RELEASE PLANS:

Jimall, Bradsi, and I met and decided (after input from a lot of folks) that the Systems release plan will follow the following basic framework.

1. There will be a Win'93 release (code name "Chicago" - please use that from now on), which will have following goals and constraints:
   - targeted at running well on a 386/4MB system.
   - further exploit the 386 (offering better memory management, an IFS mechanism, 32bit device drivers, better support for Win32 applications, including pre-emptive multitasking of 32bit apps).
   - it will offer "100%" compatibility with Win3.1 device drivers.
   - it will pre-reg a 386.
   - it will offer better support for workgroups - significant incremental improvements over Sparta release 1.
   - it will offer easy of use improvements to offer better support for installation and configuration.
   - it will NOT be aimed at introducing a radically new user interface.
   - beyond OLE-2, MAPI, ODBC it will NOT offer major new systems API's.
   - it will be targeted at a Q3'93 release. Functionality will be tailored to meet this
We will simultaneously release a "MS-DOS 7.0" based on the core of the above technology.

2. Cairo will remain the release of Windows where we will make major innovations in both UI and API's. It provides the underlying distributed functionality that we need to have in order to build upon for the future, and in doing so have an answer to the likes of Notes. Specific decisions wrt Cairo are:
   - Cairo will be targeted at an NT platform only, NT release 2 will be fused with Cairo release 1.
   - Cairo/NT will be targeted at 386/8MB platform, and we will do whatever is needed to make this a reality.
   - Cairo will ship as soon as its schedule permits (i.e. as early in 1994 as possible).

Rationale behind Above:

a. Why do a Win'93 release?
   We need a release of Windows in 1993 in order to:
   - complete the work needed to make Sparta more of an attractive workgroup solution.
   - solve many of the "mundane" problems that didn't get solved in Windows 3.1 - better hardware detection on setup etc.
   - provide a better low-end 386 OS solution to compete with OS/2 (i.e. people who "just want pre-emptive multi-tasking on a small system", etc.)
   - provide a ship vehicle forOLE-2, MAPI, Win32s API's - experience has taught that until it goes into the shipping version of the OS, it is hard to get ISVs to pay attention to API's.

b. Why not just wait for Cairo?
   Cairo is a major step forward. We should ship Cairo as soon as possible, but we should take the time to get all of its important elements (eg. OFS) complete and thoroughly tested. It will also take time for the market to digest Cairo. It is worth doing an incremental release of Windows between now and Cairo.

c. Won't Win'93 incrementally grow into enough of Cairo, to ensure that no-one pays attention to full Cairo?
   We are not going to attempt to address in Chicago any of the distributed systems and information storage problems (tracking links, summary catalogues, etc.) that Cairo will solve. We will not attempt any kludges. This will require discipline. In particular, we will not change the UI to require major style changes for applications.

d. Why not move elements (eg. Shell) of Cairo into Win'93?
   The penalty of defocusing the Cairo team is not worth it. The real contribution of Cairo is the integration of user visible components with the underlying infrastructure - we do not want to compromise or delay this.
e. Why base Cairo on NT?
To the end-user, Cairo (whether on NT or on DOS/Windows) will be a major OS upgrade. Further at this point in time (1994), it is unlikely that we will be positioning Windows as being "based on DOS". Hence to the end-user it will be a "Windows" upgrade. There is a lot of upside on focussing our investments around one OS technology for the distributed environment (long term we cannot afford to develop everything twice). The issue then becomes can we make NT ready for prime time in 1994? The answer is "yes" - if we focus on it, we can.

f. Isn't this "OS/2 all over again"?
(ie. Cairo will never become mainstream - either because Win'93 will eclipse it, or because people won't want NT)
There are many differences wrt the OS/2 situation: (i) as noted above there are clear and important functionality differences between Win'93 and Cairo, in the case of Windows vs. OS/2 we made an explicit decision (called Windows 3.0 and protected mode operation) to eliminate the difference, (ii) we do not have IBM restricting our ability to make either Cairo or NT decent and thus compelling us to find other avenues, (iii) we have Billg 100% bought into Cairo, and the decisions above.