

States by having investment and trade abroad.” So, that’s the approach we’ve been taking.

*U.S. Military Presence in the Pacific*

Q. Mr. President, I’d like to ask you one question. Do you see any political reasons to keep the strong military presence of the U.S.A. in this part of the world after the breakup of the Soviet Union?

*The President.* We see less—because of the hostility that existed, cold war hostility—we see less imminent threat. But who knows in this changing world where the security threats will come to the freedom of small ASEAN countries, for example. And what we will do is preserve a certain security presence.

But I think it’s fair to say that as the world has changed dramatically, as the cold war is over, the threat that existed between the Soviet Union and the United States is certainly way, way, way down. And I think our friends in Asia see it that way. But I think everyone recognizes that there can be untoward happenings. We saw one just a year ago in the Persian Gulf that required a mobility and a presence eventually in the Gulf by the United States.

So, we are not in a war frame of mind. We’re in a peace frame of mind, but we’re keeping our eyes open. And there are certain security considerations that ASEAN countries agree with us exists, and we’ll just act accordingly.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, if I could bring you back to an earlier question.

*The President.* He’s got one for the Prime Minister. Then let me come over there, sir, if you would.

*Relocation of Command Task Force*

Q. I’d like to bring you back to the earlier question about the bases here in Singapore since there had been this expectation of agreement and there now seems to be more to talk about. Do you have specific reservations about more American troops coming into this country?

And if I could, Mr. President, bring you back to an earlier question as well, which was the question about defense spending in the U.S. Even though you don’t want to break the budget, are you now going to

cut deeper into defense spending?

*The Prime Minister.* There was no reservation. What I said was, we have agreed in principle. Of course, the details are not available to us, and the details would have to be discussed between the two sides. And only when you know the details can we then sign an agreement. But this will be within the framework of the memorandum of understanding which we have with the United States. So in principle, I’ve told the President that there’s no problem.

*U.S. Military Spending*

*The President.* And my answer to that question is, we are examining all these questions right now. And if, given the changes in the world, there are ways we can save further on defense that has absorbed quite a few cuts, I’d like to be able to recommend that to the American people. But all that, we’re working right now with the Secretary of Defense on these questions. But I would hope that the answer would be in the affirmative. But again, I’d like to have the available time left between now and when I finalize all of this to stay a little loose on it. But we’re looking for saving taxpayers’ money everywhere we can.

Q. Well, if I may, sir, Secretary Cheney says he and Dick Darman have already agreed on a figure.

*The President.* Well, I don’t know that he said that. I haven’t been told that he’s agreed with Dick Darman. So, I’ll let you know as soon as I hear, maybe.

*U.S. Military Presence in the Pacific*

Q. Mr. President, a few minutes ago you mentioned the Gulf crisis. Is it one of the objectives of the United States in devising these new, more flexible regional security arrangements to ensure that, if there is in future some kind of regional crisis, that the United States and its friends and allies in this region can cooperate together more effectively to damp down or contain such a problem? And can you give us an idea of the kinds of crises you see emerging in the future?

*The President.* No, but I think the first answer to your question is, yes, I think there should be an ability to respond flexi-