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reform as you seem to be doing on lobbying reform, say, with respect to soft money donations to the party? And does the party understand fully, sir, your feelings about them selling access to you to big money donors?

The President. Yes, and we changed that. And we can change that. And I have no problem changing that. That is wrong.

I think—by the way, I think that the President and that any other person in public office ought to meet with his or her supporters, including financial supporters. I think that's important. I would do that anyway. I have always done that; from the time I was attorney general of my State I have done that. But it is wrong to raise money on the promise of guaranteed specific kinds of access. That is wrong, and we stopped that.

Now, the difference is, I can do this lobby reform and hold the executive branch to a higher standard and challenge the Congress to follow suit in a way that does not in any way undermine the public interest. But if I hold the Democrats to a standard which in effect paralyzes them financially, in comparison to the Republicans, I will be punishing the very public interest that I seek to advance because it will make it less likely that there will be competitive elections.

The American people's only chance to make the right choices is when there are genuine competitive elections. I would love nothing better—if I could get an agreement with the Republican Party we could shut this whole thing down tomorrow. We could, by mutual agreement, at least change the party rules on campaign finance reform. And if they would do it, we could do it and we wouldn't have to wait for Congress to act.

Telecommunications Reform

Q. You mentioned the telecommunications bill, sir. Have the changes that have been made to it today made it any more acceptable to you?

The President. Well, I want to wait and see what happens. I know that they acted to try to stop one person from being able to own television stations, newspapers, radios, and cable networks in the same market. That was a very important step forward. I congratulate the House on that. Did the V-chip amendment pass? They're working on that. That's also very important to me.

As you know, I issued a letter on the House bill, which was changed markedly after it came out of committee—that's a very unusual procedure—setting forth the concerns that I have, the Vice President shares, our administration has. We'll just have to review the bill when it gets in its final form.

Bosnia and Croatia

Q. What about the war in Croatia? Are you concerned that that could spread into an all-out war in the Balkans?

The President. Yes—well, I'm concerned that it could spread the war in Bosnia and in the Croatia-Serbia area.

Let me just back up and say the Croatian offensive originally was launched in response to the Serb attack on Bihac, one of the protected areas. And it has largely, apparently, relieved a lot of pressure on Bihac. But because it is so comprehensive, it runs the risk of a wider war. And that is what we have cautioned against in our contacts with the Croats.

Q. So, Mr. President, you're saying that the actual offensive is justified?

The President. I explained that the original Croatian action, which we were told by the Croatian Government they would feel compelled to take, was animated by the Serbian attack on Bihac. But we have asked them to exercise real restraint because we are very concerned about a wider war.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on the 30th Anniversary of the Voting Rights Act

August 4, 1995

This Sunday, August 6, 1995, marks the 30th anniversary of the Voting Rights Act, guaranteeing the right to vote to all Americans, regardless of race. Passed by a bipartisan majority in Congress and signed by President Lyndon Johnson after years of struggle, the Voting Rights Act has correctly been recognized as the single most important civil rights law our Nation has ever adopted. It

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