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**Collection:** Roberts, John G.: Files  
**Folder Title:** JGR/Presidential Remarks, Statements,  
[& Addresses] June 1984  
(3 of 3)  
**Box:** 40

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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 20, 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR FRED F. FIELDING

FROM:

JOHN G. ROBERTS 

SUBJECT:

Proposed Presidential Remarks:  
Meeting with Representatives of the  
International Youth Year Commission  
(6/20 -- 1:30 p.m. draft)

Richard Darman has asked that comments on the above-referenced remarks be sent directly to Ben Elliott by 10:00 a.m. tomorrow, June 21. The brief remarks stress the importance of youth exchanges and the vitality of democratic values. The remarks support the International Conference of Democratic Youth to be held in Jamaica next year, and applaud the International Youth Year Commission's effort to obtain support from the American business community so that delegates to the Conference can visit the United States. I have reviewed the remarks and have no objections.

Attachment

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 20, 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR BEN ELLIOTT  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT  
DIRECTOR, PRESIDENTIAL SPEECHWRITING

FROM: FRED F. FIELDING *Orig. signed by FFF*  
COUNSEL TO THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Proposed Presidential Remarks:  
Meeting with Representatives of the  
International Youth Year Commission  
(6/20 -- 1:30 p.m. draft)

Counsel's Office has reviewed the above-referenced remarks,  
and finds no objection to them from a legal perspective.

cc: Richard G. Darman :

FFF:JGR:aea 6/20/84

bcc: FFFielding/JGRoberts/Subj/Chron

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 20, 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR BEN ELLIOTT  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT  
DIRECTOR, PRESIDENTIAL SPEECHWRITING

FROM: FRED F. FIELDING  
COUNSEL TO THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Proposed Presidential Remarks:  
Meeting with Representatives of the  
International Youth Year Commission  
(6/20 -- 1:30 p.m. draft)

Counsel's Office has reviewed the above-referenced remarks,  
and finds no objection to them from a legal perspective.

cc: Richard G. Darman

FFF:JGR:aea 6/20/84

bcc: FFFielding/JGRoberts/Subj/Chron

## WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING WORKSHEET

- O - OUTGOING
- H - INTERNAL
- I - INCOMING  
Date Correspondence Received (YY/MM/DD) 1 / 1

Name of Correspondent: Richard Dorman

MI Mail Report      User Codes: (A) \_\_\_\_\_ (B) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: Proposed Presidential Remarks:  
Meeting with Representatives of the International  
Youth Year Commission (6/20 - 1:30pm draft)

ROUTE TO:	ACTION	DISPOSITION	
Office/Agency    (Staff Name)	Action Code	Tracking Date YY/MM/DD	Type of Response    Code    Completion Date YY/MM/DD
<u>WHOLE</u>	ORIGINATOR	<u>84106120</u>	<u>1 1</u>
<u>CIAT 18</u>	Referral Note: <u>D</u>	<u>84106120</u>	<u>3 8410621</u> <u>10:50am</u>
	Referral Note:	<u>1 1</u>	<u>1 1</u>
	Referral Note:	<u>1 1</u>	<u>1 1</u>
	Referral Note:	<u>1 1</u>	<u>1 1</u>

**ACTION CODES:**

- A - Appropriate Action
- I - Info Copy Only/No Action Necessary
- C - Comment/Recommendation
- R - Direct Reply w/Copy
- D - Draft Response
- S - For Signature
- F - Furnish Fact Sheet  
to be used as Enclosure
- X - Interim Reply

**DISPOSITION CODES:**

- A - Answered
- C - Completed
- B - Non-Special Referral
- S - Suspended

**FOR OUTGOING CORRESPONDENCE:**

- Type of Response = Initials of Signer
- Code = "A"
- Completion Date = Date of Outgoing

Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

Keep this worksheet attached to the original incoming letter.  
Send all routing updates to Central Reference (Room 75, OEOB).  
Always return completed correspondence record to Central Files.  
Refer questions about the correspondence tracking system to Central Reference, ext. 2590.

## WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 6/20/84 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: 10:00 a.m. 6/21/84

SUBJECT: PROPOSED PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR COMMISSION (6/20-1:30 p.m. draft)

	ACTION FYI			ACTION FYI	
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	McMANUS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
MEESE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MURPHY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
BAKER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	OGLESBY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DEAVER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ROGERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
STOCKMAN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPEAKES	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
DARMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SVAHN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FELDSTEIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	VERSTANDIG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FIELDING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WHITTLESEY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FULLER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	TUTWILER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HERRINGTON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WIRTHLIN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HICKEY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ELLIOTT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
McFARLANE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	HENKEL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			ROSEBUSH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**REMARKS:**

PLEASE PROVIDE ANY EDITS/COMMENTS DIRECTLY TO BEN ELLIOTT, WITH A COPY TO MY OFFICE, BY 10:00 A.M. TOMORROW, JUNE 21. THANK YOU.

**RESPONSE:**

1984 JUN 20 PM 5:18

Richard G. Darman  
Assistant to the President  
Ext. 2702

1984 JUN 20 PM 4:13

(Myer/BE)  
June 20, 1984  
1:30 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: MEETING WITH REPRESENTATIVES OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL YOUTH YEAR COMMISSION  
FRIDAY, JUNE 22, 1984

Thank you very much. First, I want to welcome you and thank you for taking the time to come to Washington to begin the activities for our national celebration of International Youth Year 1985.

I believe you all know, or you wouldn't be here, the importance of our youth to the future peace, security, and well-being of our Nation and the world. And I'm certain that by working together -- the youth organizations represented here today, our Government, and America's business community -- Youth Year 1985 will be a resounding success.

There's a spark in all of us which, if struck early enough, can light up our lives, elevate our ideals, deepen our tolerance, and strengthen our determination to make this world a better place.

You couldn't make a better investment in America's future. During Youth Year 1985, we will be making a special effort to help our young people reach out to each other and to their counterparts all over the world. They will be able to build new bridges of understanding.

Understanding begins with the knowledge that the most powerful force for progress in this world comes not from government bureaucracies, nor public programs, nor even valuable resources like gold or oil. True wealth -- and the real hope for the future -- comes from the heart, from the treasure of ideas

and spirit, from free people with a vision of the future, trust in their fellow men, and faith in God.

The better future we all yearn for will not be built by skeptics who spend their lives admiring the complexity of problems. It will be built by free men and women who believe in themselves. History shows that progress takes its greatest strides when people are free to worship, create and build, when they can decide their destiny and benefit from their own risks.

The dream of human progress through freedom is still the most revolutionary idea in the world today. And it's also the most successful. Two weeks ago today, the leaders of seven major industrial democracies issued a "Declaration of Democratic Values" at the London Economic Summit that concluded with these words: "Strong in (our) beliefs, and endowed with great diversity and creative vigor, we look forward to the future with confidence." We should be confident. The summit demonstrated the unity of the western industrialized nations, the enduring strength of our shared vision and values, and our resolve to sustain peace with freedom.

You, too, should be confident -- confident that if you prepare for International Youth Year 1985 with wisdom and responsibility, you can shape the future the way you want.

I've always believed that a lot of the problems in the world come about because people talk past each other instead of to each other. That's why I'm so pleased that Prime Minister Seaga of Jamaica has offered to host an International Conference of Democratic Youth during 1985. We believe the conference merits



strong support of freedom-loving people everywhere. It will give young people all over the world a chance to examine democratic values and principles, and to speak out for human rights and individual liberty.

And I understand that your Commission will be seeking support from the business community so that young delegates attending the Jamaica conference will be able to visit the United States. If young people from other countries have a chance to visit us and see our spiritual and economic vitality, they will understand America better. We, in turn, will learn much of value for ourselves. By reaching out to those who will guide the destiny of our country, the American business community will be making a sound investment in our future.

The Youth Year Commission has accepted a worthy and important challenge. You have our support. Our task force on Youth Year, under the leadership of Greg Newell, will do everything it can to help. Together, I'm certain we will achieve great success in reaching out to America's young people, and through them, to the youth of the world.

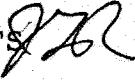
Thank you and God bless you all.

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 21, 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR FRED F. FIELDING

FROM: JOHN G. ROBERTS 

SUBJECT: Remarks: Agricultural Communicators'  
Congress (6/21 -- 12:30 p.m. draft)

Richard Darman has asked that comments on the above-referenced remarks be sent directly to Ben Elliott by 11:00 a.m. tomorrow, June 22. The remarks review the Administration's farm policies, noting the lifting of the Soviet grain embargo, the increase in export credits, efforts to open new export markets, the reduction of certain crop surpluses through the payment-in-kind program, and increases in various other loan and crop insurance programs. I have reviewed the remarks and have no objections.

Attachment

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 21, 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR BEN ELLIOTT  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT  
DIRECTOR, PRESIDENTIAL SPEECHWRITING

FROM: FRED F. FIELDING *Orig. signed by FFF*  
COUNSEL TO THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Remarks: Agricultural Communicators'  
Congress (6/21 -- 12:30 p.m. draft)

Counsel's Office has reviewed the above-referenced remarks,  
and finds no objection to them from a legal perspective.

cc: Richard G. Darman

FFF:JGR;aea 6/21/84 :  
bcc: FFFielding/JGRoberts/Subj/Chron

THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

June 21, 1984

MEMORANDUM FOR BEN ELLIOTT  
DEPUTY ASSISTANT TO THE PRESIDENT  
DIRECTOR, PRESIDENTIAL SPEECHWRITING

FROM: FRED F. FIELDING  
COUNSEL TO THE PRESIDENT

SUBJECT: Remarks: Agricultural Communicators'  
Congress (6/21 -- 12:30 p.m. draft)

Counsel's Office has reviewed the above-referenced remarks,  
and finds no objection to them from a legal perspective.

cc: Richard G. Darman

FFF:JGR;aea 6/21/84

bcc: FFFielding/JGRoberts/Subj/Chron

## WHITE HOUSE CORRESPONDENCE TRACKING WORKSHEET

- O - OUTGOING
- H - INTERNAL
- I - INCOMING

Date Correspondence Received (YY/MM/DD) 1 1

Name of Correspondent: Richard Daiman

MI Mail Report      User Codes: (A) \_\_\_\_\_ (B) \_\_\_\_\_ (C) \_\_\_\_\_

Subject: Remarks: Agricultural Communicators' Congress (6/21 - 12:30pm draft)

ROUTE TO:	ACTION	DISPOSITION			
Office/Agency (Staff Name)	Action Code	Tracking Date YY/MM/DD	Type of Response	Code	Completion Date YY/MM/DD
<u>CUHOU</u>	ORIGINATOR	<u>8410621</u>			<u>1 1</u>
<u>CUPT 18</u>	Referral Note:	<u>D 8410621</u>		<u>58410622</u>	<u>11:00am</u>
	Referral Note:	<u>1 1</u>			<u>1 1</u>
	Referral Note:	<u>1 1</u>			<u>1 1</u>
	Referral Note:	<u>1 1</u>			<u>1 1</u>

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## WHITE HOUSE STAFFING MEMORANDUM

DATE: 6/21/84 ACTION/CONCURRENCE/COMMENT DUE BY: 11:00 a.m. TOMORROW  
June 22nd

SUBJECT: REMARKS: AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATORS' CONGRESS  
(6/21 - 12:30 p.m. draft)

	ACTION	FYI		ACTION	FYI
VICE PRESIDENT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	McMANUS	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
MEESE	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	MURPHY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
BAKER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	OGLESBY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DEAVER	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	ROGERS	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
STOCKMAN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	SPEAKES	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
DARMAN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	SSVAHN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FELDSTEIN	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	VERSTANDIG	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FIELDING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WHITTLESEY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
FULLER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	TUTWILER	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HERRINGTON	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	WIRTHLIN	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
HICKEY	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	ELLIOTT	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
McFARLANE	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	HENKEL	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			ROSEBUSH	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

**REMARKS:**

Please provide any edits directly to Ben Elliott by 11:00 a.m. tomorrow, June 22nd, with an information copy to my office.

Thank you.

**RESPONSE:**

Richard G. Darman  
 Assistant to the President  
 Ext. 2702

1984 JUN 21 PM 2:48

1984 JUN 21 PM 2 00

(Myer/BE)  
June 21, 1984  
12:30 p.m.

PRESIDENTIAL REMARKS: AGRICULTURAL COMMUNICATORS' CONGRESS  
MONDAY, JUNE 25, 1984

Good afternoon. I'm delighted to welcome you, America's agricultural communicators, to the White House -- please think of it as your home away from the farm. And I would like to congratulate you for holding your first Agricultural Communicators' Congress. Your desire to work together, share ideas, and help each other is in the fine tradition of America's farm community.

Agriculture has always been a sharing society. Pioneers helped each other cross uncharted lands and establish homesteads. In time of need, a neighbor was always willing to step in and give a helping hand.

America's farmers and ranchers have never lost that wonderful spirit. And you're carrying it forward. Through you, farmers and ranchers share know-how, business concepts, and homemaking ideas. You concentrate on what is right with agriculture and how to make it better. You are problem solvers, community builders, and information sharers. The accent is on the positive, on success. I don't mind telling you -- you're my kind of media.

You're helping to increase yields, develop new marketing strategies, improve agricultural services, and make genetic improvements in plants and livestock. In fact, you do so well that the American agricultural community has a record of productivity unmatched by any other in the world.

Agriculture is a driving force in our Nation's economy and you can be very proud of what your industry has accomplished. Our Administration will continue doing all we can to help the farm community recover from past policy mistakes and economic difficulties.

One of my first actions as President was to lift the Soviet grain embargo. And last August, we signed a new 5-year grain trade agreement with the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union has agreed to purchase 9 million tons annually, and can purchase up to 12 million tons without consultation. And this year, we have offered to sell them at least 22 million tons. As long as I'm President, our farmers will never again be asked to bear alone the brunt of our foreign policy.

What we are doing, and what we will continue to do, is to pursue new export markets and work to remove export barriers. Export trade leads are being sent electronically to U.S. exporters. Our trade teams have been continuously on the go in search of new markets. Jack Block has been knocking on doors all over the world, and he's going to keep on knocking. And I know that all of you join me in wishing Jack a speedy and complete recovery.

To help finance exports, our Administration has authorized \$4.8 billion in export credits -- the largest guarantees in our history. And we've increased a blended export credit program that will move 7 million tons of 15 different farm commodities.

I believe these efforts are paying off. We've negotiated new import quotas with Japan that will lead to a doubling of



citrus and beef exports over the next 4 years. And earlier this month, we reached agreement on internationalization of the yen -- an accord that will make our exports more competitively priced in the Japanese market.

We've recovered a 1-million-ton wheat flour market in Egypt. An export agreement has been concluded with Mexico. And we're negotiating with the Common Market in an effort to solve some of the problems caused by subsidized exports.

Let me assure you, now that we've regained our reputation as a reliable supplier, we intend to maintain that reputation.

At home, we tackled the price-depressing surplus of 1981 and 1982 that could have hung over the market for years. By quickly stepping in with a payment-in-kind program, the surplus problem was dealt with. And today, corn prices are up 12 percent from a year ago, and cotton prices are up 26 percent. We've moved closer to the point where the market, not the Government, will be sending production signals to our producers.

On another front, we've doubled the funds provided for Farmers Home Administration operating loans, and have helped some 270,000 farm operators who couldn't get credit through commercial sources.

Our Federal Crop Insurance Program dealt with the 1983 drought by paying out \$450 million -- an all-time high. And the Farmers Home Administration also provided emergency disaster loans at low interest rates and extended filing application deadlines.

And today, we're hard at work on the 1985 Farm Bill. The Department of Agriculture is actively soliciting farmers' views on this bill. So far, they've accepted hundreds of pages of written recommendations and held listening sessions in California, Chicago, Atlanta, and Syracuse, New York.

All of these efforts are important, but not nearly as important as our economic expansion. The month we took office, the prime interest rate was at the highest level since the Civil War. Considering that one-fifth of farmers' cash outlays are for interest expenses, that 21-percent rate was a devastating blow. Inflation was just as cruel. In the 2 years before we took office, farm costs jumped an outrageous 26.5 percent -- the fastest 2-year rise in our history.

Today, the prime interest rate has fallen by nearly half, and we've knocked inflation down to under 5 percent. Don't get me wrong: Interest rates are still higher than you or I would like. But we have restored our country's basic economic health, and if we continue to pursue a sound monetary policy and work to put the Federal budget process in order, interest rates will drop more and inflation will stay down.

Now, the critics are still with us. But they are the same critics who were wrong on inflation, wrong on unemployment, wrong on real wages, wrong on interest rates, and wrong on the recovery. In fact, every time I hear them, I remember Robert Frost saying, "The brain is a wonderful organ. It starts working the moment you get up in the morning and doesn't stop until you get to the office."

Am I optimistic? You bet I am. I believe that our best days are still to come. With faith, freedom, and courage, there's no limit to what the American people can and will accomplish. And that's always been the way of the American farmer.

Once again, I want to congratulate you on your Congress and to thank you for what you're doing. By sharing ideas with farm audiences, you are helping to keep our great Nation, and our farm community, strong, prosperous, and free. And as I recently told the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives, America's farmers have my pledge to see to it that the dream of a successful family farm remains a living part of the American dream.

Thank you and God bless you all.

THE WHITE HOUSE  
Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

June 25, 1984

REMARKS OF THE PRESIDENT  
TO AGRICULTURE COMMUNICATORS CONGRESS

The South Grounds

1:32 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Hello there. Good afternoon. I'm delighted -- please sit down. I'm delighted to welcome you, America's Agricultural Communicators, to the White House. Or, as Jack Block calls this, the South Forty. (Laughter.)

And I'd like to congratulate you for holding your first Agricultural Communicators Congress. Your desire to work together and to share ideas and to help each other is a fine -- in the fine tradition of America's farm community.

Agriculture has always been a sharing society. Pioneers helped each other cross unchartered lands and establish homesteads. In time of need a neighbor was always willing to step in and give a helping hand, and America's farmers and ranchers have never lost that wonderful spirit. You're carrying it forward.

Through you, farmers and ranchers share know-how and business concepts. You concentrate on what is right with agriculture and how to make it better. You're problem solvers, community builders and information sharers. And the accent is on the positive, on success. I don't mind telling you you're my kind of communicators.

You're helping to increase yields, develop new marketing strategies, improve agricultural services and make genetic improvements in plants and livestock. In fact, you did it so well that the American agricultural community has a record of productivity and efficiency unmatched by any other in the world.

Agriculture is a driving force in our nation's economy and you can be very proud of what your industry has accomplished.

Our administration will continue doing all we can to help the farm community recover from past policy mistakes and economic difficulties. One of my first actions, as you know, in this job was to lift the Soviet grain embargo. And last August, we signed a new five-year grain agreement with the Soviet Union. The Soviet Union has agreed to purchase 9 million tons annually and can purchase up to 12 million tons without consultation. That's a 50 percent increase over the previous agreement. And this year, we've offered to sell them at least 22 million tons.

As long as I'm President, our farmers will never again be asked to bear alone

MORE

the brunt of our foreign policy. (Applause.)

What we're doing, and what we'll continue to do, is to pursue new export markets and work to remove export barriers. To promote exports, our administration, in the first two years, has authorized the largest credit guarantees in our history -- over \$9 billion. Export trade leads are being sent electronically to U.S. exporters.

Our trade teams have been continuously on the go in search of new markets. Jack Block has been knocking on doors all over the world, and he's going to keep on knocking. And I know that all of you join me in wishing Jack a very speedy and complete recovery and that he'll be soon -- either here or back out there on the road again.

But, I believe these efforts are paying off. We've negotiated new import quotas with Japan that will lead to a near doubling of citrus and beef exports over the next four years. And just last month, we reached agreement on internationalization of the Yen -- an accord that should make our exports more competitively priced.

Last year we demonstrated our determination to counter export subsidies and recovered a one-million-ton wheat flour market in Egypt. As a result, the European community has joined us in serious discussions in an effort to solve some of the problems caused by their subsidized exports. And, as you know, I signed a contract sanctity legislation that gives farmers additional assurances that existing exports contracts will not be abrogated.

Let me assure you, now that we've regained our reputation as a reliable supplier, we intend to maintain that reputation. At home we tackled the price-depressing surplus of 1981 and '82, that could have hung over the market for years by quickly stepping in with that Payment-In-Kind Program. We've moved closer to the point where the market, not the government, will be deter -- spending -- or sending production signals to our producers.

On another front, we've doubled the funds provided for the Farmers Home Administration operating loans, and have helped some 270,000 farm borrowers who couldn't get credit through commercial sources. Our Federal Crop Insurance Program dealt with 1983's severe weather problems by paying out \$580 million -- that's an all-time high. And the Farmers Home Administration also provided emergency disaster loans at low interest rates and extended filing application deadlines. And, we're determined to do everything we can for the farmers hit hard by recent flooding in the midwest. In fact, Secretary Block sent a team out this morning to assess the damage, and they're on site, right now, even as we meet here today.

And today, we're hard at work on the 1985 Farm Bill. The Department of Agriculture is, and will continue, to actively solicit farmers' views on this bill. So far they've accepted hundreds of pages of written recommendations and held listening sessions in Chicago, Atlanta, Syracuse, and Riverside, California. And I'm pleased to announce that the next session will be held on July 19th in Dallas, Texas.

All of these efforts are important, but not as important as our economic expansion. The month we took office, the prime interest rate was at the highest level since the Civil War.

(airplane passes overhead)

They're all Democrat run -- (Laughter.) Every time I come out here, they take off. (Laughter.)

But, considering that a fifth of farmers' cash outlays are for interest expenses -- that 21 percent rate that we inherited when we took office was a devastating blow. And inflation was just as cruel. In the three years before 1981, farm costs jumped an outrageous 45 percent -- that was at \$39.7 billion, and that was the largest three-year increase in our history. And today, the prime interest rate has fallen by nearly half; and we've knocked inflation down to around 4 percent -- well, as a matter of fact, for the last 3 months, it's been 3.6 percent.

But don't get me wrong -- interest rates are still higher than you and I would like, and we're going to continue. And I think that to get them down, they just have to finally realize that we're serious about keeping inflation under control. There is no excuse for the interest rates being at the level they are right now, other than just fear of the future. (Applause.)

But we've restored our nation's basic economic health. And if we continue to pursue a sound monetary policy and work to put the federal budgeting process in order, interest rates will drop more and inflation will stay down. We all have a stake in making sure that government spending is brought down in line with government revenues. And that's why I strongly favor constitutional reforms to give the President a line-item veto, and to mandate, by the Constitution, a balanced federal budget. (Applause.)

Now, the critics are still with us -- but they're the same critics who were wrong on inflation, they were wrong on unemployment, they were wrong on real wages, they were wrong on interest rates, and they were wrong about whether there'd be a recovery or not. In fact, every time I hear them, I remember Robert Frost saying, "The brain is a wonderful organ. It starts working the moment you get up in the morning, and doesn't stop until you get to the office." (Laughter.)

Am I optimistic? Well, you bet I am. I believe our best days are yet to come. With faith, freedom, courage -- there's no limit to what the American people can do and will accomplish. And that's always been the way of the American farmer.

So, once again, I want to congratulate you on your Congress and to thank you for what you're doing --

(Airplane passes overhead)

I may beat this one -- (Laughter.) By sharing ideas with farm audiences, you're helping to keep our great nation and our farm community strong, prosperous and free. And as I recently told the National Council of Farmer Cooperatives -- America's farmers have my pledge to see to it that the dream of a successful family farm remains a living part of the American dream.

Thank you again -- (Applause.) -- and God bless you all. Thank you. (Applause.)

END

1:42 P.M. EDT