

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:16 p.m. in the National Palace. In his remarks, he referred to United Nations Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

April 1, 1995

The President. Good morning. I'm speaking to you this morning from the Gibbs Magnet School for International Studies in Little Rock, Arkansas. I'm happy to be joined by the Principal, Dr. Marjorie Bassa, members of her staff, and 30 wonderful elementary students, their parents, and other interested citizens here.

Good morning, class.

Students. Good morning, Mr. President.

The President. What you just heard was the sound of America's future. This school and these people are living proof that the education reforms that were started when I was Governor of Arkansas, and that are continuing now under the leadership of Governor Tucker, are paying off.

The young people who attend this public school are getting a head start on the 21st century. Beginning in kindergarten, they learn about other cultures. They receive foreign language training. They're already acquiring the skills that will allow them one day to compete and win in the new global economy. They come from many different racial and cultural backgrounds, but they all have a shot at the American dream.

I want to spend a few moments telling you why I think education and training for all of our people is the most important thing we can do to keep the American dream alive in the 21st century.

You know Washington's in the midst of a great debate today about the proper role of our National Government. On one side is the old view that big, one-size-fits-all Government can provide the answers to all of our big problems. On the other side is the view that Government is the source of all of our problems. In the real world, that's a false choice.

Let's look at what started this debate. As we move toward the 21st century and the information age, jobs and incomes will de-

pend more and more on what we know and what we can learn. That means that today, at the end of the cold war, we're able to create jobs, new businesses, new millionaires at a rapid rate, more than ever before. But at the same time, about two-thirds of our people are working hard for the same or lower wages, and are quite insecure about their future. And we know we still have too many social problems we're not making enough headway on, crime and drugs, violence and family breakdown.

In the real world, we have to face the fact that we have to create opportunity but deal with these problems of economic stagnation and social disintegration. And we are stuck with a Government that's too organized to meet the problems of yesterday and not enough able to meet the problems of today and tomorrow.

I believe we have to chart a new course between the old way of big Government and the new rage of no Government, because I believe we need a Government that does four things: first, that creates economic opportunity, grow the middle class and shrink the under class; second, that enhances the security of the American people, here at home, on our streets, in our schools, and abroad; and third, that reforms the National Government to make it smaller, less bureaucratic, to serve the interests of ordinary Americans, not special interests, to serve the future, not the past, and to demand more personal responsibility of our citizens. Fourth, and most important, we need a Government that helps our people raise their education and skill levels so they can make the most of their own lives. That's what I call the New Covenant, a partnership between Americans and their Government that offers more opportunity in return for more responsibility.

Earlier this week, I convened a regional economic conference at Emory University in Atlanta with a group of economists, business and Government leaders. And working Americans discussed ways to strengthen our economy and to ensure a better future for our children. They were Republicans, Democrats, and independents. But the one thing we all agreed on was that the countries that will do the best job of developing the full capacities of all of their children and all of

their adults will be the most successful in the 21st century. We all agree that higher education levels are essential if we're going to raise the incomes of working Americans, if we're going to grow the middle class and shrink the under class.

That's why I and my administration have worked so hard to expand Head Start, to set world class standards for our schools, to give parents and teachers more resources to meet those standards but also to give them more authority at the school level to decide how best to achieve excellence. We've worked to establish apprenticeship programs to prepare young people who don't go on to college to get higher paying jobs. And we've worked hard to make college loans more affordable for more students, millions of them throughout the country.

By eliminating the middlemen in the college loan system, lowering the cost, and offering better repayment terms, our direct student loan program is giving more young people a chance to go to college while saving tax dollars at the same time. And we're demanding more responsibility in return. More students get loans at lower cost, but now they have to pay them back. Stricter enforcement of the student loan program has cut the cost of delinquent loans to taxpayers from \$2.8 billion in 1991 to a billion dollars today. That's opportunity and responsibility.

Because we've focused on education, for the last 2 years we've been able to cut Government spending, cut the deficit, cut hundreds of programs and over 100,000 bureaucrats from the Federal budget, and still increase our investment in education.

Now, many in Congress think there's no difference in education and other spending. For example, there are proposals to reduce funding for Head Start; for public school efforts to meet the national education goals; for our national service program, AmeriCorps, which provides scholarship money for young people who will work at minimum wage jobs in local community service projects; even proposals to reduce school lunch funding. There are proposals to eliminate our efforts for safe and drug-free schools altogether and, unbelievably, to cut the college loan programs.

These are not wise proposals. Here at Gibbs, where students are preparing for the 21st century, close to 50 percent of the students depend upon the school lunch program for a nutritious meal. And all these young people, not just those who have the money to afford it, should be able to go as far as their talents will carry them. And if that means they need scholarships, student loans, and the opportunity to do community service, we ought to give it to them.

Some in Congress want to cut education to pay for tax cuts for the wealthy. I want instead a middle class tax cut that helps families pay for education and training, a tax deduction for education costs after high school.

Now in the past, education and training have enjoyed broad, bipartisan support. Last year, with strong support from Republicans and Democrats, Congress enacted my proposals to help students and schools meet the challenges of today and tomorrow. Educational experts said we did more for education by expanding Head Start, expanding apprenticeships, expanding college loans than any session of Congress in 30 years.

Now in this new Congress, some want to cut education, and that's wrong. Gibbs Magnet School is a reflection of what we ought to be doing more of in America. I don't know what political party these children belong to, but I do know we need them all and they deserve our best efforts to give them a shot at the American dream. We must begin when they're young, training our people to succeed, preparing them for a lifetime of learning. The fight for education is the fight for the American dream.

Thanks again to all those people who are here with me today, especially our children. And thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:06 a.m. from the Gibbs Magnet School for International Studies in Little Rock, AR.

Interview With Chris Fowler, Digger Phelps, and Dick Vitale of ESPN

April 1, 1995

NCAA Basketball Championship

Q. Last year, President Clinton was the first Chief Executive to attend the Final Four