about it -- but I don't feel myself winding down, I feel myself keying up. I want to do more. I want to try to make sure that I give the American people as much as I can every day. So I've got plenty of energy and I'll do whatever I'm asked to do.

I owe them a great deal. I think Al Gore -- everybody in this room knows that he's had far more responsibility and gotten more done than any Vice President in history. Nobody's ever had a role that even approximates that. I don't think the American people know that yet, but I know that. And he deserves a lot of credit for what he's done and he has my friendship and my support. But I also think that it's a mixed blessing, as you say, because people want to see any Vice President out there on his own. If you go back and look at where Richard Nixon was in 1959, you will see the same sort of thing. So I think I see this as a rhythmic process.

I think he'll do fine. But the reason I think that has nothing to do with the questions you ask me. The reasons I think that are, A, he's a good man with a good record, but most importantly, he's out there telling the American people how he would change the country for the better. And I think that's important.

I did an interview and I talked about Hillary and this -- if she decides to do this I will do whatever I can do. And if she's successful I will happily go to the Senate spouses meeting if that's part of the job. I have never known anybody who didn't run for office who was a more effective, more consistently committed, completely passionate public citizen than her. So if she decides to do it, and if the people of New York decide that they want her to do it, that's a decision for them to make and they have to deal with that, and she's trying to deal with that, you know, the whole question of moving there.

It is true that shortly after we came here I said, you get to decide where we live from now on for the rest of our lives. And she said, I want to go to New York -- in, like, '93. This is just something that happened later. So I'll be dividing my time between home -- I'm going to go home and build my library and build my center -- I'll divide my time between there and New York, whatever she does about this Senate race.

But if I can help her in any way, I will, because I think it would be a great thing for the country -- not only because of what I owe her, because she just -- what she knows and how she's lived and what she's done. I mean, it's very unusual to find somebody like that who has that much knowledge and background and passion all packed into one place. I mean, I know that you think I'm a biased observer, but I think I could support it with evidence.

Go ahead, Bill.

Q In that same vein, sir -- (laughter) -- as the spotlight shifts from you to your Vice President and to your wife, are you likely to be content, drifting slowly offstage, or do you think that someday you will want to run for office, some office again? Or are you willing to tell us this afternoon, sir, that you will never again run for elective office?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't have any idea. (Laughter.) Really, I don't know. Let me just say this. I love this job. I love it. Even on the bad days -- you can do something good for the country, you can do something good for the future. I have loved doing this. And I have given it every ounce of my energy and ability and judgment. And I feel very fortunate. But we have a system that I, frankly, agree with, even though I'm in pretty good shape -- we have a system that says a President gets two terms and then the President has to go find something else to do with his life. And there are lots of other worthy things to do.

And I was a very happy person before I became President. I never have had any trouble finding something interesting to do that I believed in. And I will do my best to use the opportunity and the gift the American people gave me to serve in this position to be a useful citizen of my country and the world for the rest of my life, and I have no doubt

that there will be some way I can do that. And I'm, frankly, kind of excited about it. I mean, it's a new challenge. I'll have to think in a different way and do a different way.

Will I miss a lot of the things about this job? Yes. I'll even miss all of you, believe it or not. But I'm just grateful that I've had the chance to serve and that the results have been good for our people and for our country and I think for the world.

And, you know, that's part of life. Life has its rhythms. And the people that are most satisfied and most happy in life take the rhythms of life and make the most of them, instead of sitting around moping and wishing the rhythms were something other than they are. That's just not the way the life works. And, listen, I'm way ahead and I'm very grateful.

Thank you very much.

END 3:45 P.M. EDT

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THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release
1999

July 21,

PRESS CONFERENCE BY THE PRESIDENT

The East Room

2:35 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon.

Q Mr. President, you don't know it, but there is such a bright light on you -- we can't see you for the light. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: I've been waiting a long time for the halo to appear. (Laughter.)

Let me say, ladies and gentlemen, I have a brief opening statement, but before I make that and take questions, I'd like to say that, as you might imagine, I have been briefed on this morning's developments in the search off Martha's Vineyard. Again, let me commend the Coast Guard and all the officials at the local, state and national level for the fine work they have done under extremely difficult circumstances.

Again, I think we should keep our thoughts with the families as events unfold, and my thoughts and prayers are with them.

Today I want to make a brief statement about the choice we face here in Washington and in our country about how best to move forward into the new century and what to do with the surplus. When we look toward the future, it is helpful to remember at least the recent past. Six and a half years ago, the budget deficit was \$290 billion and rising. Wages were stagnant, inequality was growing, social conditions were worsening.

In the 12 years before I took office, unemployment averaged more than 7 percent. It's almost difficult to remember what it was like. No one really thought we could turn it around, let alone bring unemployment to a 29-year low, or turn decades of deficits, during which time the debt of our country was quadrupled in only 12 years, into a surplus of \$99 billion.

Our nation has made a seismic shift in the last six years, from recession to recovery, from a crisis of confidence to a renewal of resolve, from economic disorder to a fiscal house finally in order. Now as we debate what to do with our prosperity, we face a critical choice -- whether to move forward with the fiscal discipline that got us to where we are today, or return to the kind of risk-taking that got us into recessions and deficits before.

We must decide whether to invest the surplus, to strengthen America over the long-term, or to squander it for the short-term. I think the right course is clear. And a bigger surplus only means that the mistake could be bigger, and the missed opportunity greater if we take the wrong course.

I have proposed a balanced budget that puts first things first. I believe we must maintain our sound economic strategy, and invest the surplus in long-term goals -- saving Social Security, saving and strengthening Medicare, modernizing it by providing a long overdue drug benefit, and continuing to meet our basic responsibilities in education, defense, the environment, biomedical research.

Tomorrow I will release a report that shows a great and growing need for prescription drug coverage. What the study shows is that 75 percent of our older Americans lack decent, dependable private-sector coverage of prescription drugs. That's three out of every four seniors.

Clearly, America needs a prescription drug plan that is simple, universal and voluntary. Anyone who says we don't I believe is out of date and out of touch.

As I've described, my plan meets these national priorities, while paying off the debt by 2015; while investing in America's new markets, the places that have not yet felt our prosperity; and while providing substantial tax relief -- \$250 billion of it targeted to help families save for retirement, pay for child care, long-term care, for modern schools.

So let's be clear about something. We're not debating whether to have tax cuts or not -- we should have tax cuts, but tax cuts that provide for us first to save Social Security and Medicare, not undermine them; tax cuts we can afford, not ones that would demand drastic cuts in defense, education, agriculture, the environment; tax cuts in the national interest, not special interest.

Now, these are the risks that are posed by the Republican tax plan that the House is about to vote on. Let me tell you what their plan would do. It would pile up \$3 trillion in debt over the next two decades, right when the baby boomers start to retire -- that's what it costs -- right when Social Security and Medicare feel the crunch.

Because of the cost of the tax plan over the next two decades, I should say what it doesn't do. It doesn't do anything to extend the solvency of Social Security, to extend the solvency of Medicare, significant -- cuts from where we are today in education, defense, biomedical research, the environment and other critical areas.

If we don't save Social Security it's not because we can't. If we don't strengthen Medicare and add the prescription drug benefit, it's not because we can't. If we don't meet these clear national needs, it's because we choose not to do so. It will be because, instead, we choose to reward ourselves today by risking our prosperity tomorrow.

I hope Congress will make the right choice. When members cast their ballots on the Republican tax plan, they're really voting also on whether to save Social Security and Medicare. They're voting on whether to pay off the national debt for the first time in over 150 years -- something that would guarantee us lower interest rates, higher investment, more jobs, higher incomes, and for average citizens, lower home mortgage payments, car payments, credit card payments, college loan payments.

They're voting whether to meet our most pressing national priorities in education, defense, nearly every other domain in our people's lives. I think the choice is clear between the plan the Republican leadership has outlined and the national priorities of the American people. I hope we can still work together across party lines to save Social Security and Medicare, to safeguard our priorities and have the right kind of tax cut.

If Congress passes the wrong kind, of course, I will not sign it. I will not allow a risky plan to become law. And as I said, we now have six and a half years of evidence. This is not really a debate that's just about ideas without any evidence. We clearly know what works now, and we ought to stay with it.

As I said, I will work with any member of any party willing to put first things first. We can have a tax cut and do the right thing for the long-term in America. That is my commitment, and I hope that together we can fulfill it for our people.

Thank you very much. Helen.

Q Mr. President, in U.S. treaty relations, is it obligated to defend Taiwan militarily if it abandons the one China policy? And would the U.S. continue military aid if it pursues separatism?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let me say, first of all, a lot of those questions are governed by the Taiwan Relations Act, which we intend to honor. Our policy is clear: We favor the one China policy; we favor the cross-strait dialogues. The understanding we have had all along with both China and Taiwan is that the differences between them would be resolved peacefully. If that were not to be the case, under the Taiwan Relations Act we would be required to view it with the gravest concern.

But I believe that both China and Taiwan understand this. I believe that they want to stay on a path to prosperity and dialogue. And we have dispatched people today, as the morning press reports, to do what we can to press that case to all sides. This is something that we don't want to see escalate, and I believe that what Mr. Lee said yesterday was trying to move in that direction. We all understand how difficult this is, but I think that the pillars of the policy are still the right ones. The one China policy is right; the cross-strait dialogue is right; the peaceful approach is right. And neither side, in my judgment, should depart from any of those elements.

Q So we would still have to go to war with China if it decided to break away?

THE PRESIDENT: I will say what I've already said -- the Taiwan Relations Act governs our policy. We made it clear. And I have -- as you remember, a few years ago we had a physical expression of that, that we don't believe there should be any violent attempts to resolve this, and we would view it very seriously. But I don't believe there will be. I think that both sides understands what needs to be done.

Terry?

Q Mr. President, do you think that President Lee was unnecessarily provocative in trying to redefine the nature of the Taiwan-Chinese relationship? And is the United States trying to send a signal by delaying a Pentagon mission which was going to Taiwan to assess its air defense needs? And, further, finally, you said that you still believe in a one China policy. How do you address Senator Helms' criticism that that policy is "a puzzling fiction"?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't think it's a puzzling fiction. But if Senator Helms means that today they're not, in fact, unified, then that's true. But the Chinese tend to take a long view of these things and have made clear a sensitivity to the different system that exists on Taiwan, and a willingness to find ways to accommodate it, as they did in working with Hong Kong, and, perhaps, even going beyond that.

So I think the important thing is to let -- they need to take the time necessary to work this out between themselves in a peaceful way. That is clearly in both their interests. And I'm still not entirely sure, because I have read things which seem to resonate both ways on this, exactly what the Lee statements were entitled -- trying to convey.

But I think that both sides are now quite aware of the fact that they need to find a way to pursue their destinies within the framework that we have followed these last several years, which I might add, has allowed both places to prosper and to grow, to do better and to have more contacts, more investment, and underneath the rhetoric, quite a bit more reconciliation. So I would hope that we would stay with what is working and not depart from it.

Q Is that the meaning of the delay of the Pentagon mission to assess the --

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't think this was the best time to do something which might excite either one side or the other and imply that a military solution is an acceptable alternative. If you really think about what's at stake here, it would be unthinkable. And I want -- I don't want to depart from any of the three pillars. I think we need to stay with one China; I think we need to stay with the dialogue; and I think that no one should contemplate force here.

Randy.

Q Economists have been calling on you to indicate now whether you intend to reappoint Alan Greenspan in order to avoid having the issue to become mired in election year politics and upsetting financial markets next year. Would you like to see the Chairman stay on, and has he given you any indication of his plans?

THE PRESIDENT: I have, as you know, enjoyed a very good relationship, both personally and professionally, with Mr. Greenspan. I think he has done a terrific job. I have no idea whether he would even be willing to serve another term. I will make the decision in a timely fashion. I do not expect it to become embroiled in election year politics; there's no evidence of that.

You heard -- I think the Vice President said yesterday or the day before that he thought he was doing an excellent job. So we believe that as long as the United States is fiscally responsible, then the Fed will respond to developments in our own economy and in the world economy in a way that is clear, transparent, and I think designed to keep our growth going. So I'm not concerned about it.

Peter, go ahead.

Q -- I think the Vice President indicated he was sending a signal by saying that Chairman Greenspan had been doing an excellent job. Do you endorse that interpretation?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know, all I know is he said he was doing a great job, and I agree with him.

Go ahead.

Q Mr. President, you mentioned the Kennedy tragedy at the beginning of the news conference. Could you please give us a better understanding of what the White House role has been in the conduct of the recovery operation and the decision-making on the release of information about it?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think that -- I am unaware of any role we have played in the decision-making of the release of information, except, let me say that today a lot of things are breaking in a hurry, and I believe there are some decisions that ought to be announced by the Kennedy family, and others that ought to be properly announced by either the Coast Guard or the NTSB.

So we have not tried -- to the best of my knowledge, had any role in the timing or substance of release of information. And we have had no role in the conduct of the operation except that I did talk to Admiral Larrabee, I think it was the day before yesterday, at a time when the operation might normally have ceased, and he said, I think we have a chance to find something else because of the equipment we have here, even though it's difficult and I'm inclined to believe because of the circumstances here and because who's involved that we ought to go on a little more. And I said that I would support it and defend it. And I think it was the right decision.

Q Mr. President, if you'll allow me to ask about two different topics. On the Kennedy search, sir, there have been conflicting reports about whether or not Mr. Kennedy's body has, in fact, been recovered. I understand that based upon the answer you just gave, that might not be a question that you'd want to address, but, perhaps, given the fact that there is this conflicting information you could answer that question.

And, secondly, sir, on this notion of a drug benefit, prescription drug benefit, you chided the Republicans about targeting tax cuts at the wealthy, saying that they're too steered in that direction. How do you reconcile that philosophically with allowing rich Americans, rich older Americans, to get a prescription drug benefit which even you just said this new study will show one in four don't need?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, it's voluntary. And most wealthy Americans are well taken care of under the present program they have and won't exercise it. So that's the first point I want to make.

The second thing I would like to say is I don't think most people know this, even some of you may have forgotten, but in the 11th hour of the deficit reduction package negotiations in 1993, in order to get up to \$500 billion in cuts in the deficit projected over five years -- we did much better, as all of you know -- the cap was taken off. The income cap was taken off of the Medicare tax, which means virtually every single upper-income person in America will pay far more into the Medicare program than they will ever draw out in health care or benefits.

They are making a net significant contribution today because, unlike Social Security taxes where there is still an earnings cap, there is no longer an earnings cap on Medicare. And I think a lot of folks have forgotten that -- so that in that sense, this is the most progressive program we have. The upper-income people, particularly once you get over about \$250,000 in income, they're paying far more into this program over the course of their life than they could ever draw out if they were sick every day from the time they're 65 on.

Q Sir, a question --

THE PRESIDENT: I just don't think I should make an announcement about that. I am aware of what the Coast Guard has done and what they have found as of five minutes before I came out here. But I simply -- I just don't think it's appropriate for me -- I'll be glad to comment on whatever they want to say, but I think I should leave it for them to talk.

Q Sir, you talk about how expensive the Republican tax cuts would be. But the Congressional Budget Office has now just come out with a report saying that even with their tax cuts, almost \$800 billion in tax cuts, they would save about \$277 billion over a 10-year period, whereby your program would save only about \$50 billion. That's about \$227 billion difference. How do you reconcile that? And, you know, people on the Hill listen to the CBO.

THE PRESIDENT: They listen to the CBO except where it's inconvenient for them, like the patients' bill of rights. The Republicans have freed us all now to question the CBO, since they ignored the CBO in the patients' bill of rights; they have discredited their own CBO.

Let me say, I haven't seen that CBO accounting. All I can tell you is that all of our budget people were rolling their eyes and saying that it was a very creative study.

Let me just say this: You have six and a half years of experience with the numbers we have given you and the estimates we have made. And every single year, our numbers have not only been accurate, but we have done better than we said we would do -- every single year, for six and a half years now.

Our studies show that their tax cut over the next two decades will cost, first, a trillion dollars and then \$3 trillion in the second decade, and that -- then an enormous loss to the American people in interest savings. That is, we'll have to keep spending more and more of our tax money paying interest on the debt, and it will require huge cuts in education and defense and other things.

You cannot -- they simply cannot credibly make that statement. And they don't put any new money into the Medicare program. And they don't have a Medicare reform package out there. So unless they just simply propose to bankrupt all the teaching hospitals and a lot of the other hospitals in the country, and let the Medicare program wither away, as one of the previous leaders so eloquently put it -- they can't possibly finance this tax program without doing serious damage. I can't comment on the CBO study, but it doesn't make any sense to anybody I've talked to about it.

Q May I just follow up --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q The CBO estimates the cost of your Medicare reforms are more than twice what you say they are.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, again you have evidence. Let me just say this: In the 1997 Balanced Budget Agreement -- okay? -- and this is the reason all these teaching hospitals are in trouble today -- we agreed to a Medicare savings figure. And we said, okay, here is our health information -- this is what we do in the Executive Branch, we deal with these hospitals -- here are the changes you need to make in the Medicare program to achieve the savings that the Republicans and the Democrats in Congress and the White House agreed on.

And the CBO said, no, no, no, no, that won't come close; you need these changes plus these changes. And we said, okay, we're following the CBO, we put it in there. What happened? And that's one of the reasons the surplus is somewhat bigger than it otherwise would be -- the cuts in Medicare were far more severe, our numbers were right, their numbers were wrong and that's why you've got all these hospitals all over America, every place I go, talking about how they're threatened with bankruptcy.

So when it comes to estimating Medicare costs, again, we have evidence. And whenever there's been a difference between us and the CBO, we've been right and they've been wrong. That's all I can tell you. No serious person -- so what are they going to do about Medicare? They say our drug program will cost more -- they don't put a red cent into it. What are they going to do about it? Even if you don't have a drug program, if you adopt their tax cut program they won't be able to do anything to extend the solvency of Medicare and they will have to have huge cuts.

For them to produce those savings they are going to -- they can't even fund my defense budget, much less the one they say they want. They're going to have cuts in defense, cuts in education, cuts in the environment. That's all their savings assumed that they're going to stay with the present budget levels, which they, themselves, are trying to get out of even as we speak here today. So this is -- the American people are not -- I mean, this is not rocket science, this is arithmetic.

And we've been dealing with -- we went from creative supply-side mathematics to elemental arithmetic in 1993. And it has served us very well. And all I'm trying to do is stick with basic arithmetic and get this country out of debt, save Social Security and Medicare, provide this prescription drug benefit, keep us moving forward.

Q Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Next. Let me take John's first, then I'll take you, Sarah.

Q Sir, in your conversation with Chairman Arafat this morning, did you ask him to take any specific steps to advance what you believe is new momentum toward peace, and did you discuss with him his complaints yesterday that he found Prime Minister Barak's 15-month timetable unacceptable?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I told him only this. I said that -- I generally described my meetings with Prime Minister Barak to him. I told him that he was committed to working in partnership with Chairman Arafat and honoring any agreements that had been made to this point, and that any

modifications they made going forward to the benefit of either or both sides would have to be done by mutual agreement; that I thought he was completely committed to resolve all the issues outstanding in the peace process in an expeditious manner. And what I urged him to do was to have this one-on-one meeting, hear him out, think it through, and if he wanted to talk to me again after the meeting occurred, that I would be happy to talk to him.

So I went out of my way not to describe Prime Minister Barak's proposals or to advocate or not advocate, but simply to say that I was convinced they were being made in complete good faith, and that the peace process would be revitalized, and whatever they did from here on out is something that they would do together. And I think he felt good about that. And I did say, after you have the meeting, if you want to talk again about this -- I'll be glad to talk to you. And he said he did. So that's where we are.

Sarah. Go ahead, Sarah.

Q Sir, your microphone is not working apparently; it seems like you're talking very low, we can barely hear you. But in the meantime, don't you think it would be a good idea if we announced for the country's sake the list of conferences to be held at the White House each day, and the list of the people whom the President has appointments with?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I never thought about it. Don't you have a list of the conferences we have every day here?

Q No, indeed. We do -- and what if we find out you haven't any?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think I ought to talk to our folks about it, but I will consider that.

Go ahead.

Q Will you be taking any concrete contributions with you to the Balkan summit on investment next week? And you've said that you would give only humanitarian aid to Yugoslavia as long as Milosevic is in power. Will you have any trouble defining that? Will that cause any problems in distinguishing between humanitarian and other aid?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let me say that I hope very much that there will be some positive, concrete commitments that come out of the meeting that we're going to have. I do not believe -- I do not believe we can achieve the future we want in the Balkans and avoid future ethnic conflicts unless there is a unifying vision which both brings the Balkan states closer together in their economic and political self-interests, and then brings the region as a whole closer to Europe.

And so I think that we have to have some incentives to move in that direction. And there are direct -- there are also indirect things the United States can do to help to contribute to that goal. And because of all the other things that have been going on -- you know it's been a very busy two or three weeks -- we haven't actually had an opportunity to sit down and go through what our options are, so I can't give you a more specific answer.

But I will say this -- if what we have done in Bosnia, and what we have done in Kosovo, is to have lasting benefits, we have got to find a way to create closer unity among the Balkan states themselves, and then with the region and Europe. And that is what I am working on.

And what was the second question you asked?

Q On the humanitarian aid, how will you define it?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes. There may be -- frankly, there may be some differences of opinion. As you know, I tend to take a rather narrow view of it because I don't think that we should, in effect, reward Mr. Milosevic's political control by doing things which are not humanitarian in nature. But based on the virtual daily reports I get about where we all are on this and where we are operating in Kosovo, I now no longer expect them to be big debates. I don't expect there will be a big difference of opinion.

Yes, go ahead, John.

Q Mr. President, the House of Representatives appears to be on the verge of terminating funding for the F-22 fighter. Will the White House fight hard for full funding for that program, even if it means sacrificing other Pentagon airplane programs or even pay for servicemen?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't think we should sacrifice the pay for our service personnel because we now are getting back in the ball game in recruitment. You know, we've really been -- the good economy and the

increased deployments and the low pay all combined we're making it hard for us to both recruit and retain people. And the people are still the most important part of our military -- their quality and their training and their morale and their commitment and the condition of their families. So I don't think that.

Now, the Congress every year puts other things into the defense budget which are not priorities for the Pentagon, and are priorities for the Congress. We can fund the F-22, we can fund the plane without compromising the basic priorities of our national defense within the funds set aside, and that is what I will fight to do. I think it would be a mistake to abandon the project. I think it has real potential to add to our national defense. I have always supported it and I hope that it can be preserved.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. You had some fun, recently, with George W. Bush and his slogan of "compassionate conservatism." But you went beyond the notion that he's not offering many details as policy, and seemed to ridicule his slogan and even question his sincerity. Were you just trying to help Mr. Gore's candidacy or were you taking the opportunity maybe to just needle the leading Republican candidate?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I was just having a little fun. (Laughter.) You know, that's a long time -- if we don't have any laughs it's going to be a very tedious struggle between now and November of 2000.

Let me say this. I think that every person struggles to find a phrase or something that will sort of stand for what he or she is trying to do. So I was really just having a little fun.

I think the most important thing is that all the candidates make their positions clear on the great debates going on now, and make their positions clear on what they would do if they got the job. To me, that's the most important thing. You know, I am not involved in this campaign as a candidate, and I have a full-time job, so I'm not involved in any sort of full-time consulting role. (Laughter.) So I look at this -- I look at this more from the point of view of the average American voter -- what will change the lives of America.

For example, every candidate should tell us, are you for the patients' bill of rights are you for closing the gun show loophole; are you for raising the minimum wage; are you for the House Republican tax plan, or do you favor our plan on Social Security and saving Social Security and Medicare and making America debt-free and having a smaller tax cut that enables us to continue to fund education and defense and these other things? What are you going to do if you get elected?

To me, the best thing the Vice President has done is to talk about dramatically intensifying the war on cancer, making pre-school universal, increasing access to college by helping people save without tax consequences; what he would do to make America a safer country, what he would do in communities to have faith-based organizations cooperate with governments more. I think these are interesting ideas about how you build on the progress the country has made the last six and a half years.

So I would say to everyone -- you know, use whatever slogans you want, but tell us where you stand. I think that's the most important thing.

Susan?

Q Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I'll come over here. I know I'm left leaning, but I will give you -- (laughter) --

Q Mr. President, the economy is going great. In a new USA Today-CNN poll this week, your approval rating was at a very healthy 58 percent. But that same poll showed that by 50 percent to 38 percent, Americans said they wanted to see a change from Clinton administration policies -- not a continuation of them. What do you think accounts for that sentiment for change, and do you think it means that you present something of a mixed blessing to Mrs. Clinton and Vice President Gore in their campaigns next year?

THE PRESIDENT: I think what that means people think things are going well, but they want a change in policy. I think that's right. If you asked me that question, and you worded it in that way, I'd be in the 50 percent, because I think that -- my own view is that, particularly in a dynamic time, where things are changing, you should want continued change. But is change -- the question is, should we change in a way that builds on what has been done and goes beyond it -- which is what I would argue -- or should you change and go back to the policies we were following when we had \$290-billion deficits and we averaged over 7 percent unemployment for 12 years. I mean, I think that's really the question the American people have to ask themselves.

I think change is good. The great thing about this country is that it works best when it's sort of in a perpetual stage of renewal. So I would, myself, as a citizen, I would vote against somebody who said, vote for me and I'll keep it just like it is; everything that Bill Clinton did is exactly what I'll do. I would vote against that candidate, because I do not believe that is the right thing to do.

But what I think we should do is we should build on the progress of the last six years and go beyond it, and not adopt a completely

different approach which has been proven not to work. So all I want the American people to do is to remember what it was like before, think what it's like now, recognize that ideas and policies have consequences. And the American people usually get it right; that's why we're all still around here after more than 200 years.

Q -- (inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q -- for Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Gore?

THE PRESIDENT: No, because I -- no, he has done -- look at what the Vice President's done. He's staked out new issues here. He said, here's how I'm going to change what we're doing in cancer research; here's how I'm going to change what we're doing in education; here's how I'm going to change what we're doing in crime -- but not to reverse what we've done, but to build on it and go beyond it. So I think that's very, very -- that's the sort of thing that's worthy of debate. That's not the same; that is change.

What the American people have to decide is what kind of change do they want. Do they want to build on what has worked for the last six and a half years, or do they want to abandon it and go back to what failed them for 12 years before. That will be the decision they have to make.

Yes, go ahead.

Q In your last press conference, sir, with Prime Minister Ehud Barak, you mentioned you wanted better, normalized relations with Syria. Now, have you received any response, positive response or indication from Syria towards that? And, on Iran, can you share with us the administration's views of -- events and administrations in Iran? Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, on Syria let me say, the only thing I can tell you is that the statements, at least, that have been coming out of Syria have been quite encouraging in terms of the regard that President Assad seems to have for Prime Minister Barak, and the willingness, the openness that there is to negotiating and moving toward peace. So I'm encouraged by that.

And on Iran, frankly, I'm reluctant to say anything for fear that it will be used in a way that's not helpful to the forces of openness and reform. I think that people everywhere, particularly younger people, hope that they will be able to pursue their religious convictions and their personal dreams in an atmosphere of greater freedom, that still allows them to be deeply loyal to their nation. And I think the Iranian people obviously love their country and are proud of its history and have enormous potential. And I just hope they find a way to work through all this, and I believe they will.

Q You mentioned the patients' bill of rights. It seems like that was an argument by both parties over providing more for people who already are lucky enough to have health insurance. And, in fact, neither party dealt with some very fundamental issues that energized you and the First Lady five and six years ago. The question is, with such a robust economy and the budget surpluses, if not now, when, and if not you, who, would provide the leadership to provide for those folks?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, but I think the bigger question is how. That is, it is true that just as we've predicted in 1993 and 1994, that the percentage of people who have health insurance on the job is going down, just as we said it would, if nothing was done. So what we have tried to do is to isolate discrete populations that seem to be most in need and try to offer them help.

In the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, we reached bipartisan agreement on a proposal that would fund providing health insurance for up to 5 million more children through state-designed programs. Now, I've been a little disappointed -- and I'm not being critical of any of the states, either, here -- but I've been a little disappointed that the uptake on the program has been a little slow. That is, I would have thought by now we'd have almost 3 million of those 5 million children enrolled already, because we've got the money there, and we're well behind that.

So we are looking at whether there are things that we can do at the national level to work with the states to simplify access to the children's health insurance programs that the states have set up. But -- and I also had a talk with Senator Kennedy, the other day who believes that for little or no more extra money, we could actually adjust the program and take in several million more children. So the children are the biggest group.

Then, I have a proposal, as you know, that's part of my Medicare reform proposal that I didn't mention today, but I want to reiterate it, that would allow the most vulnerable group of people without health insurance, people between the ages of 55 and 65, to buy into the Medicare system in a way that would not compromise the integrity of the system. So I think that is quite important.

In addition to that, there are a lot of states -- there are some states -- Tennessee was the first state to do this under the former governor -- they started it -- which are allowing lower-income working families to buy into their Medicaid programs on a sliding scale.

So if all these things were done, we would dramatically reduce the number of people without health insurance and we'll eventually probably get down to, if we keep pushing in this direction, get down to the point where the largest group of people without health insurance are young, single people who believe that they're going to live forever and be healthy forever and don't want to bear the cost. And we'll have to think about, then, what to do.

But I think the best thing to do is try to get as many kids as we can covered, and then try to get these people who are out of the work force who are older, but they're not old enough to get Medicare, to get them at least where they can all afford on a sliding scale to buy into the Medicare program.

Go ahead, Scott.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. On the Kennedy tragedy, sir, will you authorize the Navy to participate in a burial at sea ceremony? Why do you believe it's justified to spend so many federal resources on this tragedy? And, finally, sir, I wonder if you would give us your thoughts on Mr. Kennedy's last visit here to the White House. I understand you and the First Lady took him on a tour.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we have received -- I have received no official word, personal word from the family what burial arrangements they want. Until they make a statement about it, I just don't feel that I can say anything.

Secondly, I will say that until just a couple of days ago the recovery efforts -- the rescue, then the recovery efforts that were undertaken were consistent with what would have been done in any other case. Because the Coast Guard felt that they had the capacity to succeed in this if they had a few more days, and because of the role of the Kennedy family in our national lives, and because of the enormous losses that they have sustained in our lifetimes, I thought it was appropriate to give them a few more days. And if anyone believes that was wrong, the Coast Guard is not at fault; I am. It was because I thought it was the right thing to do under the circumstances.

Now, you asked about -- John Kennedy had actually not been back to the White House since his father was killed, until I became President. First, he was on an advisory committee that made a report to me and he came back to the Oval Office, where he saw the desk that he took the famous picture in, coming through the gate, for the first time since he was a little boy.

And then last year -- maybe you would have a better memory than I would, but it seems to me it was last May, when we had the event at the White House celebrating the series that HBO did on the Apollo program. Do you remember they did a series on the space program that was done after the movie came out? And Tom Hanks came, a lot of people came. And he was invited because of his father's role in starting the space program. And he and Carolyn came. And afterward I asked them if they would like to go upstairs, and he said he would. So I took him upstairs and showed him the residence, which he'd not seen since he was a tiny boy.

And I showed him some of my -- the memorabilia that I had from his father's service. I have a picture of his father speaking to the Irish Parliament, and a number of other things which he thought were very interesting. And we took a -- we had a very nice evening. And I sent him the pictures from it. And then, in return, he sent me a signed copy of his favorite picture of his father, which is now upstairs. It's John Kennedy campaigning in Virginia, in Charlottesville in 1960. It's quite a lovely picture -- interesting picture.

But it was a nice night. I think that he really wanted to kind of come to terms with all of it. And I think he and Carolyn, they were delightful young people, and they had a great time here that night. And Hillary and I loved having them here. It was quite a great night.

Q To just follow on that, sir, just one question, if I may. Is there anything that Mr. Kennedy said to you that night that particularly struck you?

THE PRESIDENT: We just had a friendly conversation. You know, I knew him pretty well by then. We'd been -- I met him years ago when he was a law student, doing a summer internship with Mickey Kantor's law firm out in Los Angeles, long before I ever thought I'd be here and before I ever thought we'd have any other contacts. He just happened to be -- Mickey asked me if I'd speak to his law clerks, because I was in LA to give an education speech, and I went by and visited with them and he was there. And we had been together on many occasions since then.

The thing that struck me was I thought he was -- he said he was glad to be back. And I think he -- he was a very deliberate person, as many people have noticed, about when he would be publicly exposed and all of that. He had his mother's care for having a private life. And I think that he had not -- I'm not sure he had really felt he wanted to come back to the White House before he did. But especially in light of everything that's happened, I'm glad he had the chance to come back here one more time and see the residence and know where he was when he was a little boy. I'm glad he did that. I'm grateful that that happened.

Yes, go ahead. Yes, yes, please.

Q On Colombia, the Pastrana administration are asking the United States for \$500 million to support the military against the guerrillas. Is your administration ready to respond to that request? And, also, the Colombians are asking for more direct intervention from the United States. Are you considering this possibility? And, also, Mexico, you're going to meet with President Zedillo in October. And the Mexican government is still rejecting the extraditions of major drug lords. What are you going to ask him -- you're going to get assurance from him to extradite these big narcotic traffickers to the United States?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you know, we had no extraditions between Mexico and the United States for a long time, and we've actually had some now. So we're moving in the right direction. And President Zedillo and I have been pretty successful in continuing to move our relationship in the right direction, so we'll work on that.

On Colombia, I'm not prepared to make any kind of dollar commitment today. But let me say, I have stayed in close touch with President Pastrana, and I admire the fact that he has really thrown himself into trying to end the civil conflicts in Colombia, to stop the insurgency. The people in the United States have a real interest in that because I think that until the civil discord in Colombia is brought to an end, it is going to be much, much harder for us to restrain the activities of the narco-traffickers there, and their reach.

So, in addition to wanting a neighbor and a democracy in Latin America to be free of the kind of violence and heartbreak that the Colombian people have undergone because of this, it is also very much in our national security interest to do what we can, if we can be helpful in ending the civil conflict so that Colombia can be about the business of freeing itself of the influence of the narco-traffickers in ways that would be good for Colombians and good for us as well.

Q Another question about the presidential race. Aside from asking George W. Bush to come forward and give specifics on the issues that you mentioned, could you tell us what you find objectionable about his trying to present a new moderate face for his party, just like you did for the Democrats? And could you tell us whether you're worried whether he will figure out how the Republicans can occupy the center of American politics?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q You don't think he can?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no, I don't think I'll answer those questions. (Laughter.) I will say -- no, look, let me say again, I wouldn't even agree with the characterization you gave of my first answer.

When I ran for President, in 1991, the first thing I did was tell the American people what I thought was going on in our country and what I would do. And if you remember, the late Senator Paul Tsongas and I were actually almost ridiculed at the time because we both put out these very detailed plans of what we would do. If you go back and get one of those

plans now, you'll see that virtually everything we said we'd do we did do, except for the things we tried to do and were defeated on.

And my view is that there are a lot of things that count in a presidential election toward a successful presidency, but it is -- that go beyond specific issues, and judgment plays a role in it, and crises will always come up and things can be learned and all that. But it really matters where you stand on the big issues that everybody knows about that are going on right now, and it matters where we're going in the future.

So that's the only point I want to make. And I think any -- I would say that applies to every candidate. I don't want to answer the questions you ask me because that's not my job. My job is not to handicap this horse race, not to comment on it, not to comment on the candidates. My job is to work for the American people. But I'm going to answer these questions from the point of view of Joe Citizen. That's -- every political question you asked me from now on, I'm going to pretend that I'm living back in Little Rock already and I'm working on my presidential library and I'm sitting here as a voter saying, where do they stand, what will they do -- all of them. And I do believe the Vice President has done the best job of telling the American people what he would do and -- to go back to Susan's formulation -- how he would change the country in a positive way.

George.

Q Mr. President, as the nation has celebrated the 30th anniversary of the moon landing, a lot of the former astronauts have lamented that no President after Kennedy set a kind of national goal like President Kennedy did of landing on the moon. Do you think that -- in your view, is the country not receptive today to that kind of goal-setting by a President, or is it something a President should do, set a goal of landing on Mars?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we are planning to land on Mars. But I think -- for one thing, when I became President, the space program was actually in peril. And we -- the space station was certainly at risk. And I have fought for it and I believe in it. And one of the things I talked to -- Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins were in to see me yesterday, and we talked about where we could go with this. And Dan Goldin was there, the NASA Administrator; and Dr. Neal Lane, my Science Advisor. And we talked about how we could use the coming of the millennium as -- you know, the First Lady sponsored all these other lectures here. And I told him about Stephen Hawking's lecture and what he said. And we talked yesterday about how we could set some goals for the space program, capture the imagination of the American people and broaden the support for it.

And one of the things that I suggested that I think would be quite helpful that we're going to work on now is what we can do to dramatize for the American people -- you mentioned Mars, but I think what is more likely to capture the imagination of the American people are the benefits to us here on Earth of continued advances in space. And some of them, particularly in the health field, are likely to be breath-taking. They're principally in the area of the environment and health.

So I asked our people to start working on that and they said they would be willing to help us. I have to tell you that it was a great day for me yesterday to have them come by the White House. They also gave me a moon rock, by the way -- but only on loan. (Laughter.) And the moon rock is 3.6 billion years old. So when I feel very tired, I'll look at it and feel young again. (Laughter.)

Yes, go ahead. We had an Irish question first, I promised. Go ahead, what's the Irish question?

Q Thank you, sir. Given the --

THE PRESIDENT: You want to ask one, too?

Q We both have a -- given the various meetings underway with Mo Mowlam here, and George Mitchell there, has any progress been made on the Irish situation? And is one side more to blame than the other on it?

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Why don't we take both Irish questions at once. What's your Irish question?

Q Last week, you seemed to kind of get fired up when you were talking to the teenagers from Colorado. You said that the politicians in Northern Ireland were behaving akin to school children. Do you feel, after all the work that you've done on this project, that perhaps it was misplaced and you should have perhaps pushed in a place more like Africa, where they have thousands of people dying from ethnic strife, instead of 3,500 over 30 years?

Q And if I can have a third Irish question, what role, if any, do you expect to play, Mr. President, in breaking the deadlock?

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, let me answer the Irish questions, then I'll come back to the "should we have done something else."

I've talked to Senator Mitchell, and he is willing to spend some time -- he can't go back full-time for another year or two, but I'd like to put this in some -- at least I'd like to tell you how I look at it.

Obviously, I am very disappointed at the breakdown of the process here. But I do think it's important to note that neither side wants to abandon the Good Friday Agreement. And that's very important. It's also important to note that everybody agrees on what their responsibilities are and what the other side's responsibilities are, and everybody agrees that it all has to be done by a date certain.

So they have agreed to break out the two areas causing problems, the decommissioning and the standing up to the executive, and try to figure out how they can unlock that, and Mo Mowlam, as you pointed out, is working hard on it, and they've asked Senator Mitchell to come back and do some work on it, and my instinct is that it will be resolved.

Now, let me say in terms of your characterization, here's the problem. To the outsiders -- I told the parties that to the outsiders -- no one, none of us outside, even somebody like me that's been so involved in this, no one will understand if this thing breaks down over who goes first; that that did sound like the kind of argument that young people have, you know -- who goes first.

Underneath that, there's something deeper: The Protestants are afraid that they IRA will never disarm if they let the Sinn Fein go into the executive branch, and the IRA do not believe -- since the agreement did not require decommissioning as a condition of getting into the executive branch, they don't want to have to spend the rest of their lives being told that it wasn't the vote of the people, it wasn't the Good Friday Accord, it was what the Unionists and Great Britain did to force them to give up their arms that got them to disarm. They believe that would, in effect, require them to disavow what they've done for 30 years.

And what they're saying is, when we surrender our arms, we're surrendering to our people. Our people voted for this. We are surrendering to the will of the people that we represent. So when you put it in that textured way on both sides, it makes it clear why it becomes a difficult issue. And I can't think of anybody better to try to work through it than George Mitchell, because he's got it all in his head and he's put three years into it. But my instinct is that we will get this worked out.

Now, you asked about did I think we had misplaced our energies. I don't think so. We have -- for one thing, we don't have a stronger partner in the world than Great Britain, and for another, we don't have a bigger ethnic group in America than the Irish, and we're tied by blood and emotion to the Irish struggle.

I also think that it has enormous symbolism, beyond the size of the country and the number who have died. And if it can be resolved, I think it will give great impetus to the forces of peace throughout the world. So I don't believe for a moment we made a mistake.

But let me also say I think we should be more involved in Africa and I've tried to involve us more in Africa. I did everything I could to head off that civil war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. It's not a civil war, they are two separate countries, but they once were together and they're basically now arguing over the divorce settlement. And I don't mean to trivialize it in that characterization. And we are still actively involved in trying to stop that.

Reverend Jackson played a significant role in trying to end the awful carnage in Sierra Leone, and I'm very grateful for that. We're now working, and we're able to work with Nigeria to try to stabilize the region. We are training African militaries and the Africa Crisis Response Corps, so that we can, hopefully, prevent further carnage. So I believe the United States should be more involved in Africa.

And, of course, the announcement that the Vice President made on our behalf the other day of our new AIDS initiative in some ways may be the most important thing we can do to save lives there.

So I agree that we should be more involved. But I don't agree that we misplaced our energies in Ireland. I'm proud of every late-night phone call and every frustrating hour I've spent on it.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, go ahead.

Q -- can I ask about you --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't want to talk about me.

Q Oh, come on.

THE PRESIDENT: I'm not a candidate for anything.

Go ahead, what? Go ahead. All right, one more.

Q Listen, Mr. President, with due respect, in another development, I know that you are for Africa, and you know that I support -- Africa, my friend, the President of the Dominican Republic -- we are Afro-Latino. But I am not concerned at this moment about Mars. I am concerned about place where I have been for 20 years, the White House, that is going to celebrate 200 year next year. I wonder if you would tell the people of the United States what you are going to plan for that big celebration?

And another thing, Mr. President -- I am disgusted with you -- you have been hiding something extraordinary -- the performance -- or the trade promotional coordinating committee that has been carried out in the last year -- are the participants in the prospective of this economy. Why don't you speak about the success of that initiative? It's a sin that you -- you talk about a lot of things that is -- another thing that is good for America and the world.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, a lot of the things that are good for America don't make good news for them, you see.

Q And I have a follow-up. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: No, let me just say -- (laughter) -- a follow-up? (Laughter.) Now, that's really good. That is really -- Oh, God, is that good.

Let me just say that we will have a lot of celebrations of the 200th birthday of the White House next year, and it's neat that coincides with the first year of the new century and the millennium. So we'll have -- I'm not prepared to announce them yet, because I want others who deserve more credit than I do to be able to do that. But it will be a signal honor for us to be living here in that year, and we'll be able to do a lot -- and I hope we'll have even more American citizens coming to the White House next year to be a part of it.

Go ahead. Just that follow up -- that showed a lot of guts. (Laughter.) If this is a follow up, I'll give you another question. (Laughter.)

Q Sir, you've stressed that you have plenty to do, and yet for some time, your political career has enjoyed the benefits of support from two people in particular -- the Vice President and the First Lady -- two people who are now in a position to expect some support from you. I'm wondering what you feel you owe those two people in terms of political support, and as you plan your schedule in the weeks and months ahead, how you'll balance that assistance against your job as President, and finally, how you personally are adjusting to what people might think is an interesting shift in role.

Q I have a follow-up to his question. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Now, I believe that. (Laughter.)

Well, I will do whatever I'm asked to do, basically. I'll try to be helpful. And if I can be helpful, I will be. But I think the best thing I can do for anyone who generally shares our ideas, is part of our party, trying to move the country forward, is to continue to be a good President and take care of our country.

But I don't mind hard work and I don't mind long hours, and I find myself, apparently unlike some of my predecessors -- but just read what you all say about it -- but I don't feel myself winding down, I feel myself keying up. I want to do more. I want to try to make sure that I give the American people as much as I can every day. So I've got plenty of energy and I'll do whatever I'm asked to do.

I owe them a great deal. I think Al Gore -- everybody in this room knows that he's had far more responsibility and gotten more done than any Vice President in history. Nobody's ever had a role that even approximates that. I don't think the American people know that yet, but I know that. And he deserves a lot of credit for what he's done and he has my friendship and my support. But I also think that it's a mixed blessing, as you say, because people want to see any Vice President out there on his own. If you go back and look at where Richard Nixon was in 1959, you will see the same sort of thing. So I think I see this as a rhythmic process.

I think he'll do fine. But the reason I think that has nothing to do with the questions you ask me. The reasons I think that are, A, he's

a good man with a good record, but most importantly, he's out there telling the American people how he would change the country for the better. And I think that's important.

I did an interview and I talked about Hillary and this -- if she decides to do this I will do whatever I can do. And if she's successful I will happily go to the Senate spouses meeting if that's part of the job. I have never known anybody who didn't run for office who was a more effective, more consistently committed, completely passionate public citizen than her. So if she decides to do it, and if the people of New York decide that they want her to do it, that's a decision for them to make and they have to deal with that, and she's trying to deal with that, you know, the whole question of moving there.

It is true that shortly after we came here I said, you get to decide where we live from now on for the rest of our lives. And she said, I want to go to New York -- in, like, '93. This is just something that happened later. So I'll be dividing my time between home -- I'm going to go home and build my library and build my center -- I'll divide my time between there and New York, whatever she does about this Senate race.

But if I can help her in any way, I will, because I think it would be a great thing for the country -- not only because of what I owe her, because she just -- what she knows and how she's lived and what she's done. I mean, it's very unusual to find somebody like that who has that much knowledge and background and passion all packed into one place. I mean, I know that you think I'm a biased observer, but I think I could support it with evidence.

Go ahead, Bill.

Q In that same vein, sir -- (laughter) -- as the spotlight shifts from you to your Vice President and to your wife, are you likely to be content, drifting slowly offstage, or do you think that someday you will want to run for office, some office again? Or are you willing to tell us this afternoon, sir, that you will never again run for elective office?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't have any idea. (Laughter.) Really, I don't know. Let me just say this. I love this job. I love it. Even on the bad days -- you can do something good for the country, you can do something good for the future. I have loved doing this. And I have given it every ounce of my energy and ability and judgment. And I feel very fortunate. But we have a system that I, frankly, agree with, even though I'm in pretty good shape -- we have a system that says a President gets two terms and then the President has to go find something else to do with his life. And there are lots of other worthy things to do.

And I was a very happy person before I became President. I never have had any trouble finding something interesting to do that I believed in. And I will do my best to use the opportunity and the gift the American people gave me to serve in this position to be a useful citizen of my country and the world for the rest of my life, and I have no doubt that there will be some way I can do that. And I'm, frankly, kind of excited about it. I mean, it's a new challenge. I'll have to think in a different way and do a different way.

Will I miss a lot of the things about this job? Yes. I'll even miss all of you, believe it or not. But I'm just grateful that I've had the chance to serve and that the results have been good for our people and for our country and I think for the world.

And, you know, that's part of life. Life has its rhythms. And the people that are most satisfied and most happy in life take the rhythms of life and make the most of them, instead of sitting around moping and wishing the rhythms were something other than they are. That's just not the way the life works. And, listen, I'm way ahead and I'm very grateful.

Thank you very much.

END 3:45 P.M. EDT

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TEXT:

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

July 21, 1999

PRESS CONFERENCE BY THE PRESIDENT

The East Room

2:35 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Good afternoon.

Q Mr. President, you don't know it, but there is such a bright light on you -- we can't see you for the light. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: I've been waiting a long time for the halo to appear. (Laughter.)

Let me say, ladies and gentlemen, I have a brief opening statement, but before I make that and take questions, I'd like to say that, as you might imagine, I have been briefed on this morning's developments in the search off Martha's Vineyard. Again, let me commend the Coast Guard and all the officials at the local, state and national level for the fine work they have done under extremely difficult circumstances.

Again, I think we should keep our thoughts with the families as events unfold, and my thoughts and prayers are with them.

Today I want to make a brief statement about the choice we face here in Washington and in our country about how best to move forward into the new century and what to do with the surplus. When we look toward the future, it is helpful to remember at least the recent past. Six and a half years ago, the budget deficit was \$290 billion and rising. Wages were stagnant, inequality was growing, social conditions were worsening.

In the 12 years before I took office, unemployment averaged more than 7 percent. It's almost difficult to remember what it was like. No one really thought we could turn it around, let alone bring unemployment to a 29-year low, or turn decades of deficits, during which time the debt of our country was quadrupled in only 12 years, into a surplus of \$99 billion.

Our nation has made a seismic shift in the last six years, from recession to recovery, from a crisis of confidence to a renewal of resolve, from economic disorder to a fiscal house finally in order. Now as we debate what to do with our prosperity, we face a critical choice -- whether to move forward with the fiscal discipline that got us to where we are today, or return to the kind of risk-taking that got us into recessions and deficits before.

We must decide whether to invest the surplus, to strengthen America over the long-term, or to squander it for the short-term. I think the right course is clear. And a bigger surplus only means that the mistake could be bigger, and the missed opportunity greater if we take the wrong course.

I have proposed a balanced budget that puts first things first. I believe we must maintain our sound economic strategy, and invest the surplus in long-term goals -- saving Social Security, saving and strengthening Medicare, modernizing it by providing a long overdue drug

benefit, and continuing to meet our basic responsibilities in education, defense, the environment, biomedical research.

Tomorrow I will release a report that shows a great and growing need for prescription drug coverage. What the study shows is that 75 percent of our older Americans lack decent, dependable private-sector coverage of prescription drugs. That's three out of every four seniors. Clearly, America needs a prescription drug plan that is simple, universal and voluntary. Anyone who says we don't I believe is out of date and out of touch.

As I've described, my plan meets these national priorities, while paying off the debt by 2015; while investing in America's new markets, the places that have not yet felt our prosperity; and while providing substantial tax relief -- \$250 billion of it targeted to help families save for retirement, pay for child care, long-term care, for modern schools.

So let's be clear about something. We're not debating whether to have tax cuts or not -- we should have tax cuts, but tax cuts that provide for us first to save Social Security and Medicare, not undermine them; tax cuts we can afford, not ones that would demand drastic cuts in defense, education, agriculture, the environment; tax cuts in the national interest, not special interest.

Now, these are the risks that are posed by the Republican tax plan that the House is about to vote on. Let me tell you what their plan would do. It would pile up \$3 trillion in debt over the next two decades, right when the baby boomers start to retire -- that's what it costs -- right when Social Security and Medicare feel the crunch.

Because of the cost of the tax plan over the next two decades, I should say what it doesn't do. It doesn't do anything to extend the solvency of Social Security, to extend the solvency of require significant -- significant -- cuts from where we are today in education, defense, biomedical research, the environment and other critical areas.

If we don't save Social Security it's not because we can't. If we don't strengthen Medicare and add the prescription drug benefit, it's not because we can't. If we don't meet these clear national needs, it's because we choose not to do so. It will be because, instead, we choose to reward ourselves today by risking our prosperity tomorrow.

I hope Congress will make the right choice. When members cast their ballots on the Republican tax plan, they're really voting also on whether to save Social Security and Medicare. They're voting on whether to pay off the national debt for the first time in over 150 years -- something that would guarantee us lower interest rates, higher investment, more jobs, higher incomes, and for average citizens, lower home mortgage payments, car payments, credit card payments, college loan payments.

They're voting whether to meet our most pressing national priorities in education, defense, nearly every other domain in our people's lives. I think the choice is clear between the plan the Republican leadership has outlined and the national priorities of the American people. I hope we can still work together across party lines to save Social Security and Medicare, to safeguard our priorities and have the right kind of tax cut.

If Congress passes the wrong kind, of course, I will not sign it. I will not allow a risky plan to become law. And as I said, we now have six and a half years of evidence. This is not really a debate that's just about ideas without any evidence. We clearly know what works now, and we ought to stay with it.

As I said, I will work with any member of any party willing to put first things first. We can have a tax cut and do the right thing for the long-term in America. That is my commitment, and I hope that together we can fulfill it for our people.

Thank you very much. Helen.

Q Mr. President, in U.S. treaty relations, is it obligated to defend Taiwan militarily if it abandons the one China policy? And would the U.S. continue military aid if it pursues separatism?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let me say, first of all, a lot of those questions are governed by the Taiwan Relations Act, which we intend to honor. Our policy is clear: We favor the one China policy; we favor the cross-strait dialogues. The understanding we have had all along with both China and Taiwan is that the differences between them would be resolved peacefully. If that were not to be the case, under the Taiwan Relations Act we would be required to view it with the gravest concern.

But I believe that both China and Taiwan understand this. I believe that they want to stay on a path to prosperity and dialogue. And we have dispatched people today, as the morning press reports, to do what we can to press that case to all sides. This is something that we don't want to see escalate, and I believe that what Mr. Lee said yesterday was trying to move in that direction. We all understand how difficult this is, but I think that the pillars of the policy are still the right ones. The one China policy is right; the cross-strait dialogue is right; the peaceful approach is right. And neither side, in my judgment, should depart from any of those elements.

Q So we would still have to go to war with China if it decided to break away?

THE PRESIDENT: I will say what I've already said -- the Taiwan Relations Act governs our policy. We made it clear. And I have -- as you remember, a few years ago we had a physical expression of that, that we don't believe there should be any violent attempts to resolve this, and we would view it very seriously. But I don't believe there will be. I think that both sides understands what needs to be done.

Terry?

Q Mr. President, do you think that President Lee was unnecessarily provocative in trying to redefine the nature of the Taiwan-Chinese relationship? And is the United States trying to send a signal by delaying a Pentagon mission which was going to Taiwan to assess its air defense needs? And, further, finally, you said that you still believe in a one China policy. How do you address Senator Helms' criticism that that policy is "a puzzling fiction"?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't think it's a puzzling fiction. But if Senator Helms means that today they're not, in fact, unified, then that's true. But the Chinese tend to take a long view of these things and have made clear a sensitivity to the different system that exists on Taiwan, and a willingness to find ways to accommodate it, as they did in working with Hong Kong, and, perhaps, even going beyond that.

So I think the important thing is to let -- they need to take the time necessary to work this out between themselves in a peaceful way. That is clearly in both their interests. And I'm still not entirely sure, because I have read things which seem to resonate both ways on this, exactly what the Lee statements were entitled -- trying to convey.

But I think that both sides are now quite aware of the fact that they need to find a way to pursue their destinies within the framework that we have followed these last several years, which I might add, has allowed both places to prosper and to grow, to do better and to have more contacts, more investment, and underneath the rhetoric, quite a bit more reconciliation. So I would hope that we would stay with what is working and not depart from it.

Q Is that the meaning of the delay of the Pentagon mission to assess the --

THE PRESIDENT: I didn't think this was the best time to do

something which might excite either one side or the other and imply that a military solution is an acceptable alternative. If you really think about what's at stake here, it would be unthinkable. And I want -- I don't want to depart from any of the three pillars. I think we need to stay with one China; I think we need to stay with the dialogue; and I think that no one should contemplate force here.

Randy.

Q Economists have been calling on you to indicate now whether you intend to reappoint Alan Greenspan in order to avoid having the issue to become mired in election year politics and upsetting financial markets next year. Would you like to see the Chairman stay on, and has he given you any indication of his plans?

THE PRESIDENT: I have, as you know, enjoyed a very good relationship, both personally and professionally, with Mr. Greenspan. I think he has done a terrific job. I have no idea whether he would even be willing to serve another term. I will make the decision in a timely fashion. I do not expect it to become embroiled in election year politics; there's no evidence of that.

You heard -- I think the Vice President said yesterday or the day before that he thought he was doing an excellent job. So we believe that as long as the United States is fiscally responsible, then the Fed will respond to developments in our own economy and in the world economy in a way that is clear, transparent, and I think designed to keep our growth going. So I'm not concerned about it.

Peter, go ahead.

Q -- I think the Vice President indicated he was sending a signal by saying that Chairman Greenspan had been doing an excellent job. Do you endorse that interpretation?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know, all I know is he said he was doing a great job, and I agree with him.

Go ahead.

Q Mr. President, you mentioned the Kennedy tragedy at the beginning of the news conference. Could you please give us a better understanding of what the White House role has been in the conduct of the recovery operation and the decision-making on the release of information about it?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think that -- I am unaware of any role we have played in the decision-making of the release of information, except, let me say that today a lot of things are breaking in a hurry, and I believe there are some decisions that ought to be announced by the Kennedy family, and others that ought to be properly announced by either the Coast Guard or the NTSB.

So we have not tried -- to the best of my knowledge, had any role in the timing or substance of release of information. And we have had no role in the conduct of the operation except that I did talk to Admiral Larrabee, I think it was the day before yesterday, at a time when the operation might normally have ceased, and he said, I think we have a chance to find something else because of the equipment we have here, even though it's difficult and I'm inclined to believe because of the circumstances here and because who's involved that we ought to go on a little more. And I said that I would support it and defend it. And I think it was the right decision.

Q Mr. President, if you'll allow me to ask about two different topics. On the Kennedy search, sir, there have been conflicting reports about whether or not Mr. Kennedy's body has, in fact, been recovered. I understand that based upon the answer you just gave, that might not be a question that you'd want to address, but, perhaps, given the fact that

there is this conflicting information you could answer that question.

And, secondly, sir, on this notion of a drug benefit, prescription drug benefit, you chided the Republicans about targeting tax cuts at the wealthy, saying that they're too steered in that direction. How do you reconcile that philosophically with allowing rich Americans, rich older Americans, to get a prescription drug benefit which even you just said this new study will show one in four don't need?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, first of all, it's voluntary. And most wealthy Americans are well taken care of under the present program they have and won't exercise it. So that's the first point I want to make.

The second thing I would like to say is I don't think most people know this, even some of you may have forgotten, but in the 11th hour of the deficit reduction package negotiations in 1993, in order to get up to \$500 billion in cuts in the deficit projected over five years -- we did much better, as all of you know -- the cap was taken off. The income cap was taken off of the Medicare tax, which means virtually every single upper-income person in America will pay far more into the Medicare program than they will ever draw out in health care or benefits.

They are making a net significant contribution today because, unlike Social Security taxes where there is still an earnings cap, there is no longer an earnings cap on Medicare. And I think a lot of folks have forgotten that -- so that in that sense, this is the most progressive program we have. The upper-income people, particularly once you get over about \$250,000 in income, they're paying far more into this program over the course of their life than they could ever draw out if they were sick every day from the time they're 65 on.

Q Sir, a question --

THE PRESIDENT: I just don't think I should make an announcement about that. I am aware of what the Coast Guard has done and what they have found as of five minutes before I came out here. But I simply -- I just don't think it's appropriate for me -- I'll be glad to comment on whatever they want to say, but I think I should leave it for them to talk.

Q Sir, you talk about how expensive the Republican tax cuts would be. But the Congressional Budget Office has now just come out with a report saying that even with their tax cuts, almost \$800 billion in tax cuts, they would save about \$277 billion over a 10-year period, whereby your program would save only about \$50 billion. That's about \$227 billion difference. How do you reconcile that? And, you know, people on the Hill listen to the CBO.

THE PRESIDENT: They listen to the CBO except where it's inconvenient for them, like the patients' bill of rights. The Republicans have freed us all now to question the CBO, since they ignored the CBO in the patients' bill of rights; they have discredited their own CBO.

Let me say, I haven't seen that CBO accounting. All I can tell you is that all of our budget people were rolling their eyes and saying that it was a very creative study.

Let me just say this: You have six and a half years of experience with the numbers we have given you and the estimates we have made. And every single year, our numbers have not only been accurate, but we have done better than we said we would do -- every single year, for six and a half years now.

Our studies show that their tax cut over the next two decades will cost, first, a trillion dollars and then \$3 trillion in the second decade, and that -- then an enormous loss to the American people in interest savings. That is, we'll have to keep spending more and more of our tax money paying interest on the debt, and it will require huge cuts in education and defense and other things.

You cannot -- they simply cannot credibly make that statement. And they don't put any new money into the Medicare program. And they don't have a Medicare reform package out there. So unless they just simply propose to bankrupt all the teaching hospitals and a lot of the other hospitals in the country, and let the Medicare program wither away, as one of the previous leaders so eloquently put it -- they can't possibly finance this tax program without doing serious damage. I can't comment on the CBO study, but it doesn't make any sense to anybody I've talked to about it.

Q May I just follow up --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes.

Q The CBO estimates the cost of your Medicare reforms are more than twice what you say they are.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, again you have evidence. Let me just say this: In the 1997 Balanced Budget Agreement -- okay? -- and this is the reason all these teaching hospitals are in trouble today -- we agreed to a Medicare savings figure. And we said, okay, here is our health information -- this is what we do in the Executive Branch, we deal with these hospitals -- here are the changes you need to make in the Medicare program to achieve the savings that the Republicans and the Democrats in Congress and the White House agreed on.

And the CBO said, no, no, no, no, that won't come close; you need these changes plus these changes. And we said, okay, we're following the CBO, we put it in there. What happened? And that's one of the reasons the surplus is somewhat bigger than it otherwise would be -- the cuts in Medicare were far more severe, our numbers were right, their numbers were wrong and that's why you've got all these hospitals all over America, every place I go, talking about how they're threatened with bankruptcy.

So when it comes to estimating Medicare costs, again, we have evidence. And whenever there's been a difference between us and the CBO, we've been right and they've been wrong. That's all I can tell you. No serious person -- so what are they going to do about Medicare? They say our drug program will cost more -- they don't put a red cent into it. What are they going to do about it? Even if you don't have a drug program, if you adopt their tax cut program they won't be able to do anything to extend the solvency of Medicare and they will have to have huge cuts.

For them to produce those savings they are going to -- they can't even fund my defense budget, much less the one they say they want. They're going to have cuts in defense, cuts in education, cuts in the environment. That's all their savings assumed that they're going to stay with the present budget levels, which they, themselves, are trying to get out of even as we speak here today. So this is -- the American people are not -- I mean, this is not rocket science, this is arithmetic.

And we've been dealing with -- we went from creative supply-side mathematics to elemental arithmetic in 1993. And it has served us very well. And all I'm trying to do is stick with basic arithmetic and get this country out of debt, save Social Security and Medicare, provide this prescription drug benefit, keep us moving forward.

Q Mr. President?

THE PRESIDENT: Next. Let me take John's first, then I'll take you, Sarah.

Q Sir, in your conversation with Chairman Arafat this morning, did you ask him to take any specific steps to advance what you believe is new momentum toward peace, and did you discuss with him his complaints yesterday that he found Prime Minister Barak's 15-month timetable unacceptable?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I told him only this. I said that -- I generally described my meetings with Prime Minister Barak to him. I told

him that he was committed to working in partnership with Chairman Arafat and honoring any agreements that had been made to this point, and that any modifications they made going forward to the benefit of either or both sides would have to be done by mutual agreement; that I thought he was completely committed to resolve all the issues outstanding in the peace process in an expeditious manner. And what I urged him to do was to have this one-on-one meeting, hear him out, think it through, and if he wanted to talk to me again after the meeting occurred, that I would be happy to talk to him.

So I went out of my way not to describe Prime Minister Barak's proposals or to advocate or not advocate, but simply to say that I was convinced they were being made in complete good faith, and that the peace process would be revitalized, and whatever they did from here on out is something that they would do together. And I think he felt good about that. And I did say, after you have the meeting, if you want to talk again about this -- I'll be glad to talk to you. And he said he did. So that's where we are.

Sarah. Go ahead, Sarah.

Q Sir, your microphone is not working apparently; it seems like you're talking very low, we can barely hear you. But in the meantime, don't you think it would be a good idea if we announced for the country's sake the list of conferences to be held at the White House each day, and the list of the people whom the President has appointments with?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't know. I never thought about it. Don't you have a list of the conferences we have every day here?

Q No, indeed. We do -- and what if we find out you haven't any?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I think I ought to talk to our folks about it, but I will consider that.

Go ahead.

Q Will you be taking any concrete contributions with you to the Balkan summit on investment next week? And you've said that you would give only humanitarian aid to Yugoslavia as long as Milosevic is in power. Will you have any trouble defining that? Will that cause any problems in distinguishing between humanitarian and other aid?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, let me say that I hope very much that there will be some positive, concrete commitments that come out of the meeting that we're going to have. I do not believe -- I do not believe we can achieve the future we want in the Balkans and avoid future ethnic conflicts unless there is a unifying vision which both brings the Balkan states closer together in their economic and political self-interests, and then brings the region as a whole closer to Europe.

And so I think that we have to have some incentives to move in that direction. And there are direct -- there are also indirect things the United States can do to help to contribute to that goal. And because of all the other things that have been going on -- you know it's been a very busy two or three weeks -- we haven't actually had an opportunity to sit down and go through what our options are, so I can't give you a more specific answer.

But I will say this -- if what we have done in Bosnia, and what we have done in Kosovo, is to have lasting benefits, we have got to find a way to create closer unity among the Balkan states themselves, and then with the region and Europe. And that is what I am working on.

And what was the second question you asked?

Q On the humanitarian aid, how will you define it?

THE PRESIDENT: Oh, yes. There may be -- frankly, there may be

some differences of opinion. As you know, I tend to take a rather narrow view of it because I don't think that we should, in effect, reward Mr. Milosevic's political control by doing things which are not humanitarian in nature. But based on the virtual daily reports I get about where we all are on this and where we are operating in Kosovo, I now no longer expect them to be big debates. I don't expect there will be a big difference of opinion.

Yes, go ahead, John.

Q Mr. President, the House of Representatives appears to be on the verge of terminating funding for the F-22 fighter. Will the White House fight hard for full funding for that program, even if it means sacrificing other Pentagon airplane programs or even pay for servicemen?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't think we should sacrifice the pay for our service personnel because we now are getting back in the ball game in recruitment. You know, we've really been -- the good economy and the increased deployments and the low pay all combined we're making it hard for us to both recruit and retain people. And the people are still the most important part of our military -- their quality and their training and their morale and their commitment and the condition of their families. So I don't think that.

Now, the Congress every year puts other things into the defense budget which are not priorities for the Pentagon, and are priorities for the Congress. We can fund the F-22, we can fund the plane without compromising the basic priorities of our national defense within the funds set aside, and that is what I will fight to do. I think it would be a mistake to abandon the project. I think it has real potential to add to our national defense. I have always supported it and I hope that it can be preserved.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. You had some fun, recently, with George W. Bush and his slogan of "compassionate conservatism." But you went beyond the notion that he's not offering many details as policy, and seemed to ridicule his slogan and even question his sincerity. Were you just trying to help Mr. Gore's candidacy or were you taking the opportunity maybe to just needle the leading Republican candidate?

THE PRESIDENT: No, I was just having a little fun. (Laughter.) You know, that's a long time -- if we don't have any laughs it's going to be a very tedious struggle between now and November of 2000.

Let me say this. I think that every person struggles to find a phrase or something that will sort of stand for what he or she is trying to do. So I was really just having a little fun.

I think the most important thing is that all the candidates make their positions clear on the great debates going on now, and make their positions clear on what they would do if they got the job. To me, that's the most important thing. You know, I am not involved in this campaign as a candidate, and I have a full-time job, so I'm not involved in any sort of full-time consulting role. (Laughter.) So I look at this -- I look at this more from the point of view of the average American voter -- what will change the lives of America.

For example, every candidate should tell us, are you for the patients' bill of rights are you for closing the gun show loophole; are you for raising the minimum wage; are you for the House Republican tax plan, or do you favor our plan on Social Security and saving Social Security and Medicare and making America debt-free and having a smaller tax cut that enables us to continue to fund education and defense and these other things? What are you going to do if you get elected?

To me, the best thing the Vice President has done is to talk about dramatically intensifying the war on cancer, making pre-school universal, increasing access to college by helping people save without tax consequences; what he would do to make America a safer country, what he

would do in communities to have faith-based organizations cooperate with governments more. I think these are interesting ideas about how you build on the progress the country has made the last six and a half years.

So I would say to everyone -- you know, use whatever slogans you want, but tell us where you stand. I think that's the most important thing.

Susan?

Q Mr. President --

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, I'll come over here. I know I'm left leaning, but I will give you -- (laughter) --

Q Mr. President, the economy is going great. In a new USA Today-CNN poll this week, your approval rating was at a very healthy 58 percent. But that same poll showed that by 50 percent to 38 percent, Americans said they wanted to see a change from Clinton administration policies -- not a continuation of them. What do you think accounts for that sentiment for change, and do you think it means that you present something of a mixed blessing to Mrs. Clinton and Vice President Gore in their campaigns next year?

THE PRESIDENT: I think what that means people think things are going well, but they want a change in policy. I think that's right. If you asked me that question, and you worded it in that way, I'd be in the 50 percent, because I think that -- my own view is that, particularly in a dynamic time, where things are changing, you should want continued change. But is change -- the question is, should we change in a way that builds on what has been done and goes beyond it -- which is what I would argue -- or should you change and go back to the policies we were following when we had \$290-billion deficits and we averaged over 7 percent unemployment for 12 years. I mean, I think that's really the question the American people have to ask themselves.

I think change is good. The great thing about this country is that it works best when it's sort of in a perpetual stage of renewal. So I would, myself, as a citizen, I would vote against somebody who said, vote for me and I'll keep it just like it is; everything that Bill Clinton did is exactly what I'll do. I would vote against that candidate, because I do not believe that is the right thing to do.

But what I think we should do is we should build on the progress of the last six years and go beyond it, and not adopt a completely

different approach which has been proven not to work. So all I want the American people to do is to remember what it was like before, think what it's like now, recognize that ideas and policies have consequences. And the American people usually get it right; that's why we're all still around here after more than 200 years.

Q -- (inaudible.)

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q -- for Mrs. Clinton and Mr. Gore?

THE PRESIDENT: No, because I -- no, he has done -- look at what the Vice President's done. He's staked out new issues here. He said, here's how I'm going to change what we're doing in cancer research; here's how I'm going to change what we're doing in education; here's how I'm going to change what we're doing in crime -- but not to reverse what we've done, but to build on it and go beyond it. So I think that's very, very -- that's the sort of thing that's worthy of debate. That's not the same; that is change.

What the American people have to decide is what kind of change do they want. Do they want to build on what has worked for the last six and a half years, or do they want to abandon it and go back to what failed them for 12 years before. That will be the decision they have to make.

Yes, go ahead.

Q In your last press conference, sir, with Prime Minister Ehud Barak, you mentioned you wanted better, normalized relations with Syria. Now, have you received any response, positive response or indication from Syria towards that? And, on Iran, can you share with us the administration's views of -- events and administrations in Iran? Thank you.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, on Syria let me say, the only thing I can tell you is that the statements, at least, that have been coming out of Syria have been quite encouraging in terms of the regard that President Assad seems to have for Prime Minister Barak, and the willingness, the openness that there is to negotiating and moving toward peace. So I'm encouraged by that.

And on Iran, frankly, I'm reluctant to say anything for fear that it will be used in a way that's not helpful to the forces of openness and reform. I think that people everywhere, particularly younger people, hope that they will be able to pursue their religious convictions and their personal dreams in an atmosphere of greater freedom, that still allows them to be deeply loyal to their nation. And I think the Iranian people obviously love their country and are proud of its history and have enormous potential. And I just hope they find a way to work through all this, and I believe they will.

Q You mentioned the patients' bill of rights. It seems like that was an argument by both parties over providing more for people who already are lucky enough to have health insurance. And, in fact, neither party dealt with some very fundamental issues that energized you and the First Lady five and six years ago. The question is, with such a robust economy and the budget surpluses, if not now, when, and if not you, who, would provide the leadership to provide for those folks?

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, but I think the bigger question is how. That is, it is true that just as we've predicted in 1993 and 1994, that the percentage of people who have health insurance on the job is going down, just as we said it would, if nothing was done. So what we have tried to do is to isolate discrete populations that seem to be most in need and try to offer them help.

In the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, we reached bipartisan agreement on a proposal that would fund providing health insurance for up to 5 million more children through state-designed programs. Now, I've been a little disappointed -- and I'm not being critical of any of the states, either, here -- but I've been a little disappointed that the uptake on the program has been a little slow. That is, I would have thought by now we'd have almost 3 million of those 5 million children enrolled already, because we've got the money there, and we're well behind that.

So we are looking at whether there are things that we can do at the national level to work with the states to simplify access to the children's health insurance programs that the states have set up. But -- and I also had a talk with Senator Kennedy, the other day who believes that for little or no more extra money, we could actually adjust the program and take in several million more children. So the children are the biggest group.

Then, I have a proposal, as you know, that's part of my Medicare reform proposal that I didn't mention today, but I want to reiterate it, that would allow the most vulnerable group of people without health insurance, people between the ages of 55 and 65, to buy into the Medicare system in a way that would not compromise the integrity of the system. So I think that is quite important.

In addition to that, there are a lot of states -- there are some states -- Tennessee was the first state to do this under the former governor -- they started it -- which are allowing lower-income working families to buy into their Medicaid programs on a sliding scale.

So if all these things were done, we would dramatically reduce the number of people without health insurance and we'll eventually probably get down to, if we keep pushing in this direction, get down to the point where the largest group of people without health insurance are young, single people who believe that they're going to live forever and be healthy forever and don't want to bear the cost. And we'll have to think about, then, what to do.

But I think the best thing to do is try to get as many kids as we can covered, and then try to get these people who are out of the work force who are older, but they're not old enough to get Medicare, to get them at least where they can all afford on a sliding scale to buy into the Medicare program.

Go ahead, Scott.

Q Thank you, Mr. President. On the Kennedy tragedy, sir, will you authorize the Navy to participate in a burial at sea ceremony? Why do you believe it's justified to spend so many federal resources on this tragedy? And, finally, sir, I wonder if you would give us your thoughts on Mr. Kennedy's last visit here to the White House. I understand you and the First Lady took him on a tour.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we have received -- I have received no official word, personal word from the family what burial arrangements they want. Until they make a statement about it, I just don't feel that I can say anything.

Secondly, I will say that until just a couple of days ago the recovery efforts -- the rescue, then the recovery efforts that were undertaken were consistent with what would have been done in any other case. Because the Coast Guard felt that they had the capacity to succeed in this if they had a few more days, and because of the role of the Kennedy family in our national lives, and because of the enormous losses that they have sustained in our lifetimes, I thought it was appropriate to give them a few more days. And if anyone believes that was wrong, the Coast Guard is not at fault; I am. It was because I thought it was the right thing to do under the circumstances.

Now, you asked about -- John Kennedy had actually not been back to the White House since his father was killed, until I became President. First, he was on an advisory committee that made a report to me and he came back to the Oval Office, where he saw the desk that he took the famous picture in, coming through the gate, for the first time since he was a little boy.

And then last year -- maybe you would have a better memory than I would, but it seems to me it was last May, when we had the event at the White House celebrating the series that HBO did on the Apollo program. Do you remember they did a series on the space program that was done after the movie came out? And Tom Hanks came, a lot of people came. And he was invited because of his father's role in starting the space program. And he and Carolyn came. And afterward I asked them if they would like to go upstairs, and he said he would. So I took him upstairs and showed him the residence, which he'd not seen since he was a tiny boy.

And I showed him some of my -- the memorabilia that I had from his father's service. I have a picture of his father speaking to the Irish Parliament, and a number of other things which he thought were very interesting. And we took a -- we had a very nice evening. And I sent him the pictures from it. And then, in return, he sent me a signed copy of his favorite picture of his father, which is now upstairs. It's John Kennedy campaigning in Virginia, in Charlottesville in 1960. It's quite a lovely picture -- interesting picture.

But it was a nice night. I think that he really wanted to kind of come to terms with all of it. And I think he and Carolyn, they were delightful young people, and they had a great time here that night. And

Hillary and I loved having them here. It was quite a great night.

Q To just follow on that, sir, just one question, if I may. Is there anything that Mr. Kennedy said to you that night that particularly struck you?

THE PRESIDENT: We just had a friendly conversation. You know, I knew him pretty well by then. We'd been -- I met him years ago when he was a law student, doing a summer internship with Mickey Kantor's law firm out in Los Angeles, long before I ever thought I'd be here and before I ever thought we'd have any other contacts. He just happened to be -- Mickey asked me if I'd speak to his law clerks, because I was in LA to give an education speech, and I went by and visited with them and he was there. And we had been together on many occasions since then.

The thing that struck me was I thought he was -- he said he was glad to be back. And I think he -- he was a very deliberate person, as many people have noticed, about when he would be publicly exposed and all of that. He had his mother's care for having a private life. And I think that he had not -- I'm not sure he had really felt he wanted to come back to the White House before he did. But especially in light of everything that's happened, I'm glad he had the chance to come back here one more time and see the residence and know where he was when he was a little boy. I'm glad he did that. I'm grateful that that happened.

Yes, go ahead. Yes, yes, please.

Q On Colombia, the Pastrana administration are asking the United States for \$500 million to support the military against the guerrillas. Is your administration ready to respond to that request? And, also, the Colombians are asking for more direct intervention from the United States. Are you considering this possibility? And, also, Mexico, you're going to meet with President Zedillo in October. And the Mexican government is still rejecting the extraditions of major drug lords. What are you going to ask him -- you're going to get assurance from him to extradite these big narcotic traffickers to the United States?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, you know, we had no extraditions between Mexico and the United States for a long time, and we've actually had some now. So we're moving in the right direction. And President Zedillo and I have been pretty successful in continuing to move our relationship in the right direction, so we'll work on that.

On Colombia, I'm not prepared to make any kind of dollar commitment today. But let me say, I have stayed in close touch with President Pastrana, and I admire the fact that he has really thrown himself into trying to end the civil conflicts in Colombia, to stop the insurgency. The people in the United States have a real interest in that because I think that until the civil discord in Colombia is brought to an end, it is going to be much, much harder for us to restrain the activities of the narco-traffickers there, and their reach.

So, in addition to wanting a neighbor and a democracy in Latin America to be free of the kind of violence and heartbreak that the Colombian people have undergone because of this, it is also very much in our national security interest to do what we can, if we can be helpful in ending the civil conflict so that Colombia can be about the business of freeing itself of the influence of the narco-traffickers in ways that would be good for Colombians and good for us as well.

Q Another question about the presidential race. Aside from asking George W. Bush to come forward and give specifics on the issues that you mentioned, could you tell us what you find objectionable about his trying to present a new moderate face for his party, just like you did for the Democrats? And could you tell us whether you're worried whether he will figure out how the Republicans can occupy the center of American politics?

THE PRESIDENT: No.

Q You don't think he can?

THE PRESIDENT: No, no, I don't think I'll answer those questions. (Laughter.) I will say -- no, look, let me say again, I wouldn't even agree with the characterization you gave of my first answer.

When I ran for President, in 1991, the first thing I did was tell the American people what I thought was going on in our country and what I would do. And if you remember, the late Senator Paul Tsongas and I were actually almost ridiculed at the time because we both put out these very detailed plans of what we would do. If you go back and get one of those plans now, you'll see that virtually everything we said we'd do we did do, except for the things we tried to do and were defeated on.

And my view is that there are a lot of things that count in a presidential election toward a successful presidency, but it is -- that go beyond specific issues, and judgment plays a role in it, and crises will always come up and things can be learned and all that. But it really matters where you stand on the big issues that everybody knows about that are going on right now, and it matters where we're going in the future.

So that's the only point I want to make. And I think any -- I would say that applies to every candidate. I don't want to answer the questions you ask me because that's not my job. My job is not to handicap this horse race, not to comment on it, not to comment on the candidates. My job is to work for the American people. But I'm going to answer these questions from the point of view of Joe Citizen. That's -- every political question you asked me from now on, I'm going to pretend that I'm living back in Little Rock already and I'm working on my presidential library and I'm sitting here as a voter saying, where do they stand, what will they do -- all of them. And I do believe the Vice President has done the best job of telling the American people what he would do and -- to go back to Susan's formulation -- how he would change the country in a positive way.

George.

Q Mr. President, as the nation has celebrated the 30th anniversary of the moon landing, a lot of the former astronauts have lamented that no President after Kennedy set a kind of national goal like President Kennedy did of landing on the moon. Do you think that -- in your view, is the country not receptive today to that kind of goal-setting by a President, or is it something a President should do, set a goal of landing on Mars?

THE PRESIDENT: Well, we are planning to land on Mars. But I think -- for one thing, when I became President, the space program was actually in peril. And we -- the space station was certainly at risk. And I have fought for it and I believe in it. And one of the things I talked to -- Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin and Michael Collins were in to see me yesterday, and we talked about where we could go with this. And Dan Goldin was there, the NASA Administrator; and Dr. Neal Lane, my Science Advisor. And we talked about how we could use the coming of the millennium as -- you know, the First Lady sponsored all these other lectures here. And I told him about Stephen Hawking's lecture and what he said. And we talked yesterday about how we could set some goals for the space program, capture the imagination of the American people and broaden the support for it.

And one of the things that I suggested that I think would be quite helpful that we're going to work on now is what we can do to dramatize for the American people -- you mentioned Mars, but I think what is more likely to capture the imagination of the American people are the benefits to us here on Earth of continued advances in space. And some of them, particularly in the health field, are likely to be breath-taking. They're principally in the area of the environment and health.

So I asked our people to start working on that and they said they would be willing to help us. I have to tell you that it was a great day for me yesterday to have them come by the White House. They also gave me a

moon rock, by the way -- but only on loan. (Laughter.) And the moon rock is 3.6 billion years old. So when I feel very tired, I'll look at it and feel young again. (Laughter.)

Yes, go ahead. We had an Irish question first, I promised. Go ahead, what's the Irish question?

Q Thank you, sir. Given the --

THE PRESIDENT: You want to ask one, too?

Q We both have a -- given the various meetings underway with Mo Mowlam here, and George Mitchell there, has any progress been made on the Irish situation? And is one side more to blame than the other on it?

THE PRESIDENT: Okay. Why don't we take both Irish questions at once. What's your Irish question?

Q Last week, you seemed to kind of get fired up when you were talking to the teenagers from Colorado. You said that the politicians in Northern Ireland were behaving akin to school children. Do you feel, after all the work that you've done on this project, that perhaps it was misplaced and you should have perhaps pushed in a place more like Africa, where they have thousands of people dying from ethnic strife, instead of 3,500 over 30 years?

Q And if I can have a third Irish question, what role, if any, do you expect to play, Mr. President, in breaking the deadlock?

THE PRESIDENT: Okay, let me answer the Irish questions, then I'll come back to the "should we have done something else."

I've talked to Senator Mitchell, and he is willing to spend some time -- he can't go back full-time for another year or two, but I'd like to put this in some -- at least I'd like to tell you how I look at it.

Obviously, I am very disappointed at the breakdown of the process here. But I do think it's important to note that neither side wants to abandon the Good Friday Agreement. And that's very important. It's also important to note that everybody agrees on what their responsibilities are and what the other side's responsibilities are, and everybody agrees that it all has to be done by a date certain.

So they have agreed to break out the two areas causing problems, the decommissioning and the standing up to the executive, and try to figure out how they can unlock that, and Mo Mowlam, as you pointed out, is working hard on it, and they've asked Senator Mitchell to come back and do some work on it, and my instinct is that it will be resolved.

Now, let me say in terms of your characterization, here's the problem. To the outsiders -- I told the parties that to the outsiders -- no one, none of us outside, even somebody like me that's been so involved in this, no one will understand if this thing breaks down over who goes first; that that did sound like the kind of argument that young people have, you know -- who goes first.

Underneath that, there's something deeper: The Protestants are afraid that they IRA will never disarm if they let the Sinn Fein go into the executive branch, and the IRA do not believe -- since the agreement did not require decommissioning as a condition of getting into the executive branch, they don't want to have to spend the rest of their lives being told that it wasn't the vote of the people, it wasn't the Good Friday Accord, it was what the Unionists and Great Britain did to force them to give up their arms that got them to disarm. They believe that would, in effect, require them to disavow what they've done for 30 years.

And what they're saying is, when we surrender our arms, we're surrendering to our people. Our people voted for this. We are surrendering to the will of the people that we represent. So when you put it in that textured way on both sides, it makes it clear why it becomes a

difficult issue. And I can't think of anybody better to try to work through it than George Mitchell, because he's got it all in his head and he's put three years into it. But my instinct is that we will get this worked out.

Now, you asked about did I think we had misplaced our energies. I don't think so. We have -- for one thing, we don't have a stronger partner in the world than Great Britain, and for another, we don't have a bigger ethnic group in America than the Irish, and we're tied by blood and emotion to the Irish struggle.

I also think that it has enormous symbolism, beyond the size of the country and the number who have died. And if it can be resolved, I think it will give great impetus to the forces of peace throughout the world. So I don't believe for a moment we made a mistake.

But let me also say I think we should be more involved in Africa and I've tried to involve us more in Africa. I did everything I could to head off that civil war between Ethiopia and Eritrea. It's not a civil war, they are two separate countries, but they once were together and they're basically now arguing over the divorce settlement. And I don't mean to trivialize it in that characterization. And we are still actively involved in trying to stop that.

Reverend Jackson played a significant role in trying to end the awful carnage in Sierra Leone, and I'm very grateful for that. We're now working, and we're able to work with Nigeria to try to stabilize the region. We are training African militaries and the Africa Crisis Response Corps, so that we can, hopefully, prevent further carnage. So I believe the United States should be more involved in Africa.

And, of course, the announcement that the Vice President made on our behalf the other day of our new AIDS initiative in some ways may be the most important thing we can do to save lives there.

So I agree that we should be more involved. But I don't agree that we misplaced our energies in Ireland. I'm proud of every late-night phone call and every frustrating hour I've spent on it.

THE PRESIDENT: Yes, go ahead.

Q -- can I ask about you --

THE PRESIDENT: Well, I don't want to talk about me.

Q Oh, come on.

THE PRESIDENT: I'm not a candidate for anything.

Go ahead, what? Go ahead. All right, one more.

Q Listen, Mr. President, with due respect, in another development, I know that you are for Africa, and you know that I support -- Africa, my friend, the President of the Dominican Republic -- we are Afro-Latino. But I am not concerned at this moment about Mars. I am concerned about place where I have been for 20 years, the White House, that is going to celebrate 200 year next year. I wonder if you would tell the people of the United States what you are going to plan for that big celebration?

And another thing, Mr. President -- I am disgusted with you -- you have been hiding something extraordinary -- the performance -- or the trade promotional coordinating committee that has been carried out in the last year -- are the participants in the prospective of this economy. Why don't you speak about the success of that initiative? It's a sin that you -- you talk about a lot of things that is -- another thing that is good for America and the world.

THE PRESIDENT: Well, a lot of the things that are good for

America don't make good news for them, you see.

Q And I have a follow-up. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: No, let me just say -- (laughter) -- a follow-up? (Laughter.) Now, that's really good. That is really -- Oh, God, is that good.

Let me just say that we will have a lot of celebrations of the 200th birthday of the White House next year, and it's neat that coincides with the first year of the new century and the millennium. So we'll have -- I'm not prepared to announce them yet, because I want others who deserve more credit than I do to be able to do that. But it will be a signal honor for us to be living here in that year, and we'll be able to do a lot -- and I hope we'll have even more American citizens coming to the White House next year to be a part of it.

Go ahead. Just that follow up -- that showed a lot of guts. (Laughter.) If this is a follow up, I'll give you another question. (Laughter.)

Q Sir, you've stressed that you have plenty to do, and yet for some time, your political career has enjoyed the benefits of support from two people in particular -- the Vice President and the First Lady -- two people who are now in a position to expect some support from you. I'm wondering what you feel you owe those two people in terms of political support, and as you plan your schedule in the weeks and months ahead, how you'll balance that assistance against your job as President, and finally, how you personally are adjusting to what people might think is an interesting shift in role.

Q I have a follow-up to his question. (Laughter.)

THE PRESIDENT: Now, I believe that. (Laughter.)

Well, I will do whatever I'm asked to do, basically. I'll try to be helpful. And if I can be helpful, I will be. But I think the best thing I can do for anyone who generally shares our ideas, is part of our party, trying to move the country forward, is to continue to be a good President and take care of our country.

But I don't mind hard work and I don't mind long hours, and I find myself, apparently unlike some of my predecessors -- but just read what you all say about it -- but I don't feel myself winding down, I feel myself keying up. I want to do more. I want to try to make sure that I give the American people as much as I can every day. So I've got plenty of energy and I'll do whatever I'm asked to do.

I owe them a great deal. I think Al Gore -- everybody in this room knows that he's had far more responsibility and gotten more done than any Vice President in history. Nobody's ever had a role that even approximates that. I don't think the American people know that yet, but I know that. And he deserves a lot of credit for what he's done and he has my friendship and my support. But I also think that it's a mixed blessing, as you say, because people want to see any Vice President out there on his own. If you go back and look at where Richard Nixon was in 1959, you will see the same sort of thing. So I think I see this as a rhythmic process.

I think he'll do fine. But the reason I think that has nothing to do with the questions you ask me. The reasons I think that are, A, he's a good man with a good record, but most importantly, he's out there telling the American people how he would change the country for the better. And I think that's important.

I did an interview and I talked about Hillary and this -- if she decides to do this I will do whatever I can do. And if she's successful I will happily go to the Senate spouses meeting if that's part of the job. I have never known anybody who didn't run for office who was a more effective, more consistently committed, completely passionate public

citizen than her. So if she decides to do it, and if the people of New York decide that they want her to do it, that's a decision for them to make and they have to deal with that, and she's trying to deal with that, you know, the whole question of moving there.

It is true that shortly after we came here I said, you get to decide where we live from now on for the rest of our lives. And she said, I want to go to New York -- in, like, '93. This is just something that happened later. So I'll be dividing my time between home -- I'm going to go home and build my library and build my center -- I'll divide my time between there and New York, whatever she does about this Senate race.

But if I can help her in any way, I will, because I think it would be a great thing for the country -- not only because of what I owe her, because she just -- what she knows and how she's lived and what she's done. I mean, it's very unusual to find somebody like that who has that much knowledge and background and passion all packed into one place. I mean, I know that you think I'm a biased observer, but I think I could support it with evidence.

Go ahead, Bill.

Q In that same vein, sir -- (laughter) -- as the spotlight shifts from you to your Vice President and to your wife, are you likely to be content, drifting slowly offstage, or do you think that someday you will want to run for office, some office again? Or are you willing to tell us this afternoon, sir, that you will never again run for elective office?

THE PRESIDENT: I don't have any idea. (Laughter.) Really, I don't know. Let me just say this. I love this job. I love it. Even on the bad days -- you can do something good for the country, you can do something good for the future. I have loved doing this. And I have given it every ounce of my energy and ability and judgment. And I feel very fortunate. But we have a system that I, frankly, agree with, even though I'm in pretty good shape -- we have a system that says a President gets two terms and then the President has to go find something else to do with his life. And there are lots of other worthy things to do.

And I was a very happy person before I became President. I never have had any trouble finding something interesting to do that I believed in. And I will do my best to use the opportunity and the gift the American people gave me to serve in this position to be a useful citizen of my country and the world for the rest of my life, and I have no doubt that there will be some way I can do that. And I'm, frankly, kind of excited about it. I mean, it's a new challenge. I'll have to think in a different way and do a different way.

Will I miss a lot of the things about this job? Yes. I'll even miss all of you, believe it or not. But I'm just grateful that I've had the chance to serve and that the results have been good for our people and for our country and I think for the world.

And, you know, that's part of life. Life has its rhythms. And the people that are most satisfied and most happy in life take the rhythms of life and make the most of them, instead of sitting around moping and wishing the rhythms were something other than they are. That's just not the way the life works. And, listen, I'm way ahead and I'm very grateful.

Thank you very much.

END

3:45 P.M. EDT

RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Richard Socarides (CN=Richard Socarides/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

CREATION DATE/TIME:30-JUL-1999 09:50:35.00

SUBJECT: AIDS protesters

TO: Todd A. Summers (CN=Todd A. Summers/OU=OPD/O=EOP@EOP [OPD])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Christopher S. Lehane (CN=Christopher S. Lehane/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Thomas M. Rosshirt (CN=Thomas M. Rosshirt/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Laura M. Quinn (CN=Laura M. Quinn/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Alejandro G. Cabrera (CN=Alejandro G. Cabrera/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Philip G Dufour (CN=Philip G Dufour/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Michael B. Feldman (CN=Michael B. Feldman/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Monica M. Dixon (CN=Monica M. Dixon/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Sandra Thurman (CN=Sandra Thurman/OU=OPD/O=EOP@EOP [OPD])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Clark E. Ray (CN=Clark E. Ray/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Elizabeth J. Potter (CN=Elizabeth J. Potter/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Ansley Jones (CN=Ansley Jones/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Eli G. Attie (CN=Eli G. Attie/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Ron Klain (CN=Ron Klain/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])

READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

relevant material begins in 5th para

----- Forwarded by Richard Socarides/WHO/EOP on 07/30/99
09:48 AM -----

rwockner@netcom.com

07/29/99 03:04:00 PM

Record Type: Record

To: Richard Socarides@EOP

cc:

Subject: NC10725: Ann Northrop column (Vileness at US News & World Report)

NEW ANN NORTHROP COLUMN

reprint rights from: Ann Northrop <annnorth@earthlink.net>

Progress? No and yes.

The weekly newsmagazine, U.S. News & World Report, has printed something so egregiously horrible that it shocked even me (who likes to consider herself extremely jaded about the idiocies of the press). See if you can believe this:

"It was an unusual footnote to New York's police scandal that riled the political landscape. Days after a cop was convicted last month of sodomizing a Haitian immigrant [Abner Louima], Whispers [name of the column] learns that NYPD set up a recruitment booth at a gay festival. It was sponsored in part by S&M advocates who decried violence against gays. Americans for Truth About Homosexuality provided Whispers with a video of the event that showed several men in chains being slapped and whipped."

A few sentences later, the item ends with "A police spokesman said it is against department recruiting policy to discriminate on the basis of sexual orientation."

I am left so speechless by the hatred, ignorance and violence of this item that I am tempted to just leave the rest of this column blank. But my editor would not approve. I must say I'm a little surprised we haven't already burned down the U.S. News offices. I guess we just don't read the magazine. How about this. I won't go into a whole boring harangue about how awful this is, because it's overtly shocking on its face, but I think it would be a really good idea to just take a minute and call, fax, email or write the U.S. News honchos about what filth you think they are to equate us with psychotic, violent, rapist madmen in the NYPD.

Maybe if I spend some time pondering one of our recent amazing success stories, it will encourage you to believe that your call can make a difference.

I can't seem to stop thinking about Al Gore and the campaign to harass him about his work on behalf of the pharmaceutical companies to keep poor countries around the world from getting AIDS drugs at a reasonable cost. For those of you who haven't been following this, our story so far:

Millions of people around the world are infected with the virus HIV, believed to cause the life-threatening condition called AIDS. In the United States, tens of thousands of people with HIV appear to be alive today because they are ingesting new generations of virus-fighting drugs. The pharmaceutical companies making these drugs are making a bundle. In fact, drug companies have the highest profit margin of any legal industry in the world. And those companies can charge high prices in the United States and Europe for their drugs because most of those prices are paid by government or private insurance. But what about the rest of the world? Can millions in South Africa or Thailand or India afford a lifetime of protease inhibitors? No, of course not. But the Clinton administration, particularly Al Gore, have been supporting the drug companies by threatening to punish any other country that tries to get drugs more cheaply, which is legal under international law.

So a lot of different AIDS-interested groups got together to fight and a few decided to take the fight public by yelling at Gore directly at his first official campaign appearances. And what's so stunning is that it worked. It turns out that Gore is afraid of being publicly humiliated and

public humiliation is what public demonstrations have always been about. The strategy is expose what's really going on and we win because we're right. That's the secret. That's why we've always done pretty well. Because we're right.

But lately what we hear is that "ACT UP is dead" (I attended a session "looking back" at ACT UP at the recent NYC gay and lesbian film festival), "AIDS is over" and certainly no Americans care what happens to anyone in any other country. (When I worked at CBS News in the '80s, we were talking one day about hostages held in Lebanon and I referred to the number being held as, let's say, 26 and someone else said, no, 12, and I said no, 26, and he said, no, 12 Americans, and that's the number we reported.) A couple of weeks ago, attempting to follow Gore and keep up to date on his public statements about AIDS drugs for Africa, I attended his speech to the national NAACP convention. Sure enough, following a section about the need to expand trade with Africa, which got a standing ovation, he had a paragraph about how trade would be impossible with a continent ravaged by a horrible plague. Gore announced he would soon be announcing a major new program to help Africa cope with AIDS. Almost no reaction. Clearly not something anywhere on the agenda for a group of very politically involved African-Americans.

But Gore is still reacting. Rumor has it that a deal is in the works to allow other countries to get the access they should have to cheaper drugs while allowing the U.S. to save face with the drug companies. And in the meantime, Gore and the White House made a big phony announcement of funds and conferences meant to look like they're actually doing something. The announcements so far are meaningless. Hillary Clinton sitting around with religious leaders for a photo op is not going to get drugs into anybody's body. But they are going to make Hillary sit for that photo op. And Gore will keep paying lip service. And a Congressional committee did hold hearings on this a week or so ago. And soon we might even have something substantive that will make a real difference. But why?

Is it just good timing to attack a politician as he begins a race he feels shaky about? Is it because we are right and thus occupy the moral high ground? Is it because the press, lacking anything else to write about for Gore's campaign appearances, decided to write about this? All of the above? I don't know, but I'm extremely proud of all the AIDS activists who are making this happen right now. It's something we've talked about for years--equal access for all everywhere to life-saving mechanisms. How interesting that now is the time when we're making real progress on it.

RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Richard Socarides (CN=Richard Socarides/OU=WHO/O=EOP [WHO])

CREATION DATE/TIME:30-JUL-1999 12:20:03.00

SUBJECT: FW: Solid editorial (to share) from Springfield, IL

TO: Christopher S. Lehane (CN=Christopher S. Lehane/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Thomas M. Rosshirt (CN=Thomas M. Rosshirt/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Laura M. Quinn (CN=Laura M. Quinn/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Alejandro G. Cabrera (CN=Alejandro G. Cabrera/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Philip G Dufour (CN=Philip G Dufour/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Michael B. Feldman (CN=Michael B. Feldman/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Monica M. Dixon (CN=Monica M. Dixon/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Clark E. Ray (CN=Clark E. Ray/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Elizabeth J. Potter (CN=Elizabeth J. Potter/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Ansley Jones (CN=Ansley Jones/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Eli G. Attie (CN=Eli G. Attie/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TO: Ron Klain (CN=Ron Klain/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

----- Forwarded by Richard Socarides/WHO/EOP on 07/30/99
12:19 PM -----

"Zingale, Daniel" <DZingale@AIDSAction.org>
07/30/99 11:24:09 AM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message

cc:

Subject: FW: Solid editorial (to share) from Springfield, IL

>
>EDITORIAL
> Group off base in blaming Gore for Africa's AIDS crisis
>
> 07/07/1999
> The State Journal-Register Springfield, IL
> M1,M2
> Page 7
> (Copyright 1999)
>
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>
>Bob Witeck
>Witeck-Combs Communications
>2120 L Street N.W. Suite 850
>Washington, D.C. 20037
>202-887-0500 ext. 19
>202-887-5633 fax

Message Sent

To:

"'Downey, Thomas J.'" <tdowney@downeyhandler.com>
"'Rivers, Stephen'" <stephen@riverspr.com>
"'Seidman, Ricki L'" <Ricki.L.Seidman@usdoj.gov>
Richard Socarides/WHO/EOP
"'Spector, Stacie'" <SSpector@gorennet.com>
"'Spengler, Mark'" <spengler@smtp.democrats.org>
"'Tobias, Andy'" <ATobias@aol.com>
"'Trammel, Jeff'" <jtrammel@hillandknowlton.com>
"'uvaid@nglftf.org'" <uvaid@nglftf.org>

RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Laura M. Quinn (CN=Laura M. Quinn/O=OVP [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME:30-JUL-1999 15:51:46.00

SUBJECT: FW: Solid editorial (to share) from Springfield, IL

TO: Thomas M. Rosshirt (CN=Thomas M. Rosshirt/O=OVP@OVP [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:
FYI

----- Forwarded by Laura M. Quinn/OVP on 07/30/99 03:52
PM -----

Richard Socarides @ EOP 07/30/99 12:20:50 PM

Record Type: Record

To: See the distribution list at the bottom of this message
cc:
Subject:FW: Solid editorial (to share) from Springfield, IL

----- Forwarded by Richard Socarides/WHO/EOP on 07/30/99
12:19 PM -----

"Zingale, Daniel" <DZingale@AIDSAction.org>
07/30/99 11:24:09 AM

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Message Sent

To:

Ron Klain/OVP@OVP
Monica M. Dixon/OVP@OVP
Eli G. Attie/OVP@OVP
Michael B. Feldman/OVP@OVP
Ansley Jones/OVP@OVP
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Laura M. Quinn/OVP@OVP
Clark E. Ray/OVP@OVP
Thomas M. Rosshirt/OVP@OVP
Alejandro G. Cabrera/OVP@OVP
Christopher S. Lehane/OVP@OVP

RECORD TYPE: PRESIDENTIAL (NOTES MAIL)

CREATOR: Eli G. Attie (CN=Eli G. Attie/O=OVP [UNKNOWN])

CREATION DATE/TIME: 2-AUG-1999 14:48:27.00

SUBJECT: VP News Coverage for 8/2/99

TO: naomirwolf@aol.com (naomirwolf@aol.com @ inet [UNKNOWN])
READ:UNKNOWN

TEXT:

----- Forwarded by Eli G. Attie/OVP on 08/02/99 02:48 PM

Shanna P. Singh
08/02/99 02:15:30 PM
Record Type: Record

To: All OVP E-Mail Group
cc:
Subject:VP News Coverage for 8/2/99

===== ATTACHMENT 1 =====
ATT CREATION TIME/DATE: 0 00:00:00.00

TEXT:

> {|xyz~hce2j2g*****:r*1X7=68=f**VP NEWS COVERAGE for AUGUST 2, 1999
(Also i
ncluded: selected articles from the weekend)

LEXIS-NEXIS COVERAGE

Copyright
t 1999 The National Journal Group, Inc.
National Journal's CongressDaily

Au
gust 2, 1999 10:48 am Eastern Time

EDITION-1: am

SECTION: POLITICS

LENGTH:
317 words

HEADLINE: LEADERSHIP EVENTS

BODY:

House and Senate leaders are
planning some media events this week, but are
otherwise keeping their public s
chedules light in order to accommodate a hectic
legislative schedule leading u
p to the August recess, which is scheduled to
begin Friday.

On Tuesday, Ho
use Speaker Hastert and Republican Conference Chairman J.C.
Watts of Oklahoma w
ill launch a campaign to encourage people to get blood tests
to detect diabete
s and heart disease.

Also Tuesday, Vice President Gore, Senate Minority
Leader Daschle, and
House Minority Leader Gephardt will hold a news conference
on agriculture.

And on Saturday, Majority Leader Armey is scheduled to att
end the Midwestern

Leadership Conference in Omaha.

Meanwhile, President Clinton at the White House this morning will present new public service announcements created on behalf of his anti-drug campaign.

Clinton is scheduled this afternoon to attend a memorial service for the late Dan Dutko, a leading Democratic Party fundraiser who was killed in a biking accident last week, and then attend a Democratic fundraiser in the evening.

Both events are in Washington.

On Tuesday, Clinton travels to Chicago to address the business leaders participating in the Welfare to Work Partnership.

He will announce new figures showing the program has exceeded its goal of hiring 10,000 welfare recipients, and that the federal government also has had considerable success putting those on assistance to work.

On Thursday, Clinton will be on Capitol Hill to lead a Democratic "unity" event. The gathering will be a sendoff as members prepare to leave town for the August recess, and will feature calls for passage of Democratic priorities on health care, gun control and the budget, among other issues.

Clinton heads for Arkansas Friday, preparing to join Gore Saturday for two Gore 2000 fundraisers.

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St. Louis Post-Dispatch

August 2, 1999, Monday, FIVE STAR LIFT EDITION

SECTION: NEWS, Pg. A4

LENGTH: 625 words

HEADLINE: NATION

BYLINE: From News Services

BODY:

Lewinsky is injured in California freeway accident

Monica Lewinsky suffered scrapes and bruises Sunday when her sport utility vehicle overturned on a freeway in Ventura, Calif., the California Highway Patrol said. Lewinsky, who was driving alone, reached over to the passenger seat to take something out of her purse, realized she was close to a motor home, veered away and then lost control of her vehicle, said Bob Inman, a CHP dispatcher. Her Ford Explorer crossed a dusty median strip on state Highway 101 about five miles north of town and toppled on its side, he said. Lewinsky, who lives in Los Angeles, was not cited for the accident, and alcohol or drugs were not involved in the crash, Inman said.

All 50 states meet welfare-to-work requirement
s

All 50 states have moved the required number of people from welfare to work, the White House said Sunday, noting that 35 percent of the nation's welfare recipients held jobs in 1998 or were actively looking for work. President Bill Clinton plans to promote those numbers Tuesday at a welfare-to-work conference in Chicago, and use them to make the case for Congress to provide funding for services, such as child care, to aid the welfare-to-work transition. Administration officials say the proportion of welfare recipients who are working is four times as high now as when the president took office in 1993. Nationally, the percentage of welfare recipients with jobs rose from 7 percent in 1992 to 27 percent last year.

Gov. Bush will try to sidestep whistleblower case

Texas
Gov. George W. Bush will file documents today asking a judge to reject demands that he testify in a whistleblower lawsuit filed by a former state agency director, attorneys in the case said Sunday in Austin, Texas. The civil suit, which political analysts say could provide fodder for Bush's White House rivals, accuses the governor of interfering with a state inquiry into alleged misconduct at 20 funeral homes owned by Houston-based Service Corporation International. The former Funeral Service Commission's executive director, Eliza May, alleged that Bush had her fired in February at the behest of Robert Waltrip, chairman of Service Corp., which owns the funeral homes she was investigating. Waltrip is a longtime supporter of the Bush family. A spokesman said Bush's testimony was not needed because he knows nothing about the investigation or May's dismissal.

Bradley calls racial divide America's largest problem

The biggest problem facing American society is divisions between races, said former Sen. Bill Bradley, a candidate for the Democratic presidential nomination. "I've always believed that the racial divide in America was our fundamental and deepest challenge," Bradley said Sunday on the NBC program "Meet the Press." He is the only announced challenger to Vice President Al Gore for the nomination.

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USA TODAY

August 2, 1999, Monday, FIRST EDITION

SECTION: LIFE; Pg. 3D; Larry King's People

LENGTH: 531 words

HEADLINE: Play
with the NBA: Hoop it up, help a kid

BYLINE: Larry King

BODY:

Peter Morto
n, owner of the Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in
Las Vegas, will host the second H
oops in Vegas tournament to benefit
the ERAS center, a nonprofit organization t
hat assures at-risk
children access to the services they require.

Here's th
e way the tournament works: It's a 16-team, single-elimination
event taking pla
ce at UNLV. Coached by some of the NBA's current
stars, each team will consist
of a retired NBA legend, a celebrity
and maybe you, a donor who will pay for th
is once-in-a-lifetime
opportunity. The event takes place Aug. 14-15, and those
participating
include Tom Arnold, Corbin Bernsen, Bob Sa- get,
Kareem Abdul-Jab
bar, Danny Manning and Connie
Hawkins. For information, call the hotel. . . .

Former Texas governor Ann Richards, loving her role as
a lobbyist with a Was
hington law firm, was the last person to
debate Texas Gov. George W. Bush, who
defeated her.
She told me Bush should not be taken lightly, that he will be
the
nominee of the Republican Party and should be a strong favorite
to be elected.
"He'll be hard to debate," she said, "because
he's not easily pinned down on s
pecifics. But he has a great natural
flair for politics."

Richards is suppo
rting Al Gore but thinks Bill Bradley
will "give him a run for his money" in
the Democratic primaries.
"Bradley cannot be taken lightly," she told me, "and
I've told
that to the vice president." She is a great admirer of Elizabeth
Dole
's and thinks she'll be Bush's vice presidential choice.
. . . .

WEB-BASED NE
WS COVERAGE for AUGUST 2, 1999

NEW YORK COVERAGE
(VP Travel: 8/1)
(Please see
also: NY Times in hard-copy clips)

DEM BIG: BRADLEY PALS GAGG
ED

By DEBORAH ORIN

A veteran Democratic s
enator is accusing the
Clinton White House of using crude pres
sure
tactics to keep Democrats from endorsing Bill
Bradley against Vice President Al Gore for the
2000 nomi
nation.

"It's been made clear to me that the things I say
about Bradley that are nice are heard in Gore's
office," Sen. Joe Biden (D-Del.), who may

endorse Bradley for
the presidency, told Time
magazine.

"Ninet
y-five percent of my colleagues here on the
Democratic side be
lieve that Bill Clinton has
consciously turned over the reins
of political
power - the power of appointment, the power of
pardon, the power relating to those things that
affect partisan politics - to Al Gore."

That charge comes a
t a time when Gore is sagging
in polls, Democrats are getting
ever more jittery
about how badly he trails GOP front-runner

George W. Bush, and Bradley is enjoying a
popu
larity boomlet and raising big bucks.

Just last week, House
Democrats rebuffed a plea
from ex-White House aide Paul Begala
to start
beating up on Bush, saying they couldn't risk it -
basically because they fear Gore is a loser.

And sources say the AFL-CIO has delayed the
early endorsement
that Gore has been so eagerly
seeking - a tactical win for Br
adley.

Bradley so far has only two Senate endorsements,
from two of the most independent senators - Paul
Wellstone of Minnesota and Bob Kerrey of
Nebraska. And sources
say New York Sen.
Daniel P. Moynihan, an old pal, will back h
im.

But sources have told The Post that Moynihan is
waiting to be sure funding for his beloved Penn
Stati
on renovation is finalized - a claim that
buttresses Biden's c
harge. Moynihan has declined
comment on whom, or when, he'll e
ndorse.

Meanwhile, a relaxed-looking Bradley said on
"Meet the Press" yesterday that race is the
nation's
top problem. It was his first Sunday
talk-show appearance of
the presidential
campaign.

Gore spent yeste
rday at a fund-raiser at the Sag
Harbor home of the late Comme
rce Secretary
Ron Brown's widow, Alma.

On t
he Republican side, Bush was vacationing at
his father's home
in Kennebunkport, Maine.

Many of his rivals were in Iowa, trying to rev up support in an Aug. 14 straw poll that is expected to push Bush even further ahead.

Multimillionaire Steve Forbes is offering to buy tickets and pay for air-conditioned buses to take his voters to the poll, in Ames.

Forbes is also offering free T-shirts, barbecue, music, even gold pins to rev up support, Time reports.

ILLINOIS COVERAGE
(VP Travel: 8/7-8)

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Chicago Tribune

August 2, 1999 Monday, CHICAGO SPORTS FINAL EDITION

SECTION:
EDITORIAL; Pg. 10; ZONE: N

LENGTH: 384 words

HEADLINE: BUSH'S ARMIES OF
COMPASSION

BODY:
Republican presidential front-runner George W. Bush's faith-based anti-poverty plan offers something old, something new, several things borrowed and, as a political play, something quite shrewd.

The idea of government fighting poverty through religiously affiliated organizations has been around for years. It also has worked remarkably well in various forms in various states, including Texas, where Bush is governor. Former President Ronald Reagan and President Clinton each proposed poverty fighting through faith-based organizations. Vice President Al Gore called in May for Americans to "dare to embrace" religious programs and called for a "new partnership" between church and state.

What's new about Bush's announcement are details, including its \$8 billion price tag. He would spend about that much to allow the 70 percent of taxpayers who do not itemize their deductions to take charitable deductions. In this way, Bush says, he would enlist taxpayers, charities, community groups and religious organizations into "armies of compassion" to fight a new conservative-style war on poverty, welfare dependency, criminal behavior and other social problems.

It says something about the spirit of the times that Bush's proposal is receiving so little resistance. As Gore's earlier announcement shows, a new consensus has risen across party lines. The persistence of problems afflicting poor children and families despite the overall prosperity of the 1990s has

as
driven many Americans to take a fresh look at faith-based organizations that
were helping the needy long before government got into the act.

Bush's plan
n to use tax deductions skirts the issue of church-state separation
by letting
individuals, not the government, hand over the money for such
services. Taxpaye
rs presumably have a better vantage point than government
bureaucrats to decide
which programs are making the best use of their money.

Bush's plan moves i
n the right direction. Churches, temples and prayer halls
cannot replace gover
nment in the mammoth task of helping the needy. But they do
a better and more
efficient job than government of understanding their
communities and meeting th
e needs of their citizens. As Bush wisely points out,
they need not be rivals
in that task. There is plenty of work to go around.

ARKANSAS COVERAGE
(VP Tr
avel: 8/8)
NO WEB-BASED NEWS COVERAGE

NEW HAMPSHIRE COVERAGE
(VP Travel: 8/8)

THE MANCHESTER UNION-LEADER
Editorial
The Navy needs to pay up:
Where's Go
re and Shaheen on this one?

The U.S. Navy is playing the deadbeat on a ne
arly \$3 million bill owed the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard
for work on a submarin
e called the USS Helena. The bill was submitted to the Second Fleet last April,
but last week the brass said they didn't have the money, and wouldn't pay.

The situation is causing a budgetary problem that will require shipyar
d personnel to work an extra
6,000 hours of overtime between now and September
to cover the shortfall. The overtime money will
come from a different budget
from the Helena's, and workers will be required to work six days a week
to pul
l this off. The key is to maintain the shipyard's good record of cost-effective
ness in the eyes of
military analysts, even though the Navy, which owns the sh
ipyard, is the problem.

Because the Portsmouth facility, which is the
oldest operating Navy yard in the United States, must
compete with private sh
ipyards for contracts, the pressure is always on there to maintain a high level
of
economy on projects. This keeps steady work coming in and the doors open.
In past rounds of
Pentagon base closures, the cost effectiveness of operations
maintained at Portsmouth has literally meant
the difference between life and
death for the historic facility. This high efficiency has given the New
Hampsh
ire and Maine congressional delegations a solid, bottom-line rationale to fight
for the yard when
the cost-cutters get their calculators out, as political cl
out can only go so far in a city that's full of it

clout, that is. (Funny how the only time you find a bureaucrat in the Beltway who wants to save money is when there's a military base to close.)

According to Terry Eleftherion, a union spokesman, the situation "makes Portsmouth appear to be more expensive and less efficient than it is ... If this was a private shipyard, they'd never do this. They'd find the money."

The Navy's arcane bookkeeping involves annually setting "man-day rates" at the yard, which will be artificially high next year due to the snafu. This, in turn, may cause the yard to lose future work to other facilities, Eleftherion says.

So because these geniuses in Washington some of whom are probably the kind who'll pay a thousand bucks for a hammer can't get a budget straight on fixing one submarine, hundreds of people will have to work overtime to maintain cost appearance, and maybe in the end save their jobs.

It's obvious that the Navy is refusing to do the right thing on this, and isn't about to budge without a little help from the top. So where's Al Gore when we really need him? Where's Madam Governor with all her connections (Didn't she sleep in the Lincoln bedroom? Isn't her husband, the so-called "hunk," Mr. Gore's state chairman?). Maybe these two very important people can tear themselves away from the photo-op of the day long enough to do something really useful. The people of the Seacoast, and all of New Hampshire and Maine would appreciate it.

Once Gore and Shaheen get the money from the Navy, they can have a ceremony and have their picture taken at the shipyard, maybe with a nice shot of the Atlantic in the background. We understand the ocean is at its usual, most picturesque level.
D
Sean Dexter

THE MANCHESTER UNION-LEADER
Closely watched political process both overrated and helpful
By JOHN DISTASO
Senior Political Reporter

When U.S. Sen. Judd Gregg stands up and calls George W. Bush a great guy, calls him his choice for President and then asks you to vote for him, will you? Will you be more inclined to? Will it matter at all to you?
Even if you think Judd Gregg is great, and even if you think Bush is great, do you think Bush is great because Gregg thinks he's great?
And, if you're not sure who you like for President, does it matter to you that Gregg likes Bush or that Gov. Jeanne Shaheen's husband, Bill, and a collection of state leaders like Al Gore?
Probably not very much, especially in independent New Hampshire.
Still, the political endorsement game is one of the most-watched processes of this and any election season primary or general. And while the importance of political endorsements may be overrated, there are occasions in which they do help.
Gregg, for instance, is a meaningful endorsement. First, he's been a U.S. senator, a governor, a U.S. House member and an executive councilor. He's been in nine

elections in New Hampshire and is 9-0, not counting primaries. That record shows he has a high level of respect, especially among Republicans and they are the ones who count in a Republican Presidential Primary.

Ditto for the Shah. Sure, the governor hasn't endorsed Al Gore officially. But her husband, Bill, is his state campaign chairman.

Two landslide election victories show Gov. Shaheen has broad appeal, from independents as well as Democrats and yes, even some Republicans.

Gore, who's struggling to find a consistent message in his campaign while facing a tough challenge from New Jersey Sen. Bill Bradley, will no doubt officially receive the governor's endorsement. And it can't hurt.

Gregg brings along what GOP strategist Patrick Griffin calls "the most effective Republican political organization in the state," people who work tirelessly to set up mini-organizations in cities and towns to send people out to you, the undecided voter and ask you to consider Bush.

It doesn't guarantee you will, but a personal touch from a neighbor may prompt you to give the candidate serious consideration.

"Endorsements are actually more valuable early in the process than in the end," said Jim Monahan, an uncommitted Democratic activist.

"Endorsements sort of define the characteristics of the candidate," said Monahan. "I may not know Bill Bradley or Al Gore, but I know these others who endorsed him well. I know their views on issues, even if I'm not yet sure of his."

A host of other New Hampshire Republican activists and officeholders are spread out among the rest of the field. Former U.S. Rep. Bill Zeff, for instance, backs former Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander, while 1996 GOP gubernatorial nominee Ovide Lamontagne, who defeated Zeff in a primary that year, is behind former Vice President Dan Quayle. Former U.S. Sen. Warren Rudman likes John McCain.

Four years ago, Gregg, Zeff, U.S. Rep. Charlie Bass and former Gov. Steve Merrill and were the top names backing eventual Republican standard-bearer Bob Dole.

Dole, like Bush this year, had a huge lead in the polls the summer before the First-in-the-Nation Primary. But in February of 1996, he lost the GOP primary to Pat Buchanan.

This year, the conventional wisdom so far has Bush a far better candidate than Dole. He's livelier and fresher, and, more important to Republicans, polls show he can defeat Vice President Al Gore in a general election matchup. Dole never came close to Bill Clinton in any polls.

Strategist Griffin said there is a high level of enthusiasm in Bush this year.

"The last time, it was, 'I'm endorsing Bob Dole, I guess.' This time it's, 'I'm with Bush, dammit!'"

Ultimately, if Bush wins the primary, it will have much more to do with Bush than the New Hampshire endorsement lineup.

Still, strong endorsements "make your campaign legitimate and show that you have appeal," said Griffin.

"And allegedly, these elected officials come with some sort of organization. That's true in the case of

Gregg and Bass and (U.S. Rep.) John E. Sununu. And it's also true on smaller scales to the other offices such as Executive Council or municipal office or legislator."

"The Gregg organization is the most significant political franchise in the state," said Griffin, who is not committed to any candidate.

W

While Bush is accused by foes of avoiding the retail-style politics necessary to win in New Hampshire, Griffin says just the opposite is true.

"They're doing an awful lot of outreach," said Griffin.

So, if you want to know who's with whom, here's the lineup of key endorsements:

Republicans

Texas Gov.

George W. Bush: U.S. Sen. Judd Gregg, U.S. Rep. Charlie Bass, Executive Councilor

Ruth Griffin, former Gov. Steve Merrill, former Attorney General Jeffrey H. O'Neil, former state GOP

Vice Chairman Barbara Russell, former state Commissioner of Resources and Economic Development

Robb Thomson.

Arizona Sen. John Mc

Cain: Former U.S. Sen. Warren Rudman, Executive Councilor Peter Spaulding, for

former Grafton County GOP Chairman Nancy Merrill, former Rockingham County Chairman Wayne

MacDonald, state Rep. David Young of Alstead, and state Rep. Kathy Florea of Bedford.

Former Vice President Dan Quayle: Former Gov. John H. Sununu, former state Board of Education Chairman Ovide Lamontagne, state Sen. Arthur Klemm of Windham.

Former Tennessee Gov. Lamar Alexander: Former Attorney General Tom Rath, former U.S. Rep. Bill

Zeliff, Executive Councilors Bernard Streeter and Raymond Burton.

Utah Sen. Orrin Hatch: Staffers Ken Egan and Patrick Hines; no major endorsements.

Former White House adviser and television commentator Pat Buchanan: Former New Hampshire

Christian Coalition Executive Director Shelley Uscinski.

Conservative activist Gary Bauer: Former Union Leader Editorial Page Director Richard Lessner,

Milford activist Karen Testerman.

Former American Red Cross President Elizabeth Dole: Former Hillsborough County Commissioner

Toni Pappas, former U.S. Assistant Secretary of State Betty Tamm, former Bass campaign manager

Chris Hodgson.

Business magazine publisher

Steve Forbes: State Sen. Mary Brown, Belknap County Commissioner Mark Thurst

on, Patty Humphrey, wife of former Sen. Gordon Humphrey, former Federal Emergency

Management Administrator Wally Stickney, former New Hampshire Republican Party Executive

Director Paul Young.

Radio talk show host Alan Keyes: State Rep. David Corbin of Stratham.

Democrats

Vice President Al Gore: Bill Sha

heen, New Hampshire House Democratic Leader Peter Burling and his leadership team,

11 of the 13 Democratic state senators, including Senate President Clesson

Blaisdell, former New Hampshire Democratic State Committee Chairmen Joseph Keefe and Jeff

Woodburn, former state Rep. Jim Demers.

Former New Jersey Sen.

Bill Bradley: State Sens. Mark Fernald of Sharon and Clifton Below of Lebanon

, Manchester attorneys Lee Nyquist and Daniel Callaghan, former U.S. Senate candidate John

Rauh and former U.S. House candidate Mary Rauh, 1994 Democratic gubernatorial nominee Wayne

King, former state Sen. Mary Nelson, Yankee Publishing Co. Chairman Rob Trowbridge.

Key uncommitted Democrats: Gov. Jeanne Shaheen (officially, but her husband chairs Gore's state campaign), veteran activist/lobbyist Jim Monahan.

Key uncommitted Republicans: Speaker of the House Don
Sytek, Senate Republican Leader Carl
Johnson (formerly backed Ohio Rep. John
Kasich before he left the campaign), Executive Councilor
Tom Colantuono, state
Sens. Pat Krueger of Manchester, Fred King of Colebrook, Ned Gordon of
Bristol, Leo Fraser of Pittsfield, Leo Fraser of Pittsfield, Gary Francoeur of Hud
son, Rick Russman of
Kingston, Sheila Roberge of Bedford

THE CONCORD MONITOR
R
Editorial: Unconnected

is or what he Voters still don't know who Gore
stands for.
Monday, August 2, 1999
Running for president is a simple proposition
. You tell people who you are and what you stand for, and you
make a personal connection so that you can mold your ideas
to fit their needs and dreams.
If you
ou're an incumbent vice president in good times, running for
president is even simpler. Sure, you're easy game for the press and
the pundits, and the baggage of the president you've served under
is to some extent your baggage. But you've got name recognition
and experience, and your cash crop grows like zucchini in
July.
Like you, a
If you're Al Gore, you have yet other advantages.
large majority of the public wants more restrictions on gun
ownership - but not on abortion. Your party wins on
family-friendly legislation, on diversity, on the environment, on
caring about the poor and elderly, on education.
Employment is way up, crime is way down, and the question you cannot ask often
enough is: Are you better off than you were eight years ago?
So what's the problem? Why does Al Gore look like he's paddling
upstream no matter how much water is released to ease his
journey?
According to the national media, his problems are these: He's
boring, he's stiff, he's passionless, he's a creature of Washington,
internal bickering weighs down his campaign, and an opponent in
his own party is raising big bucks.
The
se swipes at Gore are not unfounded, but they only hint at the
vice president's real problem. He has not passed the first test of
presidential politics. People don't know who he is or what he

stands for.

With just over six months to go
before New Hampshire votes,
Gore must answer these questions:

Who is he?

The facts of his life
have been in the public realm for years, but he
needs to
shape them into a few phrases with which people can
identify him. Ronald Reagan was a personable patriot who wanted
to
stop the growth of the federal government. George Bush was a
World War II fighter pilot who had paid his dues. Bill Clinton was
a longtime governor with a silver tongue and a vision of an
inclusive country. Clinton's last opponent, Bob Dole, was an old
war horse running one last mission for his generation.

How does Al Gore define himself? How does he want voters to
see him?

Is Gore selling anything American
that Americans want to buy?

The vice president has made several speeches
laying out where he
stands on the issues. His positions
are thoughtful and reasonable.
But a successful presidential
campaign is far more than the sum of
its policy details.

Last week, the New York Times asked Gore what he stood for,
and he answered: "Keep the prosperity going, make certain
no one's left behind, bring revolutionary improvement to
our public schools, build stronger families and more livable
communities."
This succinct formulation is a good nucleus
for answering a vital
question:

What
would a vote for Al Gore mean?

Can Gore connect?

The vice president has a tendency to speak too loudly in small
rooms. When he is shaking hands and kissing babies on Main
Street, it does not come naturally to him to draw out the people he
meets and listen to their concerns.

Even in this mass media age, successful presidential candidates -
and presidents - develop a personal bond with the people that
goes deeper than any specific issue or concern. Even people who
disagreed with Ronald Reagan's or Bill Clinton's politics had to
admit to
admire their ability to reach the public in an essential human way.

Does Al Gore have this gift?

In assessing Gore's campaign, the media aren't wrong to focus on
inside staff squabbles or the negatives that come with calling
Washington, D.C., home. But 12 years after he first came to Ne
w Hampshire to pursue his presidential fortunes, there's a
more troubling problem for Gore.
Why i
s it that so many fundamental questions about his candidacy
remain unanswered? And after all this time, can he get voters to
listen as he tries to answer them?

THE CONCORD MONITOR
Vice president
's first race was a cliffhanger

Monday, August 2, 1999

The Associated Press

MANCHESTER, Tenn.
- While Al Gore crisscrosses the country
seeking the presid
ency, the man he narrowly beat to launch his
political care
er quietly practices law in a small town where trees
shade
the old brick courthouse and people on the uncrowded
street
s say "howdy" to strangers.

On J. Stanley Rogers' wall in
his office are some two dozen
photos, most of them taken du
ring his six years in the Tennessee
Legislature. Not one sh
ows him campaigning for the U.S. House in
1976 against the
28-year-old Gore, who was making his first run
for office.

Rogers searches drawers for such a picture, but comes up e
mpty.

"I have no idea where it is," he confesses.

Rogers gave Gore his toughest congressional race, barely losing a
close Democratic primary. Gore then easily won the general
election and was re-elected three times by wide margins.

In 1984, Gore handily won an open U.S. Senate seat and was
overwhelmingly re-elected in 1990. He gave up the seat when
President Clinton made him his running mate in 1992.

Rogers doesn't spend much time thinking about what might have
happened if he had received 3,560 more votes and won the 4th
District primary 23 years ago.

"If you
play the 'what if' game, you can imagine anything," he said.

"I think I would have served well in Congress. If he had lost that
race, as young as Al was, I assume he would have offered himself
later for public service."

It was a crowded Democratic field in 1976, with nine candidates seeking the nomination to succeed Democratic Rep. Joe L. Evins, who was retiring after 30 years.

Though he had never sought elective office, Gore was well known because his father, Alben W. Gore Sr., had served seven terms in the U.S. House and three in the U.S. Senate. The elder Gore lost his re-election bid in 1970, largely because of his strong opposition to the Vietnam War.

Before seeking office, the younger Gore worked as a reporter for The Tennessean in Nashville. He also attended law school at Vanderbilt University in Nashville.

Rogers, then 37, had been majority leader during four of his six years in the Tennessee House. He practiced law when the Legislature was not in session.

The district at the time consisted of 25 counties mostly east and south of Nashville. Primarily a rural district, it included small towns with colorful names like Big Lick, Little Crab and Pumpkintown.

To this day, even with some shifts in boundaries and renamed the 6th District, it remains Democratic, now represented by Rep. Bart Gordon.

Gore did not return phone calls seeking comment on the 1976 race with Rogers, but U.S. Rep. Bob Clement, a Nashville Democrat who's known Gore since both were children, said it prepared Gore well for future elections.

"Al was in the fight of his life," Clement said. "... No doubt he's grown a lot. I've noticed a change in him - his maturity, confidence level and ability to communicate with the American people and the world."

M. Lee Smith, a political analyst and publisher of the Tennessee Journal political newsletter in Nashville, said Gore showed a campaign style in 1976 that he follows today.

"At age 28, he was very focused on winning that election and launching his political career," Smith said. "He was as focused then for Congress as now for president. He hasn't changed much."

Rogers recalled there were no polarizing issues in the race. Newspaper clippings from then show Rogers portraying Gore and his parents as wealthy and privileged and emphasizing his own

humble upbringing as the son of a carpenter. Gore campaigned for mandatory sentences for criminals and maintaining a strong military.

"It was just shoe leather and handshakes," Rogers said. "We gave it our best shot."

On Election Day, it was unclear who would win.

"The lead changed hands back and forth," Rogers said as he sipped coffee in his office on the town square in this city of 8,500, some 60 miles southeast of Nashville. "We had a helicopter ready to go to Nashville (for a victory party), but"

The Gore name was too powerful for Rogers to overcome. The future vice president received 37,680 votes, just under 33 percent of the ballots cast, while Rogers got 34,121.

"He had 30 percent of the vote in an y county and there was nothing you could do," Rogers said.

There was no Republican in the general election, and Gore swamped a little-known independent.

Rogers said he took the loss hard, but he harbors no bitterness toward Gore. Ever a loyal Democrat, he's contributed to Gore campaigns through the years.

Persistent prodding by a reporter won't pry anything even remotely negative about Gore from him.

"I consider him a friend and vice versa," said Rogers, who settled back into his small-town law practice after the campaign and never again sought public office. "When I have the opportunity to talk about him, I give him high marks."

Just water over the dam?:
Shaheen-Gore canoe questions remain

That Connecticut River "photo op" for Al Gore and Gov. Jeanne Shaheen presented several classic examples of why the public is so cynical about politics.

First, there was the trip itself, which was another waste of the taxpayers' money so that presidential candidate Gore could look good in announcing the government was giving away tax dollars on the Connecticut. A press release from Washington would have carried the news just as well.

Second was the specially-timed release of dam water so Al and Jeanne could float their canoe.

Third, and here the cynicism really sets in big time, came the denials, the changed stories, the "misquoted" claim, etc.

A Vermont official, initially critical of the early water release, claimed to have been misquoted. (The paper involved stood by its story.) A Connecticut River Joint Commission official said such special water releases are done all the time just for the asking. (The dam's owner says this is hardly the case.) And, true to form, New Hampshire Democratic mouthpiece Peter Burling tried to divert attention by blasting Republicans for criticizing the event.

When none of that seemed to work, a new tale was told. The special spill was done for "safety" reasons, said the River Commission spokesman. With all the "tragedy" in the news of late, they wished to make sure that Al and Jeanne were neither stranded nor drowned in a sudden burst of water. The "tragedy," we gather, was a reference to JFK Jr.'s plane crash.

But the image of a wall of water forcing the burial at sea of Al and Jeanne is a bit much. If that were a real concern, what of other boats out on the river beneath the dam that day? Were they all informed of the much-earlier than usual release? Or was the public's river simply closed to the public while these two "public servants" had their picture taken?

The public's cynicism for politics crosses party lines, of course. Witness last week's congressional vote that extended most favored nation status for Red China.

Opponents noted that we had already given China this status. In return, the Reds have sent spies to swipe our nuclear weapons secrets, and threatened to war on us should we defend little Taiwan, as we are pledged to do.

In response, Bill Clinton says, yes, but if we don't extend the trade status, the Chinese could get really nasty!

Sadly, American business, (including New Hampshire's own Business and Industry Association) goes along with this attitude; and Reps. Bass and Sununu voted with Clinton. Bass' vote is no surprise. One will recall his famous proclamation of a year or two ago in which he said the Chinese government was no longer communist. We had hoped for better from Sununu, however.

Joseph W. McQuaid

Bradley flip-flops: But of course Gore is pure

Now we have the former great basketball player and ex-U.S. Senator from New Jersey, Democratic Presidential candidate Bill Bradley taking on the issue du jour, campaign finance reform. Last week the Tall One took Texas Gov. George W. Bush and Vice President Al Gore to task for supposedly directing their campaign chiefs to plumb for soft money for the general election. This thing about Gore doing it must gall Bradley especially, since Bradley intends to be the nominee and should be the one, in his mind, to be worrying about financing a general election, not Gore.

He called the two hypocrites because Bush has said some vague things about campaign money reform, and of course Gore and his pal Clinton, who Gore says is one of the best Presidents who ever lived, are very much against soft money. That is the name for large sums raised by special interests. The cash is used for issue ads and by committees and indirectly

helps a candidate. Gore and Clinton are against soft money, unless of course it comes from Buddhist temples or the Chinese government.

Anyway, Bradley now says he wants the public to finance elections, which is an odd flip-flop since three years ago when still a senator he was against such a plan. Bradley said in 1996 that public financing would be "forcing taxpayers to fund politics." Gore's campaign chairman rubbed it in a little, saying in 18 years in the senate, Bradley never cared a blip about such reforms. Gore did, of course, but kept taking the loot anyway. Lucky for Al there was no "controlling legal authority" to stop him from trolling for it from the White House, too.

Ah, the rascals are such fun to watch.

Dean Dexter

OTHER ARTICLES

THE WASHINGTON POST
Bradley Says He'd Veto GOP Tax Cut

By Steven Mufson
Washington Post Staff Writer

Monday, August 2, 1999; Page A5

Democrat
Democratic presidential candidate Bill Bradley yesterday renewed his call for candidates to reject "soft money" for their campaigns and said that, if president, he would veto the current Republican tax cut proposals.

The former senator from New Jersey, speaking on NBC's "Meet the Press," said he was "shocked" by sharp criticism from the Gore campaign over his proposal that all presidential candidates agree to ban the use of unregulated campaign contributions -- so-called soft money -- in the next presidential election.

There are strict federal regulations on the amount of money that individuals can contribute to directly support a candidate in primary and general elections. But political parties also raise funds to use for more general party activities. That unregulated, or "soft," money can often be used in ways barely distinguishable from directly supporting a campaign.

"I would hope that they would accept the challenge not to accept soft money," he said. Responding to a comment by Gore campaign chairman Tony Coelho that Bradley would handicap Democratic candidates who can't keep up with Republican fund-raising drives, Bradley said he wouldn't reject soft money if others continued to take it.

Bradley's success at raising campaign contributions has bolstered the claim

of the one-time Rhodes scholar and basketball star to
be a viable alternative
to Vice President Gore, the front
-runner for the Democratic nomination.
Bradley spent Satur
day campaigning in New Hampshire, the site of the first
pr
esidential primary.

On NBC yesterday, Bradley said he wou
ld be cautious in dealing with
federal budget surpluses.

He said he would veto the \$792 billion Republican-backed t
ax cut but would
not say how big a tax cut he would suppor
t. "I'd probably be more in line
with the smaller, rather
than a larger" tax cut and would rather use budget
surplus
es to pay down the national debt, keep interest rates low and "deal
with those problems in the country that you can only deal with in goo
d
economic times," he said.

Bradley
sidestepped a question about reforming Medicare to enable the
program that provides health coverage for older and disabled Americans to
forestall financial collapse and provide better benefits. H
e said that he
would present a proposal for overhauling na
tional health care in the fall and
would make Medicare pro
posals then.

"I don't think anything should be off the ta
ble," Bradley said, referring in
part to whether wealthier
Americans should pay more for Medicare
coverage.

Bradley also responded to a question about his change in position
on federal
support for ethanol, a corn product used as a
fuel additive and sold largely
by Archer Daniels Midland C
o. As a senator, Bradley opposed the ethanol
program, call
ing it "highway robbery" with no environmental, energy
sec
urity or financial benefits. As a candidate stumping in the farm state of

Iowa, where caucuses provide an early test for presidential hop
efuls,

Bradley has supported the ethanol subsidy program.

"When I was in the Senate, I represented my state, New Je
rsey. This was
not good for New Jersey," Bradley said. "No
w I'm running for president. I
have to see the whole count
ry."

He said that after talking to "hard-working" Iowa fa
rmers, he changed his
mind.

Bradley
said he saw "the racial divide" as the nation's biggest problem. He

said, "Slavery was our original sin; race remains our unresolved dile
mma."

NEWSWEEK

A War Over Who Controls the Left
Bradley is testing Gore's
lock on the 'old' Democrats

By Howard Fineman

When Bill Clinton first ran for president, he wanted to be known as a centrist "new" Democrat, not an old-fashioned liberal. So at an AFL-CIO convention, he openly disagreed with Big Labor's big-spending agenda, and sent his spin doctors into the press room to underscore the point. Then, at a Rainbow Coalition conference, he picked a fight with the Rev. Jesse Jackson. Without warning his host, Clinton criticized the harsh lyrics of a rapper whom the civil-rights leader had invited as a tribune of black street entry. The maneuver worked. Jackson was furious, and a new entry soon appeared in the field manual of political warfare. To "pull a Sister Souljah" is to impress the center by dissing, and distancing yourself from, your party's most loyal base.

Now Al Gore wants the same job, but he can't use the same tactic. Rather than moving away from what's left of the Democratic left, he's being forced to embrace it, conspicuously. The AFL-CIO and Jackson's Rainbow Coalition are meeting in Chicago this week, and Gore and his allies will be openly begging for support not looking to pick a fight. On the Republican side, meanwhile, Gov. George W. Bush is pulling the Sister Souljah. Flush with money and momentum, he has refused to embrace a hard-right agenda. His loudest antagonist in next week's Iowa straw poll are ardent pro-lifers, well known in the eyes of many moderates.

The cause of Gore's predicament is as irritating (to Gore) as it is obvious: Bill Bradley. The former New Jersey senator is no raging liberal, and he has yet to offer a menu of specific panders. In fact, Bradley angrily dismisses the need for detailed proposals, until at least this fall, on anything other than campaign reform and gun control. But his mere presence shrewdly, well funded, relentlessly forcing Gore to work harder to lock up "the base."

And that, in turn, could make it harder for the vice president to win the top job, if he manages to take the Democratic nomination. It's a simple but iron rule of presidential politics: to win it all, run to the middle as fast as you can.

Gore's base was supposed to be secure by now, especially with Big Labor.

When Democratic House leader Dick Gephardt decided not to run, Gore's aides talked of wrapping up an endorsement from the 13 million-member AFL-CIO as early as last February. Indeed, most

of the AFL-CIO's leaders, including president John Sweeney, want to endorse Gore, the sooner the better. But though Bradley is not beloved by Big Labor, flirting with him is a way to advance the unions' agenda.

And it's a controversial agenda. The industrial unions want tougher action against cheap imported steel and are withholding support for Gore, a dedicated free trader, as a way to get it. Gore huddled at the Pittsburgh airport recently with local steel-industry officials. The administration will soon unveil a new "save the steel industry" plan, but the unions are unlikely to be soothed, let alone excited. The Teamsters, meanwhile, want the veep to help banish the federal monitors who oversee the corruption-prone union. Does Gore want to risk doing a favor for Jimmy Hoffa Jr.? No way. Bottom line: it's unlikely that the AFL-CIO will endorse Gore now and perhaps not even at the next meeting in October.

It's the same story with the Jackson family. There is, as they say, a history. Jackson Sr. and Gore were bitter antagonists in the 1988 presidential primaries. But Gore has assiduously cultivated the family since, seeking Senior's advice and campaigning for Junior, now a House Democrat, when he ran for Congress from the South Side of Chicago in 1995. When Jackson Sr. made it clear this spring that he wouldn't run himself, Gore again hoped for a key early endorsement.

He didn't get it. Eager, as always, to play a pivotal role, the Jacksons quickly realized that Bradley had access to money, a strong hoop-based appeal in the black community and contacts among the power elite in Chicago, their home town. Bradley's most generous law-firm supporters: two white-shoe powerhouses in Chicago. Among his \$1,000 donors: Michael Jordan. And

His Airness is not alone. Last week Bradley hosted a "Hoopla" fund-raiser in Chicago featuring NBA Hall of Famers.

The Jacksons also want to prod Gore on the issues. One of them is national health insurance, which Bradley supports. Another is the AIDS epidemic in Africa. In the eyes of some AIDS activists, Gore hasn't been doing enough on the issue, and they're picketing some of his events. The Jacksons haven't

joined in the criticism of Gore yet. Bradley, who privately has been courting the Jacksons, says only that he's studying the issue. Both candidates will make their pitch to the Rainbow Coalition this week.

Gore can't even catch a break when he's working the base. Seeking to impress environmentalists recently,

he paddled a canoe down the
Connecticut River to advertise
a new federal cleanup grant. Great news for
greens? Well,
no. As the whole (political) world knows, his river dance
turned into the photo op from hell. The authorities without Gore's
knowledge sped up the release of 100 million gallons of water into the
river. Their aim was to assure him a smooth ride. It wasn't,
and, for Al
Gore, it may never be.

Newsweek, August 9, 1999

THE BOSTON GLOBE
Gore scores big with Mass. donors

Contributors also fund Bradley bid

By John Aloysius Farrell, Globe Staff, 08/02/99

WASHINGTON - Vice President
Al Gore has tapped the Democratic
establishment in Massachusetts for an impressive haul of money and
supporters, but Bill Bradley's strength in the national race for resources is
reflected in the state as well, according to federal election reports.

Although Gore has locked up most of the state's formidable collection of big
Democratic donors, Bradley's insurgent campaign is drawing money from a
wide array of old friends and admirers -
new contributors and Democrats who
think the party needs a change in leadership after recent years of scandal.

Capitalizing
on his position, Gore leads Bradley by almost 2-to-1 margins in the
number of contributors and the amount of money raised in Massachusetts.

Gore has raised \$550,000 from 706 contributors in Massachusetts, according
to a computer analysis of Federal Election
Commission records performed for
the Globe by the Center for
Responsive Politics, a Washington-based
good-government group.
Bradley has collected \$301,000 in the state from 374
contributors.

"People who have been active in the Democratic Party
and active in
campaigns in Massachusetts for the last decade
have a lot of support for what
the Clinton-Gore administration has accomplished," said Charles A. Baker, an
attorney and
political consultant active in the Gore campaign. "The vice
president has been the beneficiary of that support."

Most
of the deep-pocketed donors and fund-raisers from Massachusetts are in
Gore's camp. Included on this list are the former party chairman and
current
Massachusetts Envelope Co. executive, Steven Grossman;
John P. Manning

of Boston Capital Corp.; the venture capitalist Thomas H. Lee; Gerald and Elaine Schuster, both party stalwarts; Fred Siegel of Energy Capital Partners; nursing home operator and former DNC finance chair Alan Solomont; and Viacom's Sumner Redstone.

Bradley's supporters, in part by necessity, take pride in the fact that, as former congressman James Shannon puts it, "Bradley money is not Democratic establishment money. These are not the usual fund-raisers.

"A lot of the people supporting Bradley are people new to politics - a lot from the financial sector - people who feel they can play more of a role in an insurgent campaign," said Shannon, a leading Bradley supporter in the state.

A former legislator, Michael Harrington, said that Bradley's Massachusetts backers are an "eclectic" group, attracted to the former New Jersey senator for a variety of reasons. Some donors are longtime friends and admirers, like MIT's Lester Thurow. Others see an opportunity to make a bigger splash in an underdog campaign. Some contributors, former Celtics great John Havlicek, Celtics coach Rick Pitino, and New England Patriots executive J.A. Kraft, for example, have roots, like Bradley, in the world of sports.

And some of Bradley's backers, looking at polls that show Gore running behind Texas Republican Governor George W. Bush, think Democrats need to move beyond the scandal-plagued image of the Clinton-Gore years.

"There is a mild degree of disenchantment with the existing order, with the Clinton-Gore administration, though with some acknowledgment that Gore isn't culpable, just there on the scene," said Harrington, a Bradley supporter. "People are looking for a fresh face."

"I don't think that anybody is specifically against Gore; there is no sense of animus. But there is definite scandal weariness out there," said Shannon.

Gore leads Bradley in the national fund-raising competition, collecting \$19.5 million to Bradley's \$11.7 million. But Bradley's supporters find solace in the Gore campaign's spending habits. Bradley has been far more frugal, having spent \$4.3 million, compared with \$8.2 million spent by Gore.

"They can't help themselves. It's the trappings of incumbency. Fritz Mondale suffered the same thing with Gary Hart," said Harrington of the vice president's campaign in 1984.

Among the prominent figures who have contributed to Gore are former

Governor Michael Dukakis, former Lieutenant Governor Thomas P. O'Neill III, former Dukakis administration officials John De Villars, Philip Johnston and Nicholas Mitropoulos, and former Clinton administration figures Stuart Altman, Robert Reich, Thomas Glynn and Deval Patrick.

Two lawyers with close ties to Senator Edward M. Kennedy, Paul Kirk and Nick Littlefield, gave the \$1,000 maximum contribution to Gore, as did US Representative John Olver, Democrat of Amherst; Cathleen Douglas Stone; Swanee Hunt; The New Republic publisher Martin Peretz and his wife Anne; state Senator Linda Melconian; and a collection of lawyers, lobbyists, and Beacon Hill veterans that include Baker, Charles Campion, and Michael Whouley of the Dewey Square Group; George Bachrach; Cassidy & Associates vice-chairman John Brennan; Chris Gabrieli; Thomas Joyce; Patricia McGovern; and James Rowan.

In the Bradley camp, the best known donors and fund-raisers are lawyers James Segel and Dennis Kanin; developer Ronald Druker; and Kevin Phelan of Meredith & Grew, Inc. Democratic national committeewoman Virginia

Allan; Delphi Management's Scott Black; computer executives Charles Cuneo; John Moriarty and Michael Daitzman and Fleet Bank President John Hamill. Harvard Professors Philip Heymann and Cornel West and Staples executive Thomas Stemberg are also on the list.

CNN ALLPOLITICS

Biggest national problem is racial division, Bradley says

August 2, 1999
Web posted at:
3:42 a.m. EDT (0742 GMT)

WASHINGTON (AllPolitics, August 2) -- The biggest challenge facing America is racial division, says presidential candidate and former Senator Bill Bradley.

"I've always believed that the racial divide in America was our fundamental and deepest challenge," Bradley said Sunday on NBC's Meet the Press.

"The need to be able to see beneath skin color or eye shape to the individual is tremendously important," he said.

Would ban soft money

Bradley also said soft money should be banned from

the political process.

"Everybody knows that the people with the big bucks, particularly in soft money, have a bigger clout in the process," he said. "I think they're fed up."

Instead
, general elections should be funded from
public coffers, he
said. "We spend \$900 million a year
promoting democracy abroa
d. I think we ought to be
able to spend the same amount of mo
ney ensuring the
special interests don't have a grip on the l
egislative
jugular in this country."

Brad
ley said he would provide free TV time for
candidates.

He also would encourage more people to participate in
elections by using incentives similar to those adopted
by some states, such as same-day registration. In
Minnesota,
one in six voters registers and votes in the
same day, he sa
id. In Oregon, residents are able to
vote by mail.

'No' to independent Taiwan

The former basketball s
tar said he would continue to
support NAFTA. The trade agreem
ent has hurt some
Americans, he said, "but overall it's a ben
efit to the
country. The answer to a lot of worldwide problem
s is
more trade, more fairly shared, worldwide."

On recent tension between China and Taiwan, he said,

"The U.S. should say to the Taiwanese government
that if they
take steps toward independence, that they
cannot count on us
for any help."

At the same time, he said, the U.S. should
make it
clear to the People's Republic of China that, if Taiw
an
does not take steps toward independence, the U.S.

would support Taiwan if China were to be the
aggres
sor. "The 'one nation, one China' is an important
policy," he
said.

WEEKEND COVERAGE
(7/31-8/1)

McCain and Bradley: The Insiders' O

outsiders Try to Stay in the Hunt
By Stuart Rothenberg

One is a Republican, and one is a Democrat, but Sen. John McCain (Ariz.) and former Sen. Bill Bradley (N.J.) certainly seem to have a lot in common.

Each man is running as a political outsider, waging an uphill fight against his party's frontrunner for president. McCain, the Republican, and Bradley, the Democrat, talk often about campaign finance reform and the role of money in politics, and each has received a "bump" from favorable media treatment of his candidacy.

But do these guys have any chance to be nominated next year? Is all the attention paid to McCain and Bradley anything more than media-driven hype?

Both McCain and Bradley start far behind the leaders in national polls. A mid-July Yankelovich poll for CNN and Time magazine found McCain running third for the GOP nomination and trailing Texas Gov. George W. Bush by 51 points (57 to 6 percent). A mid-July Pew Research survey found McCain trailing Bush by 56 points (60 to 4 percent).

Bradley is closer to Vice President Al Gore in recent polls, but only because the former Senator is the sole alternative to his party's frontrunner. In the CNN and Time poll, Bradley trailed the Vice President by 31 points, 57 to 26 percent. In the Pew survey, the margin was 36 points, with Gore leading 65 to 29 percent.

Gore and Bush each draw about the same levels of support, but the opposition to Bush is divided.

Financially, Bradley is still in the game, while McCain really isn't at this point.

The Arizona Republican raised about \$6.1 million during the first six months of this year, but that number inflates McCain's actual fundraising, since almost a third of his receipts, \$1.9 million, were transferred from his Senate account. That means McCain has raised just over \$4 million as a presidential hopeful. He has also received about \$2 million in matching funds.

That's not enough to do much, despite the fact that McCain was second among Republicans with \$2 million on hand as of June 30. Bush already has 15 times that amount in the bank.

Money has become Bradley's best weapon. It is the sole reason why commentators and handicappers have taken notice of him, and it's the reason why Gore has reason to be concerned with Bradley's challenge.

Bradley raised \$11.7 million during the first six months of 1999, and his

second-quarter receipts of \$7.4 million were only \$1.3 million less than Gore's. The former New Jersey Senator's June 30 cash-on-hand total (\$7.4 million) was just \$1.8 million behind Gore's figure.

Bradley's fundraising success means he should have enough money to run a full-scale media campaign through February and possibly into March, guaranteeing that he'll have the opportunity both to introduce himself and to criticize his opponent with television ads.

But fundamentally, both Bradley and McCain face a positioning problem.

Bradley has been trying to avoid being pegged ideologically. His strategists prefer to present him as a principled outsider who can offer leadership and get America to focus on serious problems.

But the former Senator must develop more wedge issues to use against Gore, since he will ultimately need to convince Democratic primary voters why they shouldn't merely pass the torch to the Vice President.

Since the Gore-Bradley matchup doesn't appear to be a stark ideological contrast, Gore always has the option of agreeing with Bradley, thereby neutralizing his foe's message. Insiders may knit-pick about differences between the two Democrats on guns or campaign finance, but most voters probably won't see much of a difference so far.

Whatever Bradley's positioning problems, McCain's are worse. More than six months ago, he told me (and everyone else who listened) that his presidential bid depended on Bush's campaign imploding, creating an opening for an alternative. But not only has Bush not imploded, the governor's campaign has been exceeding already high expectations.

Whether it's money, endorsements or the candidate's campaign skills, Bush looks even more unbeatable than he did late last year. Where does that leave an opening for McCain? It doesn't. McCain's strategy still looks like one of

"hanging around" to see if Bush flops. It's not so much a case of the Senator winning the nomination as it is being available to sweep up with the debris if the governor of Texas loses it.

McCain has as much, or maybe more, appeal to Reform Party activists and Independent types as to Republicans. And conservative constituencies in the GOP, who regard his views on campaign finance reform as a threat to their

influence and existence, would jump on him en masse if they thought he had a chance for the GOP nomination.

McCain also has a tactical problem. He isn't participating in the Aug. 14 straw poll, but says he will participate in the Iowa caucus. How well can he do in the caucuses if he isn't putting together an organization that can deliver voters next month? And how will a weak showing in Iowa affect important tests for McCain in Arizona, South Carolina and Michigan, all of which take place before March 7?

Everything is relative, and both McCain and Bradley have exceeded expectations. But both outsiders still have plenty to prove, and each depends on his party's frontrunner totally screwing up. While that could happen, it's a long shot for Bradley, and an even longer shot for McCain.

WIRE REPORTS

Bradley goes door-to-door to get ahead
Presidential campaign sweeps New Hampshire

08/01/99

DERRY, N.H. - Democrat Bill Bradley went door-to-door Saturday in three New Hampshire towns, joining volunteers who spent the last week canvassing the state on behalf of his presidential campaign.

The former New Jersey senator said the effort was "massive, early and intentional," a bow to the independent streak of New Hampshire voters. His campaign said more than 500 Bradley supporters from 14 states spent seven days visiting 100,000 front doors in 31 cities.

On doorknobs they hung handbills describing Mr. Bradley's career on the basketball court and in the Senate.

They promised that as president he "will work on the big, unfinished business of America" - racial equity, health care for all, reducing poverty and reforming campaign finances.

"The reason we're . . . [going door-to-door] so early is to show respect to the voters and to invite them into the process of running for president," Mr.

Bradley said.

His allies say a victory in New Hampshire's leadoff primary is critical if Mr. Bradley is to beat Vice President Al Gore, the Democratic front-runner.

Mr. Bradley
ey said the state is a good place to test his low-key, open-ear style.

"I'm trying to do this campaign in a different way."

But New Hampshire pollster Kelly Myers said such "retail politicking is less
important than it used to be," even in a state known for
wanting to see the
candidates up close.

Many of the volunteers were recruited on the Internet. Mr. Bradley's
campaign Web site includes a "community involvement" section that
encourages people to join the effort in any of 15 ways - from writing to a
local newspaper to rounding up votes personally in
New Hampshire or Iowa.

James Bradfield logged in from Bend, Ore., and was inspired. A registered
Republican until he
decided to back Mr. Bradley, he flew to New Hampshire
last week and spent seven days walking door-to-door for his candidate of
choice.

"I was sucked in by the Web site," Mr. Bradfield said, adding that he likes
Mr. Bradley's commitment to
reduce the influence of money in political
campaigns.

Volunteers said they were encouraged. "We encountered an awful lot of
uncommitted people," said Mike Dowling of Ocean Grove,
N.J., who went
door-to-door in Londonderry.

THE AUSTIN-
AMERICAN STATESMAN
Critics: Bush veto shields nonprofits
Democrats want more scrutiny
routinely for private groups that spend public money

By Kevin
Herman
American-Statesman Capitol Bureau Chief

Published: July 31, 1999

Republican Gov
. George W. Bush, a
presidential candidate who wants to funnel
federal tax dollars into private programs, is
fielding Democratic criticism for vetoing a
bill requiring private entities to meet in
public when they discuss how to spend
taxpayers' money.

Bush last month killed a measure that
would
have subjected certain nonprofit
corporations to the state
open meetings
laws if the organizations spend federal

money.

tion of Though the bill made no men
 faith-based organizations, Bush cited them
as the reason for his veto.

 "House Bill
2557, designed to solve one
 specific problem, could subj
ect nonprofit and faith-based organizations in Texas to
 unnecessary government intrusion," Bush
said in his June 20 veto message.

 Texas Democratic
Chairwoman Molly Beth Malcolm said Friday that the Bush v
eto raises questions about whether he wants to
 keep a close eye on how private
 organizations
spend public money.

 Bush's presidential campaign has b
een highlighted by his effort to enlist the nation's
 "armies of compassion" by allowing
 fait
h-based and other nongovernment
 entities to get tax dolla
rs to provide assistance programs.

Malcolm says it's a solid idea but only if
coupled with
public disclosure of how such
groups spend the tax money

 "There hasn't been anybody out there,
Democrats or Republicans, who is against
working w
ith faith-based operations," she
said. "But it is importa
nt that there be
 accountability. Taxpayer money that goes
 to anybody, whether it is faith-based or any
other group, to the extent appropriate, it
sho
uld be opened to the public to see how
those tax dollars
are used."

Bush spokeswoman Karen Hughes said

Bush "envisions that funds directed to
faith
-based or private or charitable
organizations would be su
bject to federal
 audit just as they currently are."

 "The law says if you receive federal funds, they must be pla
ced in separate
 accounts subject to federal audit," she s
aid. "That creates a necessary
firewall which protects ta
xpayers' money yet also maintains the private
nature of t

he operating budgets of the faith-based or private charity."

Hughes said Bush concurred with the intent of House Bill 2557 but felt it went too far.

"He felt the legislation would open nonprofit and faith-based organizations to unnecessary government intrusion by requiring the governmental body or a church or synagogue to post public notice of their meetings under the Open Meetings Act," she said.

The "specific problem" mentioned by Bush in his veto message was an ongoing one at the East Texas Human Development Co., which gets federal money to run Head Start, housing assistance and other programs. Federal auditors have criticized the corporation for "pervasive misapplication of grant funds."

State Rep. Bob Glaze, D-Gilmer, said the problems festtered for years because the company was free from public scrutiny of how it spent tax money. Glaze filed House Bill 2557 in an effort to subject the company and about 50 other similar organizations to the open meetings laws.

"My concern was that these people need to be accountable and taxpayers need to have the opportunity to see where their tax dollars are going," Glaze said Friday.

The bill sailed through the House and Senate, where Finance Chairman Bill Ratliff, R-Mt. Pleasant and a leading Bush ally, was its sponsor.

The Bush veto, in the final hours for gubernatorial rejection of legislation approved this year, raises questions about his willingness to allow public scrutiny of public money spent by private organizations, according to Glaze.

But Bush, in his veto message, said guaranteeing public accountability for organizations such as the human development company "is better accomplished through rulemaking by the Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs."

Bush has instructed that agency to "review its rules, policies and contracts to ensure fiscal accountability."

ast Ohio, Bill Bradley takes his shot at the presidency. But can he overcome the Gore machine?

BY LISA CHAMBERLAIN

Al Gore has been running for president since he was born. For the past seven years, he has loyally stood by Bill Clintons side, biting his tongue, waiting for his turn. For Gore, the 2000 presidential nomination was supposed to be a cakewalk. But if Northeast Ohio is any example and it is the Gore campaign is in big trouble.

Bill Bradley formed his exploratory committee to seek the Democratic presidential nomination and made a low-key, low-profile announcement. Then he hit the road, traveling around the country, interacting with small

groups of potential and actual supporters. A few stories about the former senator from New Jersey and basketball star for the New York Knicks popped up here and there. But most of Bradleys ground-laying activities were off the medias radar screen, and therefore out of most Americans view.

Then last month the numbers came out. Bradley had raised almost as much money as a sitting vice president known for his fund-raising prowess. The media suddenly perked up. Does Al Gore have a challenge on his hands? Is Clinton fatigue a real syndrome? Whos on this Bradley train that has slowly but surely picked up steam? A handful of well-connected Clevelanders, as it turns out.

Bradleys supporters in Cleveland are emblematic of a national trend propelling Bradley forward as a serious primary challenger. It is an unusual, if well-heeled, grassroots insurgency that is hoping to usurp Al Gores political machine. Gore in Cleveland this week to make up for a canceled fund-raising trip has unwittingly found himself in a game of one-on-one with a three-time All-American basketball player.

"A rare combination"

The 56th floor of Key Tower is a pretty conservative place. Lots of wood paneling and long hallways. (For a brief moment Im acutely aware of my sandaled feet in need of a good pedicure.) The floor-to-ceiling windows offer an expansive view of Cleveland not readily available to mere

pedestrians. This is home to Jim Bennett, a senior vice president at KeyCorp and supporter of Bill Bradley.

Bennett is no fan of Gore, and this is no surprise. "Al Gore is very

anti-business and does not understand economics. Hes a scary guy," says

Bennett. "I think youd find a lot of senior business people who think hes dangerous. Hes a government interventionist and regulator to the point where it makes no economic sense."

But why Bradley over George W.? With the exception of being a former basketball player himself, Bennett does not seem a likely Bradley fan. A white-haired, lifelong Republican in favor of welfare reform and against government regulation but civically active for many years, Bennett would seem a perfect fit with George W. and his bumper-sticker slogan of "compassionate conservatism."

"George W. was a dilettante," responds Bennett. "He played around in the oil business. Hes been a politician for the 1

ast five or six years. He was an accident waiting to happen. It just makes me uneasy. He hasn't been battle tested, and he doesn't have the character. I think he's manufactured."

By contrast, "Bradley has a 40-year record of accomplishment and public service," says Bennett, who has followed Bradley's career since they were both college basketball players, Bradley at Princeton and Bennett at Cornell. "And having the social consciousness of a 1960s person, but really understanding business and being very friendly to the business community, Bradley has a rare combination."

Bennett saw this "rare combination" up close when KeyCorp enlisted Bradley for its lecture tour last year. Bennett traveled with Bradley on the company jet, listened to his speeches and, in the course of a day, saw Bradley at his best interacting with Key's clients in a thoughtful, quietly inspiring way.

"It was interesting to watch him at all of these meetings," says

Bennett. "I made my living for over 30 years making quick character assessments in the management consultant world, needing to figure out who saps energy, who provides energy. So I would like to consider myself a discerning observer. [Bradley] is genuine and uncontrived. He is a very substantive person. His charisma is understated, mature, thoughtful. He's not an orator. He's an engager."

By the end of the day, Bennett was charmed, and offered to help Bradley should he decide to run for president. Just after Bradley announced he was going to do just that, Bennett was one of two people in Cleveland he called to ask for help. Bennett immediately agreed, even if he thought Bradley didn't really have a chance against the Gore machine, as most everyone had concluded.

Despite the long odds, Bennett helped put together an impressive fund-raising host committee that included National City Bank CEO David Daberkof, Progressive Insurance CEO Peter Lewis, Jim Ratner of Forest City and Farah Walters of University Hospital, among others.

"This is politics at its most exciting," says Bob Rawson, managing partner at Jones, Day, Reavis & Pogue. "Its politics as it's meant to be people getting excited about the candidate and feeling they're engaged in something worthwhile."

Unlike Bennett, Rawson's support of Bradley is no surprise. Though he says he has occasionally voted for Republicans, he is a lifelong Democrat who has known Bradley since they played basketball together as undergraduates at Princeton, and then later as Rhodes Scholars at Oxford University. He is also no stranger to politics; his wife, Judy, is running for mayor of Shaker Heights. In other words, Rawson was the first Clevelander Bradley called after announcing, and Rawson immediately got to work on a fund-raiser, which he hosted in his Shaker Heights backyard.

"When I introduced him the other day at our event, I said I am making this introduction based upon personal knowledge. In my judgment, he has the ability to lead the American people; he knows the issues. He's had experience outside of politics that is meaningful. He has the character we'd all like to have in office."

Rawson's glowing recommendation worked. The \$1000-a-plate fund-raiser yielded more than \$160,000. Though just a drop in the presidential fund-raising bucket, it was one fund-raiser among many that have added up to \$11.7 million, just a little shy of Gore's \$17.5 million. Cash on hand shows an even closer race. There's less than a \$2 million spread between the two candidates. Gore may be raising more money, but he's spending a lot more too which makes Bradley's candidacy even more viable.

"When I agreed to get involved, Bradley seemed like a person worthy of support, but he had no real chance of winning," says Bennett. "Now it looks as though he's got a real shot."

Crashing the Party

If Jim Bennett is representative of an unlikely coterie of monied

Bradley supporters in Cleveland, there exists another unlikely group of supporters consisting of younger but experienced Democratic Party activists.

Mike Thomas was Bill Clinton's lead campaign staffer in Cuyahoga County in 1992. Though he's out of the political campaign business, he's now part of an informal group of thirtysomethings working to get Bill Bradley the Democratic nomination for president. Just as Bennett would seem to fall easily into the George W. Bush camp, Thomas would seem a likely Gore supporter. He is not.

"I don't have anything bad to say about the vice president," says Thomas. "I just think Bradley is a better candidate. And when you get down to it, you make a choice. Who do you like better? At some point in politics you have to decide, are you just going to be with the person who's going to win, or are you going to be with the person who you think is going to do the best job? I think Bradley is going to do the best job."

What Thomas thought was a personal decision may turn out to be something larger happening within the Democratic Party. "As soon as people found out there was a group working on this, people started coming out of the woodwork," says Thomas. "I don't want to declare who these people are; I don't want to get them in trouble. But I've had any number of campaign professionals call me looking to get involved."

Thomas speculates that a long-simmering disaffection with Clinton is starting to boil over at Gore's expense.

"After Clinton took office, he immediately tacked to the right. Economically, you're not going to hear too many complaints. But let's assume that I'm right, and there are disaffected Democrats that for whatever reason have a bad taste in their mouth. Bradley gives them a place to go, and gives us an opportunity to bring them back into the fold."

When asked what exactly Bradley stands for, though, Thomas takes a pass.

"Bradley's message is not to have a message right now. I'll be frank, I think this is a good strategy. If there are all these disaffected Democrats out there, not defining yourself too early allows them to gather around you. The second you say something, you inevitably alienate someone. He's allowing all these people who have chosen not to be with Gore to come over to him. He's putting that coalition together, and he's doing a good job."

Running a non-message campaign is the easy way to explain why Jim Bennett and Mike Thomas can support the same candidate. The more complex reality is that these two seemingly disparate groups have a lot in common, as evidenced by Bush and Gore's respective slogans: "compassionate conservative" and "practical idealist." Hollow though they may be, these poll-tested positioning lines loosely define the coveted suburban voter—a majority of the likely electorate, who are by and large fiscally conservative and socially liberal.

Only it seems that Bradley may be the real McCoy minus the catchy slogan.

Most Democrats are leery of Bush, who waffles on litmus-test issues such as abortion. Fiscal conservatives, both Republican and Democrat, are leery of Gore, who waffles on labor issues.

Into this crevice of mutual suspicion slips Bradley—a basketball star of the 60s generation known for his socially tolerant viewpoint who worked for a middle-class tax cut as a senator and has been in the business world since his retirement in 1996. Bradley is the embodiment of the fiscal conservative and the social liberal. He is the ultimate Third Way politician, the anointed next wave in American politics.

"I started following his career when I was in college at Oberlin," says Chris Carmody, director of the Greater Cleveland Media Development Corporation, who worked on Mayor Mike White's campaign in 1989. He is among the thirtysomething Democrats supporting Bradley, the generation culminating Third Way politics.

"I was impressed by two things: One was his independent thinking, and the other is his positive approach to race relations, which is really important to me. That is something that Republicans have never addressed, and the Democrats have backed away from.

"But his economic ideas are different from that of either party," continues Carmody. "For instance, he was a leader in pushing for closing tax loopholes. He put a lot on the line, and was the author of the 1986 tax reform bill. That didn't please his party or Republicans.

"And when I listen to Al Gore, he sounds like Republican family values light. That's not what I'm looking for in the next president."

But can Bradley win?

"If it was a crowded Democratic field, I don't think he could get the Democratic nomination," says Carmody. "But he has a significant shot for two reasons. One is that he has a longtime celebrity status, especially given his sports background. I think that translates into support in the early primaries in places like New Hampshire and New

York. The other reason is that by any measurement, he has done extremely well in fund-raising."

"Bradley is not part of the machine, but on any given day, anyone can win or lose," says Thomas. "Look at Jesse Ventura. Nobody predicted that. Nobody predicted Gray Davis [the governor of California] could beat people who were spending \$30 million. Politics isn't simple. On the face of it, it looks like whoever has the most money wins, but that's not always the case. There's an awful lot of luck involved. You get the people together, you raise the money, and then you seize the moment if it comes."

The moment may be on its way. Gore has had seven years to build up his apparatus, but you wouldn't know it for trying. The Cuyahoga County Democratic Party couldn't or wouldn't offer a single name of a local person involved with the Gore campaign even though he has a fund-raiser in town this week.

One woman is here from Chicago putting the event together, but she referred inquiries about operations in Cleveland to a Washington staffer who never returned phone calls.

In fact, the only person who could offer a comment was Lee Fisher, co-chair of Gore's campaign for president in 1988. But he made it clear that he is not part of the campaign due to his leadership of the Center for Families and Children, a nonprofit agency. Fisher couldn't even say if he will attend Gore's fund-raiser.

"I too have been impressed with the efforts of Bill Bradley," says Fisher. "He has an impressive list of supporters, most of whom are good friends of mine. Bill Bradley has focused more time and attention on Ohio than Gore, at least this year. But Gore has deep roots in Ohio going back at least since 1988. Provided that the Gore campaign starts to get organized in the next 90 days, they can catch up and surpass the Bradley effort before the end of the year."

"Despite the fact that Bradley is an extremely talented candidate, this is Al Gore's nomination to win or lose," continues Fisher. "Provided he does not take his supporters for granted, it will be very difficult for Bradley to be successful. The best chance for the Bradley campaign is if the Gore campaign doesn't take him seriously."

Insiders familiar with Democratic Party machinations say that at comparing Bradley's and Gore's operations is comparing apples to oranges. Gore's apparatus has been in place for a long time, and he no doubt has the support of elected Democratic officials nationwide. Bradley is in some respects starting from scratch. Without an insurgent group pushing for him, there would be no debate at all. And even Bradley's supporters realize though the odds are better than slim the shot is still long.

Bradley may be quietly inspiring a coalition

n of supporters. He may be raising lots of money. He may even have a better chance of beating George W. than Al Gore. What he doesn't have, at least right now, is the Democratic nomination. And without that, the point is moot.

So be it,

say Bradley's Democratic supporters. His run for the nomination, even if he loses, will sharpen up Gore and bring disaffected Dems back into the fold once they've had chance to vent.

George W. is looking pretty unbeatable, anyway. The combined Bradley-Gore campaign coffers don't even add up to Bush's \$36 million. But in a karmic repeat, the country will likely hit a recession shortly after Bush takes office. With Gore dismissed as a viable candidate, Bradley will be perfectly positioned for a run against Bush.

Look for Senator Hillary Clinton to become the first woman VP as Bradley's running mate in 2004. You heard it here first.

WASHINGTON POST
POLITICS

By Susan B. Glasser

Sunday, August 1, 1999; Page A05

Candidate S

Steve Forbes has something George W. Bush is willing to pay for: the list of subscribers to his magazine.

Forbes has been the Republican front-runner's most bitter critic on the presidential campaign trail, but that hasn't stopped the Texan's advisers from

trying to sell his brand of "compassionate conservatism" to the readers of

Forbes's "capitalist tool."

Bush's

presidential campaign rented the names of 6,000 Forbes subscribers

at a cost of \$125 per thousand, according to a spokeswoman for the

magazine. "I think it's a flattering thing," said the spokeswoman, Elizabeth

Ames. "We reach a desirable group."

The Bush fund-raising letter sent to the Forbes readers indirectly addressed

the criticisms Forbes and other rivals have lobbed his way, saying, "I know

others have criticized compassionate conservatism. That's their right, but

what are they saying? That compassion is beneath us? That our party

should be led by some one who boasts of a hard heart?" In what might be a bit of

reversy for this crowd, the Bush letter also lectured sternly that

"prosperity alone is simple materialism. Prosperity must have a greater purpose."

Down in Texas, the word is that they're pleased with the response from the

Forbes subscribers. "It's done very well for us," said Bush spokeswoman Mindy Tucke

r.

But that doesn't mean Forbes -- or any other GOP candidate, for that matter -- has written off the Forbes readers. Ames

s said both the Forbes
campaign and that of former vice presi
dent Dan Quayle also have paid to
rent the list this year. In
a true capitalist act, the cost to Forbes was the
same as th
at for Bush.

RETURN TO SENDER

Returning m
oney may be a presidential campaign's most unpleasant chore.
It goes against all that is sacred in the relentless pursuit of cash, particula
rly
in a millennial campaign season predicted to shatter all
fund-raising records.
But at times it must be done, for reaso
ns either prosaic (a donor unwittingly
gave more than the leg
al limit) or piquant (a donor carries the unmistakable
stench
of controversy).

The former, of course, is far more prevale
nt. But financial reports filed by
candidates this month reve
al at least a smattering of the latter. Vice
President Gore's
campaign, for instance, returned a \$250 check from
aspiring
oil pipeline entrepreneur Roger Tamraz, who vaulted to political
infamy for his brazen attempts to curry administration favor with huge soft
money donations during the 1996 campaign.

Gore also returned a \$1,000 check to Bennett Lebow, chairman of Liggett
Group Inc. tobacco company. But a search of contributions shows Leb
ow
sent two \$1,000 checks to Gore and only one was returned.
The campaign
also held onto a \$1,000 check from Lebow's wife,
who also contributed the
maximum to Sen. John McCain (R-Ariz
.). Overall, Gore returned more than
\$100,000.

Gore's Democratic rival, Bill Bradley, sent back close to \$100,000 to
individual donors, including \$1,000 to Hollywood megadirector Bar
ry
Levinson. Why send back so much precious political cash?
"We are beyond vigilant," explained Bradley spokesman Eric Ha
user. "We
return things that don't look right. Usually it's j
ust a simple mistake" like
giving more than the legal limit,
forgetting to list an address or omitting an
employer's name.

And what about Levinson? Turns out the "Diner" director, in
tending to give
the legal maximum for both himself and his wi
fe, sent a single check for
\$2,000 to Bradley. But it doesn't
work that way. Levinson's wife is free
(and encouraged) to c
ontribute on her own, Hauser said, but she has to send
a sepa
rate check.

McCain returned \$27,825 in individual contributi
ons, including \$500 to Brent
Scowcroft, national security adv
iser under President George Bush. Why?

The campaign offered n
o explanation. For the record, Scowcroft also gave
\$1,000 to
Bush's eldest son. Bush also returned more than \$100,000 in
c
ontributions.

QUOTABLE

Hillary Rodham Cli
nton, talking to reporters in New York on Friday about
runnin
g for the Senate: "I'm very committed to following through on this. It's
the only thing I'm interested in, and I'm getting more interested a
nd excited
about it every day."

WASHINGTON POST
Bush's
Capital Plan To Woo Big Business

By Susan B. Glasser and Jo
hn Mintz
Washington Post Staff Writers
Su
nday, August 1, 1999; Page A01

The groundswell began after
the dinner plates were cleared. One by one,
the Washington re
presentatives of corporate America, gathered at the U.S.
Cham
ber of Commerce headquarters last month, declared their allegiance
to Texas Gov. George W. Bush's presidential campaign.

Meeting just across the park from the executive mansion that Bush aims to
win back for the GOP 15 months from now, the 16 or so trade associ
ation
lobbyists who convened that night spoke for a broad and
powerful swath of
American industry: Oil producers. Supermar
ket owners. Electric utilities.
Forestry and paper manufactur
ers. Chemical companies.

Their support -- carefully cultivat
ed for more than a year by Bush's
Washington allies -- repres
ents a sharp break from the hands-off approach
such groups tr
aditionally have taken to presidential nomination battles.
Al
though individual lobbyists routinely back White House candidates, trade
association leaders have largely avoided such intimate entanglement
s with
presidential primary politics, believing that it's goo
d business not to take
sides when you don't have to.

But the Bush campaign is rewriting that particular Washington canon
with
an effort led by Thomas R. Kuhn, a Bush classmate at Yal
e who heads the
electric utilities trade group here. His driv
e to wire the corporate side of
Washington has generated sign
ificant fund-raising commitments and
endorsements from dozens
of big business's representatives, according to
industry lob

byists.

"It's unusual, even unique, that trade association executives are endorsing this early . . . and that they're overwhelmingly going for one candidate," said Red Cavaney, president of the American Petroleum Institute. Added Tim Hammonds, president of the Food Marketing Institute and a Bush "Pioneer"

who has raised more than \$100,000, "it is unique in my memory that we've seen such a great amount of enthusiasm so early" among trade groups.

The trade association operation offers a revealing glimpse into how a campaign that aspires to outside-the-Beltway populism has also eagerly exploited every advantage -- financial and political -- Washington has to offer. It also helps explain the outpouring of fund-raising support for Bush from America's corporate boardrooms; for the Bush campaign, Washington serves as a vehicle for recruiting business backers nationwide.

But while Bush's mutual embrace with American business is a fund-raising asset, it also could pose a political risk for the governor. Texas environmental activists, for example, have roundly denounced him for what they say is his cozy relationship with the chemical and oil industries, which the state has allowed to operate aging plants that foul the air and anger residents.

Indeed, the chemical industry, which has worked closely with the governor in Texas and likes his hands-off style of regulation, is one of the most passionately pro-Bush industries, according to several sources familiar with the Bush effort here. Frederick L. Webber, chief executive of the Chemical Manufacturers Association and another Pioneer, has persuaded numerous top chemical executives such as Dow Chemical chief executive William Stavropoulos to help raise funds for Bush, industry officials said.

"This industry has openly said we're going to support Bush and [is] committing to raise a huge sum of money for him," said the head of a major trade association familiar with the chemical group's plans.

Lobbyists for other industries are adopting the same tactics as Webber, generating campaign cash and CEO endorsements from the companies that fund their trade groups -- even as the groups maintain official neutrality.

Several said they are embracing Bush, despite knowing little about his positions on their industries' issues, simply because they know that his philosophical leanings are pro-business. But they said Bush also has played off corporate America

's deep suspicions of Vice President Gore, warning of
his env
ironmental stances and alliances with unions and trial lawyers.

To be sure, Gore can cite support from some prominent business figures,
though Bush's stiffest competition for corporate support may com
e from a
Republican rival, Sen. John McCain (Ariz.), who wields
power over much
of U.S. industry as chairman of the Commerce, Science and Transportation
Committee.

But sheer numbers show how lopsided business's pro-Bush sentiment is: In
the latest campaign fund-raising reports, Gore listed donations from
m 264
corporate chairmen and chief executives between April and June, whereas
McCain was backed by 121. Bush received donations from 1,542 -- four
times as many as the other two combined. In terms of contributions from
political action committees (PACs), a traditional gauge of Washington
support, Bush received \$689,000 this quarter, compared with \$77,000 for
McCain.
n. Gore does not accept PAC donations.

At the Chamber dinner
, the lone Bush holdout expressed the fear of
retaliation that
traditionally has kept trade group leaders neutral in
presidential
primaries. Jerald Halversen, president of the Interstate Natural
Gas Association of America, which represents pipeline companies, told the
other diners he was worried about the remaining 18 months of the
Clinton-Gore administration. "We have a lot of issues before the Energy
Department, so we can't risk alienating
them," Halversen told the gathering,
according to one person
in attendance.

Few other industry executives share his hesitation. "It's a very, very broad
cross section of industries"
that is backing Bush, said Kuhn, president of the Edison Electric
Institute. "From international trade to the service industries
to retail, I think people are very, very excited."

More than a year ago, Kuhn was already preparing the governor's
inside-Washington campaign. He called Andrew Card, President George
Bush's transportation secretary and at that time president of the American
Automobile Manufacturers Association, asking whether Card would be with
Bush's son should he launch a presidential campaign.

"I had always placed Kuhn in the trade association camp -- apolitical rather
than political," said Card, now General Motors' top Washington lobbyist. "It
became clear to me then that George W. did have a network working that I
didn't know about."

W. Henson Moore, the deputy White House chief of staff and deputy energy secretary during the Bush administration, also got a call from Kuhn to back the Texas governor. "He was calling people he knew, and the people he knows the best are trade association heads," said Moore, who heads the American Forest & Paper Association and is raising money for the Bush campaign.

The idea, said a Bush Pioneer involved in the trade association effort, was to "drive the industries from the inside." Washington industry groups, the Bush camp reasoned, offer a pipeline to corporate CEOs. And once the CEOs are on board, the fund-raising will follow. After all, "people who represent corporations and trade associations in Washington -- they don't do things unless their clients or bosses tell them to."

Soon, Kuhn and others were flying their recruits to Austin to get the pitch from Bush himself. Other association heads met with him on a trip to Washington earlier this year.

"Bush presents a pro-growth, pro-business message," said the Food Marketing Institute's Hammonds, who decided to become a Pioneer after a trip to Texas. Hammonds expressed confidence that if Bush were elected president, he would please the food industry by dismantling Clinton-era workplace safety regulations that the industry considers heavy-handed.

"Regulators have been an enormous threat to our industry," Hammonds said. "Clinton's taught us the power of driving a regulatory agenda through the agencies," such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Chemical and oil executives also fear Gore's aggressiveness on environmental regulation while expressing warm feelings for Bush, who has committed himself to light-handed regulation and lower business taxes.

"Our industry is intimately familiar with him, and we've found him to be very approachable," said petroleum institute head Cavaney. "George W. reminds me much more of Ronald Reagan than he does of his father. There are a lot of philosophical similarities, and he also makes people feel respected, even when he disagrees with them."

"We like Bush because of his evenhandedness, his grasp of our issues," said an executive in the chemical industry, which has more plants in Texas than any other state. "We see him as someone we can work with" on the environment. "We want to do things voluntarily," as Bush prefers, he said, "rather than by command and control out of Washington."

shington."

But environmental activists say Bush's failure to crack down on polluters is one reason Texas has some of the country's dirtiest air. Texas is one of the biggest industrial polluters among the 50 states, and the federal government has threatened to cut off highway funds to the Dallas area because it has failed to address the problem.

The activists cite Bush's decision to allow the oil and gas industries to operate more than 800 aging plants without complying with clean-air standards. Bush touts a voluntary agreement with companies to work on pollution as a more effective approach than regulation, though opponents note that only 100 plants are participating.

Summing up the environmentalists' complaints, Austin activist Peter Altman said, "The chemical and oil industries like Bush's long record of protecting polluters at the expense of public health."

NEW YORK TIMES
Summertime Presidential Politics

By GAIL COLLINS

Vice President Al Gore is eager to have voters notice that he is being specific about the issues. "Our democracy is ill-served by an over-reliance on generalities and fuzzy rhetoric," he told The Times's Katharine Seelye last week, in an interview where he proudly pointed to his detailed proposals on things like gun control, classroom computerization, tax cuts and cancer research.

Finally, a man who dares to speak out on the fuzzy rhetoric controversy!

Since Mr. Gore is going to be held responsible for seven years' worth of Clinton Administration initiatives, not to mention 16 years of Congressional votes, his positions on the issues have never been much of a mystery. But for the Vice President's purposes, the point right now is not so much specific talk but to talk about how specific he is being.

There are three things a Presidential candidate can do in the peak summer vacation period 15 months before an election: position, inculcate or change the subject. Mr. Gore is working on two.

By calling attention to all his issues, he positions himself nicely against George W. Bush, the most likely Republican nominee. Mr. Bush, who was still looking for a permanent career when Mr. Gore first ran for President, does not have much of a paper trail when it comes to policy. T

he public
has been hearing for weeks now that Mr. Bush is a natural,
charismatic
politician while Mr. Gore is stiff and a boring speaker.
Now, the Vice
President would be very happy to hear talking heads not
ing that Mr. Bush
lags far, far behind Mr. Gore in the specificity ra
ce.

Mr. Gore is also very eager to change the subject from all the
recent talk
about disarray in his campaign organization.

If reporters start counting his position papers, perhaps they will stop

pointing out that the Gore campaign employs two communications
con
sultants who refuse to talk to each other.

Mr. Bush's mission, mean
while, is inoculation. Politicians have learned that
they can protect
themselves against negative stories about their personal
histories b
y discussing the trouble spots early. That is why Hillary Clinton is
spending her summer answering the same carpetbagger question over and
over, and why Mr. Bush has been reliving his semi-reckless youth and
spotty job history for reporters' campaign biographies, most recently a long
and detailed series in The Washington Post. By responding to allegatio
ns
about substance abuse and his military service in the Texas Nation
al
Guard, Mr. Bush is trying to get them out of the way so he can han
dle
future queries by saying he has already talked about that.

Inoculation is a tricky business, particularly since Mr. Bush's response
to
questions about drug use is that he is not going to answer such qu
estions.
There is also the danger that revisiting old controversies w
ill inadvertently
raise new questions. For instance, after having gon
e to great lengths to
depict his college drinking habits as normal yo
uthful carousing, Mr. Bush
told The Post that he does not remember an
y protests against the war in
Vietnam when he was at Yale in the late
1960's, a degree of
unconsciousness that suggests he was in somethin
g close to a four-year
coma.

Mr. Gore and Mr. Bush are no
t the only candidates hard at work in the
heat. Bill Bradley, who has
been enjoying a quiet but lucrative summer
listening tour, says he i
s ready to start some heavy-duty positioning himself.
That would give
the country two Democratic candidates delivering big
issues addresse
s while nearly a dozen Republicans struggle with the
mysteries of the
Iowa straw poll.

The straw poll bears more than a passing resembla
nce to one of those old
TV game shows. The candidates vie to get the
most people stuffed into
buses and carry them across the plains to a
crowded auditorium in the
middle of August. It is a political version

of "The Blair Witch Project" -- a
low-budget production that terrifi
es people despite the fact that it only
pretends to be real.

John McCain, the only Republican who is not taking part in the straw poll,
is trying to draw attention to his campaign against Mr. Bush, and bol
ster his
own credentials as a bold truth-teller, by attacking the eth
anol subsidy
program so dear to the hearts of corn growers.

It is a smart bit of positioning, particularly since Mr. Bush's very first b
it of
Presidential pandering was done on behalf of ethanol. It would,
however,
have looked a little bolder if Mr. McCain had not long sinc
e written off
Iowa himself.

NEW YORK TIMES
Bradley Poses a Quie
t Threat to Gore's Run

By RICHARD L. BERKE

ES MOINES
, Iowa -- Former Sen. Bill Bradley's presidential
campaign headq
uarters in Iowa, which he opened here last week, is
a dark, spar
tan affair whose only adornments are a few stray
basketballs signed b
y the former star of the New York Knicks. The rent:
\$250 a month.

By contrast, Vice President Al Gore opened his campaign headquarters
two months ago, a sprawling, sleek space in a choice neighborhood here
with cool gray decor and state-of-the-art computers. The rent: \$4,00
0 a
month.

At first glance, the Gore operation is far mor
e impressive, and has double
the staff members. Yet impressions can b
e deceptive. Bradley is
assembling a staff of veterans, and husbandin
g his resources so vigilantly
that Rob Tully, the Iowa Democratic cha
irman, said no one should doubt
that the former senator poses an unmi
stakable challenge.

"There really is a race here," Tully said. "I w
ould probably give the
advantage to Gore right now in terms of organi
zing. But the reality is
Bradley's done a great job catching up to th
e vice president. I told Bill
Bradley that he could win the Iowa cauc
uses. He could."

It is a common refrain, not only in battleground s
tates like Iowa and New
Hampshire but among political players in Wash
ington: The Bradley
campaign is no fly-by-night insurgency.

Methodically and with quiet discipline, Bradley and his aides are
assembling an organization that is far more sophisticated about presidential

politics -- and more flush with money -- than those run by past candidates who sought to topple a front-runner.

While Gore is still the heavy favorite for the nomination, and has an overwhelming lead in most early polls, Bradley is now viewed as a plausible alternative by the Democratic establishment -- and a contender who, at the very least, will force the vice president into a costly and possibly bloody battle for the nomination.

Bradley's operation is stocked with veterans of Democratic campaigns who say they have learned from the mistakes of the past and are determined not to repeat them. Already, they have begun aggressive efforts to build state organizations and put their delegates on slates in New York and other states where it is a painstaking process that has eluded many candidates in the past.

On Saturday in New Hampshire, for example, Bradley led more than 200 volunteers in a door-to-door drive to meet and identify potential supporters in the state's primary. Such an effort is highly unusual this early, especially for a candidate who is not the front-runner. Many of the volunteers were recruited on the Internet, which the Bradley campaign is using as an organizing tool. In all, the campaign said 500 Bradley volunteers knocked on the doors of 35,000 houses in New Hampshire last week.

Another example of the dexterity of the Bradley operation is that officials of the AFL-CIO said that Bradley's energetic, behind-the-scenes intervention had helped persuade leaders of the politically powerful federation not to make an early endorsement of Gore.

The vice president has devoted so much energy to courting labor that it was practically a given that he would win an early endorsement from the federation, beginning with the recommendation by executive committee this month. But now, AFL-CIO officials say, the committee's vote has been put off.

Labor's endorsement of Gore is still likely. But the delay plays into the Bradley strategy of undermining the notion that Gore's nomination is inevitable -- and gives the campaign precious time to cultivate union members.

"I t's not like Bradley's any better on trade than Gore is," said Steve Rosenthal, political director of the AFL-CIO. "But Bradley has been working this very hard. There are some people saying, 'This guy deserves a chance to be heard and has shown he's a pretty serious candidate.' You have people in there who really do understand how to work with the labor movement. It's made some people look twice."

Now that an organizational structure is taking shape, Bradley is entering a new phase of his campaign, where he is expected to be more visible on the national stage. After rejecting requests for months from national television programs in a calculated effort to keep his profile low -- and refusing to lay out detailed positions on any issues except gun control and campaign finance -- he will appear on Sunday on the NBC News program "Meet the Press."

In the coming months, the low-key and sometimes plodding Bradley is expected to reach out to liberals as he addresses such issues as education, foreign policy and universal health insurance -- matters that Gore has discussed in great detail.

Douglas Berman, Bradley's campaign chairman, said that he had studied other presidential candidates who had taken on a front-runner -- including Ronald Reagan in 1976, Edward M. Kennedy in 1980 and Gary Hart and John Glenn in 1984 -- and that his organization would be vastly more prepared.

"We're Gary Hart but we have money," said Will Robinson, Bradley's senior adviser, who was a top campaign official for Walter F. Mondale in 1984 and Michael S. Dukakis in 1988. "We're Gary Hart but we're putting together a structure and an organization and a full slate. We're Gary Hart but we know the rules."

The most concrete sign of the potency of the Bradley organization is that it has amassed nearly \$12 million this year -- compared with almost \$18 million for the vice president -- and has spent its resources far more carefully. Gore has only about \$2 million more than Bradley in the bank. That means that the Bradley campaign has the financial capacity to be competitive through at least the first round of contests.

A convincing testament that Bradley is being taken seriously comes not from his campaign but from his opponent's. Steve Hildebrand, Gore's Iowa director, sounded envious as he reeled off names of his friends on the Bradley campaign, including Sen. Paul Wellstone of Minnesota and Robinson, Iowa field director for Mondale in 1984.

"Here's what I'm worried about: This is such a family fight, and he's got all these smart people," Hildebrand said. "I know how good they are. I wish I had Will to call to talk about this. And Paul Wellstone wouldn't be a United States senator if it weren't for caucus organizing. Paul gets it. He's on the phone all the time calling Iowans."

Still, most Democrats involved in the process argue that the party's nomination is Gore's to lose. As an incumbent vice president who has been plotting his campaign for years, Gore enjoys numerous institutional

advantages.

Already, Gore appears to have the support of most of the so-called super delegates -- members of Congress, party officials and others who will automatically be sent to the Democratic convention and who account for about 20 percent of the total delegates. As a result, Gore will likely start with almost 40 percent of the delegates he needs for the nomination. Gore, a Tennessean, will also benefit from deep loyalty from blacks and other minority groups as well as from white Southern Democrats who will have a predisposition to back a fellow white Southerner.

"Any time you have two people on the ballot, there's a possibility that either can win," said David Axelrod, a strategist in Chicago who has advised the Gore campaign. "But I think the odds are very much in Gore's favor because of the many advantages he brings to the race. Part of the Hart deal that made him so strong in Iowa is that he snuck up on Mondale; there's no sneaking up on the radar screen here."

Wellstone, who has endorsed Bradley, acknowledged that while "he can do it -- it's still a big mountain to climb." The senator's advisers are hard-pressed to explain how they could wrest the super delegates from Gore.

Asked how Bradley could win over Southerners, Berman, his campaign chairman, played down the former senator's New Jersey base, saying: "Even in the South, you drive down the street and you see the same Blockbusters, the same McDonald's. Now, Wal-Marts are in the Northeast. There are both regional differences and huge commonalities."

Here in Iowa, Gore has been far more active in signing up early support. Already, he has captured the crucial endorsements from the Iowa affiliates of the United Automobile Workers and the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees.

Hildebrand, the Gore director in Iowa, said of Bradley and his people: "I came here April 15 and he had all the momentum, he had good crowds. But they didn't capitalize on it. It took them forever to staff up. They could have stopped the UAW endorsement."

Gina Glantz, Bradley's national campaign manager, acknowledged there was concern that the campaign was slow to establish an office in the state.

"There were people who really wanted us to get going," she said. "They were saying, 'Hurry up! Hurry up!' I understand their disappointment but we're not a campaign that looks back."

Ms. Glantz

tz, who was the field director for Mondale in 1984, argued that by
ke
eping costs down, the Bradley campaign may have more to spend in the
heat of the battle.

Dan Lucas, Bradley's Iowa campaign manager, who
recalled several
underfinanced presidential campaigns he had worked
on, said: "The secure
funding is just an unbelievable benefit here. I
f you looked at the odds, you'd
have to go with the Vice President. B
ut there could be some big world
event that just changes the nature o
f this thing overnight."

Bradley's advisers concede that the inviti
ng climate for their candidate is
not merely of his own making but th
at they have capitalized on a concern
among some Democrats that Gore,
whose lead had seemed so
insurmountable, has had a somewhat shaky st
art.

"That fact that there was this constant drumbeat of inevitabil
ity made our
achievements seem that much greater," Ms. Glantz said.

There is no doubt that Bradley's rise is complicating life for Gore,
who is
trying to set his sights on the leading Republican contender,
Gov. George
W. Bush of Texas.

Tully, the Iowa Democratic
chairman, said: "The vice president's office
asked me, 'Why are you
saying all these great things about Bradley? Why
don't you say nice t
hings about us?' But we're going to report it as we see
it."

A
P Coverage from Aug 1 2, 1999

Politics 2000 Notebook

Sund
ay, August 1, 1999; 3:55 p.m. EDT

CONCORD, N.H. (AP) -- The
results of Iowa's straw poll of
Republican presidential candi
dates should not knock anyone out of the
running, former Vice
President Dan Quayle said Sunday.

"It's not a make-or-bre
ak for me," Quayle said. "I don't think it should
be for an
yone."

Quayle commented during a telephone interview as he
wound up a
campaign swing through New Hampshire. He said he
is committed to
being on New Hampshire's first-in-the-nation
primary ballot next year
despite his poor showing in recent t
elephone polls.

The Aug. 14 straw poll raises money for the
Iowa Republican Party.

Campaigns can buy \$25 tickets for backers, and most are organizing bus caravans to bring in supporters.

Four years ago, straw votes were bused in from the rest of the Midwest, notably by Sen. Phil Gramm of Texas, who gained a surprise tie vote with the early favorite and eventual nominee, Bob Dole.

This year, Iowa Republican officials have limited voting to Iowans and said they will demand photo identification.

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Former Connecticut Gov. Lowell P. Weicker Jr. said Sunday the Reform Party needs a strong candidate to challenge the political monopoly held for decades by Republicans and Democrats.

He's just not saying he's the man for the job.

Speaking Sunday on CBS' "Face the Nation," the former Republican U.S. senator and independent governor once again brushed off talk of entering the 2000 presidential race.

"I'm trying to push a third-party challenge to both the Republicans and the Democrats," he said. "This isn't a personal ambition on my part, yet I know we can't really resolve our major problems until we give some competition to the monopoly that has been the Republicans and Democrats over the decades."

Weicker, who lives in Greenwich, Conn., has been considered a possible candidate since word spread that Minnesota Gov. Jesse Ventura, the Ross Perot-founded party's highest ranking elected official, was encouraging him to run.

NEW YORK (AP) -- More than 500 people turned out Sunday for a Long Island brunch to raise funds for the presidential campaign of Vice President Al Gore.

The event was held in 100-degree weather at the waterfront Sag Harbor home of Alma Brown, widow of Commerce Secretary Ron Brown.

"I thought this would be a good occasion to make a speech on global warming -- not as many skeptics out there this day," joked Gore, dripping with sweat as he addressed the guests under a sweltering white tent in the front yard.

Sag Harbor is on Long Island's East End, a summer playground for the rich and famous.

Among the guests were former model Christie Brinkley; the chairwoman of the New York State Democratic Committee Judith Hope; and two members of Congress from Long Island, Rep. Michael Forbes, who recently changed his party affiliation from Republican to Democrat, and Rep. Carolyn McCarthy.

"He will be a tremendous president," McCarthy said. "He is the first vice president ever to have not been hidden away and to have gained a lot of experience because of that. I'm happy that he's out here on Long Island. This is the beginning of a grassroots campaign for him."

Gore said that under the policies he and President Clinton have pursued, "we are moving in a good direction of high living standards, low crime and more progress."

Gore, accompanied by his wife, Tipper, told the group he was soliciting advice on how to be a good grandparent to his first grandchild -- a boy born July 4 to his daughter Kareenna and her husband Drew Schiff.

He said he had been told that "the preferred technique is to give the grandchild anything and everything he wants and if that causes problems give him back to the parents."

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AP
Top News at 2 p.m. EDT

Sunday, August 1, 1999; 1:58 p.m. EDT

Sunday, August 1, 1999

Bradley 'Shocked'
by Gore Camp Attacks

WASHINGTON (AP) -- Democratic presidential hopeful Bill Bradley said today he's "shocked" by attacks from Vice President Gore's camp. Bradley said that Gore's campaign lashed out at him after he urged candidates not to accept soft money -- the largely unregulated contribution of big donors to political parties. The Gore camp accused the former New Jersey senator of having dropped the fight for campaign finance reform when he quit the Senate for private life.

China Army Warns Taiwan, Falun Gong

BEIJING (AP) -
- China's army, the world's largest, marked its 72nd
birthday
today with warnings to both Taiwan and an outlawed meditation
group that it was ready to ``smash any plot to split the nation.'' Defense
Minister Chi Haotian repeated the government's accusations that
Taiwanese President Lee Teng-hui last month had gone further
down the
``dangerous road of splitting the motherland'' in s
uggesting that China and
Taiwan deal with each other as separ
ate states. The 2.5-million member
People's Liberation Army t
races its anniversary back to an armed uprising
in 1927.

Heat Wave Death Toll Reaches 150

CHICAGO (A
P) -- Medical authorities in Chicago are examining the
bodies
of 20 people today to see if they are additional victims of a deadly
heat wave. At least 50 people in Illinois have died as a result of the
heat
since the high temperatures settled in on July 19. They
're among at least
150 heat-related deaths around the country
. Temperatures have cooled in
the Windy City, with highs only
in the 80s. The city says there are still
some lingering eff
ects from the heat, including some power outages.

Farmers C
heer End of British Beef Ban

LONDON (AP) -- With open-invite
ation barbecues, British farmers
celebrated today the lifting
of a three-year ban on British beef exports
imposed by Europ
ean regulators after an outbreak of mad cow disease. A
superm
arket chain offered free roast beef sandwiches to travelers arriving
by train from France at London's Waterloo station, and government

officials joined in some very public beef-eating before TV cameras
at the
barbecues. The embargo crippled Britain's beef indust
ry, which lost an
estimated \$2.4 billion in sales.

Service for Mrs. Barton To Be Held

LIZELLE, Ga. (
AP) -- The wife of mass killer Mark Barton will be buried
tod
ay. Leigh Ann Barton was the first person killed in her husband's
rampage through the Atlanta area last week. He went on to kill 11 others,
including his two children, before committing suicide. So far
, two of the
nine brokerage victims have been laid to rest. L
ast week's massacre was
the bloodiest mass killing in Atlanta
's history.

Congo Rebel Faction Leader OKs Deal

LUSAKA, Zambia (AP) -- The leader of a Congolese rebel group signed
a fragile cease-fire accord today, inching forward the final se

ttlement to
ad of the Congo
nessed by Zambian
resident Benjamin Mkapa.
nd the representatives of five
ct signed the accord July 10.

Congo's year-old civil war. Jean-Pierre Bemba, he
Liberation Movement, signed at a ceremony wit
President Frederick Chiluba and Tanzanian P
Congolese President Laurent Kabila a
nations involved in the confli

mbia

CASTEL GANDOLFO, Italy (AP) -- Pope John Paul II worri
ed today
over stalled efforts to end Colombia's civil war, sa
ying the 35-year-old
conflict was hurting the country and its
people. Government and rebel
negotiators in Colombia have be
en unable to get peace talks under way,
deadlocked by a preli
minary dispute over whether international monitors
should hav
e any role. Talks on that issue failed Friday for the third time in
less than a month.

Drug Test Takes Away Canada Medal

WINNIPEG, Manitoba (AP) -- Canada was stripped of its gold
medal in
roller hockey at the Pan Am Games today, becazuse i
ts goaltender tested
positive for banned substances and the g
old now goes to the United
States. Canadian goaltender Steve
Vezina of Montreal tested positive for
two stimulants and an
anabolic steroid, games officials said. The positive
test is
the first drug scandal at the Winnipeg Games. Canada beat the
United States 7-6 Tuesday.

Report: Jazz To Sign Malone for
\$67M

SALT LAKE CITY (AP) -- The Utah Jazz reportedly will
sign two-time
NBA MVP Karl Malone to a four-year contract wor
th the maximum \$67
million under NBA salary cap rules. The Sa
lt Lake Tribune reported the
pending contract, and Malone as
well as Jazz owner Larry Miller
confirmed for the Associated
Press that a press conference is planned for
today to announc
e Malone's re-signing. Malone averaged 23.8 points in
1999, h
is lowest since 1986-87, his second year in the league.

AP
NewsBrief by DAVID GOODMAN

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Bradley: Taiwan Should Temper Talk

Su
nday, August 1, 1999; 12:25 p.m. EDT

WASHINGTON (AP) -- The

United States must make clear that Taiwan
should not expect U
.S. aid if Taiwan's unilateral moves toward
independence prov
oke a Chinese invasion, Democratic presidential
candidate Bil
l Bradley said Sunday.

Bradley, speaking on NBC's ``Meet th
e Press,'' said the United States is
committed to helping Tai
wan against a Chinese military strike. But the
United States
``should say to the Taiwanese government that if they take
st
eps toward independence, they cannot count on us for any help.''

Bradley, who is challenging Vice President Al Gore for the Democratic
nomination next year, said ``we would be there'' if China takes
military
action against Taiwan in the absence of a move towar
d independence.

Taiwan's president, Lee Teng-Hui, recently
angered Beijing by suggesting
he no longer supported the one-
China policy under which Taiwan and
China, separated after a
1949 civil war, ostensibly are committed to
eventual reunific
ation.

On the campaign front, Bradley said he was ``actuall
y shocked that the
Gore campaign attacked me so strongly'' af
ter Bradley urged Democratic
and Republican candidates for pr
esident to decline ``soft money''
contributions -- the largel
y unregulated donations to political parties.

The Gore camp
, in a letter, accused the former New Jersey senator of
dropp
ing the fight for campaign finance reform when he quit the Senate

``for private life and \$2 million in special interest speaking and consult
ing
fees.''

Bradley said it was ironic th
at a Republican presidential hopeful, Sen. John
McCain of Ari
zona, was the only one to agree that candidates should
refuse
to accept soft money. McCain has been a leader in efforts to
change campaign finance law.

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The Associated Press

Bush Winning Over Trade Group Chiefs

By Susan B. Glasser and John Mintz
Washington Post Staff
Writers

Sunday, August 1, 1999; Page A1

T
he groundswell began after the dinner plates were
cleared. On
e by one, the Washington
representatives of corporate America

, gathered at

the U.S. Chamber of Commerce headquarters last month, declared their allegiance to Texas Gov.

George W. Bush's presidential campaign.

Meeting just across the park from the executive mansion that Bush aims to win back for the GOP 15 months from now, the 16 or so trade associations and lobbyists who convened that night spoke for a broad and powerful swath of American industry: Oil producers. Super market owners. Electric utilities. Forestry and paper manufacturers. Chemical companies.

Their support carefully cultivated for more than a year by Bush's Washington allies represents a sharp break from the hands-off approach such groups traditionally have taken to presidential nomination battles. Although individual lobbyists routinely back White House candidates, trade

association leaders have largely avoided such intimate entanglement with presidential primary politics, believing that it's good business not to take sides when you don't have to.

But the Bush campaign is rewriting that particular Washington canon with an effort led by Thomas R. Kuhn, a Bush classmate at Yale who heads the electric utilities trade group here. His drive to wire the corporate side of Washington has generated significant fund-raising commitments and endorsements from dozens of big business's representatives, according to industry lobbyists.

"It's unusual, even unique, that trade association executives are endorsing this early . . . and that they're overwhelmingly going for one candidate," said Red Cavaney, president of the American Petroleum Institute. Added Tim Hammond, president of the Food Marketing Institute and a Bush "Pioneer"

who has raised more than \$100,000, "it is unique in my memory that we've seen such a great amount of enthusiasm so early" among trade group chiefs.

The trade association operation offers a revealing glimpse into how a campaign that aspires to outside-the-Beltway populism has also eagerly exploited every advantage financial and political Washington has to offer. It also helps explain the outpouring of fund-raising support for Bush

from America's corporate boardrooms; for the Bush campaign, Washington serves as a vehicle for recruiting business backers nationwide.

But while Bush's mutual embrace with American business is a fund-raising asset, it also could pose a political risk for the governor. Texas

environmental activists, for example, have roundly denounced him for what they say is his cozy relationship with the chemical and oil industries, which the state has allowed to operate aging plants that foul the air and anger residents.

Indeed, the chemical industry, which has worked closely with the governor in Texas and likes his hands-off style of regulation, is one of the most passionate ly pro-Bush industries, according to several sources familiar with

the Bush effort here. Frederick L. Webber, chief executive of the Chemical Manufacturers Association and another Pioneer, has persuaded numerous top chemical executives such as Dow Chemical chief executive William Stavropoulos to help raise funds for Bush, industry officials said.

"This industry has openly said we're going to support Bush and [is] committing to raise a huge sum of money for him," said the head of a major trade association familiar with the chemical group's plans.

Lobbyists for other industries are adopting the same tactics as Webber, generating campaign cash and CEO endorsements from the companies that

fund their trade groups even as the groups maintain official neutrality.

Several said they are embracing Bush, despite knowing little about his positions on their industries' issues, simply because they know that his philosophical leanings are pro-business. But they said Bush also has played off corporate America's deep suspicions of Vice President Gore, warning of his environmental stances and alliances with unions and trial lawyers.

To be sure, Gore can cite support from some prominent business figures, though Bush's stiffest competition for corporate support may come from a Republican rival, Sen. John McCain (Ariz.), who wielded power over much of U.S. industry as chairman of the Commerce, Science and Transportation Committee.

But sheer numbers show how lopsided business's pro-Bush sentiment is: In the latest campaign fund-raising reports, Gore listed donations from 264 corporate chairmen and chief executives between April and June, whereas McCain was backed by 121. Bush received donations from 1,542 four times as many as the other two combined. In terms of contributions from political action committees (PACs), a traditional gauge of Washington support, Bush received \$689,000 this quarter, compared with \$77,000 for McCain. Gore does not accept PAC donations.

At the Chamber dinner, the lone Bush holdout expressed the fear of

retaliation that traditionally has kept trade group leaders neutral in presidential primaries. Jerald Halversen, president of the Interstate Natural

Gas Association of America, which represents pipeline companies, told the other diners he was worried about the remaining 18 months of the Clinton-Gore administration. "We have a lot of issues before the Energy Department, so we can't risk alienating them," Halversen told the gathering, according to one person in attendance.

Few other industry executives share his hesitation. "It's a very, very broad cross section of industries" that is backing Bush, said Kuhn, president of the Edison Electric Institute. "From international trade to the service industries

to retail, I think people are very, very excited."

More than a year ago, Kuhn was already preparing the governor's

inside-Washington campaign. He called Andrew Card, President George

Bush's transportation secretary and at that time president of the American Automobile Manufacturers Association, asking whether Card would be with Bush's son should he launch a presidential campaign.

"I had always placed Kuhn in the trade association camp apolitical rather than political," said Card, now General Motors' top Washington lobbyist. "It became clear to me then that George W. did have a network working that I didn't know about."

W. Henson Moore, the deputy White House chief of staff and deputy energy secretary during the Bush administration, also got a call from Kuhn to back the Texas governor. "He was calling people he knew, and the people he knows the best are trade association heads," said Moore, who heads the American Forest & Paper Association and is raising money for the Bush campaign.

The idea, said a Bush Pioneer involved in the trade association effort, was to "drive the industries from the inside." Washington industry groups, the Bush camp reasoned, offer a pipeline to corporate CEOs. And once the CEOs are on board, the fund-raising will follow. After all, "people who

represent corporations and trade associations in Washington they don't do things unless their clients or bosses tell them to."

Soon, Kuhn and others were flying their recruits to Austin to get the pitch from Bush himself. Other association heads met with him on a trip to Washington earlier this year.

"Bush presents a pro-growth, pro-business message," said the Food

Marketing Institute's Hammonds, who decided to become a Pioneer after a trip to Texas. Hammonds expressed confidence that if Bush were elected president, he would please the food industry by dismantling Clinton-era workplace safety regulations that the industry considers heavy-handed.

"Regulators have been an enormous threat to our industry," Hammonds said. "Clinton's taught us the power of driving a regulatory agenda through

the agencies," such as the Occupational Safety and Health Administration.

Chemical and oil executives also fear Gore's aggressiveness on environmental regulation while expressing warm feelings for Bush, who has committed himself to light-handed regulation and lower business taxes.

"Our industry is intimately familiar with him, and we've found him to be very approachable," said petroleum institute head Cavaney. "George W. reminds me much more of Ronald Reagan than he does of his father. There are a lot of philosophical similarities, and he also makes people feel respected, even when he disagrees with them."

"We like Bush because of his evenhandedness, his grasp of our issues," said an executive in the chemical industry, which has more plants in Texas than any other state. "We see him as someone we can work with" on the environment. "We want to do things voluntarily," a Bush supporter said, "rather than by command and control out of Washington."

But environmental activists say Bush's failure to crack down on polluters is one reason Texas has some of the country's dirtiest air. Texas is one of the biggest industrial polluters among the 50 states, and the federal government

has threatened to cut off highway funds to the Dallas area because it failed to address the problem.

The activists cite Bush's decision to allow the oil and gas industries to operate more than 800 aging plants without complying with clean-air standards. Bush touts a voluntary agreement with companies to work on pollution as a more effective approach than regulation, though opponents note that only 100 plants are participating.

Summing up the environmentalists' complaints, Austin activist Peter Altman said, "The chemical and oil industries like Bush's long record of protecting polluters at the expense of public health."

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