

nam here and way premature in terms of Burma, Myanmar.

*Trading Blocs*

Q. Mr. President, the United States has consistently opposed the East Asia economic caucus proposed by Malaysia. What will it take to change your mind?

*The President.* Well, we've had an opportunity to discuss that here. We understand Singapore's position fully. What we want to do is be sure that we don't look like we are in favor of dividing the world up into mutually exclusive trading blocs. And thus, I took a lot of time in Australia and had an opportunity here to give our view to the Prime Minister and his colleagues on NAFTA, the North American free trade agreement, to make sure, to the best of my ability, that our friends in Asia understand that we are not trying to divide the world up into trading blocs.

Our view has been, possibly the answer better lies in using APEC, an expanded role for that, perhaps. So, we are listening in terms of the Singapore view on this one, but I think the overriding point is we don't want to do something that perhaps accidentally does that which Singapore doesn't want, what the United States doesn't want, and divide the world into mutually exclusive trading blocs.

*Myanmar*

Q. Mr. President, there is a clear difference of view between the United States and ASEAN towards the approach to be taken towards Myanmar. Have you discussed this subject at all with the Prime Minister?

*The President.* This didn't come up today, and we'll have some more time if the Prime Minister wants to raise it. Our view is quite well-known.

*Asia-U.S. Trade*

Q. Some Asian businessmen and some Asian politicians, too, have criticized American businessmen for not being aggressive enough. They say Americans complain so much about trade barriers, unfair trade practices, but they say that the old American can-do, the old American good salesman, for example, that's just not true any

more. How do you feel about that? Is some of this criticism justified, and will you be talking to these businessmen who are with you?

*The President.* Well, perhaps some is, but I'll tell you something, we have a bunch of business leaders with us who represent not just their own companies and the successes that they've had, nor do they only represent those who have successfully dealt in Asia, but they also represent some of the largest trade organizations, Chamber of Commerce, NMA, National Manufacturers; the smaller business outfits, NFIB, the National Federation of Independent Business; and others, too, President's Export Council. We've had vigorous discussions, they have, and the Prime Minister made this possible, with the top commercial ministers here and others about just that point. The Prime Minister says to me, "Hey, come on over, but you've got to be aware of what the market's like here. You've got to do better."

And everybody in our country would say that. But we say, "Yes, we'll do better, and yes, we think there's opportunity, and let's work together to make these." But also we want access and cutting down of barriers so we can be here.

But I think there's some fairness to that in some areas. Singapore, it's been pretty vigorous, I think, in a two-way street.

Is that responsive?

Q. Yes. I was thinking about Korea. They've often criticized Americans, and the Japanese too, for not being aggressive enough.

*The President.* Yes. Well, I think most American businessmen would say we've got to do better in trying to adapt to foreign markets. So, that's part of it. The other part of it is, hey, we want full access to markets. And so, it's not mutually exclusive. But our message is: The more access we have, the more we can invest, the more that means, eventually means, for jobs in our country. So, I think it's a two-way street.

But our message is going to be listening to where we're not doing it right. These business people are smart. They'll take the message back to their colleagues through these vast organizations and say, "Here's what we need to do now to get smaller and other businesses doing better in the United