

1 UNITED STATES ATTORNEY GENERAL JANET RENO

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DISCUSSION

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NORTH AMERICAN FREE TRADE AGREEMENT

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AND U.S. IMMIGRATION ISSUES

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University of California at San Diego

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Graduate School of International Relations

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and Pacific Studies

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Robinson Auditorium

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Thursday,

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October 7, 1993

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1:00 p.m.

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Panel of Experts

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MICHAEL BERNSTEIN

Chair, Department of History

MILES KAHLER

Graduate School of International Relations and Pacific  
Studies

COLLEEN MORTON

Vice-President, Institute of the Americas

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P R O C E E D I N G S

(1:00 p.m.)

1  
2  
3 MR. GOUREVITCH: Attorney General Janet Reno is already  
4 well known to most Americans. Born in Miami and raised in  
5 Dade County, Florida, Ms. Reno earned her B.A. in chemistry  
6 at Cornell, and a law degree from Harvard. In 1978 she  
7 became State Attorney for Dade County, was reelected five  
8 times, and then served as State Attorney for Florida. It  
9 was in March of this year that President Clinton appointed  
10 her Attorney General of the United States.

11 The Attorney General will speak to us today about NAFTA  
12 and immigration. Following her talk, I'm hopeful that we'll  
13 have some time for questions. Please hold any comments or  
14 remarks you may have until the question period. The  
15 Attorney General has a very busy schedule today, so at about  
16 1:40 or so she'll leave for the next scheduled event, and  
17 the rest of you are welcome to stay and continue our  
18 discussion of NAFTA here.

19 Ladies and gentlemen, it's a very great honor for me,  
20 as Dean of the Graduate of School of International Relations  
21 of Pacific Studies, to introduce and present to you the  
22 Attorney General of the United States, Janet Reno.

23 HONORABLE JANET RENO: Thank you so much, Dean, and  
24 thank you for this very warm welcome.

25 It's a little over seven months ago that I started this

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1 great adventure. Then, I was in Miami, thinking I would  
2 begin a new term as State Attorney, and did not think that  
3 any of this would ever happen to me. It has been an  
4 incredible adventure. The American people give me such hope  
5 for the future, and this opportunity to visit with you, to  
6 talk about an issue that is of great concern to me, and I  
7 think imperative for the nation to consider, is a real  
8 privilege for me.

9 I come today to talk about immigration and the North  
10 American Free Trade Agreement. I come to talk with you  
11 today about California and the challenges it faces, knowing  
12 in some small measure, from Miami, what those challenges may  
13 be: immigration, and drugs, and the impact that these forces  
14 can have on a state and its economy, and so much of what  
15 goes within each of our communities.

16 I came to Washington from Miami, where I was the  
17 daughter of an immigrant, a man who came to this country  
18 when he was 12 years old, who was teased for his funny  
19 clothes and his funny language, and never forgot what it was  
20 to be an immigrant, and spent all of his life as a police  
21 reporter for the Miami Herald, reporting the bad news,  
22 reporting the hard news, but trying to do it in a way that  
23 was respectful of everybody involved, and gentle to all  
24 concerned.

25 I come from Miami, where we have seen the burden of

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1 immigration, in our courts, our court calendars, our  
2 prisons, our hospitals, and our public schools, but we have  
3 also seen the magnificent contribution of immigrants  
4 throughout our community.

5 The lessons taught me will always be with me. His  
6 example guides me, and I want to try to approach the issues  
7 I face as Attorney General in that spirit. I think the  
8 greatest single issue that I will face as Attorney General  
9 is the whole issue of immigration. How do we maintain this  
10 nation's tradition as a nation of immigrants, while at the  
11 same time balancing the burdens that immigration can place  
12 on a community? One of the jobs as Attorney General  
13 involves the whole Immigration and Naturalization Service,  
14 and the Border Patrol, and I am dedicated to doing  
15 everything I can, in the time that I am Attorney General,  
16 to develop appropriate procedures along the border, with the  
17 Border Patrol, to stem illegal immigration, but I am here  
18 to tell you that the passage of NAFTA, of the North American  
19 Free Trade Agreement, will help me protect our borders.

20 NAFTA is our best hope for reducing illegal  
21 immigration, in the long haul. If NAFTA passes, my job will  
22 be easier. If NAFTA fails, my job, stopping the flow of  
23 illegal immigrants, will be much, much more difficult, if  
24 not impossible.

25 I'd like to talk with you candidly about illegal

1 immigration. The women, men, and children who cross our  
2 borders from Mexico take tremendous risks. Illegal  
3 immigrants don't make their perilous journeys so that they  
4 can stand in one of our welfare lines, or be treated in some  
5 emergency room. No; illegal immigrants come to America for  
6 jobs. It's that simple, and those that would tell you  
7 otherwise aren't speaking the truth; they're just being  
8 political about it.

9 I want to be clear about this. I want to treat  
10 everyone, regardless of who they are, with respect. I want  
11 to insure that our laws and our procedures for due processes  
12 are carried out, no matter who is involved, but I also want  
13 to insist on doing everything humanly possible to protect  
14 those borders from those who would ignore our immigration  
15 laws.

16 To focus on the border for a moment, when I came into  
17 office I became concerned because I found there were  
18 resources on the border that were not being used, because  
19 a car didn't have a radio, there was not a backup procedure,  
20 and one of first things that I undertook was to make sure  
21 that the resources of the Border Patrol are being used as  
22 wisely as possible, and that equipment is not sitting on the  
23 sidelines, unused, as we face this tremendous challenge on  
24 the border.

25 Under the President's leadership, as we consolidate the

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1 resources, we're increasing the size of the Border Patrol.  
2 In the coming months, I will be announcing new and  
3 innovative approaches to deploying our personnel most  
4 effectively along the border. We're also using new  
5 technologies, including integrated sensors, enhanced  
6 inspection systems, and better communications networks, to  
7 sharpen our eyes and ears on the border. Our administration  
8 is moving aggressively to shut the loopholes that some use  
9 to flout our immigration laws.

10 The bottom line, though, is this: people come to  
11 America illegally because they seek better jobs. We will  
12 not reduce the flow of illegal immigrants into this country  
13 until these illegal immigrants find decent jobs, at decent  
14 wages, in Mexico. Our best chance to reduce illegal  
15 immigration is sustained, robust Mexican economic growth.  
16 NAFTA will create jobs in Mexico, jobs for Mexican workers  
17 who otherwise cross illegally into America. These jobs will  
18 help us deal with the immigration problem.

19 I have read so much since I first heard about NAFTA,  
20 pro and con, and I didn't come to this job as an expert in  
21 NAFTA, or international trade, or what should be the content  
22 of trade treaties between the North American nations, but  
23 the more I read, the more I see an awful lot of political  
24 rhetoric, and I think we've got to cut through it. I think  
25 we've got to look at what the real facts are, and see the

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1 direct linkage between free trade, a strong economy in  
2 Mexico, and reduced illegal immigration.

3 In 1986, before NAFTA became such a hot potato,  
4 Congress created the Commission for the Study of  
5 International Migration. After completing its work, this  
6 commission concluded that the creation of new and better  
7 jobs in Mexico, through measures including a free trade  
8 pact, is the only long-term way to reduce illegal  
9 immigration to the United States.

10 I wanted to find out about this commission. I sent my  
11 people back, and said, "Make sure they know what they're  
12 talking about. Make sure it was a commission that was  
13 balanced, and composed of people who knew what they were  
14 talking," because I don't want to stand up across this  
15 country and talk about ideas, unless I feel like they have  
16 some backing, and I'm satisfied that this report is a  
17 thoughtful, balanced, and fair report.

18 A University of California study in 1991 also found  
19 that free trade with the United States, and international  
20 economic reforms, would reduce illegal immigration from  
21 Mexico. The study estimated that NAFTA could reduce illegal  
22 Mexican immigration by anywhere between 250,000 and 1.1  
23 million people. Even a NAFTA opponent at the Economic  
24 Policy Institute concluded, in 1991, that NAFTA would reduce  
25 illegal immigration from Mexico by as many as 1.6 million

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1 people by the turn of the century.

2         These studies also found that reduced illegal  
3 immigration will produce real wage increases of as much as  
4 six percent for low-wage American workers who are now edged  
5 out of opportunity by illegal immigration. According to the  
6 International Trade Commission, the passage of NAFTA will  
7 boost Mexican economic growth by several percentage points.  
8 The commission also found that NAFTA will increase jobs and  
9 average wages in Mexico.

10         The failure of NAFTA will only serve to worsen the  
11 problem. For example, major agricultural reforms are  
12 already underway in Mexico. One of the points raised to me  
13 is, "Well, if you get NAFTA, that will increase the people  
14 leaving the farms to go to the cities, and that will  
15 increase illegal immigration." That's happening now,  
16 because, with or without NAFTA, those agricultural reforms  
17 are taking place. People will be going to the cities. If  
18 they go to the cities and don't find jobs, guess where  
19 they're coming? These agricultural reforms in Mexico are  
20 going to happen anyway. If NAFTA fails, these urban centers  
21 will not be able to absorb the influx. That will mean even  
22 greater pressures on our borders.

23         Let us protect our borders with the most personnel, the  
24 best technology that we can muster, but let us also face the  
25 facts. A richer, more stable, more competent Mexico is the

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1 only solution, I think, to real, substantial immigration  
2 reform, but such a Mexico is a better partner for America.  
3 That is why I think we've got to approve the agreement.

4 I have another job, probably one that more people think  
5 of in connection with the Attorney General, and that's doing  
6 something about drugs in the United States. There is no  
7 simple solution to the problem of drugs in the United  
8 States. It's going to take a balanced approach of focusing  
9 on the kingpins, going after the people who traffic in this  
10 human misery, making sure that we use our dollars wisely,  
11 but there is no doubt that we must also put a far greater  
12 emphasis on education, prevention, and treatment,  
13 recognizing that drugs are a symptom of a deeper problem in  
14 society, and that is that too often we have forgotten and  
15 neglected people, and we have failed to make an investment  
16 in people. We see it in terms of violence, in terms of drug  
17 abuse, and we have got to renew our commitment to people,  
18 and to giving our children a chance to grow, as strong,  
19 constructive human beings.

20 In addition, besides these efforts, it's going to take  
21 a genuine, sustained cooperation with the government of  
22 Mexico. One of the great experiences that I've had in these  
23 seven months is to have an opportunity to talk with the  
24 Attorney General of Mexico, a very distinguished person with  
25 a deep and abiding regard for human rights, a deep and

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1 abiding regard for honest, fair, vigorous law enforcement.  
2 He's one of the best people that I've talked to in my whole  
3 experience in Washington, in terms of understanding the  
4 facts and realities, but refusing to give in to what's gone  
5 on before, and with a real commitment to do everything he  
6 can in his office to improve the effectiveness of law  
7 enforcement in Mexico.

8 President Salinas and Attorney General Carpizo have  
9 increased the Mexican anti-drug budget, they have battled  
10 the drug lords, and they've tackled the corruption, but we  
11 need to do much more. The passage of NAFTA will cement for  
12 decades close ties between America and Mexico. The trade  
13 agreement will make cooperation between our countries the  
14 norm, instead of the exception. With NAFTA in place, I can  
15 work far more effectively with my Mexican counterparts, to  
16 insure tough, honest enforcement of our anti-drug laws.  
17 Cooperation with Mexico is good for American law  
18 enforcement. It will help us do our job, and that's another  
19 reason we need NAFTA.

20 I journey to Mexico next week to address our joint  
21 efforts to reduce illegal immigration and drug trafficking.  
22 I'm confident that the passage of NAFTA will significantly  
23 enhance the cooperative work of America and Mexico.

24 Before I close, I'd like to speak directly to the  
25 people of California. Being a Floridian, born and raised

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1 there, and oftentimes a bit competitive with California, I  
2 nevertheless have admired this state, admired the spirit in  
3 which this state became one of the greatest in the nation.  
4 I have to tell you now, having flown out here three or four  
5 times in these last four months, I just have an incredible  
6 respect for the people who founded this state, who came  
7 across those mountains, or around those oceans. It is a  
8 pioneering state, a state that has never fallen back from  
9 a challenge, never shrunk from the opportunity to do  
10 something better. I come from a state that is in many  
11 respects newer. My city didn't become a city until 1896.  
12 In its first newspaper, published on May 15th, 1896, it  
13 said, "We now have 1,500 people; we should incorporate."  
14 And now look at it. I don't think Miami, South Florida,  
15 Florida, or California want to shrink from challenge, want  
16 to shrink from change, want to shrink from moving towards  
17 the future and the spirit in which this state grew to what  
18 it is today.

19 I know the last years have been very hard ones for  
20 Californians. Economic forces from within and beyond  
21 California's borders have turned viciously against the  
22 state, yet illegal immigrants have continued to flock here,  
23 and the result has been economic hardship. I understand.  
24 I understand that some are tempted to pull back, to  
25 retrench, to hunker down and wait out the economic storms.

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1 For most people in times of such trouble, this would be the  
2 most natural path to take. But that's not a path that  
3 Californians, nor indeed the people of this country, have  
4 taken, when they have faced challenges in the past.

5 I think the time has come to understand that we can do  
6 so much if we look to the future, look to the future in  
7 terms of competition against all comers, both from at home  
8 and abroad. We've beaten people before, when we've competed  
9 effectively, square-on, and we can do it again. You've got  
10 it better in California than anyplace else.

11 Now you've got to decide whether to support NAFTA, and  
12 whether to encourage your representatives in Congress to do  
13 the same. I don't think the facts, when I get through all  
14 the rhetoric back and forth, and read all the pros and cons,  
15 and think it out, I don't think the facts leave doubt as to  
16 what should be done. NAFTA will create jobs in Mexico, but  
17 it will also create jobs in California. These will be good,  
18 high-wage jobs, for, despite what NAFTA's critics say, a job  
19 created in Mexico is not a job lost in America. This is so  
20 for two reasons.

21 NAFTA eliminates Mexican trade barriers which now  
22 hamstring business. The average tariff, as I understand it,  
23 into Mexico, is about 10 percent, two-and-a-half times the  
24 barriers going the other way, of about four percent. That  
25 can only benefit American business.

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1           Second, more jobs at better wages in Mexico will  
2 increase Mexican spending on American-made products. I'll  
3 let the facts speak for themselves, as to whether NAFTA will  
4 be good for California, good for this country.

5           Since 1986, as Mexico began to get its economy in  
6 order, California's yearly exports to Mexico and Canada have  
7 already totaled almost \$14,000,000, and trade with Mexico  
8 and Canada supports nearly 190,000 jobs for Californians.  
9 These markets for California goods are growing. California  
10 trade with Mexico has tripled since 1987. Mexicans already  
11 purchase more goods from America, per capita, than the  
12 Japanese or the Europeans, even though Mexican wages are  
13 much lower. As NAFTA causes Mexican incomes to rise,  
14 California's exports will rise, right along with them.

15           NAFTA will expand the profitable Mexican and Canadian  
16 markets for California businesses. NAFTA will tear down  
17 Mexican trade barriers that now discriminate against  
18 California firms. If NAFTA is ratified, California  
19 companies will expand their Mexican markets, from satellites  
20 to computers, to lumber, to industrial machines.

21           NAFTA will create good, high-paying jobs for American  
22 workers. It's estimated, and I've not seen any significant  
23 refutation, that 200,000 new American jobs will be created  
24 over the next two years. American companies now caught in  
25 the straitjacket of American trade barriers will be freed

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1 by NAFTA to pursue the growing Mexican market.

2 American exports to Mexico, which have already  
3 skyrocketed from \$12,000,000 to \$40,000,000 in just five  
4 years, will soar even higher because of NAFTA. Under NAFTA,  
5 America will become the leading country in the world's  
6 largest free trade zone.

7 These are the facts. Sometimes, though, facts can be  
8 obscured by the fear of change, by the worry of a worker  
9 afraid for his job, by the fear of the college graduate  
10 apprehensive about her future. I understand this fear. I  
11 know how difficult change can be. NAFTA does mean change  
12 for America, but it is change for the better.

13 As I have traveled across this country, I have seen a  
14 new spirit awakening in America, a spirit recognizing that  
15 we cannot continue to provide health care as we have done  
16 before, that we cannot continue just to build prisons, but  
17 we've got to prevent crime in other ways, by banning guns  
18 and addressing the issues that cause crime in the first  
19 place, that we have got to develop an educational system  
20 that will provide standards of excellence for all of our  
21 children, not just a few, that give them a chance to grow,  
22 and to become strong, constructive members of our society.

23 We have got to develop a sense that enables us to react  
24 to change, that can let us focus on prevention, rather than  
25 crisis. Let us focus on our children, and an investment in

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1 our people, rather than the results of indifference and  
2 neglect, whether it be in prisons, drugs, or low academic  
3 achievement.

4 The time is here for change, and I think the American  
5 people are committed, committed to doing their very best,  
6 to being their very best, to competing against all comers,  
7 and to showing the world that, given a level playing field,  
8 with Mexico, with the other nations of the world, we can do  
9 a better job, compete better, provide stronger, better  
10 products and services than anybody else.

11 It has been an incredible journey for me, back and  
12 forth across this country, in the small towns and the major  
13 cities. There are problems, but this nation was never, ever  
14 made great by shirking its problems. This state did not  
15 become the great state that it is by putting its head in the  
16 sand, and saying, "We don't want to compete." This state,  
17 this nation, came out into a new land, into a new world, and  
18 said, "We can do it." And I think we will.

19 MR. GOUREVITCH: I think we have an opportunity for  
20 questions. I'd like to just suggest only that you make your  
21 questions short, so that we can have as many as possible.  
22 The Attorney General will remain there, and I will try to  
23 help by calling on people.

24 Who would like to ask the first question?

25 SPEAKER: I'd like ask a question about a local issue,

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1 specifically the San Diego-Tijuana border. I think we're  
2 all in agreement with what you said, that NAFTA is a good  
3 thing for the economies of San Diego and Tijuana.  
4 Development depends on them being closely linked, yet now  
5 it's very, very hard to have any commercial or other  
6 intercourse across the border, because of very long waits  
7 getting into the U.S., long and uncertain waits, and I  
8 wonder if you have thought about the problem of having  
9 rigorous enforcement of our immigration laws, but still  
10 allowing commerce to easily work across the border.

11 HONORABLE JANET RENO: This past summer, I went to the  
12 border. I saw the lines. I heard the problems. I talked  
13 with merchants. And one of the points that is of particular  
14 interest: the border, and the problems along the border,  
15 change as you go up and down the border from here to Texas,  
16 but of principal concern in many instances is commercial  
17 interchange and economic interchange.

18 In a bigger vision, I am concerned when I see lines  
19 anywhere in the country. A successful business doesn't  
20 become really successful, and doesn't make its profits, by  
21 keeping its customers standing in line, and somehow or  
22 another, working together, I think we can address how we  
23 stem illegal immigration, while at the same time encouraging  
24 good economic exchange that benefits both nations. To that  
25 end, we are trying to work. The Immigration and

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1 Naturalization Service is working with Customs. I was  
2 amazed when I took office to find that Customs and INS  
3 inspectors were oftentimes standing side by side, when one  
4 person could perhaps be doing the same functions. We want  
5 to make sure that there is no overlap, no duplication, no  
6 fragmentation between those services, that we can develop  
7 other means and methods for providing prompt economic  
8 intercourse, while at the same time addressing the problem.

9 As you well know, there are no easy answers, and every  
10 time I think I've found one solution, then another problem  
11 pops up. But somebody asked me when I took office, what did  
12 I know about being Attorney General? What did I know about  
13 federal issues? It is amazing, after you've been prosecutor  
14 in Dade County for 15 years, what you learn in terms of how  
15 complex problems can be, but if you work at it hard enough,  
16 if you let people know that there's no instant solution, if  
17 you look at the resources you have, and try constantly to  
18 refine them so that they work together better, you can make  
19 a difference, and I'm dedicated and determined to try.

20 SPEAKER: In respect to the environment in bordering  
21 states that will be greatly affected by this, how does the  
22 U.S. propose to implement policies, environmental policies,  
23 that Mexican and U.S. citizens will be able to abide by?

24 HONORABLE JANET RENO: There is a side agreement that  
25 I think goes a long way towards protecting the environment,

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1 a side agreement to NAFTA that has been negotiated by the  
2 administration. If we don't have NAFTA, we're going to have  
3 nothing that can provide protection where Mexican influences  
4 would affect the border, or the area immediately across the  
5 border. I can't give you these assurances, other than a  
6 very personal one.

7 The Secretary of the Department of Environmental  
8 Regulation, Carol Browner, comes from the same hometown that  
9 I do. She was Secretary of our Florida Department of  
10 Environmental Regulation, and she was superb. I have every  
11 confidence in her, and I think she refers to NAFTA as the  
12 "the greenest treaty." I think it will give us an  
13 opportunity that we would not have if NAFTA were not passed,  
14 to make sure that some of these issues can be addressed.

15 MR. GOUREVITCH: The student back there.

16 SPEAKER: Before I was a student, I worked in an  
17 electronics factory, that the main export to Mexico was our  
18 well-paying jobs and health benefits, to a Mexican  
19 maquiladora plant, where they were able to expose the  
20 workers in their plant in Mexico to toxic chemicals. But  
21 that's not even what I even wanted to ask about. I just got  
22 reminded about it, when you talked about the green effect  
23 of NAFTA. I think of the effect on workers exposed to  
24 trichloroethylene and pentylene (phonetic), and other  
25 chemicals.

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1           What I want to know is, you talked about your Mexican  
2 counterparts' belief in human rights, but what about these  
3 American unionists who were detained the other day,  
4 including one of my fellow graduate students? They were  
5 detained on a fact-finding mission, trying to determine what  
6 the conditions were for maquiladora workers.

7           HONORABLE JANET RENO: I am not familiar with the  
8 details on it. If you'll give me the details afterwards,  
9 I'll be happy to check into it.

10          MR. GOUREVITCH: There was another hand up, over here.

11          SPEAKER: My question concerns job retraining.  
12 Obviously, jobs are going to go south of the border, to some  
13 extent. What policies is the Clinton administration  
14 proposing right now for job retraining, about how much  
15 monies are in the budget, and what industries are they going  
16 to?

17          HONORABLE JANET RENO: That's a good question, and I  
18 can't give you the specifics, but I'll get your name, and  
19 try to give you the specifics afterwards, and call you when  
20 I get back to Washington, or have somebody call you with the  
21 details.

22          One of the points that has impressed me about the  
23 President, with regards to the issues arising from NAFTA,  
24 because nobody denies that there will be some jobs lost to  
25 south of the border: the fact is that a lot many more jobs,

1 good jobs, will be created here. Both with respect to jobs  
2 that might be lost as a result, but, more importantly, jobs  
3 that are lost because of whole industries, or products, or  
4 processes becoming obsolete, I have had recent conversations  
5 with the Secretary of Education, and with a number of other  
6 people with the Department of Labor, and the whole emphasis  
7 of the administration is to emphasize retraining as a fact  
8 of life in the United States. With technology developing  
9 as it is, with industries becoming obsolete, or a particular  
10 process becoming obsolete very quickly, I think we are going  
11 to look forward to a future where retraining, job  
12 retraining, will be as much a part of our life as K through  
13 12, and I think everything that Secretary Reich in the  
14 Department of Labor, and the administration, and the  
15 Secretary of Education are trying to do in this regard  
16 focuses on just that effort.

17 SPEAKER: Attorney General, my name is John Brooks.  
18 In the press in the last week, there have been some  
19 reflections on the enhanced border enforcement program along  
20 the Texas border, and some at least implied criticism of the  
21 damage it has done to the Texas economy, and a suggestion  
22 that an enhanced border program might be better suited to  
23 the California border. I wonder if you could comment on how  
24 our economy might escape what happened in Texas.

25 HONORABLE JANET RENO: Well, first of all, as I pointed

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1 out in the earlier question, the one that was first asked,  
2 I have been told by far better experts than me that the  
3 border varies as you go through from one state to another,  
4 and there are different situations. The experience in El  
5 Paso is one that should be reviewed; number one, to  
6 determine how it can be done cost-effectively, long-range;  
7 number two, how it can be done without disrupting economic  
8 relationships along the border that people want to preserve;  
9 number three, how it can be done in close coordination with  
10 the government of Mexico, to make sure that there are no  
11 tensions or ill-will developing.

12 We are reviewing that whole experience, to determine  
13 what, if anything, we can learn from it, and how it might  
14 be applied both here and in other parts of the border, and  
15 I think we still have some lessons to learn from it.

16 SPEAKER: On the gun control, do you think the bill  
17 will pass, are you in favor of it, and do you think it will  
18 have an effect?

19 HONORABLE JANET RENO: By "the bill," let me just  
20 categorize two bills. I think the Brady bill is going to  
21 pass. Wherever I go in the United States, even in areas  
22 where I would think that people might shy away from talking  
23 about regulation of guns, there is a very firm feeling that  
24 you ought to make sure that you have plenty of time to make  
25 sure a person is capable and authorized to properly use a

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1 weapon, and I just have a great feeling that if everybody  
2 will listen to the people of the United States, and vote  
3 what the people of the United States think, it's going to  
4 pass, and overwhelmingly.

5 With respect to the ban on assault weapons, I think,  
6 equally, that will pass. It is a ban not on weapons used  
7 for sporting purposes; it's clearly defined to provide for  
8 a ban on assault weapons not used for sporting purposes.  
9 There is no reason for those weapons except to kill people,  
10 and they should be banned.

11 With respect to the crime bill as a whole, because  
12 these bills might pass as part of a whole crime bill or  
13 separately, I think the crime bill is going to pass. It  
14 provides for up to 50,000 additional community police  
15 officers. Now, one of the questions raised by some people  
16 is, fine, you add police officers, but what are the  
17 prosecutors are going to do? What are the courts going to  
18 do? What are the prisons going to do?

19 I have seen so many excellent examples of community  
20 policing in South Florida that prevented crime, as well as  
21 focused on the really significant motivator or crime in the  
22 community, and they were just excellent programs. Now,  
23 traveling around the nation, I have found program after  
24 program that works, by involving the community, by focusing  
25 on community problems and dealing with the community, and

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1 problem-solving, as opposed to just response to 911 calls.

2 I think those combined efforts will pass. It is one  
3 of the administration's high priorities, and I feel strongly  
4 about it. At the same time, I think that the whole problem  
5 that we have seen with youth violence, I don't think we can  
6 suggest that there are any simple solutions. We can ban  
7 guns, we could ban guns in the hands of teenagers, but that  
8 doesn't mean that those tremendous volumes of weapons that  
9 are out there now still won't find their way into the hands  
10 of children. I think it's imperative that we focus on  
11 prevention programs for violence, as well as everything  
12 else.

13 In the last 10 years, the DARE program and other  
14 similar programs throughout the country have proven to me  
15 that you can do a lot in terms of education, prevention, and  
16 treatment, for drug abuse, and teaching children about  
17 drugs, and I was pleased to see that the DARE program is now  
18 expanding into violence-prevention programs, as well. There  
19 are a number of school systems throughout the country that  
20 have conflict resolution programs in their elementary  
21 schools, that teach children how to resolve conflicts  
22 peacefully. There are peer mediation programs that I've  
23 visited around the country.

24 I think the time has come, whether it be on NAFTA,  
25 violence, drugs, the whole issue of job retraining and

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1 wages, that we recognize, and I think the American people  
2 understand that there are no easy answers. It's not going  
3 to be solved with 30-second sound bites. It's not going to  
4 be solved by a lot partisan rhetoric. It's going to be  
5 solved by thoughtful people, Democrats and Republicans, the  
6 private sector and the public sector, all sitting down,  
7 working together, and resolving these issues. I just have  
8 a sense that that's what the American people want, and are  
9 quite willing to do.

10 MR. GOUREVITCH: The student right there on the end.

11 SPEAKER: In regards to the Mexican worker, a great  
12 many American companies move their companies to Mexico  
13 because the labor is cheap and there are less restrictions.  
14 How can NAFTA assure that more companies won't move to  
15 Mexico, and continue the exploitation of the Mexican worker?

16 HONORABLE JANET RENO: I think that you're seeing it  
17 now. Recently, some German automobile companies relocated  
18 their factories, not in Mexico, attracted by low wages, but  
19 in the United States, attracted by a better educational  
20 system, by a whole system and infrastructure that attracts  
21 companies, and I think that you're going to see it again and  
22 again. It's not just low-wage jobs or low-wage workers that  
23 attract a company; it's the whole polity of living.

24 SPEAKER: You mentioned in your remarks that NAFTA  
25 might help with the drug enforcement. What is your position

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1 on the number of laws that allow the seizure of property in  
2 the course of trying to interdict these drugs? There's a  
3 moral hazard, that some law enforcement agency might try to  
4 use this seizure to enhance their equipment supply, and so  
5 forth. What's the Attorney General's position on this, and  
6 do you have any plans to help alleviate this problem?

7 HONORABLE JANET RENO: Asset forfeiture is a remarkable  
8 tool for law enforcement, and I will give you an example.  
9 While I was State Attorney, a friend was telling me how he  
10 had visited a federal prison, talked with somebody who had  
11 been there for five years and was just about to get out, and  
12 said he was 25 years old when he came to prison, knew he was  
13 serving a five-year sentence. It didn't bother him, because  
14 he had three square meals a day, clean sheets, an  
15 opportunity for recreation, an opportunity to do a  
16 correspondence course, working towards his college degree,  
17 and when he got out he'd never have to work again.

18 I want people to understand that five years in prison  
19 is not a nice business expense, that they're going to be hit  
20 where it hurts, in the pocketbook, and that the proceeds of  
21 their illegal drug deals will be seized whenever possible.

22 At the same time, as State Attorney, I was concerned,  
23 from a public policy point of view, about a system that  
24 permits you to "retain what you see," as the old bounty  
25 system, and I think it's imperative, and I have asked the

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1 Deputy Attorney General to lead a review of all our asset  
2 forfeiture procedures and laws, to make sure that the  
3 seizure fits the crime, that there are no abuses, that due  
4 process is carried out, and that we have the best asset  
5 forfeiture law possible, one that is consistent with due  
6 process, one that is fair, but one that is vigorously  
7 enforced.

8 SPEAKER: How difficult is it going to be for President  
9 Clinton to get NAFTA approved? What's he going to have to  
10 do to get it approved?

11 HONORABLE JANET RENO: I think that it is clear, and  
12 it is so heartening to me, because, as I became Attorney  
13 General and saw the array of issues that I was going to have  
14 to look at, health care fraud in relation to health care  
15 reform, and so many different issues, I wondered about it.  
16 He has a tremendous grasp of government and of issues. He  
17 is terribly caring. I think he is a good communicator, and  
18 what he and the entire administration are going to have to  
19 do is talk sense to the American people.

20 When I trip up, it's when I say something that I really  
21 can't support, or feel a little uncomfortable about, and  
22 people will tell you in my office that I send them back,  
23 "No, go check that out. I don't really feel comfortable  
24 saying that." The America people want the hard facts. They  
25 understand that there's not going to be any simple solution,

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1 but I think with all of us, and, for example, where NAFTA  
2 affects me in terms of immigration, where NAFTA affects  
3 Carol Browner in terms of the environment, all of us will  
4 be talking to the American people. The President will be  
5 leading the way. The American people have got to let their  
6 elected representatives know how critical it is.

7 MR. GOUREVITCH: Last question?

8 SPEAKER: You talked about job retraining, and I want  
9 to back up for a minute. I've seen the effects on foreign  
10 investment in China, and the positive effects for the  
11 workers there, so I can see that happening in Mexico, as  
12 well. But as I came home this summer from two years in  
13 China, I watched two factories close in my community, and  
14 a lot of talk about job retraining, but nothing was done for  
15 these people. Unemployment benefits last longer now, and  
16 I believe that Congress has renewed that, but these people  
17 have no jobs. They need work, and they're not in  
18 retraining. What is the administration's plan to retrain  
19 them?

20 HONORABLE JANET RENO: There are a number of good  
21 retraining programs, and if you'll give me the specifics on  
22 those two areas, I will have somebody, if you could be right  
23 over here, I'll have somebody get your name, and we'll try  
24 to give you what information is available in that particular  
25 area. You're seeing it in a number of areas, with the whole

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1 base-closing issue. And one of the significant problems:  
2 again, there is no easy answer, if you think about it for  
3 a moment, because the economic situation is something has  
4 produced this, and then you have the base closings on top  
5 of that, and you can retrain, but you've got to have  
6 something to retrain to.

7 Another significant problem, and people minimize it,  
8 but if you think about the long-range consequences of it,  
9 you have a significant number of people coming out of prison  
10 who are going to be in the community. If you take them out  
11 of prison, if they had a drug problem, and you don't address  
12 the drug problem, if they didn't have a skill that could  
13 enable them to earn a wage, that's another problem. If you  
14 send them to prison for committing a crime, and then send  
15 them back to the community without addressing the problems,  
16 guess what they're going to do again?

17 There are significant problems. There are no easy  
18 answers, but with respect to those two I'll try to get some  
19 information for you, and have somebody call you. Thank you.

20 I think President Carter said it best, that this is the  
21 time not for political rhetoric and not for demagoguery;  
22 this is the time for thoughtful, clear discussions. There  
23 are some people who oppose NAFTA, and oppose it very  
24 thoughtfully and very carefully. I think they're wrong, but  
25 it is time for important, good, substantive discussion, by

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1 people of good will who are trying their best to make sure  
2 that they've got the most accurate facts to address this  
3 critical issue.

4 PRESS: Madame, the traffic across the border seems to  
5 be in two different situations. One involves jobs and  
6 economies, and one involves crime, such as people who are  
7 shipping drugs north, people who, perhaps, are coming across  
8 the border into the San Diego or California, to commit  
9 crimes and go back across. How do you balance a free trade  
10 agreement against the problems that you're still going to  
11 have in keeping the border secure from crime?

12 HONORABLE JANET RENO: I think that's the whole reason  
13 that NAFTA is so important, because I think that much of the  
14 influx is by people who are seeking jobs. If we can develop  
15 a strong economy, a strong job base, in Mexico, for Mexican  
16 workers, that, as I have said, is the way to address the  
17 problem of illegal immigration in the long haul.

18 With respect to drugs, that's got to be addressed both  
19 in the United States, in terms of reducing our demand for  
20 drugs, and through education, prevention, and treatment, by  
21 going after the major drug pins, by helping nations abroad  
22 who may be source countries to build democratic institutions  
23 that can help withstand the drug lords, and we're dedicated  
24 to trying to do that. I don't want to do anything that  
25 would in any way reduce our efforts in terms of drug

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1 enforcement. I want to see it enhanced by improving our  
2 balance, in terms of education, prevention, and treatment,  
3 as well.

4 In terms of criminal activity, again, that has been a  
5 problem in the past. It may have been increased now, but  
6 I think developing good relationships with governments like  
7 Mexico will be as important as any other step, in terms of  
8 being able to take effective action against those who would  
9 violate our laws.

10 PRESS: Would you see still, then, having a very strong  
11 Border Patrol, to maintain the security at the border?

12 HONORABLE JANET RENO: I think that a Border Patrol  
13 that is strong, that is fair, that vigorously enforces the  
14 border to prevent illegal immigration, but that at the same  
15 time honors and respects the due process of all involved,  
16 is going to be an important of our national effort. A  
17 Border Patrol by itself, without addressing the issue of why  
18 people are coming to the United States, will not be the only  
19 answer, however.

20 PRESS: What do you think of the blockade situation?  
21 Do you think that situation would work for San Diego?

22 HONORABLE JANET RENO: I have not made a judgment on  
23 that yet. We have the results of the El Paso pilot project.  
24 There are issues that have to be addressed, and one of the  
25 things that I want to look at, as I've mentioned before,

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1 people tell me again and again that the border is different  
2 from place to place. Clearly, the border here, where  
3 there's such a close opportunity, is a unique situation that  
4 we're going to have to look at.

5 Most of all, based on my experience at the border in  
6 August; one of the things that I asked for was a report.  
7 We've got that report now, as to how present resources are  
8 being allocated, what it's going to take, how we deploy  
9 those resources, and, most of all, how do we make sure that  
10 we're deploying them carefully? It was indicated to me that  
11 there were 1,000 people available, but only 100 might be on  
12 the border. Why were only 100? Well, you had to take some  
13 people to court, you had to do something else. Can I get  
14 other people? Can we get other people who are not actually  
15 Border Patrol officers to handle transportation issues?

16 There are so many issues that we have to address, and  
17 I think we will have a good plan.

18 PRESS: When do you think your plan will be  
19 forthcoming? You mentioned it in your talk, as well.

20 HONORABLE JANET RENO: We received the report from the  
21 Border Patrol. We're looking at the El Paso project, and  
22 I would hope that after Doris Meisner, the Commissioner  
23 Designate of INS, is confirmed, and I hope that that will  
24 be shortly, that we will then be able to move ahead, because  
25 I will want her to review it.

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1           PRESS:    The Mexican government has expressed some  
2 concern about this Operation Blockade. How much of the  
3 opinion of that country would affect your decision?

4           HONORABLE JANET RENO: I'm always interested in other  
5 people's opinions, and certainly the government of Mexico,  
6 and what I would like to do is, in all issues where people  
7 express concern, I don't want to ignore it. I want to sit  
8 down, and I look forward to the opportunity to sit down with  
9 my counterpart in Mexico when I visit there this Monday, and  
10 discuss it, and see what we can do to address whatever  
11 concerns they might have, both historically and for whatever  
12 we do in the future.

13          PRESS:    Ms. Reno, have you made any recommendations  
14 already to the President, after your visit to the border  
15 last August?

16          HONORABLE JANET RENO: What I stressed to him was that  
17 it was extremely important, and I had seen it in my  
18 experience in Miami, every time we had a crisis or after the  
19 great influx as a result of the Mariel exodus, there would  
20 be a reaction, "We need more police officers," and people  
21 would hire more police officers.

22          I think it's extremely important that when you build  
23 something you build it carefully, making sure that people  
24 are well-trained, that they are deployed in the most  
25 effective manner possible, that it matches machines or

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1 matched with men. It's very frustrating to find somebody  
2 sitting behind a desk because there isn't a car to get him  
3 out in the field, and there isn't a car because there isn't  
4 a radio. I want to make sure that when we do it, we do it  
5 right, and carefully, and I think in the long run it gives  
6 us a far more effective effort.

7 PRESS: Are you also looking at Border Patrol training  
8 procedures at this point? There's a lot of people who say  
9 that the Border Patrol is out of control, in terms of human  
10 rights violations or training, is it adequate, that sort of  
11 thing.

12 HONORABLE JANET RENO: I have long concluded that  
13 training is one of the most essential ingredients of sound,  
14 professional law enforcement, and I think the Border Patrol  
15 has been asked to so much. I'm told that in the past a  
16 significant number were added, without the opportunity to  
17 get good training. If that be the case, I would ask that  
18 we make sure we do everything to insure effective training.

19 There are sometimes bad law enforcement law officers,  
20 just like there are bad lawyers, and bad plumbers. There  
21 is no one profession or trade that has a lock on the badness  
22 issue. But most people in law enforcement that I've met  
23 want so to do a good job. It is one of the most difficult  
24 jobs there is, anywhere, and particularly on the border.  
25 I just have a great respect for the very difficult job that

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1 people face on the border, and I want to do everything I can  
2 to make sure that they have the training that will equip  
3 them to deal with the issues.

4 PRESS: Do you have a time table on the border blockade  
5 decision; a month, six weeks?

6 HONORABLE JANET RENO: No. One of the things I learned  
7 quickly after taking office in Miami, and I've learned an  
8 even harder lesson in Washington; you say you're going to  
9 do something as soon as possible, and then something else  
10 happens, or a new piece of information comes in. I just  
11 want to do it as soon as possible, consistent with a good  
12 review, but I would anticipate that it would be shortly,  
13 because I do hope that Doris Meisner will be confirmed as  
14 Commissioner of the Immigration and Naturalization Service,  
15 very quickly.

16 PRESS: Outside of NAFTA, a lot of people have said  
17 that the long, long, multi-billion-dollar war on drugs  
18 failed somewhere along the way. What kind of plans would  
19 you like to see made, to truly fight the war on drugs?

20 HONORABLE JANET RENO: I don't think it was ever really  
21 fought effectively. I think with drugs you need a proper  
22 balance between punishment and prevention. I think you need  
23 to go after the major traffickers, the major distributors,  
24 interrupt the organizations, put them out of commission.  
25 I think you've got to focus on particular problem areas

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1 within a community. You've got to involve the community in  
2 terms of these programs. It is very important.

3 I had a police chief in Miami tell me, "Don't give me  
4 any more police officers; give me some place, whether it be  
5 a jail or a treatment program, to put these people." It  
6 makes no sense for police to respond again and again, as  
7 they have, and I don't know about San Diego, but in other  
8 areas, to arrest a person who committed the crime because  
9 he had a drug problem, or arrest a person for possession of  
10 small amounts of drugs, prosecute them, and don't provide  
11 treatment, or send them to jail and then dump them back into  
12 the community without job training or placement, without  
13 addressing their drug problem. That doesn't make any sense.

14 For that reason, in Miami, on our own, we developed  
15 what we called the "drug court," which was first started for  
16 nonviolent first offenders charged with possession of a  
17 small amount of cocaine. We gave them the opportunity to  
18 go to court and participate in the program, which included  
19 job training, placement, treatment, and random drug testing,  
20 and if they messed up the judge pulled them right back in  
21 and gave them appropriate sanctions. It has now been  
22 evaluated, so that I can say that I'm not the only person  
23 that thinks it's a good idea, and other people are  
24 supporting it. There will be a major conference on it in  
25 Miami, I think, in the first part of December.

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1           Programs like that, I think, could be expanded, but,  
2           as importantly, I think that drugs and violence, teen  
3           pregnancy, youth gangs, so much of what we're seeing in  
4           America today, are a symptom of a deeper problem in society,  
5           and that is that, for too often in these last 30 years,  
6           American has forgotten and neglected its children, and I  
7           think we have to make a major investment in early childhood  
8           care. I think you've seen the President's initiative there,  
9           through the Family Leave Act. Health care reform is  
10          absolutely essential to it. You see so many correlations  
11          between lack of early preventive medical care for children,  
12          or prenatal care, and learning deficiencies, failures in  
13          school, aggressive behavior down the road. The initiatives  
14          by Secretary Riley, in terms of the whole Goals 2,000, the  
15          Education Act, the Safe Schools Act, are critical. So much  
16          can be done in this nation to give our children a chance to  
17          grow as strong, constructive human beings.

18           PRESS: Madame Attorney General, back to immigration  
19          for a second. Why do think there is so much national  
20          interest in it now, in illegal immigration, not just on the  
21          border states but all through the country? Is the problem  
22          so much worse, or why is the interest so high?

23           HONORABLE JANET RENO: -I've asked that question myself,  
24          and it's puzzling to me, because it's been high on my agenda  
25          since I took office in Miami in 1978. I travel around the

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1 country, and people get very fierce at me, and then they  
2 kind of look at me and say, "Oh, wait a minute. You're from  
3 Miami; you understand." And so it's been part and parcel  
4 of my life, with significant parts of my caseload involving  
5 undocumented aliens.

6 I think it is of concern because the economy is such  
7 that somebody who doesn't have a job, who watches the impact  
8 on their community, feels it hurts more. So I think that's  
9 perhaps one of the reasons, the whole global economy. Our  
10 borders are shrinking. I think we see it around the world.  
11 You look in Eastern Europe now, and the impact it's having  
12 on Central Europe, and on Western Europe.

13 It is a problem for the entire world, and I think this  
14 world is being put to new challenges. There are new issues.  
15 We're seeing violence and atrocities that we haven't seen  
16 in a long time, and I think it reminds us all that yes, we  
17 can progress as people of this world, but we have a constant  
18 challenge, particularly with economic challenges, with the  
19 challenges of reconstituted continents, if you will, to  
20 constantly be vigilant to the forces that would divide us,  
21 that we can address these problems, and that it is  
22 imperative that we address it with good will, without  
23 bitterness, without tension, without divisiveness.

24 PRESS: To follow up on that, Madame Attorney General,  
25 what do you think of the Governor's proposals to deal with

1 immigration?

2 HONORABLE JANET RENO: I'm not familiar with all of his  
3 proposals, but one I feel quite strongly about, in terms of  
4 limiting or preventing health care for children of illegal  
5 aliens, or providing emergency care. I think that just is,  
6 again, waiting for the crisis to happen, rather than putting  
7 the money up front, in terms of prevention, in terms of  
8 disease, and the costly expenditures that would be required  
9 in emergency rooms and in medical care, if we don't provide  
10 care up front.

11 PRESS: To follow up on that, would you support the  
12 federal government sending more money to California to help  
13 deal with that, since that's what the Governor says the  
14 problem is?

15 HONORABLE JANET RENO: One of the points that I think  
16 is important for us all to consider, before we talk about  
17 states, because I have for a long time said, "Look, federal  
18 government, if there's somebody in this country illegally,  
19 and I have to prosecute them, you all should have to bear  
20 the burden of it. As a state prosecutor, if I get him  
21 convicted, you all should have to incarcerate that person,"  
22 referring to the federal government.

23 At the same time, I have recognized, and I have  
24 certainly seen, the tremendous contributions made by  
25 immigrants in Miami and throughout this nation. I think

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1 it's important to realize that in many instances those who  
2 have immigrated to this country more than pay their way.  
3 Clearly, where they do not are those who have committed  
4 crimes, that have been convicted, and are being  
5 incarcerated. They are not in any way making a  
6 contribution, if you will.

7 One of the things that I've asked for us to do, and I  
8 don't have an answer yet, is to figure out how and what is  
9 appropriate for the federal government to do, in terms of  
10 assuming the burden for those who are in state prison now,  
11 under conviction, who are undocumented aliens. We want to  
12 approach it from the point of view of seeing who should be  
13 deported, when they should be deported, working with state  
14 systems to coordinate our efforts, because now they may  
15 serve their prison term, then get out, and then I find  
16 Immigration addressing the deportation proceeding, when we  
17 could probably do it up front, in a far more effective way.

18 I think that another area of concern to me is the use  
19 of prison cells. A federal court is different than a state  
20 court, but a federal prison cell isn't that much different  
21 than a state prison cell, and I want to make sure that the  
22 prison cells of American are used to house the dangerous  
23 criminal, the career criminal, the mean, bad person, as I  
24 call them, and that they get put away, and kept away for as  
25 long as I can possibly do it. And so we want to work with

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1 state officials to try to achieve that goal.

2 PRESS: Back to human rights again, to follow up on  
3 human rights, many San Diego groups, I think some San Diego  
4 groups, I think some international groups, have told me that  
5 they gave you some reports last time you were in town, or  
6 sent you reports, about human rights abuses along the  
7 border, by the Border Patrol, and I have interviewed  
8 undocumented immigrants here who have been allegedly beaten  
9 by the Border Patrol, some at the Metropolitan Correctional  
10 Center downtown, and these cases are pending right now.  
11 What do you think of the reports that you've seen? You  
12 know, you mentioned earlier there are some, you know, of  
13 course, bad officers in every organization, bad apples, but  
14 Javier Bacera (phonetic), a congressman from L.A., is  
15 suggesting through legislation that there would be an  
16 oversight committee for the Border Patrol. What do you  
17 think of that, and do you think that the human rights are  
18 serious, to address in some way that they're not being  
19 addressed right now?

20 HONORABLE JANET RENO: I think it's important in terms  
21 of whether it be the Border Patrol law enforcement, no  
22 matter who it is where governmental authority is exercised  
23 through force, that, first of all, there be sound training,  
24 to teach people how to do it. It is extraordinarily  
25 difficult to be a police officer or to be a Border Patrol

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1 official, and to deal with situations that involve the  
2 potential for violence, but training, I think, is essential  
3 in equipping people with skills necessary to do just that.

4 They presented to me cases, and then I think forwarded  
5 to us additional cases. I have followed up two, at least,  
6 to make sure that proper procedures were involved, and I've  
7 asked that I be kept informed as to the progress on the  
8 others. Again, I think that so much of the effort goes to  
9 training, but when we see an example of abuse, it be  
10 followed up.

11 From my experience as a prosecutor in Dade County for  
12 15 years, I can tell you that it is extremely difficult to  
13 prove cases. Remember, when you file criminal charges you  
14 have to prove the case beyond and to the exclusion of a  
15 reasonable doubt. You have a dark night on the border, you  
16 don't have any clear witnesses, and it becomes extremely  
17 difficult, but it's something that we want to pursue as  
18 vigorously as we possibly can.

19 MR. GOUREVITCH: Thank you, Ms. Reno.

20 HONORABLE JANET RENO: Thank you all.

21 (Whereupon, at 2:00 p.m., proceedings in the above-  
22 entitled matter were recessed.)

23

24

25