

## Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Brian Mulroney of Canada February 5, 1993

*The President.* Hi, Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

*Q.* Hi.

*Prime Minister Mulroney.* Hi, Helen. How are you?

### *Unemployment*

*Q.* What's your reaction to the unemployment numbers, Mr. President?

*The President.* Better, but still too high: you know, at the trough of the recession, unemployment was 6.8 percent, lower than it is now. And now we've had 14 months over 7 percent, and I hope it's going down. But until we get it way down, there will still be a lot of unused capacity in the country and a lot of idle people.

### *Bosnia*

*Q.* Are you going to have a statement soon on Bosnia, Mr. President?

*The President.* Well, Mr. Christopher is working on it, and we're working on it. I've spent a good deal of time on it in the last 2 weeks. But I don't have anything to say yet. It's a very difficult problem, I'm very concerned about it, and I have spent a good deal of time on it. When I have something to say, I will.

*Q.* Will that be a topic for this meeting, sir?

*The President.* We're going to talk about a lot of things. We don't have a typed agenda.

*Q.* This isn't the first time you've met, is it?

*The President.* Yes, but we've talked before several times.

*Q.* On the phone, but not—

*The President.* This is our first meeting.

*Prime Minister Mulroney.* And you were probably mentioned in those conversations. [*Laughter*]

[*At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.*]

### *Trade*

*Q.* Prime Minister, will you be seeking some assurances against the winds of protectionism in Congress you mentioned yesterday?

*Prime Minister Mulroney.* Yes, I will. I think that any time protectionism takes hold in the

United States or Canada or elsewhere, it's bad for prosperity. It cripples growth everywhere. And so the President's a free trader, and so am I. And so I expect that we'll resolve the difficulties that we have, not in today's meeting but over a period of time. And so I look forward to the meeting. I have been very encouraged by my earlier telephone conversations with the President in regard to trade and other matters.

[*At this point, a question was asked and answered in French, and a translation was not provided.*]

*Q.* Mr. President, what do you think about the free trade of Canada? Is it important for U.S., do you think?

*The President.* I think it's very important for both of us. And I think it will have real benefits over the long run. As a Governor, I was one of those who took responsibility for trying to lobby the original agreement through the Congress here. And I hope we can complete the North American Free Trade Agreement, bringing in Mexico, making some changes that I think will be good for the Mexicans and good for the Canadians and the Americans.

But I think that if you just look at the last 50 years, the only way you can have growth within advanced countries over the long run is to have global growth. The only way you can have global growth is to expand trade.

This is a difficult time. Europe is in distress economically. Japan is having some difficulties. And of course, there will always be discussions among us about whether the rules of trade are fair or not. But our goal must continue to be the opening of trade and the increase in volume of trade.

*Q.* So do you want to reassure Canadians? Because there's a little fear in Canada about U.S. protectionism.

*The President.* Oh, I think Canada is our most important trading partner. I hope that we can do some things that will improve the economy of Canada. I'm very concerned that—our economy has started to pick up now. And normally when it does, Canada follows behind just by a few months. I want some of that growth to