

purpose. For all those born in a home cordoned off against danger, with bars on the windows and chains on the doors, life on the streets seems all too often a taste of freedom they have never known. But American freedom is better than that. We know this. We see freedom at work every day in the determined faces of parents striving to make a better life for themselves and their children. And we see it every day in big cities and small towns across the country as Americans come together to put the spirit of community to work.

Confronted with the horror of children planning their own funerals, our Nation has begun planning for the future. Our first, best hope is in the common cause of those around us. A community that shares life's experiences can be an important source of strength and understanding in a world that seems filled with growing violence and diminishing hope. Families and communities are coming together across the country to bring hope to even our most troubled youth. In Birmingham, Alabama, where police officers are sponsoring athletic teams and tutoring programs in 52 neighborhoods, youth crime has dropped by 30 percent. In Los Angeles, teachers and sheriffs are working in teams to show kids alternative methods of resolving conflicts, encouraging them to develop a sense of self-worth apart from gangs. The 1994 crime bill seeks to provide grassroots programs like these the resources they need to push forward in their efforts and to succeed in their fight.

In an invaluable victory for citizens across the country, the Congress passed, and I will soon sign, a crime bill that is designed to save the lives of children like Shavon and Robert. This path-breaking legislation will punish hardened young criminals by requiring stronger penalties, and it will expand the use of community boot camps, drug courts, and other alternative sanctions to stop first-time offenders from beginning a lifetime of crime. It bans 19 of the deadliest assault weapons, and it goes a long way toward keeping guns out of the hands of juveniles. With strong measures of discipline and training, drug treatment and education, this bill takes on the sickness of gangs and drugs and gives our young people a new chance at life. Ours

is important work: It is about trying to save a generation of children and to secure the future life of a country. It is a job we can surely do.

Ours remains the greatest Nation the world has ever known because we have not shied away from challenges. Rather, we have consistently sought to surmount them. The problem of gang violence is among the most profound we as a people have ever faced. We must respect our young people enough to give them a positive choice for the future. We must take responsibility for teaching them to choose what is right. The solutions are within our reach. The power to change America is within ourselves. Together, we must work to redeem the promise that every young life holds.

Now, Therefore, I, William J. Clinton, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby proclaim the week of September 12 through September 16, 1994, as "National Gang Violence Prevention Week." I call upon the people of the United States to observe this week with appropriate ceremonies and activities.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this tenth day of September, in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and ninety-four, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and nineteenth.

William Jefferson Clinton

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NOTE: This proclamation was published in the *Federal Register* on September 13.

Remarks to AmeriCorps Volunteers in Aberdeen, Maryland

September 11, 1994

Thank you very much. Chaplain, and General and Mrs. Tragemann, General Monroe, General Scott, Colonel Bosley, Senator and Mrs. Sarbanes, ladies and gentlemen.

I guess I'll start by saying happy birthday—*[laughter]*—and happy anniversary. A commitment of 43 years is something the rest

of this country could do more to emulate, sir. And we thank both of you for what you've done.

Hillary and I are delighted to be here today with all of you and especially with our young AmeriCorps volunteers. [*Applause*] A quiet, reticent group. [*Laughter*]

This is a special service that reaffirms our relationship to our God and our God-given responsibility to serve our fellow human beings. The Scripture from Isaiah that is the basis of this service today is something we would all do well to read and live by on a regular basis and to echo the words of Isaiah, "Here am I, Lord; send me." Because as all of you who are here know already, service to others is something everyone can do and something everyone should do because of our relationship to our God, our responsibility to others, and our responsibility to ourselves.

This chapel is filled with people who have answered the call to service. In every case, you embody what service means to America, Americans coming together and moving forward. In three words that I have always believed embodied what was best about this country—opportunity, responsibility, and community—your country has given you the opportunity to serve. You have assumed the responsibility. And our American family is much stronger and better and richer as a result.

Many of you are civilians who have spent a lifetime fulfilling the public trust in and around Aberdeen and supporting our Nation's military. And for that we are all very grateful. Many of you have spent your entire careers in uniform, your service profound, often putting you at risk of providing what President Lincoln called "the last full measure of devotion." We honor you more than we can say.

And many of you are the young people here in AmeriCorps. When I was inaugurated President, I called America to a season of service, and I asked our young people to lead the way. Thankfully, Congress has given them that opportunity, and they have responded with their responsibility in the national service program. And so we honor them for their service as well.

Later today, 40 of these young people, those in the yellow outfits, will be leaving to fight the forest fires that are raging in the West, that have already claimed so much of our natural heritage and, unfortunately, the lives of some of our finest citizens. To them and to all the other corps members who are here and to the tens of thousands who will take the pledge of service with us tomorrow at the White House and all across America as we formally kick off the first full year of AmeriCorps with 20,000 young people across this country, let us say to them, we honor your service as well, and we thank you for the high calling you have answered.

These young people will be doing a lot of things, working in education, working to help the environment, working to deal with people's human needs, working to help to increase the safety and security of our neighborhoods and our schools and our streets. Some may be working with the veterans now at Perry Point Hospital or connecting young students to the world of knowledge in Baltimore classrooms right here in Maryland. Some will be tying service and science together as they work to reclaim the Chesapeake Bay or deal with the problems of the Anacostia down in the District of Columbia.

Every one of you represents the oldest and best of America's traditions. This country really got started by a bunch of volunteers. Nobody made them do what they did. They all had to sign up on their own accord. Now we are run, from our national security all the way down to our most elemental function in every community in this country, by a nation of volunteers, not by Government edict, not by large bureaucracies but by the spirit of service and devotion that burns within the heart of every American.

So for all of you, and especially for these young people who may launch a whole generation of renewal of service all across this country, I say God bless you and all who serve, and thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:25 a.m. in the base chapel at Aberdeen Proving Ground, where AmeriCorps volunteers in the National Civilian Community Corps had received training. In his remarks, he referred to Chaplain (Lt. Col.) O.

Wayne Smith; Maj. Gen. Richard W. Tragemann, commander, Aberdeen Proving Ground, and his wife, Kathy; Maj. Gen. James Monroe, chief of ordnance and commander, U.S. Army Ordnance Center and School; Brig. Gen. Don Scott, USA, Ret., president, National Civilian Community Corps; James M. Bosley, deputy installation commander, Aberdeen Proving Ground; and congregation members celebrating special occasions.

Remarks to Organizations of the Jewish Community

September 12, 1994

Prime Minister Rabin, ladies and gentlemen, I'm very pleased to have this chance to address all of you, gathered from some 70 communities across the United States.

It is with thanks for the remarkable year we have just lived and optimism for the New Year that I wish you peace, health, and happiness in the months ahead. *Shana Tova!*

What a year it's been. Twelve months ago tomorrow I was privileged to host Prime Minister Rabin and Chairman Arafat on the South Lawn of the White House. Many of you were there to witness their historic handshake, which marked the dawn of a new era in the Middle East, one of conciliation and hope. Their brave, historic act paved the way for others.

This summer, King Hussein of Jordan and Prime Minister Rabin at the White House came here to end the state of war between Israel and Jordan and to start down the road of warm friendship and cooperation. As Prime Minister Rabin stated then so eloquently, "A million eyes all over the world are watching us now with great relief and great joy. Yet another nightmare of war may be over. At the same time, millions of eyes in the Middle East are looking at us now with great hope, heartfelt hope, that our children and grandchildren will know no more war."

I applaud Israel's courage, and I salute the Arab leaders—including the King of Morocco, who last week began the process of establishing diplomatic relations with Israel—for standing up for the naysayers and embracing change. By working to secure a future of peace and prosperity, these far-sighted statesmen will fulfill their people's

hopes and their yearnings for the quiet miracle of a normal life.

Already we see the fruits of their efforts. Palestinians and Israelis are learning every day how to live side by side in peace. Jordanian planes may now fly over Israel. Tourists visiting the Dead Sea can cross from Eilat to Aqaba. These are small steps, but they lay the foundation for much greater strides to come.

Now, the international community must do all it can to ensure that Arabs and Israelis realize the full benefits of peace. At the same time, we have a right to expect that the participants in the peace process live up to their commitments. And we also hope that all those in the region who have been urging us to continue to play an energetic role will do their part, too, in particular by taking steps now to dismantle the Arab boycott of Israel.

As we look to the year ahead, I hope and I believe that we'll see even greater progress toward a comprehensive peace in the region, a peace that joins Israelis, Palestinians, Jordanians, Syrians, and Lebanese so that all their children will come to know a better future. More than 100 of these children, participants in the 1994 Seeds for Peace program that have met at the White House this past Friday before returning to their homes, they just spent a month together in Maine, learning about one another, breaking down barriers, building ties.

These young men and women told me that in just a few short weeks, first names replaced ethnic and religious labels. Mistrust turned into curiosity. Fear gave way to friendship. These kinds of person-to-person relationships, multiplied thousands of times through business ventures, joint projects, trade, and regional cooperation, will help ensure that the olive branch of peace stretches its bough across the entire Middle East.

Nurturing peace is hard work. The dark forces of terror remain deeply entrenched, as horrible attacks against Jews in Argentina, Panama, and England recently demonstrated. But despite these terrible acts, it's essential that the American Jewish community continue its support for peace and the peace process.

As we move ahead, I urge you to keep the faith, because Israel, for the first time in its