

Remarks on Signing the Government Performance and Results Act of 1993 and an Exchange With Reporters

August 3, 1993

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, when I took this office with a real determination to engage in what we've come to call reinventing Government around here, it was really encouraging to me to see that there were Members of the Congress who had been examining these questions for years and seriously trying to address them. I want to say a special word of thanks to Senator Glenn, in his absence, and to Senator Roth; to my friend Congressman Conyers and Congressman Clinger and the other Members who have worked so hard to try to put us on the road to seriously reexamining how this Government works. It is important to restore the confidence of the American people in their Government. It is important because, to the extent that our Government works with greater efficiency and effectiveness and less unnecessary cost, it will strengthen the American economy as well as the bonds of our citizenship.

This law holds a lot of promise to do both things. The legislation itself mainly involves the inner workings of Government, things that most people don't think about and maybe don't ever want to think about. It requires the formulation of strategic plans, of setting yearly goals and targets for every program, of measuring and reporting how well programs actually perform compared to the targets set for them, and more accountability for achieving results. But we should view this structure in much simpler terms, terms that every American should be able to identify with. The law simply requires that we chart a course for every endeavor that we take the people's money for, see how well we are progressing, tell the public how we are doing, stop the things that don't work, and never stop improving the things that we think are worth investing in.

Earlier this year I met with our staff to discuss this. The Vice President and I were both enthusiastic about this bill, and I am very, very pleased that it has passed so rapidly. I do want to point out that it is, as the

Vice President said, an important first step in the efforts to reform the way the Federal Government operates and relates to the American people. It may seem amazing to say, but like many big organizations, ours is primarily dominated by considerations of input, how much money do you spend on a program, how many people do you have on the staff, what kind of regulations and rules are going to govern it, and much less by output, does this work, is it changing people's lives for the better, can we say after we take money and put it into a certain endeavor that it was worth actually having it away from the taxpayers, into this endeavor, and their lives are better? These may seem like simple questions, but for decades they haven't been answered in a very satisfactory way. We are determined to do that.

I think it's fair to say that most Americans will understand that no organization as large and complex as the National Government can be transformed overnight. I also want to say that a lot of the things that this Government does, it does pretty well, and there are a lot of dedicated employees out there who do their jobs well. But everyone who has ever spent any time looking at how we do things, how decisions are made, how they tend to pile one on top of the other, year-in and year-out, without ever being examined in total or in terms of their effect would say that this is an effort that is long, long overdue.

So I ask, as I sign this bill, for the support of the American people to continue the work of reinventing Government and for their careful attention to the report that the Vice President will present to me next month. I ask for the support of the Congress in being willing to reexamine all of our assumptions and to try to take a fresh look at the way we spend the people's money. And I ask for the support of the fine people who work for the Federal Government to try to find a new spirit of renewal and change that I think will make their jobs more satisfying, and I know will help to restore the credibility and confidence of the American people in the public enterprise.

Thank you very much.

[At this point, the President signed the bill.]

Income Tax Increases

Q. Mr. President, sir, on the subject on which you're not getting bipartisan support, on the budget, can you respond to Republican, very sharp Republican criticism of the retroactivity of the income tax increases?

The President. Well, as you know, we had supported moving it up for 6 months. But in the conference committee there was a very strong demand to do some other things that made it very difficult not to put it back retroactively, apparently. For example, the conference wanted to raise the income threshold to which Social Security recipients were subject to higher income taxes so that now no one on Social Security, and I think it's about the bottom 90 percent, will not be subject to any higher taxes.

And the people that we have to get votes from asked for the following: They said, we want the economic incentives in, we want \$495 billion of deficit reduction, and we don't want a higher energy tax number. And I think the conferees—I don't think any of them were very happy about that, but I think they thought that since that had been announced in January, or February, since a lot of people were already making adjustments on the basis of that, that that was a fairer way to do it than to run the risk of dropping below \$490 billion in deficit reduction and, frankly, not being able to pass the program.

Q. Won't it be underwithheld, and won't it be a drag on the economy—

The President. It depends on what else we do. We think we have some options to offset it, but it is ironic that the same people who filibustered the jobs program earlier this year are worried about a drag on the economy. They had a chance to put a half a million Americans to work and turned away from it.

This money will be spent to reduce the deficit and to provide economic incentives to many of those same people who will provide the higher taxes. So I think that, on balance—I understand the decision the conferees made. I wish it hadn't been necessary. But part of it was just dictated by the size of the deficit reduction package we wanted and the low energy number. I think it is a

good package; it's solid; it's clearly real numbers. It's very different from the 1990 package in many ways. So I feel quite good about it.

Bosnia

Q. Mr. President, what message is being sent to Bosnian Serbs and Muslims with this agreement that NATO has reached?

The President. The message is, first of all, that the allies are determined to protect the United Nations forces there, determined to secure the humanitarian relief program. And the other message is that we would very much—all of us—like to see a successful agreement and a fair peace agreement that can then be enforced. We'd like to see an end to the fighting. There should be an end to the shelling of Sarajevo, an end to the misery before we go through another winter with grave, grave difficulties ahead. And I hope the message will be there. I feel very good about what happened yesterday, and I appreciate the support of the allies for the United States position.

Q. How long do the Serbs have before air strikes would begin?

The President. Thank you very much.

Spending Cuts

Q. Did you notice they kept the honeybee subsidy, the one thing you had promised to get rid of?

The President. We'll eventually get it.

The Vice President. Phil Lader and I are going to get rid of that.

The President. Let me tell you, there will be many more budget cuts. This is the beginning, not the end. The House has already embarked on that course. There will be more.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:43 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. S. 20, approved August 3, was assigned Public Law No. 103-62.

The Office of the Press Secretary issued a statement on August 2 concerning the NATO decision on air strikes against the Bosnian Serbs, with the text of the NATO resolution attached.

Remarks With Judge Ruth Bader Ginsburg and an Exchange With Reporters

August 3, 1993

The President. Good afternoon. My fellow Americans, today we heard the sound of gridlock breaking in Washington, and I liked what I heard. Today the Senate passed our national service program, one of my top legislative priorities. Within months, thousands of young people will be at work in their communities helping our country and helping to pay for their own education. And middle class students everywhere will have an easier time affording college.

Also today, the Senate Judiciary Committee voted unanimously to confirm Judge Louis Freeh to be Director of the FBI. This support for a crime fighter of iron will and unshakable integrity affirms that he is clearly the right person for the job.

But I am most gratified today by the overwhelming vote in the United States Senate to confirm Judge Ruth Bader Ginsburg to be Associate Justice of the United States Supreme Court. Too often in the past, judicial nominations have prompted a partisan brawl and generated more heat than light. Today we've put aside partisanship, and the national interest won out.

I have no doubt that Ruth Ginsburg will be a great Justice. She has the opportunity to move the Court not left or right but forward. Her legal brilliance, wisdom, and deep devotion to justice has brought our Nation together around her nomination. When I announced her appointment, she spoke about her grandchildren. Someday, I believe my grandchildren will benefit from and learn from the contributions she is about to make.

We've done some good work today, but there's more to do. Tonight I will address the Nation about my plans to put our economic house in order. I hope that my remarks will be persuasive. But this afternoon, I just wanted to take a few moments to congratulate now Justice Ginsburg and to give her a chance just to say a sentence or two about this very important day in her life and the life of our Nation.

Judge Ginsburg. I am so glad to be part of what has been a very good day for the

country. And last time I was here I don't think there was an opportunity for any questions. So if one of you has a question, I'll do my best to respond.

Q. Justice Ginsburg, what do you think that you'll bring to the Court that has not been present before in the Court? What insights, what experience, what background?

Judge Ginsburg. I think you must reserve judgment. I'll do the very best I can in this job, and then you can write a review of my performance in a year or so from now.

Q. You've been called a liberal; you've been called a conservative; you've been called a moderate. What are you?

Judge Ginsburg. I think you could report on that, too. But I don't believe that every child that's born alive is either a little liberal or else a little conservative, except in Gilbert and Sullivan.

Q. But you're not a child.

Judge Ginsburg. That's every child that grows to become a woman or a man, yes.

Economic Program

Q. Mr. President, even though this is Justice Ginsburg's moment, could we ask you what you hope to accomplish with your speech tonight? What persuading do you need to do? What misperceptions perhaps are there?

The President. Well, I think there is still a continuing job to do to make sure the American people know again exactly what is in this program and why I think it is good for the country, and what it means in terms of our long-term economic health and well-being to regain control over our economic destiny; to keep interest rates down; to have these economic incentives to create jobs; to lift the working poor out of poverty; to enable us to move on to deal with health care, with welfare reform, with an important crime bill. All these things will help to strengthen our efforts at economic recovery. And therefore, this moment in this debate is very, very important because it's decisionmaking time, not delay time. And I hope that I can persuade the American people that that time has come.

Q. Mr. President, throughout the budget process, people have seemed to be able to roll you and get away scot-free. Senator Boren, the prime example, got you to back