

evening again. And we are watching this closely and may have more to say specifically in the days ahead.

But I think it's—this is very important to us. Mexico is our neighbor and has been a constructive partner, has tried to work with us on issues ranging from the drug trade to immigration, as well as on our economic issues. Mexico is sort of a bellwether for the rest of Latin America and developing countries throughout the world. So we have to work on the confidence and the liquidity crisis. And I think that it's in our interest to do so.

Now, let me say on the second question, the people who were opposed to NAFTA made exactly the reverse argument. What they said was that the Americans would be taken to the cleaners, and Mexico would get rich off NAFTA, and America would be greatly disadvantaged. As it turned out, because of our high levels of productivity, the recovery of our economy, and the particular needs of the Mexican economy and the Mexican people now, we did quite well under NAFTA for the last 2 years.

And what has happened is something that no one really foresaw. But I would think this should reaffirm our determination to try to have both democracy and progress, not only in Mexico but throughout Latin America. And for those who can remember what it was like for the United States when Latin America was in depression and when Latin America did not have democratic governments, I think there's no question that it is better for us to have the sort of atmosphere and the sort of reality we saw at the Summit of the Americas. So I just disagree with those who make the second assertion.

Anyone have a question for the Prime Minister?

Q. Mr. President, following Mexico, I want to know if you can tell us the amount of the increase in the credit facility you're going to announce and when, and second, if you plan to keep your support for the candidacy of President Salinas for the WTO over this international criticism for his role in this grand monetary crisis in Mexico?

The President. The answer to the first question is no, I can't give you a specific answer. The answer to the second question is yes, I still support President Salinas.

Is there a Japanese journalist who has a question, a Japanese journalist, a question for the Prime Minister?

North Korea

Q. [*Inaudible*—support for the light-water reactor project, the President mentioned there was a strong support by Japan, and the Prime Minister mentioned Japan intends to play a significant financial role. I wonder what specific commitment you gave to the President? Also, since you've mentioned Japan intends to play a significant financial role, I wonder if there was any specific ratio indicated, any number given to that financial role? And now there is some criticism with regard to the rather ambiguous solution reached in that agreed framework, and I wonder if there was any comment on that?

Prime Minister Murayama. Well, with regard to the resolution of the North Korean nuclear issue, I would like to say that this issue has a bearing not just on Japan and the neighboring areas but for Asia-Pacific region as a whole. And we've watched very carefully the progress in the U.S.-North Korean talks. And thanks to the tenacious efforts made by the United States, agreement has been reached, and we appreciate that very highly.

In relation to that nuclear issue, we're now discussing the light-water reactor project. As I mentioned earlier, the Government of Japan intends to play a significant financial role in relation to that LWR project. That is what I told the President. However, we have not decided on the specifics of that financial role. For example, we have not commented on how much that financial role is going to be. It is not merely that the Government of Japan intends to cooperate; rather we take this issue as a matter of—for itself as well. And I think it's with that very engaged attitude that we have to address the problem.

The President. Rita [Rita Braver, CBS News]. We'll take, I think, one more each.

Minimum Wage

Q. Mr. President, your aides have said that you are definitely considering a raise in the minimum wage in this country. Have you signed off on that? What's the area in which you're talking about raising it, and when do you think you'll have a final decision? And are you worried about Republican opposition already building?

The President. Well, I have not—let me say, number one, I haven't received a recommendation yet on that from my economic advisers. So I don't want to comment on it until I do.