

the budget and fight crime and drugs at the same time.

If we can simply break the chain between drug use and criminal activity for people who are under criminal supervision, in prison, or on parole—if we could just do that—we can go a very long way toward making our streets and our neighborhoods safe for our children again. That is what this Executive order is designed to do. I know it can work. I have seen the high rates of return from good treatment programs in Federal facilities. We can do this at the State and Federal level. If we do not do it, we will continue to see people go right back on the streets with the drug habits that got them in trouble in the first place. If we do it, the crime rates will plummet, and the drug problem will dramatically shrink.

Thank you very much. Let me go sign the order.

[At this point, the President signed the memorandum.]

#### *Asian Economies*

Q. Mr. President, what do you hear about the Asian—[inaudible]—

Q. Mr. President, what do you say about Iraq's—[inaudible]—

*The President.* I'll take them both. On the Asian issue, I received a briefing this morning from Secretary Rubin and Secretary Albright, and I've obviously kept in touch with it; I do daily. We are working hard on it. I want to emphasize that the most important thing that has to be done is that all the countries affected have to make sure they have the very best policies to have good financial institutions, proper practices, things that will inspire investor confidence. But these economies have enormous productive capacity. They have generated dramatic increases in growth for their people, and we can restore stability if the countries will take the steps that are necessary. Then the IMF reform packages have to be followed. And the rest of us need to be in a position of supporting those trends.

We're following it on a daily basis, and I believe that the path we're pursuing is the correct one.

#### *Situation in Iraq*

Q. Mr. President, what do you think of Iraq's threat to block inspections by the American-

led team? Are we going back to where we were last November? What can we do about this?

*The President.* Well, I certainly hope not. Now, of course it hasn't happened yet. But I think that it's important to make just a few basic points here.

Number one, if Saddam Hussein does this, it is a clear and serious violation of the United Nations Security Council resolution.

Number two, the United States had nothing whatever to do with selecting this team, the people on it, or its composition. The team that's there is part of a larger team of people, 43 people from 16 different countries. There are a substantial number of Americans on this team. They were picked by the person who is in charge of the inspection process because of their technical expertise. Everyone who goes there should be technically qualified, and the United States has not attempted to influence the composition of the people on the teams. But certainly Saddam Hussein shouldn't be able to pick and choose who does this work. That's for the United Nations to decide.

If they are denied the right to do their job tomorrow, then I expect the United Nations Security Council to take strong and appropriate action.

#### *Sexual Offender Tracking System*

Q. Mr. President, a few years ago you set into motion the Pam Lychner Sexual Offender Tracking and Identification Act, that you wanted all 50 States to centralize their sexual offender records. Less than half the States and the District are into that interim computer system which is eventually going to lead to a permanent system, which caused you to sign—to send a letter to the Governors to get them off the dime.

How do you look at that effort now, when you think that sexual offenders may be falling through the cracks and only half the States are on board?

*The President.* Well, I think the letter I sent says it all. The truth is that the stakes here are quite high, and we have the ability, through technology, to centralize these records to get the job done. I know it requires some cost and some effort on the part of the States. We're having a similar problem with fewer States in the child support area, trying to centralize records there so we can interconnect the systems. And I know this is difficult, but it has