

The President. Helen, you never told me that. [Laughter]

Ms. Thomas. If elected, I will serve. [Laughter]

Note: The President spoke at 11:10 a.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House.

United Nations

Appointment of Ellen F. Paul as U.S. Representative on the Commission for Social Development of the Economic and Social Council. March 25, 1983

The President today announced his intention to appoint Ellen F. Paul to be the Representative of the United States of America on the Commission for Social Development of the Economic and Social Council of the United Nations. She will succeed Ruth Schachter Morgenthau.

Ms. Paul is research director for the Social Philosophy and Policy Center and associate professor of political science at Bowling Green State University in Bowling Green, Ohio. Previously, she was national fellow at the Hoover Institution in 1980–1981; assistant professor at the University of Colorado (Boulder) in 1980–1981; visiting assistant professor at Miami University (Ohio) in 1977–1980; visiting fellow in government at Harvard University in 1976–1977; and teaching assistant in American political theory at Harvard in 1971–1972.

She graduated from Brandeis University (B.A., 1970) and Harvard University (Ph. D., 1976). She is married and resides in Bowling Green, Ohio. She was born October 18, 1948, in New York, N.Y.

Advisory Committee for Trade Negotiations

Appointment of 10 Members. March 25, 1983

The President today announced his intention to appoint the following individuals to be members of the Advisory Committee for Trade Negotiations for terms of 2 years:

Legree S. Daniels is chairman of the National Black Republican Council in Washington, D.C. He was born February 29, 1920, and resides in Harrisburg, Pa.

Murray H. Finley is president of the Amalgamated Clothing and Textile Workers Union in New York, N.Y. He was born March 31, 1922, and resides in Cuttenberg, N.J.

Simon C. Fireman is chairman of the board of Aqua Leisure Industries, Inc., in Avon, Mass. He was born September 10, 1925, and resides in Quincy, Mass.

Benjamin Frank is corporate vice president of Allied Stores Corp. in New York City. He was born February 10, 1934, and resides in New York, N.Y.

Russell L. Hanlin is president and chief executive officer of Sunkist Growers, Inc., in Sherman Oaks, Calif. He was born November 18, 1932, and resides in Pasadena, Calif.

Henry Y. Hwang is chairman, president, and chief executive officer of the Far East National Bank in Los Angeles, Calif. He was born November 28, 1929, and resides in Pasadena, Calif.

Kenneth A. Lazarus is a partner in the Washington, D.C., law firm of Ward, Lazarus & Cihlar. He is also an adjunct professor at Georgetown University Law Center. He was born March 10, 1942, and resides in Oakton, Va.

Gerald J. Lynch is consultant to the chairman of the board of Colt Industries, Inc., in Burbank, Calif. He was born February 22, 1906, and resides in San Marino, Calif.

W. Jarvis Moody is chairman, president, and chief executive officer of American Security Corp. He was born April 23, 1928, and resides in Bethesda, Md.

Edmund T. Pratt is chairman and chief executive officer of Pfizer, Inc., in New York City. He was born February 22, 1927, and resides in Port Washington, N.Y.

Foreign and Domestic Issues

Question-and-Answer Session With High School Students. March 25, 1983

The President. Well, welcome here to the Executive Office Building, and I want the viewers to know that you and I have just met and not even individually met but just in this way, and I don't have any idea what you're going to ask. But we'll get right to it,

and I understand someone has been designated to ask the first question.

Environmental Protection Agency

Q. Mr. President, my name is Wiley Asher. I go to Cherry Creek High School in Denver, Colorado. Hazardous amounts of lead were found in a Dallas schoolyard and hundreds of young children have toxic levels of lead in their blood. This morning you fired Mr. Hernandez, who stopped the cleanup of this waste site. Under the new EPA headed by Mr. William Ruckelshaus, how will these tragedies be avoided in the future? And how will the Agency reconcile the mistakes of the EPA under Mrs. Burford?

The President. Well, first of all, may I simply correct the basis for your question—and yet, I understand the base for it, because you're repeating the way the story has been reported. And the reporting leaves something to be desired.

First of all, Mr. Hernandez was not fired. Mr. Hernandez has been wanting to resign and, I think, understandably so, because of all the thing that's been going on on the part of the congressional committees and so forth. And Mrs. Burford resigned only—not by anyone else's decision, but her own, because she felt that as long as she was there they were going to keep on this harassing of the Agency.

I believe the Agency's been doing a good job. But let me explain about Dallas and the nearby plant and the belief that there is this increase in lead pollution because of the smoke emissions from that particular plant.

You have to recognize that many of these things were done—such as the toxic waste dumps—at a time when no one was knowingly exposing people to a hazardous substance. We just didn't understand those things. It wasn't too many years ago that one of our most noted scientists received the annual gold medal for discovering that if you put lead in the gasoline, the automobile engines would run better. Then a few years later we discover that it's hazardous and we have to take the lead out. Well, the same thing is true of many toxic wastes.

The EPA—I don't know what the delay has been with that particular installation, but you have to recognize that we're discovering now that there are thousands and

thousands of dumps, some of them abandoned from years past. And we're trying to catalog and find all of them. And then you have to find out are they definitely hazardous now to people and what is the degree of hazard. And then you set your priorities by which are the most dangerous now. Let us get those fixed up and cleaned up now.

And so far, I know that the department has named, as to hazardous waste dumps, about 450 or so. And they've worked it down to about a hundred that they believe require the most urgent attention, immediate attention. But this is the explanation back of all of this, and actually the record is very good on the part of the Agency.

The thing that kicked it up—and I just can't help but get this one line in. When these congressional committees began their oversight and wanted to know what was going on, we made available to them some 800,000 documents and withheld less than a hundred documents, because they were already—these were documents pertaining to legal cases, litigation involving some concern, individual, or company that might be involved in a suit over pollution. We invoked executive privilege, because that kind of a document, if you make it public, you may prejudice your case and you may not be able to proceed with the litigation and because the information in there is very confidential and is the kind that, say, a prosecutor develops when he's getting ready to prosecute a case. And the whole fuss was raised over that.

Well, finally, when the people began to suspect and feel that there was some wrongdoing, that's when we said, "Well, wait a minute. We'll make all of them available so they haven't got any complaints." And this is what we've done.

People's Republic of China and Taiwan

Q. Mr. President, my name is Michael Tropeano from Cardinal Spellman High School in Hanson, Massachusetts. Mr. President, the United States has recognized Taiwan as a free nation. How has this affected our relations with the People's Republic of China during your term as President?

The President. Well, the question of Taiwan and the People's Republic of China will remain a sore spot in our developing of

relations with the People's Republic. We've explained our position. And it isn't that we've recognized Taiwan as a nation. The problem is that the Government of Taiwan fled there in the face of the Communist revolution in Mainland China some years ago. So, you've got a government that still claims it was the legitimate Government of China. And you've now got the new Communist Government of China that claims it's the Government of the People's Republic.

And we have said—because for a number of years, the government that fled to Taiwan had been allies in World War II, an ally of the United States, and they had remained a very firm ally and friend of ours—and we have said to the Government of the People's Republic of China we believe that we can be friends to both. And the decision as to how you, between you, resolve this is an internal problem belonging to the Chinese people to settle that question.

But as far as we're concerned, we don't believe that in order to make another friend, we should discard a long-time ally and friend—the people on Taiwan. And as a matter of fact, I myself have said to some of the representatives of the People's Republic that we would think that they would have more confidence in us if they knew that we didn't discard one friend in order to make another. That should indicate to them that we'd be a good friend to them, too.

And the controversy still goes on. I think it's been eased somewhat. But neither side wants to give in. And as we've said, hands off as to what the ultimate decision is. That's up to them to work out.

Q. Mr. President?

The President. Yes. I'm going to have to go back in the—

Unemployment

Q. Hi, my name is Barbara Harper. I'm from Redford High School, which is located in Detroit, Michigan. And my question is, last night you signed a new jobs bill which was, hopefully, to eliminate the unemployment. My question is: Will the jobs bill help alleviate the unemployment among black teenagers, which have been hit the hardest?

The President. We think, yes, it will because of some provisions that are in that bill as well as some other programs we have.

And what those programs are aimed at is retraining for the newer kind of jobs that we're going to have to have in this country.

Unfortunately, there's been a structural change. Many people that have been laid-off in certain industries will find that their jobs will never again exist. But at the same time, if you read the Sunday papers and read the help wanted ads, you'll find employers in all this time of unemployment advertising for people to come work. But if you read the qualifications, you find that these are for the newer type jobs like in high technology. And there just aren't people trained for those jobs. So, we have training programs aimed at the presently unemployed, aimed at young people and so forth to train people in the various communities and sections of the country in connection with private enterprise and local authorities for the jobs that are going unfilled in those areas.

Some of the job-training programs in the past, when they were done by the Federal Government, did not pay any attention to whether they were training people for jobs that might not even exist in the area where they are being trained. We're going to try and say, "Well, okay. What are the jobs that are available here?" And train for them.

And we also—of course, the real answer to unemployment is going to be what is going on now. And that is the recovery from the recession. The other month ago when unemployment dropped four-tenths of a percentage point just in that 1 month—that was just due to the improvement in the economy—that would have taken a \$5 billion jobs project of the Government to try and make the same number of people employed.

So, yes, that's going to be the last thing to recover. It always is in a recession. But we're going to work at it as hard as we can.

Q. Mr. President?

The President. Yes?

U.S. Foreign Assistance

Q. My name is Kareem Chiaey from Burbank High School in Burbank, California. My local paper, the Burbank Daily Review, published an article stating that from 1946 through 1981, we have spent \$2.3 trillion in foreign aid. My questions are: What is the

significance of this program, and what have we gotten out of it? And how much more are we going to give away? Why are we giving a credit of \$68 million to the People's Republic of China, a Communist country? And why are you proposing to send \$60 million of our money away to El Salvador when you are cutting social programs left and right? Why don't we take care of our own people first?

The President. Well, number one, we are taking care of our own people first. The social reform, the social programs, domestic programs in this country have grown at a fantastic rate over the last decade or so. And today, we're providing meals, 95 million meals a day, the Government is. There are more people by some 4 million receiving food stamps as received them 1980, before we came here.

The talk about cutting the budget is just—we all use the expression, but it isn't true. Now, let me explain, if I can very simply, what happens.

You have to, when you make a—give a budget, under the law, you have to project for 5 years where these programs and where this budget is going to go and what it will be in 1985, '6, '7, and '8, in addition to 1984. All that we have done since we've been here is cut the increase in growth of the budget. Each one of our budgets has been bigger than the one before. But when we came here, the Government was increasing its spending by 17 percent a year. And this is why the taxes kept on having to be increased. We have reduced that by about half or better, that rate of increase. But we have not cut back on these programs, nutrition programs, and so forth. We've just reduced the rate of increase in them.

Now, the foreign aid connection. All of the free world is engaged in that, and not only the free world, the People's Republic of China, also. This is aid to the developing countries. And, since the figures you gave went back to 1946, remember, that includes the Marshall plan. We were the only nation, when World War II ended, that had not been devastated by war—factories blown up and railroads gone and power-plants and so forth, no longer existing because of the bombing and destruction. And we came up with the Marshall plan, a pro-

gram to not only help our allies rebuild but to help even our enemies.

Tokyo—I remember my first time there a few years ago, standing there and looking out a window at the whole skyline, and a Japanese gentleman telling me that when the war ended, that was just devastation, ruins. There was no city. Our firebombings had done that. And then he told me—and, literally, with tears in his eyes—how we, the enemy that they had attacked, we came in with the funds and the money to rebuild and to reopen factories and to bring in food for their people.

Now, what we're trying to do is, as we develop or help these other countries develop, they then can join the family of nations, and they become not only an exporter of things that they can produce, they become consumers of the things that we have to sell. And I think that this has been a fine thing, as well as a humanitarian thing, that we're doing. But we're joined in this, to the limit of their ability, by our allies, by other countries in the world. It's a worldwide thing that's going on.

With regard to El Salvador, the money is going there for one reason. El Salvador, after a half a century of being a military dictatorship—no human rights as we see them and believe in them—a few years ago elected a government democratically and started on the road to becoming more like the democracies. A year ago, they held another election, in the time of all this strife with the guerrillas.

The guerrillas are not a group of peasants who just have taken their muskets in hand and wanted to stage a revolution because the government was tyrannical. They are trained military personnel, armed by way of the Soviet Union and Cuba, through Nicaragua, which has become a Communist base in this country, by its own admission. One of the leaders of the guerrilla fighters the other day publicly stated, yes, they were a friend of the Soviet Union; yes, they intended to bring communism to the Western hemisphere.

Eighty-three percent of the people turned out in the election a year ago. The guerrillas threatened to shoot people for going to the polls. The people weren't intimidated. They demanded their right to

vote, and they did vote. So, the government is there reflects the will of the people.

We're trying to help that government against this assault by the guerrillas, the armed guerrillas, and help its economy so that it can become more democratic, as Costa Rica and Honduras have become. And this is why we're sending that aid there. And we're sending \$2 dollars in aid, for economic aid, to every \$1 of military aid.

Now, I'd better go toward the back of the room back there. Young lady right—you. Yes?

Defense Spending

Q. My name is Pamela Keniston. I go to Denver Christian High School in Denver, Colorado. Mr. President, in a Democratic rebuttal to your speech last night, it was suggested that you implied American military inferiority because you are afraid your defense budget will be trimmed by Congress and you want to take our attention off of the economic disasters brought on by your policies. How do you respond to this view?

The President. I respond to that one, first of all, as to want to take people's attention off the "failures" of my economic policy—you know, they started calling it a failure, on the other side of the aisle, before it had even been put in place. We hadn't even started it yet. And they kept on while—it takes a little while to get a recovery going. But now this thing they've named "Reaganomics" when they didn't think it was working—[laughter]—I'm wondering what they're going to call it now that it is working.

The economy, in this first quarter, has gone up 4 percent—the growth in gross national product. That is an astounding figure. And we've got to go back a lot of years before we find anything comparable. Inflation, which was 12.4 percent, has for the last 6 months been running at only four-tenths of 1 percent. And last month there was no inflation rate; in fact, there was deflation by two-tenths of 1 percent. Interest rates that were 21½ are now down to 10½, and they're still going lower. The automobile industry is recovering and showing growth. The building of new houses has picked up to what it was several years ago. Incidentally, this deflationary figure—also in

December we had deflation instead of inflation—this is the first time this has happened since 1965.

So, I don't want to take the people's minds off our economic program at all. I think it's doing fine. But with regard to the defense budget, for someone who came here pledged to cut spending, why would they think that I might want to increase spending if it wasn't necessary? And it is necessary.

In the decade of the seventies, we let our military go down, as I said in my speech, to the place that there was a dangerous window of vulnerability. We have set out, in these 2 years past, to close that window of vulnerability. At the same time, we have three teams in Europe—two in Geneva and one in, I think, Vienna, that one is working on getting the Soviet Union to join us in the reduction of conventional weapons. The other two are trying to persuade them to join us in reducing and, hopefully, eliminating nuclear missiles entirely. In order to get them to come to that negotiating table—they are so far in front of us, ahead of us in military strength, that it was only that when they saw that we were determined to rebuild our defenses—and they know that they cannot over a long period of time match us in that; they are no match for our industrial might—this is why they came to the table and are willing to negotiate with us. They're being stubborn, but they're there and they're talking.

If they saw us cut back and go back to where we were, unilaterally cutting our own buildup and reducing our own military strength, they wouldn't be at that table. They'd say, "We don't have to disarm with them. They're going to disarm by themselves." And the people who've said this on the other side of the aisle, I have to tell you—and I don't care if they're listening—they're talking through their hats, and they don't know what they're talking about. [Laughter.]

Q. Mr. President?

The President. All right—right there.

Views on the Presidency

Q. Mr. President, my name is John Sapp. I'm a student at Notre Dame High School in Harper Woods. If you knew what you know now back then in 1981, would you

have still run for the Presidency? [*Laughter*] And what has been the highest and the lowest points of your experience as President?

The President. Well, yes, I would have run.

I didn't have any illusions about it. Having been Governor for 8 years of California, which is not only the most populous State in the Union but, you know, it's the closest thing to the Federal Government—great difference, of course, in scale. But California, if it were a nation, would be the seventh ranking economic power in the world. So, I thought that I had a pretty good idea of what I'd be up against. There weren't too many surprises in this job.

Now, what were the high and the low points. Well, I think—I couldn't single one high point out. I would say that the succeeding in the first 2 years in getting most of the economic program we wanted—remember, for those people that are criticizing our economic program, they never gave us all we want. In the House of Representatives the other party is in control, and we do have a majority in the Senate. But to see the program actually get underway—much of it based on things that we'd done in California in what was a tough economic time there, too—that was a high spot.

Another high spot for me is the very subject we've been talking on in the military. When we came here we had airplanes that couldn't fly for lack of spare parts. We had ships that couldn't leave harbor, because they either lacked spare parts or crew—didn't have enough crew to sail. Our volunteer military was supposed to be a failure; we couldn't keep people in the service, and the career officers and so forth were resigning. And today we have a waiting line. Today we have the highest percentage of high school graduates we've ever had in the military, at the present. They're proud to be there. And we can provide the gasoline and the ammunition for training and so forth. And to see them and their pride in that job just puts a lump in my throat every time I see them. And for people that say I would like a war, no, you can't look at those young men and women in uniform and ever think that you'd want to send them out into a war.

In my book, as long as they're there and as good as they are, they're peacekeepers. No one's going to challenge us. That's a high spot.

And the third high spot is, in all this time of trouble with so many people suffering because of the recession, we turned to the private sector with what we called a private sector initiative, and we had a nationwide committee to go out and see how could we develop the private sector to take over some of these things and do some of these things as they always used to do it—neighbor helping neighbor. And it has been so successful that in all this time of economic distress, private giving to worthy causes, to charity, to helping neighbors, has never been greater in the history of the United States than this.

The low point—there've been several of those, but I suppose, if you don't mind my saying it, maybe the low point came when I got out of the car and walked into the emergency room of George Washington Hospital—[*laughter*]—and was told I'd been shot. [*laughter*] I thought that the Secret Service man piling in on top of me in the car had maybe broken a rib. I knew I hurt, but I didn't know I'd been hit. And I had a bullet just about 1 inch from my heart.

Q. I'm glad you recovered.

The President. What's that?

Q. I'm glad you recovered.

The President. Thank you very much.

Yeah.

Environmental Protection Agency

Q. My name is Bill Stroud from Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. Mr. President, our Close-Up group was scheduled to have a meeting with James Medas¹ on Tuesday morning of this week; but he didn't show up, and another speaker took his place. Would you please explain Mr. Medas' involvement with the EPA? And, specifically, has he been taken out of circulation because of involvement in trying to influence the EPA in choosing sites differently for political reasons?

The President. No, there are several individuals over there who have been feeling—

¹ *Special Assistant to the President for Intergovernmental Affairs.*

and now that we have named a new director—have been feeling that—like Mrs. Burford felt—that as long as they're there, they're going to be a focus for this kind of attention, which is interfering with the Agency's doing its job.

But let me again call to your attention: There has been no proof provided by any of those committees that there has been any wrongdoing at all. And if there is any wrongdoing, I want to be the first to know about it, because you, the people, have a right to expect that your government—I consider should be as moral and be as sacred as the temples of worship in this country. But so far, as I say, there has been no proof of anything of that kind.

I don't know why he failed to show up for an address. Maybe it was because one of those committees called for him to appear before the committee. That takes precedence in this government of ours, whether it's a Cabinet member or who it is, whenever it happens.

But I'm convinced that when the record is known of what we have accomplished, they'll find that in these last couple of years that Agency has performed well.

Q. And—

Q. Mr. President—

Q. —is he still under—and any other members—still under investigation at this time?

The President. Every allegation—I would have to say yes, for this reason: that every allegation and accusation that has been voiced by the Congress I have ordered the Justice Department and the FBI to investigate. So, that doesn't imply guilt. That just implies our willingness to show that we want all of the facts and all of the truth.

The young lady right—no. Right back of you—no, you. Yes.

Social Security

Q. Mr. President, my name is Laurie Glogoski. I'm from Garden City, Michigan, and attend Divine Child High School. In your first State of the Union address, you explicitly stated that you'd protect the poor and the needy. Yet, your social security cutbacks have directly and dramatically placed further burden on the widows and orphans you promised to protect. And at the same time, you continue to channel enormous

sums of money out of the country. Should we not provide for our own here at home before we attempt to provide for antidemocratic systems abroad?

The President: Well, we're not providing for antidemocratic systems abroad. But also, here again, the drumbeat of propaganda that takes place in the political arena has, again, contributed to misunderstanding on all of your parts. And I understand that—I mean, when you're out there, and you have to depend on the news that you get and that you hear people say.

There has never been any cutback in social security. From the very first, I said that those people dependent on it would receive it, but that we had to do something about the program to restore fiscal integrity because social security was going broke.

The first time I said it, at about the time of that first speech that you're talking about, opponents in the government challenged that I was not telling the truth. I had said that we would not be able to get by July of 1983 in social security if we did not do something to rectify that imbalance. And they said that was false. Well, they, in passing—and they have just passed the commission's report that I asked for to see how we could make social security sound—that has now been passed and I will be signing it today or tomorrow. In that thing of making that, they then had to admit, yes. And we had to borrow money beginning in July of this year—or already, before July, to pay some of the checks.

Now, the first time I ever referred to the fiscal problem of social security was long before I ever thought I'd even be a Governor. Never had any idea of anything of the kind. I was making pictures in Hollywood. But when you don't sing or dance in Hollywood, you usually wind up as an after-dinner speaker. [Laughter] And at one of those after-dinner speeches in 1964, I called attention to the fact that social security then, that many years ago, was out of balance actuarially by \$300 billion. And no one did anything about it down through all these years.

Now, we believe that the measure that has just passed by a bipartisan agreement between both parties in the Congress, that we have resolved that problem. But, in the meantime, it became such a political football

that I saw all the charges that I had cut benefits. There was no way I could cut benefits. They would have had to—that would have to take legislation passed by Congress. Nor did I ever ask for such a thing. There has been no cut at any time in the benefits. But I know that the charge has been made. And many senior citizens dependent on social security were frightened into believing that this was going to happen to them. And I think it was cruel and unusual punishment to deceive these people for political purposes.

Q. Are you going to organize a new system—

The President. What?

Q. Are you going to organize a new system like to take the place of social security, or do you have any alternative ideas?

The President. I'm not sure that—I can't organize something new. But I'm not sure that we shouldn't take a long-term look at the structure of social security with the proviso that those dependent on the program will continue to get their checks; that there will be no reform, but to go back and look at what's going to happen to you when you get out on the job market.

The payroll tax for social security has become so huge that for most of the workers in this country, it's a bigger tax than the income tax. And I'm not sure that the benefits that you will receive when you come to the point of retiring from the work force will justify the amount of that tax. And I think that while we protect the people presently dependent on the program—and those who may be in the next several years and who've based their plans on that—I don't think there would be anything wrong if we had some solid studies made as to whether we could improve that program for all of you so that it would be more fair for you and for the younger workers in the work force today in the future.

That'll probably be the headline in the morning.

Q. My name is Marylyn Prospere. I'm a student at Jamaica Plain High School, Boston, Massachusetts. Mr. President, on behalf of the Close-Up Foundation and the Close-Up students here, we thank you for sharing this time with us.

The President. Thank you.

Note: The President spoke at 1:06 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. The question-and-answer session was taped for later broadcast on the Cable Satellite Public Affairs Network.

Ballistic Missile Defense Research and Development

*Announcement on the Issuance of a National Security Decision Directive.
March 25, 1983*

Today the President issued a National Security Decision Directive addressing his intent to direct the development of an intensive effort to define a long-term research and development program aimed at an ultimate goal of eliminating the threat posed by nuclear ballistic missiles as announced in his speech of March 23, 1983.

The document directs the following:

It is my policy to take every opportunity to reduce world tensions and enhance stability. Our efforts to achieve significant reductions in strategic offensive forces and to eliminate LRINF land-based missiles are one approach to that aim. However, it is my long-range goal to go beyond this. I would like to decrease our reliance on the threat of retaliation by offensive nuclear weapons and to increase the contribution of defensive systems to our security and that of our allies. To begin to move us toward that goal, I have concluded that we should explore the possibility of using defensive capabilities to counter the threat posed by nuclear ballistic missiles.

I direct the development of an intensive effort to define a long-term research and development program aimed at an ultimate goal of eliminating the threat posed by nuclear ballistic missiles. These actions will be carried out in a manner consistent with our obligations under the ABM Treaty and recognizing the need for close consultations with our allies.

In order to provide the necessary basis for this effort, I further direct a study be completed on a priority basis to assess the roles that ballistic missile defense could play