

Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



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WEEKLY COMPILATION OF

PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

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Week Ending Friday, July 12, 1996

The President's Radio Address

July 6, 1996

Good morning. This holiday weekend we celebrate America's birthday and the values that hold us together as a community and a country. It's a time for family and fun, for games and fireworks and backyard barbecues. Tonight, smoke will curl over homes on nearly every block as millions of families gather around the grill for the most American of meals: hamburgers and hotdogs and barbecued chicken.

Today I want to talk to you about the steps we're taking to make sure the food we cook in backyard barbecues is safe and wholesome. Our families have every right to expect the food they serve their children is safe. They have every right to expect the world's most bountiful food supply will also be the world's safest. And, in fact, our food is very safe.

Nearly a century ago, after muckrakers exposed dirty conditions in meat-packing plants, we made a national commitment to protect the public from unsafe food. It was one of the first ways we came together to meet the challenges of that new industrial age. Last year, we put in place new safety precautions for seafood. And in recent years, we've learned that we all must continue to be vigilant on meat and poultry safety, and we learned it the hard way. For every year, scores of Americans still die and tens of thousands become sick from eating meat or poultry that is contaminated with harmful bacteria.

We all remember how in 1993 tragedy struck hundreds of families in the Western United States. Undercooked hamburgers served in a fast food restaurant were contaminated with a deadly strain of *E. coli* bacteria. Five hundred people became ill and four children died.

The parents of many of the *E. coli* victims turned their grief into a determination to

help others. Some of them are here with me today. In the face of this unspeakable tragedy, they had one insistent question: How could this have happened? I asked that question too, and I asked my administration, what can we do to prevent it from happening again?

Now, sometimes food makes us sick because it's undercooked. But sometimes, families have been exposed to illnesses because some meat and poultry shipped to our supermarket shelves contained invisible and deadly bacteria. The reason was shocking and simple: For all our technological advances, the way we inspect meat and poultry had not changed in 90 years. Even though we know that killers such as salmonella can only be seen with a microscope, inspectors were still checking on meat and poultry by look, touch, smell. We relied on an overworked cadre of Government inspectors, rather than working with the industry and challenging it to keep food safe.

Under the direction of Vice President Gore and Secretary Glickman, the United States Department of Agriculture has worked with industry, scientists, farmers, parents, and consumers to completely revamp our meat and poultry inspection system, to revolutionize the way our Nation protects food safety. This morning, I want to announce the major changes that the U.S. Department of Agriculture will take to keep food safe and to protect our children from deadly bacteria.

First, we're challenging every meat-packing plant in America to do scientific tests or take other safety precautions at every step of production. Each company must design and put in place its own tough plan. We're not imposing a detailed list of do's and don'ts. We're working with industry as partners, challenging them to find ways to make our meat the safest it can be. Each plant will be held accountable for meeting high standards at every step of the process. Second, we're insisting that every slaughterhouse begin to

conduct rigorous scientific tests to make sure the meat is not contaminated with deadly strains of *E. coli* and salmonella bacteria. Third, companies will have to improve their sanitation procedures. All too often, food is contaminated because simple sanitary rules are not followed.

All these changes will be phased in over the coming months to make sure they are done right. These new meat and poultry contamination safeguards will be the strongest ever. They are flexible, and they do challenge the private sector to take responsibility. They also use the most up-to-date science to track down invisible threats. They protect the public without tangling business in redtape.

Parents should know that when they serve a chicken dinner they're not putting their children at risk. Parents should know that when a teenager borrows the car to get a fast food hamburger, the hamburger should be the least of their worries. Our new food safety initiative will give families the security to know that the food they eat is as safe as it can be.

To be sure, parents will also still have to take responsibility. There is no way to make food entirely free from risk; nature simply won't let us. So everyone should follow warning labels, be careful how you handle raw meat and poultry, and make sure it's well cooked before you serve it to your family.

These days families have enough to worry about. They shouldn't have to fear the food they eat is unsafe. With the tough steps we're taking today, America's parents should be able to breathe a little easier.

Have a safe and happy Fourth of July weekend.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland and an Exchange With Reporters

July 8, 1996

President Clinton. Let me begin by saying I'm delighted to welcome President Kwasniewski to Washington and to the Oval Office, and I want to thank him for the hospi-

talities that he extended to the First Lady a few days ago.

The United States and Poland have established a strong partnership. We've worked together in the Partnership For Peace. Our troops are serving together in Bosnia. We are the number one foreign investor in Poland. And I am very pleased with the state of our relations and the aggressive leadership that the President is giving to his nation.

We're going to discuss a lot of issues that are affecting our future relations and the future of Poland, including the question of NATO enlargement, which has been a disciplined, open process since 1994, now, since the United States initiated it. And I want to reiterate my conviction that the process will continue and will bear fruit in the way that we have done it. I think that we are doing it in the right way, and that's the way I think we should continue to do it.

But I'm looking forward to our discussion. I've wanted to meet him for some time, and I got a great report on Poland from Hillary the other night, so I'm looking forward to it.

NATO Expansion

Q. Mr. President, will you talk about the timing? As you say, this has been going on since 1994. Will you talk about the timing of NATO expansion?

President Clinton. We will. Certainly we will. We'll talk about what is planned for the December ministerial and what will happen after that.

Q. Senator Dole has talked about 1998. Are you willing to be as precise as that?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I'm glad that he supports the expansion of NATO. And secondly, I think it's important for me as President to adhere in all my public comments to the things that we've agreed among our NATO Allies to do. Keep in mind, this is a process that has to proceed by consensus, and we have to have the support of all the Allies to do what we wish to do. So, I will continue to say what I have said all along. But you should make no mistake about it, NATO will expand.

Former Governor Richard Lamm of Colorado

Q. President Clinton, it looks like here in the United States, Governor Lamm is going—former Governor Lamm is going to enter the Presidential race. I wonder what your sense of that is and whether you're worried that it might erode some of your support?

President Clinton. I just don't know. I've known him a long time. I like him. And I hope if that happens—hope his wife will do what she said she was going to do. [Laughter] Did you see what she said?

Q. Which was what?

President Clinton. That she'd be for me if she thought it would undermine our position in the election. [Laughter] I like him very much, and he'll have to do whatever he wants to do. And I hope we have a good, positive debate.

Q. Are you surprised that someone who is supposed to be a friend of yours would enter the election?

President Clinton. No.

Airplane Hijacking in Cuba

Q. A Cuban plane has just been hijacked to the U.S. Navy base in Guantanamo Bay. What is your reaction to that?

President Clinton. I understand the passengers have been returned, and the pilot stayed. And as far as I know, there was no further incident.

Q. Thank you.

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

NATO Expansion

Q. Mr. President, have you proposed any new timetable for NATO expansion?

President Clinton. Let me, first of all, welcome President Kwasniewski to the White House and to the Oval Office. And I want to thank him for the warm hospitality extended to my wife last week. She had a wonderful trip to Poland and has given me a great report on it.

We are going to discuss NATO enlargement and a number of other things. As to that, I want to emphasize that the United States secured the agreement of our allies in NATO to expand NATO, and we did it

under circumstances where we agreed that we would follow a certain deliberate process. We will do that. We will probably take some further steps on that when the ministerial meets in December. I'm certain that more action will be taken there. But the important thing is that NATO is going to expand and we're going to do it in a deliberate fashion, in an open fashion, as we have said all along.

The second thing I'd like to say is I'm very pleased with our present level of cooperation. I appreciate the service of Polish troops in Bosnia. I appreciate the participation of Poland in the Partnership For Peace. And our economic relations are growing stronger every day, and I'm very pleased with the level of investment of the United States in Poland. I hope we will be able to continue that.

I'd like to ask the President to make a statement, and then we'll answer your questions.

President Kwasniewski. Well, you understand Polish a little bit, for after so many years in the United States you speak English early.

[At this point, President Kwasniewski continued speaking in Polish, and a translation was not provided.]

Q. Mr. President, when are you going to say who and when will be admitted as new members of NATO?

President Clinton. Well, that's what we're going to discuss in December. But I know it is something that is sometimes perhaps frustrating to you, but you have to realize, NATO is a group that operates together. And a NATO pledge is a solemn pledge; it's a security pledge. And one of the ways that we have secured agreement from all of our allies with all the various factors involved to expand NATO is that we have worked with them together in a very deliberate fashion.

So our next meeting is in December. I think further steps will be taken in December. And I think that is what I should say at this point, consistent with my obligation to them.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:31 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on the Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative

July 8, 1996

Thank you very much. Joseph and Tina Chery, your son must have been a remarkable young man to inspire such devotion and vision, and we thank you. We thank you for your work, and we thank you for your courage and heart in being here today. And we thank you, too, ma'am. Thank you very much.

Mr. Vice President, Secretary Rubin, Attorney General Reno, Under Secretary Kelly, thank you all for your good work. Senator Robb, thank you for being here today, sir, and for your leadership.

I thank the police chiefs, the prosecutors, the public officials from all across America who are here today, who know better than anyone that we will never be able to protect our children from violence or take our streets back for them and away from guns and drugs and gangs unless we all work together, as Mr. Chery said.

In the State of the Union Address I challenged our Nation to focus on this issue of youth violence. It is a supreme irony that we are living in an age of greater possibility for young people to live out their dreams than at any point in our history, but we are moving into the 21st century with youth violence on the rise, with too many of our children killing children, and too many others raising themselves on the street, and too many others simply vulnerable because they're going about their lives and they happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time because we permitted those wrong places to develop and we permit them to continue to exist.

I'll never forget the young man I met in Long Beach, California, who was in a junior high school. He told me that his school had developed a school uniform policy because of the gangs in his neighborhood. And they figured if they all wore green clothes to school every day nobody would shoot them. And he said it was the first time in 3 years he'd gotten to walk to and from school without having to look over his shoulder.

There is no future for these young people unless we move to take it back for them. As the Vice President said, we have worked very hard with many of you and others to place

a comprehensive strategy to take back our streets from guns and gangs and violence and drugs. Many of you have been a part of it; we thank you for that. And the strategy is beginning to work. We believe this will be the 4th year in a row when the crime rate will go down.

But we all know there is still way too much crime in America, and we know that while crime is going down in the country as a whole, youth violence is going up. While drug use has been going down and cocaine use has dropped dramatically, casual drug use by young people is going up. So we have to do more to focus our strategy on youth violence.

That's why we strengthened the safe and drug-free school law, why we instituted a policy of zero tolerance for guns in schools, why we're now encouraging communities more strongly than ever to enforce their truancy laws and to take steps ranging from school uniforms to community curfews.

The drug strategy announced this spring by General McCaffrey focuses on young people. We are mounting a nationwide crackdown on gangs. And this spring I sent to the Congress legislation to make it easier to prosecute gangs. This January in the State of the Union Address I said that if a teenager commits a crime as an adult, he should be prosecuted as an adult, and that is a proposition that is gaining wider and wider agreement.

But as we take on this problem of youth violence, if we're serious about it we cannot avoid dealing with one of its most terrifying elements, teens with guns. This is an amazing fact; listen to this. The number of teenagers committing crimes without guns is the same today as it was in the 1970's, two decades ago. Let me say that again. The number of teenagers in the United States today committing crimes without guns is the same today as it was 20 years ago. The number of homicides by teens who have guns has tripled.

Today, if a gang member is caught committing a crime with a smoking gun in his hand, often as not, the gun is simply put in a police locker with little further investigation. Yet we know that gangs often buy in bulk from a single, shadowy supplier, a criminal network that channels an arsenal of weapons to young criminals or would-be criminals.

We need a national campaign to cut off the flow of guns to teens who commit crimes. Today I am directing the Department of the Treasury and the Department of Justice to work with local law enforcement in a new nationwide initiative.

In the 17 cities already mentioned, we will, for the first time, see that every time a gun is used in a crime and seized by law enforcement, it will be tracked through a national tracing system to find out where it came from. We will use that information to target those criminal gunrunning networks that are peddling guns to our teenagers.

Local and national prosecutors have agreed to work together to break up these criminal gangs. And the new data from these 17 cities will give us a much better idea of how the black market in guns actually operates and how to break it. Police on the beat, prosecutors in the courtroom, Federal investigators in the crime lab, they'll all work together in a genuine national team to take on the gunrunners.

Those who illegally peddle guns to our children will get a simple message: We will find you, we will prosecute you, and we will punish you. We owe that much to fine families like the Cherys, to the children they lost and the children they still have to give to this world and to our future.

We have to give the future back to all of our children. We cannot permit the United States to go into the 21st century the richest, the most powerful country in the world, with more opportunities available to more young people to live out their dreams than ever before, and keep allowing our young people to die before their dreams ever have a chance to take shape.

I thank the law enforcement personnel who are here and those who stand with you all across America. I thank the members of the administration who have worked on this. Most important, I thank the Cherys and all the families who have known the most unimaginable loss any human beings can know, for having the courage to stand with us and demand that we do better.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:45 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks,

he referred to Joseph and Tina Chery, whose son was killed in gang crossfire in 1993.

Memorandum on the Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative

July 8, 1996

Memorandum for the Secretary of the Treasury, the Attorney General

Subject: Implementation of the Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative

Firearms violence is a scourge on our society. Homicides committed by young people with firearms have nearly tripled since 1985, and other types of gun-related violence have been on the rise. Too many guns are in the hands of our Nation's children.

Through the Brady Handgun Violence Prevention Act and the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994, we have reduced criminals' access to firearms, including military-style assault weapons. We are using the Gun-Free Schools Act of 1994 to take guns out of schools, making schools a safer learning environment for our children.

In addition, working in cooperation with State and local law enforcement in unprecedented fashion, Federal investigators and prosecutors have successfully disrupted numerous illicit gun markets across the country over the last 3 years. We need to strengthen our efforts to clamp down on these illegal markets, especially those that provide crime guns to children.

The Department of the Treasury's Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF) has developed a pilot program that will trace all guns used in crime that are seized by Federal, State, and local law enforcement officers, and work with that trace information to help identify illegal gun traffickers. The project utilizes an innovative computer software system that examines crime gun trace information and provides law enforcement officers with crucial investigative leads about the sources of these guns. By analyzing patterns of gun trafficking that exist in an area, we are developing more effective law enforcement strategies to target illegal gun traffickers for prosecution, particularly those

who put guns into the hands of our Nation's young people.

I am directing you to implement this project in 17 pilot cities: Atlanta, Georgia; Boston, Massachusetts; Baltimore, Maryland; Birmingham, Alabama; Bridgeport, Connecticut; Cleveland, Ohio; Inglewood, California; Jersey City, New Jersey; Memphis, Tennessee; Milwaukee, Wisconsin; New York, New York; Richmond, Virginia; Salinas, California; Seattle, Washington; San Antonio, Texas; St. Louis, Missouri; and Washington, D.C.

In addition, you should work with local, State, and Federal law enforcement in each of these cities to ensure that all crime guns seized in their cities are traced and to develop joint investigative and prosecutorial strategies to combat the problem of illegal gun trafficking. Your efforts should build upon existing partnership programs with State and local law enforcement officers, such as the Anti-Violent Crime Initiative.

You should jointly report to me in writing by August 8, 1997, on the first-year accomplishments of this project.

William J. Clinton

Letter to Congressional Leaders on Iraq

July 8, 1996

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Consistent with the Authorization for Use of Military Force Against Iraq Resolution (Public Law 102-1) and as part of my effort to keep the Congress fully informed, I am reporting on the status of efforts to obtain Iraq's compliance with the resolutions adopted by the U.N. Security Council.

The Government of Iraq crossed a new threshold of noncompliance with its cease-fire obligations in early June when it repeatedly blocked attempts by U.N. weapons inspectors to enter certain Iraqi government facilities. The investigators from the United Nations Special Commission on Iraq (UNSCOM) were attempting to enter Special Republican Guard sites where they believe Iraq may be hiding information on its weapons of mass destruction (WMD) programs.

Under a number of Security Council resolutions, Iraq is obligated to grant UNSCOM inspectors immediate, unconditional and unrestricted access to any location in Iraq they wish to examine. On June 12, the Security Council unanimously adopted Resolution 1060 deploring Iraq's failure to meet these obligations and demanding that Iraq comply. Upon adoption of the resolution, the Iraqi regime immediately and publicly restated its refusal to grant the required access.

Consequently, on June 14, the Security Council directed the Executive Chairman of UNSCOM, Rolf Ekeus, to travel to Baghdad to try to secure Iraq's compliance. The Council armed Ambassador Ekeus with a strong, unanimous Council statement condemning Iraq's continued intransigence and noting that its behavior constitutes a clear and flagrant violation of a number of Council resolutions, including the cease-fire resolution (687). On June 24, Ambassador Ekeus reported to the Council that Iraq had agreed to meet its obligations regarding the inspections.

Iraq remains out of compliance with numerous other requirements of the Security Council. Iraq continues to stall and obfuscate rather than work in good faith toward accounting for the hundreds of Kuwaitis and third-country nationals who disappeared at the hands of Iraqi authorities during the occupation. Iraq refuses to return all of Kuwaiti military equipment stolen during the occupation, as well as priceless Kuwaiti cultural and historical artifacts looted on instruction from Baghdad. Iraq continues to provide refuge for known terrorists.

Saddam Hussein's unwillingness to comply with the norms of international behavior extends to his regime's continuing threat to Iraqi citizens throughout the country. We and our coalition partners continue to enforce the no-fly zones over northern and southern Iraq as part of our efforts to deter Iraq's use of aircraft against its population. Tragically, on June 25 a petroleum truck parked near the barracks that housed U.S. military personnel deployed to Saudi Arabia in support of the Operation Southern Watch no-fly zone enforcement operation exploded, killing 19 and wounding over 250 American military personnel, many seriously. This hei-

nous and cowardly attack will not deter our efforts in enforcing the no-fly zone.

Iraq's repression of its southern Shi'a population continues, with policies aimed at destroying the Marsh Arabs' way of life as well as the ecology of the southern marshes. The human rights situation throughout Iraq remains unchanged. Saddam Hussein shows no signs of complying with U.N. Security Council Resolution 688, which demands that Iraq cease the repression of its own people.

The United States, together with international and humanitarian relief organizations, continues to provide humanitarian assistance to the people of northern Iraq. Security conditions in northern Iraq remain tenuous at best, with Iranian and PKK activity adding to the ever-present threat from Baghdad. We continue to facilitate talks between the two major Kurdish groups in an effort to help them resolve their differences and increase stability in northern Iraq.

On May 20, Iraq and the United Nations signed a Memorandum of Understanding setting forth the terms for the implementation of Resolution 986 which, among other things, will permit Iraq to sell \$2 billion of oil to purchase food, medicine, and other materials and supplies for essential civilian needs. The United States has long supported implementation of Resolution 986 to provide the Iraqi people the relief that Saddam refused to provide. The details of implementation continue to be discussed, and we are hopeful that the resolution will be implemented shortly. We are determined to see the resolution implemented as the Council intended: a mechanism to bring relief to suffering Iraqis, while denying the benefits of the oil sales to Saddam and his associates.

In October 1994, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 949, which demanded that Iraq not utilize its forces to threaten its neighbors or U.N. operations in Iraq and that it not redeploy or enhance its military capacity in southern Iraq. In view of Saddam Hussein's proven record of unreliability, we have felt it prudent to maintain a significant U.S. force presence in the region in order to maintain the capability to respond rapidly to possible Iraqi aggression or threats against its neighbors. Throughout this period, an air expeditionary force has been deployed to Jor-

dan as part of that presence, and a similarly constituted air expeditionary force will shortly deploy to Qatar as the aircraft in Jordan redeploy to the United States.

Since my last report, the Multinational Interception Force (MIF), has successfully countered the latest Iraqi attempt to illegally export petroleum from the Basrah and Khor az Zubayr port facilities. During April and May 1996, MIF vessels intercepted the greatest number of oil tankers, tugs, and offshore resupply vessels in 2 years. New and repeat violators carrying Iraqi petroleum products worth an estimated \$1.2 million and Iraqi dates worth an estimated \$1.1 million were diverted.

For the first time in Iraq sanctions enforcement history, all states of the Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC) have accepted diverted vessels and have enforced the U.N. sanctions regime. Once vessels have been turned over, and oil and date cargoes have been seized, the sale proceeds are then deposited in the U.N. escrow account and the vessels' crews deported. As a result of the MIF's enforcement efforts, we are observing an effective deterrence of sanction violations.

We continue to provide reports of MIF diversions to the U.N. Iraq Sanctions Committee as part of our close coordination and consultation with the United Nations and with Security Council members on the issue of maritime Iraq sanctions enforcement. We have also notified the Sanctions Committee of evidence of continued Iranian complicity in the export of Iraqi petroleum products.

We continue to achieve a significant foreign policy objective in maintaining multinational participation in the MIF. We received firm commitments or serious proposals from New Zealand, Belgium, and Canada to send frigates to participate in the MIF in late 1996 and early 1997.

Other countries have made different but important contributions toward enforcing the U.N. sanctions against Iraq. For example, Honduras recently deflagged four vessels and Belize deflagged three vessels. India has initiated "registry deletion" proceedings against vessels operating under its flag, and the United Arab Emirates is currently considering the deflagging of a vessel diverted twice for violating the sanctions.

The MIF will experience an increase in workload as a result of the Government of Iraq's acceptance of U.N. Security Council Resolution 986. We have revised our Notice to Mariners, which governs the maritime regime in the Gulf, to require prior notification and strict observance of maritime trade with the Mina al Bakr oil terminal. Our policy remains firm: sanctions enforcement measures continue to send a clear message to commercial shippers, and most importantly to the Government of Iraq, that there will be no action to completely lift or modify sanctions until Iraq has established its peaceful intentions by complying with all relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions. The United Nations Compensation Commission (UNCC), established pursuant to Security Council Resolution 687, continues to resolve claims against Iraq arising from Iraq's unlawful invasion and occupation of Kuwait. Currently, the UNCC has issued over 850,000 awards worth more than \$3.3 billion. The UNCC has been able to authorize only limited payments for fixed awards for serious personal injury or death, as Iraq is not in compliance with all relevant U.N. Security Council resolutions, and U.N. sanctions remain in force. However, under U.N. Security Council Resolution 986, if Iraq sells the full amount of oil initially authorized, \$600 million in revenue will go to the Compensation Fund, based on the requirement that 30 percent of oil sales proceeds be transferred into the Fund. Because the UNCC has issued over \$3.3 billion in awards, funds generated by this sale of oil will be sufficient to pay only a portion of the claims issued to date.

To conclude, Iraq remains a serious threat to regional peace and stability. I remain determined to see Iraq comply fully with all of its obligations under U.N. Security Council resolutions. My Administration will continue to oppose any further relaxation of sanctions until Iraq demonstrates its peaceful intentions through such compliance.

I appreciate the support of the Congress for our efforts and shall continue to keep the Congress informed about this important issue.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Strom Thurmond, President pro tempore of the Senate. This letter was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on July 9.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel

July 9, 1996

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, do you think it's a good idea for Prime Minister Netanyahu to sit down with Yasser Arafat personally and try to work out the problems between the Israelis and the Palestinians?

President Clinton. Well, I think it's a good idea for him to sit down with me. And we're looking forward to it. We'll be able to—we'll answer your questions later. I think we should wait until after we have a chance to visit to answer questions.

Terrorist Attack in Saudi Arabia

Q. Has there been any progress in determining who was responsible for the terrorist action in Saudi Arabia?

President Clinton. Well, I got an update yesterday. I think the investigation is progressing. I don't know how to—I don't want to answer your question specifically. I feel confident that the investigation is being handled in the proper way and it is progressing.

Q. If it is state-sponsored, though, is there going to be U.S. retaliation if you can conclude that a state was responsible for this action?

President Clinton. Let me—let's do the investigation first.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, are you bringing the President information about Palestinian violations of the accord, sir?

Prime Minister Netanyahu. First of all, I'm bringing with me to the President a lot of goodwill from the people of Israel to the people of the United States, and from the leadership of Israel to the leadership of the United States. I'm sure we'll have a productive discussion, and I'm sure you'll bear with us until we do.

Terrorist Attack in Saudi Arabia

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, do you think there are any Syrian links to the bombing in Saudi Arabia?

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Well, I thought that the President's suggestion of first investigating and then declaring may be not that frequent among political leaders, but I think it's wise. It's a wise suggestion in which I'll follow.

Q. Do you have any evidence of Syrian involvement? Do you?

President Clinton. Thank you. We'll answer more later. Thank you.

Secretary of Defense William Perry

Q. Mr. President, Secretary Perry seems to be getting a pretty tough grilling right now up on the Hill. Do you still have confidence in Secretary Perry?

President Clinton. Oh, absolutely. He's been a very good Defense Secretary. This is a tough issue. That's why I appointed General Downing to look at it all, to get the facts and to evaluate the security situation there and elsewhere where our people might be at risk. And we will do a good job of that. But I think the American people recognize that, on balance, our military people have done a good job and that he's been quite a good and effective Defense Secretary. I have full confidence in him. And I believe that every fairminded person, when they look at his record, will feel the same way.

[At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.]

Prime Minister's Visit

President Clinton. Let's get everyone in first.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. This is the most genteel press of all, the Israeli press. They're all pussycats here.

President Clinton. Let me, first of all, say I'm delighted to have the Prime Minister here. I've looked forward to having a chance to have this conversation. He and his family arrived late last night, and I'm glad to see him looking so bright-eyed this morning. And I think that I should defer answering any substantive questions until we have a chance to visit. When we have a chance to visit, we're going to make ourselves available to you, and

I'll answer whatever substantive questions you have then.

Q. Mr. President, will you promise the Prime Minister that in the second Clinton administration the Embassy will move to West Jerusalem as the law of the land says?

President Clinton. I'll promise the Prime Minister to answer questions after we have a chance to visit.

Q. Mr. President, are you going to change your policy towards Syria?

President Clinton. I'll talk about all this after we have a chance to visit. I want to visit with the Prime Minister first.

Q. Mr. President, are you expecting to get any specific answers from the Prime Minister regarding Hebron, as an example?

President Clinton. I expect we'll have a good conversation.

Q. *[Inaudible]*—the chemistry between you two is important to you, Mr. President?

President Clinton. I have always thought it was pretty good. I read the Prime Minister's—one of his books a long time before I even ran for President before, and I've always been very interested and admiring of his understanding of the problem of terrorism, which I think he explained to the world in advance of many other people focusing on it. And I just read his most recent book. And we've always had a cordial relationship. So I'm looking forward to renewing it and working with him.

NOTE: The exchange began at 11:10 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Gen. Wayne A. Downing, USA (Ret.), Director, Downing Assessment Task Force. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this exchange.

**The President's News Conference
With Prime Minister Netanyahu**

July 9, 1996

President Clinton. Good afternoon. Please be seated. I'm very glad to welcome Prime Minister Netanyahu to the White House. This is his first visit since taking office, and it gave me an opportunity to congratulate him on his victory in the election in May.

Israel has changed governments, but as I told the Prime Minister, the historic relationship between the United States and Israel has not and will not change. The bonds that unite us are as strong as ever today. I am proud that our relationship is broader, deeper, and more firmly rooted than at any time in Israel's history. And I am determined that it should remain so.

The Prime Minister and I had a good talk on many issues. At the heart of our discussions was the question of how to bring a comprehensive peace that is secure and lasting to the Middle East. I told the Prime Minister that I am committed to maintaining the progress that has been made toward that goal, and he told me the Israeli people had given him a mandate to make peace with security, a peace that will bring at each stage a growing sense of security for the people of Israel and all the people of the Middle East. The Prime Minister and his Arab partners can count on the full support of the United States towards that end.

Peace that we seek is not an abstraction. It must bring security, dignity, and a better life for Arabs and Israelis alike. Above all, peace and security must be indivisible, because peace without security is impossible, and true security without peace cannot be achieved.

I was encouraged by the Prime Minister's statement that he will be working closely with the Palestinian Authority on full implementations by both sides of the Declaration of Principles and the Interim Agreement, and on easing economic conditions on the Palestinians. We also agreed on the importance of negotiations with the Syrians. We both believe it is vital to continue to bring the nations of the Middle East together through regional initiatives and through institutions, especially economic ones, such as this fall's Cairo economic summit.

We spoke at length about the threat posed to our mutual interests by terrorism. After the brutal attack on Dhahran, Americans understand better than ever that, as the Prime Minister himself has written, free societies must mobilize their resources, their ingenuity, and their will to wipe out this evil from our midst. I am pleased, therefore, to announce that we have agreed that the first

meeting of the U.S.-Israel counterterrorism group created this past spring will take place this month.

Our cooperation will be a key element in the global effort to defeat terrorism, an effort America has led at Sharm al-Sheikh and the G-7 conference. We're also stepping up our joint efforts against the threat posed to Israel by missile proliferation. The United States has agreed to provide shared early warning information in Israel beginning before the end of next year—this year, excuse me.

Let me close by repeating something that I said to the Prime Minister in one of our earliest conversations in 1992. I said then I didn't believe the United States could make peace on behalf of Israel, that only Israel and its neighbors could make these decisions through direct negotiations. I felt that our contribution should be to minimize the risks to Israel of making peace so that Israel could have the confidence necessary to make a peace that will last. I still believe that.

That is why our commitment to Israel's security remains rock solid, why we'll continue to do whatever is necessary to ensure Israel's qualitative edge, why Israelis and no one else will ultimately have to decide the terms upon which Israel will make peace.

Those who would try to drive a wedge between Israel and the United States will not succeed. We will strengthen the bonds between us, bonds that have helped to make possible the dramatic changes in the Middle East since 1992.

Now Israel is no longer alone in the region. Courageous Arab leaders have put aside decades of hostility and suspicion to extend the hand of partnership in peace. Just as we stand by Israel, so we will also stand with those in the Arab world who seek peace. I am confident that those who join us in the search for peace will see that they have made the right choice.

Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Thank you, Mr. President. I'd like to thank you, Mr. President, for your gracious hospitality, a quick but very good lunch, for your warm welcome, which I think all the members of the delegation feel is genuine and is, I think, in the best traditions of American-Israeli relations. I hope you'll give us the opportunity

to reciprocate in the near future. And I'd very much like to welcome you soon in Jerusalem.

The purpose of this visit is to express Israel's appreciation for American support and also to reaffirm that the relationship between our two countries transcends personalities and politics and parties. It is a bond between two peoples and a bond which I think has few equals in the international arena. And I think—and I know—that our relationship is today as solid as ever, and it will continue to be solid and friendly in the utmost degree.

I want to thank you, Mr. President, for the decisions you have made in this visit regarding enhancing Israel's security. We discussed a broad range of subjects whose goal is to enhance security and to achieve peace. And we discussed the many problems and challenges that face us still through the Oslo process and the negotiations with Syria.

I think we agree that those who are on the side of peace must show complete dedication to the fight against terrorism. Anything less will simply not do. Israel is eager to make progress, but we cannot do so alone. We want to live up to the agreements, but we cannot be the only side to do so. We're willing to move forward, but we cannot move forward without reciprocity. And for us, the key word is reciprocity and the fulfillment of obligations undertaken by both sides. And while we yield to no one in our desire for peace, on the question of security and terrorism, we will not accept the notion that peace and terrorism can coexist under one roof.

I'm confident—I must say, I was confident before I came here and even more confident after I've had the opportunity to explore in some depth with President Clinton these and other issues—I'm confident that we can overcome the hurdles that face us and continue with a genuine process of seeking peace with security.

I have to say that I think that the Middle East needs something more than just the quest for these two areas. I think what we need in the region is a badly missing education for the peoples of the area for peace and human rights and democracy. I think we need a new way of thinking about relations between peoples and about relations with each other.

Our neighbors' children will accept and will learn to live with our children when they are taught that Israel is an integral, legitimate part of the region and that it is here to stay. And I think some serious efforts in this direction are needed. I think they will do as much and possibly more than all the agreements that we seek to achieve. And I'm sure that we have the resolve and we have the determination to work with those Arab leaders who are interested in a genuine peace to effect a psychological transformation in our area among the peoples, ultimately to guarantee the peace that we are working for and that we will strive for, and that we all deserve, Arab and Jew alike.

President Clinton. Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

Q. Mr. President—

President Clinton. Well let me say, first of all, how we're going to do this. We'll have one question from an American journalist, and then the Prime Minister will call upon an Israeli journalist. And we'll alternate until you run us out of the room.

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. Prime Minister, what did you tell the President about observing the concept of land for peace, pulling out troops from Hebron, and a possible meeting with Yasser Arafat?

And to you, Mr. President, after today's meeting, are you convinced that Prime Minister Netanyahu will pursue the peace process with as much determination and vigor as Yitzhak Rabin and Shimon Peres?

Prime Minister Netanyahu. We have now a history of negotiations with the Arab side, or I should say with Arab parties. I, myself, went to Madrid to initiate the breakthrough peace conference that opened up the direct negotiations between Israel and all of its Arab neighbors, the Syrians, the Palestinians, the Jordanians. We disagreed on this issue with the Arab delegations at the time, but this didn't prevent us from convening in the room.

We have our own interpretation of land for peace, our own interpretation of 242 and 338 that calls for Israel to make concessions of land in order to achieve secure and recognized boundaries. As you know, Israel has

made substantial concessions on all fronts. And the question remains, what are secure and recognized boundaries? Or for that matter, does fairness require that Israel yield a hundred percent and the Arab sides yield zero percent? And will we have secure boundaries on the '67 borders? Well, obviously, we think differently.

Rather than delve into this discussion and into this debate, I again point to the direction that was achieved in Madrid and has been, I think, the basic guiding principle, namely that we can have different interpretations but that none of us tries to coerce the other side to accept our own positions as a starting point for negotiations, which have to be left open to their conclusion, obviously. And that is what we will do with the Syrians and with others.

On the question of Hebron, we have two commitments. We have a commitment to fulfill our obligations, and we have a commitment to maintain security. And the problem in Hebron is a serious problem of security. No government, including the previous government, could act precipitously in Hebron because the potential for explosion there is immense, and it could entail the kind of tragedies that we saw in Hebron recently, or for that matter, a few decades ago in 1929 when the entire Jewish community was massacred. We've had terrible violence directed at both sides. Hebron to us is also a subject of deep historical attachment. It's the oldest Jewish community on Earth, 3,500 years old.

So this has to be treated carefully. I'm looking into the problem. I explained to President Clinton in some detail our concerns and how we seek to reconcile these two interests, fulfilling commitments on the one hand and maintaining security on the other. This is something I will discuss with my Cabinet colleagues, and I assure you that I'll be in touch with the President as we continue our deliberations.

President Clinton. You asked me——

Q. About Mr. Arafat.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. You asked did we discuss Mr. Arafat?

Q. No. Are you willing to meet with Mr. Arafat? Do you plan to meet with Mr. Arafat soon?

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Well, as you know, we have ongoing contacts with Mr. Arafat and with the Palestinian Authority. I have my own representatives who have been meeting with him on a regular basis, and we'll expand these contacts both in frequency and the level of the personnel involved. I said that if I deem it necessary for peace or for the interest of Israel to meet Arafat, I wouldn't rule it out, and I have not changed my position.

President Clinton. You asked what I said to the Prime Minister. I said, first of all, I thought it was very important that there be a reaffirmation of the commitments that Israel has made in Oslo I and Oslo II, in all the accords that were signed; second, that I thought that there should be an attempt to continue the comprehensive peace process, that it was essential to keep working with the Palestinians, there should be an attempt to reengage Syria, to work on the problem of Lebanon.

You asked if I thought that the Prime Minister would pursue the peace process with vigor. The answer to that is, I believe that he will. There was an election in Israel. The Israeli people made a decision. Part of that decision was to take a different approach to the peace process from this point forward, at least somewhat different. Israel is a democracy. They made that decision. The Prime Minister has very strong views.

But I think if you look at the mandate that he received—and he's better to talk about it than I am—but I believe that the tide of history cannot be turned, and that going back—and I said this to the Arab leaders very firmly before the last summit in Cairo—it would be a bad mistake. I think that we have to find a way for these parties to make their own peace. None of us from the outside can impose it on them. None of us should seek to impose it on them. The interest of the United States is to reduce the risks for peace undertaken by the peacemakers.

But I believe that we need to keep the tide of history going, because I don't believe there can be, ultimately, final security for the people of Israel without a resolution of the peace process that is positive. So I believe that the process will go forward. And I think we're going to have necessarily a period of

adjustment and those of us who care about it need to try to minimize the negative and maximize the positive and get through it as well as possible.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister and Mr. President, do you share the view that you cannot negotiate peace with Syria as long as Syria harbors terrorists in Damascus? And will you, Mr. President, call President Asad, just as you did after every previous visit of state head from Israel, and tell him that he still has a partner for peace?

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Well, I have said that I am prepared to negotiate with President Asad of Syria on peace. And I can tell you that the first item on my agenda would be the cessation of all terrorist attacks from Syrian-controlled areas in Lebanon via Hezbollah, or for that matter, other terrorist attacks from groups based in Syria.

And I think it's only right. I think that it's peculiar to have peace talks that are progressing while you have a terror campaign parallel to it. So the cessation of hostilities usually precedes all peace negotiations. In fact, I'm hard pressed to find exceptions in modern history. And if there are exceptions, we shouldn't follow the exception; we should follow the rule.

This is what I would do. And I think that this would be conducive to building trust that is badly needed between Israel and Syria in order to move forward with the negotiations on much more sensitive issues.

President Clinton. I would make two points very quickly. First, the United States is opposed to terrorism as practiced by anybody, anywhere. And our concerns with that have been an impediment in the improvement of our relations with Syria, which we have sought on its own merits and as a way to aid peace in the Middle East. We have an uncompromising position on terrorism, and we will maintain it, even if we have to pay for it from time to time.

Secondly, I do intend to communicate with President Asad. I have to decide—you're the first person that asked me about a telephone call, so it hadn't occurred to me one way or the other. It just sort of happened before. But we stay in regular contact about the peace process. And I have before, and I will again, on the basis of this meeting, reaffirm

my belief that he should maintain contacts with Israel and discuss peace without preconditions.

Q. Mr. President, some 150 U.S. rabbis sent you a letter yesterday asking you to cut off aid to the Palestinians and Israel if they don't live up to their commitments under the peace process. Is that something you would even consider doing? And short of that, what other steps might be considered to ensure compliance with the proposals in the peace process, such as tying U.S. aid to a continued moratorium on settlements in the occupied territories?

President Clinton. Well first of all, we have found pretty good results when we've worked closely with the Palestinians in getting increased compliance. And I think the absence of large terrorist attacks in Gaza and the West Bank is evidence of their increased capacity, which is different from their will, not only their increased will but their increased capacity to comply with the terms and the agreements which bind them as well as Israel.

So I don't believe that I should talk about what I would do if it's obvious that they had abandoned any attempt to comply with their obligations when it seems to me that, at least in the areas where we've been principally concerned, they have been willing to do more and they have been increasingly able to do more. So I want to focus on the ability of Mr. Arafat to succeed in holding up his end of the bargain. And if there comes a time when it's obvious they have no intention of doing that, then I'll cross that bridge when I come to it.

Israeli Election

Q. Can you explain to Mr. Netanyahu why you, Mr. President, and your administration were perceived as though it supported forcefully Mr. Peres to become the next Prime Minister?

President Clinton. I don't think it needed that much explaining. [Laughter] If there's one thing I've learned in years of dealing with Mr. Netanyahu, he's a very bright man. Sometimes I wish I could explain things that don't need much explaining.

The important thing is——

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Mr. President, we didn't discuss the election results.

President Clinton. We didn't discuss it at all. That's right.

Yes, go ahead, Wolf [Wolf Blitzer, CNN].

U.S. Economic Aid to Israel

Q. Mr. President and Mr. Prime Minister—in the past, Mr. Prime Minister, as the opposition leader in Israel, you've spoken about the need for Israel itself to voluntarily move away from its economic dependence on U.S. economic as opposed to military assistance. Are you willing now to give up that \$1.2 billion a year in economic assistance given Israel's economic progress?

And Mr. President, would you welcome a decision by Israel to give up that U.S. economic aid at this moment?

Prime Minister Netanyahu. You're quite right that I intend to move Israel towards economic independence. It's not a simple or a one-shot move. It requires a strategy and some very hard decisions, like the kind we took just 2 days ago in a record cut of the budget, which is merely one part of our economic policy, which will also be deregulation, privatization, the break up of cartels, and so on. All of which is hard to do, because of vested interests, with political costs, and certainly in the economic budget cuts with considerable pain in some quarters of the population.

But I'm committed to doing it. And I have no doubt that this policy pursued over the course of the coming 10 years will be able to move Israel considerably towards that goal of economic, and I stress the word economic, self-sufficiency.

This doesn't mean that I can do it tomorrow. And I haven't said that I will. The only news that I can give you, Wolf, is that this is a visit of a Prime Minister to Washington without a bag of goodies that we ask for. We came in saying, "We're doing it on our own. We're cutting our budgets, and we'll handle it on our own." But I must say that I appreciate the military assistance and the assistance in the security field especially, including the decisions the President took in this visit regarding early warning systems that are so important for us. And this is something that

I think is appreciated by the entire people of Israel.

President Clinton. I agree with the Prime Minister's statement. I think that the capacity of the Israeli economy to grow because of the talents and the diversity of its people, the strength of the people, is virtually unlimited. I think it will really take off in the years ahead. I think we should be supportive of that process. And there may come a time when aid is no longer needed and no longer sought, but I don't believe that this is the time to do anything to destabilize where we are. We need to focus on our goals in the Middle East, including greater economic prosperity in Israel and for our Arab supporters of the peace process as well.

Israeli Settlements

Q. Mr. President, how do you see the settlement policy of the new Government of Israel? And, Mr. Prime Minister, can you react to the President's response to this question, please?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, keep in mind the settlements as an issue in the abstract, or the larger issues of settlements, are, by prior agreement of the parties, to be resolved by agreements. That's the first thing.

Secondly, we know as a practical matter that the settlements issue can become a contentious one, can become a problem—not the only problem in the peace process. So it's something that we have said repeatedly has to be handled with great care.

Now, I think just saying those two things is about all that needs to be said. This is something that the more you talk about it, you could do more harm than good in the ultimate peace process. But I think those are the two touchstones, the lodestars that ought to guide decisions as we go along on settlements.

Mr. Prime Minister.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. Thank you, Mr. President. I had the opportunity to present to the President and earlier to the Secretary of State some statistics that showed that the—under the last 4 years under the Labor government of Mr. Rabin and Mr. Peres, the population of the—the Jewish population in the areas of Judea, Samaria,

and Gaza grew by 50 percent—five-zero. Roughly at a rate of 10 percent a year. And compounded it gives you the 50 percent.

This is natural growth. These are living communities. They have families. People get married, they have children. Because of the cost of housing in Israel, which is so high—and beyond the green line—also people move there to find cheaper housing and so on. So there's been a natural growth in the existing communities, and that is—I assume that no one here is expecting us to do less than the Labor government on this point.

Secondly, regarding the question of additional or new settlements, this is obviously something we don't preclude, but the precise pattern, the decision of how, when, where to do this is something that I'll deliberate with my colleagues. And we shall do so. We shall reach a decision that I think should guide us on how we view the final political settlement. I think it's important to have a direction.

But at the moment what I can tell you is that we have not yet decided on the precise pattern of our settlement policies so there is no concrete answer to your concrete question.

President Clinton. Peter [Peter Maer, NBC Mutual Radio].

Middle East Peace Process

Q. Mr. President and Prime Minister, a couple of questions on the Palestinian issue. To you, Prime Minister, do you agree with the assessment that the President gave a couple of questions back—to the assessment of, rather, the Palestinians' will and capacity to deal with terrorists and other troublemakers?

And President Clinton, would you have liked to have heard, or maybe you did privately hear, a firmer commitment from the Prime Minister to a set time for a meeting with Yasser Arafat?

Prime Minister Netanyahu. I think that the fulfillment of commitments is central. And I am not just saying it as a trick, as a ruse, as a stalling device. We inherited two agreements, Oslo I and Oslo II, not to our liking. I thought they would lead to an expansion of terrorism. I thought they would have other consequences. But I inherited them as Prime Minister. And governments keep

agreements. The same applies to the sides, the parties that sign agreements with the Israeli Government. And therefore, we expect the Palestinian Authority to fulfill the central commitments it undertook in Oslo. I think this would be only natural and this would put them, I would think, in a moral position to ask us to fulfill the remaining of our obligations.

There are two central commitments of Oslo—there are many, but the two central ones on which, may I say, I got elected, promising to ensure that they're fulfilled. The first one is Jerusalem.

There is, unfortunately, systemic violations of a solemn commitment that the PLO—or I should say, the Palestinian Authority—undertook in Oslo not to have any of their offices or governmental activity in Jerusalem. And they have offices in Jerusalem, formal PA offices operating in Jerusalem, in direct contravention of Oslo. They also have security personnel, in direct contravention of Oslo. We expect the Palestinian Authority to desist—cease and desist from these activities in order to conform with their obligations. We wish them to conform, and we wish ourselves to conform.

The second major area is security. I think that what has happened 4 months ago, after the spate of suicide bombings, was that the Palestinian Authority realized for the first time that unless it acted to curb the terrorist attacks emanating from PLO domains, then no government in Israel—and this time I'm talking about the former government—even it could not continue with the process. And as a result they began to act. And I say "began." They're acting. They've showed a capacity to curb terror emanating from their domains if they so wish. And this I think the President hit it right on the nail—right on the—I think he hit the nail right on the head.

And the crucial question for us is, A, that this be done fully, which means dismantling Hamas—or disarming Hamas and Islamic Jihad members from their weapons. It also means not releasing criminals or perpetrators of terrorist acts, and a few other things. And this remains to be fulfilled. But there has been movement in that direction, which I think is important.

I would say one thing on security. I think the crucial thing, the crucial awareness and understanding that we are trying to communicate to the Palestinian Authority is that the battle against terrorism cannot be episodic. It cannot be a product of whim or tactics or strategy. We're moving together towards peace. Don't use terror—indirectly, of course—don't use terror as an instrument of policy.

It is virtually almost true—it is not always hermetically so, but it is virtually always the case that most of the terrorists' actions, the grievous ones, the terrible ones, that have been launched against us are done not by shadowy groups or isolated individuals, but by known organizations whose activities can be curbed by our negotiating partners. And, therefore, it is not true to say that by insisting that terror be curbed we're hindering the peace process, because it is our negotiating partners in the peace process who have the capacity to stop the terrorism.

This is something we expect them to do. This is something they've shown a capacity to do. They can continue doing it. And if they do it, our response will be very, very positive in a number of areas and especially and most directly in the economic areas. You know that in Gaza they're suffering. In the PLO—in the PA areas, they're suffering because of lack of employment, because of the closure.

I do not view the closure as a principle that has to be enshrined forever. I think we can and we should pursue a policy of economic openness with the Palestinian Authority. And I'd like to help out in the economic field. But the closure, as you know, is one of the consequences of the absence or the failure of the Palestinian Authority in the past to conform with their obligations vis-a-vis security and fighting terrorism.

I think it's intertwined. And our policy again is reciprocity—fulfill the commitments, I think precisely as the President said, on both sides and maintain security.

President Clinton. Peter, you ask a specific question. Of course, the Prime Minister's already addressed this. They clearly have very high level contacts already established. And what I said to him, I'd be glad to say to you in public. I said, "I think it's

critical to do that, and I think the more contact, the better." I said what I said here, that I have been impressed by the increasing—not only the increasing will but the increasing capacity of Mr. Arafat and the Palestinian Authority to run their own affairs in security and in other areas. There's a world of difference in their ability to do this between now and 1993. And I believe that making sure that Israel and the Palestinians were on the same page, understood each other, and made the maximum number of agreements about how they were going to proceed is critical to keeping the peace process going.

The details of it, I have—you've heard the Prime Minister comment on that, and that's a decision for them to make.

We have one more question over here.

Q. Mr. Prime Minister and Mr. President, don't you think that Mr. Arafat is your peace partner and should not be left out guessing until such time that you will see fit for Israeli security to meet with him? I think that it is a necessary element which will guarantee both the security of Israel and the Palestinians that you meet immediately. And when will you, sir, since you expressed your opinion about the closure, when will you lift the closure and allow more Palestinian workers to work inside Israel?

And Mr. President, your administration has spent a great deal of time and effort to bring peace to the Middle East, especially between the Palestinians and the Israelis. At this juncture, Mr. President, don't you think that a summit between Mr. Arafat and Mr. Netanyahu, King Hussein, and President Mubarak under your auspices here at the White House before November 5th will add a lot of good to the element of stability and possibly solution? Because these things which happened here at the White House were very fruitful, and they brought a lot of good feelings to the people in the Middle East. Thank you.

Prime Minister Netanyahu. I've said that we may have agreements and we may have disagreements, but I assure that one of the things that will not happen is that we will not have disagreements as a result of lack of communications. The communication channels will be open, they will be complete,

and they will allow us to understand each other at the highest levels.

You had a second question, I think. [Laughter] What was that?

Q. Which was, when will you allow more Palestinian workers to work?

Prime Minister Netanyahu. As soon as the security conditions—I deem—as soon as I deem the security conditions will allow it, I will ease the closure.

President Clinton. Let me just say, one of the most encouraging things to me about our conversation was the clear understanding the Prime Minister showed of the difficulty the closure is imposing on the Palestinians, not only in terms of not being able to move across the borders and go to jobs in Israel but also in destabilizing their own environment and undermining our ability, for example, to encourage others from the United States and elsewhere to invest in their territory.

So we understand that. And also, I think that security is clearly the test. So this is, obviously, the next area where Mr. Arafat and the Prime Minister and his government need to go to try to reach an understanding. But I was encouraged by that.

In terms of your suggestion about a summit, my experience, sir, is that when these things are called there needs to be an understanding in advance about what is going to be achieved and how it's going to be achieved. To be fair to the Prime Minister, he has just taken office not very long ago; he's just constituted his government. And I think it would be premature to do that at this time.

But I believe the more contact we have at the higher levels, the better off we're going to be and the greater the likelihood of achieving peace. But I do not believe it's the appropriate time to do that now.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 127th news conference began at 2 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and President Hafiz al-Asad of Syria.

Remarks on Senate Action on Minimum Wage Legislation and an Exchange With Reporters

July 9, 1996

The President. Good afternoon. This was a very good day for America's working families. Today's vote by the Senate means that 10 million hard-working Americans will get a little bit of help to raise their children and keep their family strong. A 90-cent increase in the minimum wage will honor our most basic values, work and family, opportunity and responsibility. It will help working people without hurting our economy, and it is plainly the right thing to do.

Today the minimum wage is not a living wage. You can't raise a family on \$4.25 an hour. This action by the Senate today restores the bipartisan commitment that the minimum wage will keep pace with the cost of living. This action will directly benefit millions of hard-working Americans.

Sixty percent of minimum wage workers are women. More than a third are the sole breadwinners in their household. Over 2 million children live in poor or near-poor families where a worker earns the minimum wage. And they will now get a raise.

I'm gratified that a bipartisan majority of the Senators rejected a killer amendment that would have stopped this bill. The provision would have been a powerful incentive for employers to push employees out of their jobs after 6 months. It would have locked millions and millions of Americans into lower wages.

The way has now been cleared for final passage of a minimum wage bill. I call on Congress to send me the final bill quickly. The differences between the House and Senate versions are not significant. An American worker should get their raise as soon as possible. There's no reason that minimum wage workers should have to wait any longer for their raise. This is not a time to nickel and dime our working families. Our economy is sturdy; we have 10 million new jobs; unemployment at 5.3 percent; nearly 4 million new homeowners; rising real hourly wages for the first time in a decade. Now we have to make

sure that all Americans have the opportunity to benefit from a growing economy.

This has been a difficult fight. But it turned out to be a real victory for the working families of this country. Today's vote by the Senate will make it possible for more of our people to be rewarded for their hard work, to believe that there is opportunity on the other end of their responsibility.

Again, I thank the Members of the Senate who took this step. I thank the Members of the Congress, both parties, who supported it in both Houses. I look forward to the speedy resolution of the two bills and to signing it into law.

Let me say one other thing. Today is a special day for me, and since the Vice President's here, I wanted to announce that this is our fourth anniversary. It was 4 years ago today that I asked and he accepted the—I asked him to become Vice President, or at least the nominee for Vice President, and he accepted it. It has been 4 years of great adventure. It's been a wonderful partnership. And I believe that historians will record that he has been the most effective and influential Vice President in the history of the country. And I just wanted to have this chance to acknowledge 4 great years and to thank him for his remarkable service and his steadily improving sense of humor. *[Laughter]*

Budget Legislation

Q. How do you feel about a CR that runs through March, sir?

The President. A CR to do what?

Q. *[Inaudible]*—that runs through March at fiscal—*[inaudible]*.

The President. Well, I would hope we could get some of the appropriations bill passed. My understanding is that there are some that we're pretty close to an agreement on. And I would hope that we could keep working into September after we have the August recess to see what else can be done.

There's still a lot of things that need to be done. We need to pass Kennedy-Kassebaum. We need to pass a good welfare reform bill. And I'm still open to any kind of progress we can make on the budget. So I will work with the Congress in any way possible. We have to keep the Government open, and we have to keep the fundamental

functions of the country going forward. But I would hope that we wouldn't give up this early on the prospect of progress.

Minimum Wage and Former Senator Dole

Q. Mr. President, former Senator Dole's press secretary says you're playing maximum politics with the minimum wage, yet you were silent for the first 2 years of your administration on the increase of the minimum wage and that he has supported an increase in the minimum wage. Are you playing politics with the minimum wage?

The President. Does that mean that he's changed his position, and he now supports this minimum wage increase?

Q. He says he supports—as of May 24, 1996, he was in support of the minimum wage, according to the Congressional Record and the press release that they put out.

The President. Well, good for him. That's good.

The Vice President. With or without the poison pill?

The President. I mean, if he is now in support of this bill, I hope he will say so and urge the leadership in the Senate and the House of his party to send me the bill right away. And I think the American people should say that we're glad he supports the bill. If in fact he changed his position in May to support it, I think it's good.

Let me say, I never opposed—the implication that I, like Senator Dole and the Republican leadership, opposed the minimum wage increase in the first 2 years is simply false. Let's remember, though, we did first things first. The first thing we did was to double the earned-income tax credit, so that we could say over a period of years we were going to take all working families who work 40 hours a week who had children in the home out of poverty. That was a very important thing to do on its own merits. And that took a lot of doing. That took virtually all of 1993. It was an important part of our economic plan, and it was opposed by all the Members of the other party in the Congress. So we focused on the earned-income tax credit in the first 2 years.

The change of parties in the '94 election had nothing whatever to do with raising the minimum wage. When I ran in 1992, I said

I thought we ought to take action to keep the minimum wage up with inflation. And it hadn't been raised in 5 years; it needs to be raised.

1996 Election

Q. Mr. President, on this anniversary it seems only fair to ask you when you plan to officially announce what has clearly been your intention all along here, to seek reelection?

The President. I don't know. [Laughter] I don't know. We haven't made a decision about an official announcement. I can tell you this, that I'm going to try to keep my team together. I hope that we'll—I'm hoping for an eighth anniversary. How's that?

Small Business and the Minimum Wage

Q. Mr. President, what do you say to small business owners who say they'll have to lay off workers if the minimum wage is increased?

The President. I would say two things. First of all—first, in 1993, when we made 90 percent of the small businesses in this country eligible for a tax cut by increasing the expensing provisions by 70 percent, and again in this minimum wage bill, there are tax relief provisions for small businesses, a number of them which will actually put more money into the hands of small businesses. So that this—even the most hard-pressed small businesses should not be adversely affected by this.

Secondly, there have been study after study after study showing—the vast majority of the studies show that a moderate increase in the minimum wage, especially in a strong economy, does not increase the unemployment rate. We have produced over 10 million new jobs as a country in the last 3½ years. But the people who are still out there working for \$4.25 an hour can't live on it. And it is simply a myth to say that most people on the minimum wage are middle class kids living at home with their parents.

I was in Chicago the other day, and some of you probably were with me at that Taste of Chicago event. And I went to one of the food booths, and there was a woman there who said, "I really appreciate you trying to raise the minimum wage. I'm a single mother

with two children working full time on the minimum wage and going to school at night. And it's just not true that we're all living in comfortable circumstances. Most people are having a tough time like me."

And that's what I think the answer is. This country has been well-served over a long period of time by having a minimum wage that guaranteed a decent level of subsistence. And remember this, these are people that virtually have to spend everything they make. And when they earn more money, they will turn right around and spend it with small businesses all across the country. They'll spend it at those eating establishments. They'll spend it at the dry cleaners and the places that do laundry. They'll spend it on supporting their children. And therefore, they will be lifting the American economy up, and they'll be helping a lot of small businesses, too.

The Vice President. Could I say something? Could I add a word since in view of the occasion I feel it's okay to interject one word here. I remember when we started this fight. I believe it was the Jim Lehrer show went and asked the question you just asked—

The President. I remember that.

The Vice President. —to employees who are making the minimum wage. And you know, they're the ones who really ought to give the answer. And I remember vividly one woman in southern Virginia who was making the minimum wage, was asked by the reporter, what about this argument that if they increase your minimum wage X amount, your employer might reduce the number of jobs in your workplace. She thought just for a minute and looked at him straight in the eye and she said, "I'll take my chances."

And that's the way people who were making the minimum wage feel about this question. And the studies indicate that they're right, especially in today's economy.

Helms-Burton Legislation

Q. Mr. President, do you plan to implement—[inaudible]—Helms-Burton legislation that would allow lawsuits to move forward?

The President. Would you say that again, please?

Q. Do you plan to implement title 3 of the Helms-Burton legislation which is due on July 16th to allow those lawsuits to move forward?

The President. I'm sorry, I have not made a determination on that. That has not come to me for a determination yet, so I can't comment.

Let me—before I leave, I also want to say a special word of thanks to my longtime friend Secretary Reich, who has carried on this fight for the minimum wage and for a minimum wage that would not be crippled by exempting millions and millions of workers from its impact. And so this was an especially sweet day for him as well, and I thank him for his efforts. And I thank you again, all of you, for being here. This is a great day for our working families.

Thank you.

Assault Weapons Ban

Q. Mr. President, what's your response to Dole's statement on assault weapons?

The President. Let me say, I'm not entirely sure what he meant when he said what he said. My position is clear. I fought for and passed the Brady bill, the assault weapons ban, the 100,000 police. If he now believes that we were right on that, then I applaud that. But it's not clear to me that that's what he said. So I can't comment on what he said because I'm not sure what he said.

Thanks.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:10 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Statement on Training and Equipping the Bosnian Federation *July 9, 1996*

I am pleased to announce the start of the U.S.-led train and equip program for the armed forces of the Bosnian Federation. The purpose of this program is to assist in providing Bosnia with the ability to defend itself and thereby promote security and stability in the region. The program will also help ensure that upon IFOR's departure, a military balance exists among the former warring parties so that none of them are encouraged to resume hostilities.

Full commencement of the train-and-equip program was conditioned on the Bosnian Government fully complying with two commitments: first, the Dayton provision mandating the withdrawal of foreign forces and terminating its intelligence cooperation with Iran, and second, the passage of a new Federation Defense Law leading to the integration of Federation military forces and the creation of western-oriented defense institutions in Bosnia. On June 26, I certified that the Bosnian Government had met its commitments with regard to foreign forces and relations with Iran.

I am very pleased to say that this afternoon the Bosnian Federation Parliament adopted a new Defense Law. Bosnian President Izetbegovic and Federation President Zubak have overcome many significant issues in order for the Defense Law to become reality. Their leadership reflects a commitment to a workable Federation Government, and this law is an essential building block of a functioning Federation. When implemented, it will strengthen security for all Bosnians and contribute significantly to a lasting peace in the region.

With the passage of the law, the Bosnian Government has made good on its commitments. Now we can make good on ours: the U.S.-led, international train-and-equip program will begin immediately. We anticipate the program will start in a matter of days in Sarajevo when the Federation signs a contract with MPRI, a U.S.-based company which will execute and manage the program within Bosnia. MPRI will conduct its first training session for senior military leaders in Bosnia within approximately 3 to 4 weeks.

The U.S. drawdown and transfer of approximately \$100 million worth of military equipment to Bosnia will also now begin soon. The drawdown package includes individual equipment items, tactical communications assets, small arms and ammunition, main battle tanks, armored personnel carriers, light antitank weapons, and utility helicopters.

NOTE: In his statement, the President referred to President Alija Izetbegovic of Bosnia-Herzegovina, and President Kresimir Zubak of the Bosnian Federation.

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting a Report on Coastal
Zone Management**

July 9, 1996

To the Congress of the United States:

I am pleased to submit the Biennial Report of the Office of Ocean and Coastal Resource Management, National Ocean Service, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) for fiscal years 1994 and 1995. This report is submitted as required by section 316 of the Coastal Zone Management Act (CZMA) of 1972, as amended, (16 U.S.C. 1451, *et seq.*).

The report discusses progress made at the national level in administering the Coastal Zone Management and Estuarine Research Reserve Programs during these years, and spotlights the accomplishments of NOAA's State coastal management and estuarine research reserve program partners under the CZMA.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
July 9, 1996.

**Message to the Congress
Transmitting the Report of the
Corporation for Public Broadcasting**

July 9, 1996

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the Communications Act of 1934, as amended (47 U.S.C. 396(i)), I transmit herewith the Annual Report of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB) for Fiscal Year 1995 and the Inventory of the Federal Funds Distributed to Public Telecommunications Entities by Federal Departments and Agencies: Fiscal Year 1995.

Since 1967, when the Congress created the Corporation, CPB has overseen the growth and development of quality services for millions of Americans.

This year's report highlights ways the Corporation has helped millions of American families and children gain new learning opportunities through technology. At a time when technology is advancing at a pace that is as daunting as it is exhilarating, it is crucial

for all of us to work together to understand and take advantage of these changes.

By continuing to broadcast programs that explore the challenging issues of our time, by working with local communities and schools to introduce more and more children to computers and the Internet, in short, by honoring its commitment to enriching the American spirit, the Corporation is preparing all of us for the 21st century.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
July 9, 1996.

**Remarks on the Church Arson
Prevention Act of 1996**

July 10, 1996

Thank you very much and good morning, ladies and gentlemen. I want to join first with the Vice President in thanking Senator Kennedy, Senator Faircloth, Congressman Hyde, and Congressman Conyers and all the Members of Congress for supporting this legislation in such a vigorous and such a prompt way.

I think all of you know that we are here today to emphasize publicly our solidarity with this cause and with this piece of legislation. Ordinarily we would be here at a signing ceremony, and I want to say a special word of appreciation to the Members of Congress, especially to the sponsors, because this bill came down to the White House while the Congress was out of session, and every Member we discussed this issue with said, "Go on and sign the bill, Mr. President, because we don't want to lose a single day when this bill will not be a law of the land." And I thought it was important for you to come down here so that America could see the breadth and depth of support in the Congress, among religious leaders who are here and community leaders, for this legislation and for this cause.

This act makes destructive hate crimes against houses of worship a Federal crime. It doubles the maximum sentence for these crimes that cause injury to people. It increases the statute of limitations from 5 to 7 years. It passed unanimously, and that is

a great tribute to the depth of conviction in the Congress about this issue.

We all know that burning churches is an outrage. Since January of '95—listen to this—more than 190 incidents of fire or desecration of houses of worship have been reported in the United States. While many have been targeted at black churches in the South, there have also been attacks on synagogues, mosques, and white churches in all parts of this country. When these attacks are motivated by hate, they are an affront to our basic commitment to religious liberty and racial tolerance, and in so doing they pose a challenge not just to those whose houses of worship are desecrated or burned but to the entire Nation and to our future as a common community.

These attacks, as the Vice President said, may be intended to divide Americans, but they have just the opposite effect. We all know when someone burns a house of worship it must mean that the person committing the crime views the people who worship in that house as somehow fundamentally less human. And that is wrong. We know it's wrong, and we know it violates everything that this country was founded upon. We see a spirit today with Republicans and Democrats here that rejects that and says America is better than that.

The National Church Arson Task Force which we have created is mobilizing the forces of the Departments of Justice and Treasury, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and other Federal agencies, working with communities all over our country to catch and to prosecute arsonists, to prevent further burnings, and to help communities to rebuild. I have directed FEMA to coordinate a prevention effort, and we have taken steps to provide \$6 million through the Bureau of Justice Assistance to law enforcement and other community efforts in 13 targeted States.

It's also important to know that arrests are being made. In the last 3 weeks, arrests have been made in connection with fires in North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Missouri. Tomorrow Vice President Gore is meeting with leaders of the insurance industry here at the White House

to build on their pledge to work in partnership with all of us to prevent these crimes.

And while, I say again, not all these crimes are racially motivated, a significant number of them are. We have to continue our struggle against racism and religious bigotry. I want to compliment all the religious organizations and other groups in this country that have agreed to come together to help to rebuild these churches, showing that we can reach across lines of race and religion and region to bring all law-abiding Americans together in this rebuilding effort.

Recently I declared this month of July National Month of Unity, calling on religious leaders of all faiths and citizens from all walks of life to reach out to one another to strengthen the ideals that light our way as Americans and keep us strong. In recent days, here on the lawn of the White House, we have seen another sort of flame in America, the Olympic flame, which symbolizes the best of the human spirit. The other flames of these awful church burnings symbolize the worst instincts of those who would take us back to a time of terrible division and hatred. But it's the Olympic flame, carried by American citizen heroes all over our country, which is now burning throughout the South, making its way to its final destination in Atlanta.

As the world looks to our Nation as the host country of the 100th Olympic games, let us resolve anew to extinguish the flames of bigotry and intolerance and keep the flame of religious freedom and ethnic diversity and respect for all Americans burning brightly in this Olympic season.

Thank you all for your contribution to that effort, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:20 a.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. S. 1579, approved July 3, was assigned Public Law No. 104-155.

Remarks to the NAACP Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina

July 10, 1996

Thank you. Thank you very much. President Mfume, I hope you do get your 4 more

years. [Laughter] And I hope I get to hang around to work with you.

Madam Chair, Bishop Graves, Hazel and other distinguished members—[laughter]—Hey, she met me outside and kissed me. [Laughter] Brother Williams, thank you for singing for us. Reverend Hooks, you're looking young and handsome, I'm glad to see.

Ladies and gentlemen, last year I know the First Lady came to visit with you, and she had a wonderful time. And she is completing a trip that she made on behalf of our country after the meeting of the G-7 industrial countries in France. She went to a lot of the nations that used to be part of the Soviet empire that were once Communist and are now free. And she's had a wonderful trip. Last night I talked to her; she was in Finland, and so far north the sun never really goes down at this time of year. So I knew she wouldn't be mad when I woke her up at 2 o'clock in the morning to talk. [Laughter] And she asked me to give you her best.

I also want you to know what I did—the last thing I did before I got on the helicopter at the White House to come here today was to meet with Mickey Kantor, our Secretary of Commerce, and Michael Brown, Ron Brown's son, and the delegation who are leaving today to finish the mission Ron Brown started in Bosnia and Croatia. And I was especially proud that almost all the companies who lost executives on that terrible day sent replacements to go on this mission to finish the work of advancing the cause of peace. And I want to thank you, Mr. President, and all of you, for the tribute that you gave to Secretary Brown yesterday.

I am honored to be here today because of what the NAACP has meant to America. As a young boy growing up in the segregated South, it was the NAACP that gave all of us hope that there could be a better day. I told Myrlie—I don't think she quite believed it—that in early 1974, when I started my political career, I actually purchased a membership at the Mallalieu A.M.E. Church in Fort Smith, Arkansas. I came to a meeting one Sunday afternoon and bought myself a membership card. I hate to say that because I'll get a letter from Kweisi next week pointing out that I have not kept up my renewals over the last 20 years. [Laughter]

What a difference a year makes. Last year you announced your new leadership, a new sense of partnership, a new spirit of commitment to go into the 21st century. You elected Myrlie Evers as your chairman, you elected this great former Member of Congress—that's right, give her a hand. [Applause] You elected this great Member of Congress as your new president and CEO, Kweisi Mfume. As you might imagine, given the way things are around here in Washington, I miss him more than ever. I was riding in with Congressman Mel Watt from Charlotte today, from the airport, and we were talking about—where's Mel? He's here somewhere I think, Congressman Watt. And we were talking about what a great voice Kweisi was in the Congress. But I think we gained a greater leader in the struggle for equality and progress in America when he changed jobs.

I want to thank you for making your voice heard again for economic justice, for the empowerment of all voters, for educational excellence for our children. And I want to thank you especially for your effort to bring young people back into this organization and into the spirit of citizenship in America. We need these young people. After all, they have more tomorrows than yesterdays. [Laughter] There are some days when I resent that, but it's true. [Laughter]

And we can't remake our yesterdays, we can only make tomorrows. And we can't afford to have young people saying, "Well, oh, this doesn't matter. It doesn't matter whether I am involved in the NAACP. It doesn't matter whether I vote. It doesn't matter whether I'm in a community group to try to help save my peers from drugs and gangs and give them a bright future and a better life." It does matter. It matters.

And because of the dedication of Mr. Mfume to the young people of his congressional district and to the young men in his own family, he brought that conviction that he could inspire young people to his work here. And in a way, it may be the lasting legacy of this period of reform of the NAACP that you brought the young blood of America back into this organization, fighting for the future and working together. And I hope he will stay with it. I'm glad that us gray-haired

people still have a role in it, however. [Laughter]

My fellow Americans, our Nation, as you all know, is at a crossroads. We are only 4 years away now from a new century in a new millennium. Anytime you change the calendar in that way, people start to think in bigger ways. They start to imagine the great significance of the moment. But it happens to be true now, for we are undergoing a sweeping change in the way we work, the way we live, the way we relate to the rest of the world.

We are leaving the cold war that dominated most of our lives behind and moving into a new global village, if I can use my wife's term, with lots of opportunity and a lot of troubles, some of them new and some of them very old. We are moving away from the industrial age into a new era dominated by information and technology, where more people will have more opportunities than ever before; but unless they have the capacity to seize those opportunities, they'll be left behind faster than ever before.

So, when I sought this office, I did so because I wanted to get our country ready for the 21st century, because I thought there were three simple things that we had to do. One is to make sure we enter the next century with the American dream alive for everybody who is willing to work for it, without regard to their race, their gender, their region, or where they start out in life, high, low or somewhere in the middle.

Secondly, I thought we had to find a way to resist these destructive winds that are blowing in so many other countries to divide people by race and religion and ethnicity and, instead, come together in a greater sense of community, to bridge our divisions, respect our diversity, extol our shared values and make America stronger because of our diversity, not weaker because of it.

And the third thing I wanted to do is to make sure that in this new world our country continues to be the world's strongest force for peace and freedom and prosperity. It matters in Haiti. It matters in South Africa. It matters in Northern Ireland. It matters in the Middle East. It matters in all these countries, but it matters to us here at home, when we can work with the Russians to reduce our

nuclear arsenals, when we can work with other countries to stop the proliferation of dangerous weapons, when we can cooperate with other countries to prevent terrorist incidents before they occur. It matters that America is a force for peace and freedom and prosperity. It matters to every single one of you.

My strategy to achieve that vision was remarkably simple. I thought we had to reassert the basic bargain in American citizenship, more opportunity for everyone and responsibility from all. And the understanding that that responsibility includes our common responsibility not just to make the most of our own lives and our family lives but to be good citizens for our communities and for our country.

At this time of decision, that's what I hope the discussion will be about in this election year. We've come a long way in the last 4 years, but we've got a long way to go. Four years ago, when I became President, the economy was stagnant; we had the slowest job growth since the Great Depression; the deficit was spiraling; we had quadrupled our national debt in only 12 years from what we'd done in the previous 200. We put in place an economic plan designed to cut the deficit, expand trade for American products on free and fair terms, and invest more in the people of this country, wherever they lived and wherever they were starting out in life. And 4 years later, it's made a difference.

I said 4 years ago that if the Congress would adopt my plan I thought it would cut the deficit in half and produce 8 million jobs. Well, in 3½ years, we know it's cut the deficit by more than half and produced over 10 million jobs. That is a good beginning for the American people.

For much of the last 4 years the African-American unemployment rate has been in single digits for the first time in 20 years. There are 100,000 new African-American-owned businesses. After falling by \$2,000 in the previous 4 years, median income for African-American families has increased by \$2,400, or 11 percent, in just the first 2 years of this administration. Average wages are going up now for the first time in a decade. Home ownership is the highest in 15 years; there are 3.7 million new American home-

owners. The growth of home ownership among African-Americans is higher than the national average. And one reason is we have a Secretary of Housing and Urban Development in Henry Cisneros that has worked to cut the closing costs on those homes by \$1,000 for first-time home buyers.

So we're moving in the right direction. But we have to keep working until all of our people can reap the rewards of this time of change, including those that have not been reached by the recovery, those that have been downsized in competition, those that are stuck in place because they don't have the education and the skills to move up. So we have to keep working on balancing this budget because that keeps the interest rates down, the investments coming, and takes the burden off these young people you're trying to get interested in their own future.

But we have to do it in a way that recognizes our obligations to each other, that keeps the community together. Yes, reform Medicare, but don't create a two-class system and make the oldest, the poorest, and the sickest seniors more vulnerable. Yes, slow the inflation rate in Medicaid, but don't give up the guarantee that we have a national responsibility to take care of poor pregnant women, poor infant children, people with disabilities in families all over this country, and elderly people who have to go into nursing homes. I think that's our common responsibility. We don't have to give that up.

Neither should we reduce our commitment to excellence in education and to the environment in the name of balancing the budget, because that's not necessary to be done. We have to go on with the cause of health care reform. There's still too many people in this country that don't have health insurance or that lose it. That's what the Kennedy-Kassebaum bill is all about. It simply says you don't lose your health insurance if you lose your job, you're moving from job to job, or if someone in your family has been sick. A simple little guarantee that could immediately benefit over 8 million Americans who are working in this country trying to support their kids and hold their families together. And I hope the Congress will pass it without delay.

I was very happy that yesterday the Senate voted to pass a 90-cent increase in the minimum wage, something we need very much. Ten million of our hardest pressed workers will get a raise. And I urge Congress to go on and pass it now. It's passed the House and passed the Senate. Let's go on and pass it just as soon as possible. Get it on up here so I can sign that bill and we can give people a raise.

In addition to the minimum wage, there's some other provisions in that bill that I'm very proud of that have, to be fair, bipartisan support. One is—and for all of you in small businesses, it will matter a lot—we're going to increase the expensing provision of small businesses, their write-off capacity from \$17,500 to \$25,000 a year. That's important for a lot of you here in this room. It was only \$10,000 when I took office, and the small business community said it ought to be 25. If that bill gets to my desk, it will be 25.

The other thing that I think is very important is that this bill contains a package of pension reforms which will make it easier for people who work for small businesses and people who are self-employed, and especially for people who have to change jobs a lot—people who are out there selling computer software or otherwise have to move from job to job—to take out a pension, to keep it when they're unemployed, and to keep it when they move from job to job without being interrupted. People ought to be able to save for their family and save for their own retirement even if they're working in little businesses, even if they're self-employed, even if they have to move across the country, even if they have to change jobs. That is in there with the minimum wage bill, too.

Four years ago we had a lot of rhetoric on crime but not a lot of action, and the crime rate was at unbelievably high levels. But there was a quiet change going on in many of our communities, who recognized that we had to have more police on the street, trying to prevent crime, not just catch criminals; relating to people in the communities, working with the parents, working with the children. They recognized that in addition to tougher punishment for serious offenders, we needed more prevention programs for

community activists who wanted to help save these kids.

And when I became President I asked the Congress to pass that kind of crime bill, and they did. And now we're putting 100,000 police back on the street. We're taking guns off the street with the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill. We're increasing penalties for people who should be punished more, but also giving our young people something to say yes to.

Under the direction of General McCafrey, who this week is chairing a conference in El Paso, Texas, on how to stop drugs at the border, we are targeting a drug strategy to help young people. We cannot let another generation of our young people fall into the trap of drugs and gangs and crime.

We're working with communities all over this country with innovative strategies, not telling people what to do but saying, "If you want to do this, we'll help you." School uniform policies in places like Long Beach, California, or Las Cruces, New Mexico. We're working on enforcing the truancy laws. Kids ought to be in school, not on the street during school hours, I think. And helping people do that. We're working on community-based curfews. And I'm holding up to this country especially the example of New Orleans, where they had a huge drop in juvenile crime not only because they imposed a curfew system but because when they caught a young person out after curfew, instead of just punishing the person, they took these young people to a curfew center and said, "Tell me about your life. What's going on in your life? What are your problems? What can we do to help?" It was a positive as well as a disciplinary move. And the juvenile crime rate is going down dramatically.

These things are working all across America. We set up a framework in Washington, but all we're really trying to do is help people at the community level come together and take responsibility for their own kids and their own future. And we are now seeing the 4th year in a row where the crime rate is going down. And that's something to be proud of.

Now, having said that, you'd be cheering from the rafters but for two things. Instead of polite applause, we'd get a roaring cheer,

but there's two things that keep you from giving a roaring cheer. What are they? Number one, the crime rate's still too high. So what if it's lower? It's still way too high. And that means it's important. We dare not turn back on a strategy that's working. We've got to keep strengthening our community efforts, putting more of these people out on the street who can be community police officers.

I won't be satisfied with this crime problem until we can meet this test—we will never purge the country completely of crime because you can't—at least the President doesn't have the power to alter human nature. The preachers here can call on a higher power, but I can't. So we'll always have some crime. What will be the test for you, when you know that the crime rate is at a manageable, acceptable level in a civilized country? When you go home at night after a long day at work and you flip on the evening news, and the lead story is not a crime story, or if it is, you're surprised instead of deadened by it. You're really surprised. Then you will know that we got the crime rate going in the right direction for good.

The other thing that bothers people is that even though the crime rate's going down in the country as a whole, the rate of crime and violence by people under 18 is going up. We've still got too many innocent kids being killed in crossfires by drive-by shootings. We still have too many kids that are out there raising themselves in the streets, so they wind up in gangs, because everybody wants to be part of something. Most people can't just live wandering around as hermits all alone. So if you put people out there on the street and they have to raise themselves, they wind up in gangs because people don't want to be alone. There's not another compelling alternative. We have to fill that gap. And we have to do the things that are responsible, those of us who are responsible for the future. We cannot lose another generation to gangs and guns and drugs. We cannot waiver on it.

We cannot show weakness, and we dare not cater to special interest groups on this. We are determined to stand by the ban on 19 deadly assault weapons. It was the right thing to do. We are determined to stand by the Brady bill's requirement of waiting periods.

Let me just tell you, I know when we passed the Brady bill and when we passed the assault weapons ban in 1994—and Mr. Mfume will tell you this—we lost some Members of Congress who actually lost their seats in Congress because they voted for these bills. People went into their districts, called voters on the telephone, sent them letters, ran ads saying, “These people are trying to take your guns away from you. They’re trying to end your ability to go out in the country and hunt.” That’s what they said. And, you know, most people who work hard don’t have time to keep up with what’s going on every day. A lot of people didn’t know, and they went right in and dutifully voted against these Members of Congress. And some of them gave up their seats.

But you know what? It’s been 2 years now—two deer seasons—[*laughter*—two duck seasons, two turkey seasons, two quail seasons, two squirrel seasons, and everybody in this whole country that likes to do that is still shooting at those animals with the same gun they had before we passed the Brady bill and the assault weapons ban. Every single soul. So they didn’t tell the truth.

But I’ll tell you who doesn’t have guns. Because of that Brady bill, 60,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers have not been able to get handguns to pull the trigger on innocent American citizens. We were right, and they were wrong about that, and we’ve got to stand tough on it.

Now, this year, we’ve gone through a great debate about whether or not to repeal the assault weapons ban. I couldn’t believe it. Just 4 months ago the House of Representatives actually voted to repeal the assault weapons ban. They want to take Uzis out there and shoot at the deer. [*Laughter*] Wild turkey fly fast; you need lots of bullets. [*Laughter*] I’m kind of laughing to keep from crying about this.

And let me say, there’s now a lot of talk about you know where the major candidates will stand on this repeal of the assault weapons ban, who will push for it, and won’t, and whatever. But I will say one thing that the Republican candidate for President has not said and probably will not and cannot say. I will veto any attempt to repeal the assault

weapons ban or the Brady bill. I will veto it.

We should stand with law enforcement. We should stand with the victims of crime. You can’t tell me it doesn’t make any difference. I’ll never forget a handsome young business man from northern California I met a couple of years ago when we were fighting this battle. He had a beautiful young daughter, but his beautiful young daughter no longer had her beautiful young mother, because the beautiful young mother just happened to be in a high-rise one day when a madman happened to walk in and cut loose with an assault weapon.

Now, people go crazy; these things happen. But if he’d had a revolver instead of an assault weapon, there wouldn’t be so many people dead in that building. And this is important. This is an important issue.

So I ask you all to think about this and talk about this. And let me just tell you something that makes, again, Kweisi’s attempt to bring all the young people in here so important. Just starting in grade school now, we have the largest group of young Americans more diverse than ever before in terms of their racial and ethnic backgrounds, the largest group of young Americans entering our school system since the Baby Boomers entered right after World War II.

It was thought for a long time we would never have a group of youngsters that large again. This group is larger. They are more likely to be people of color. They are quite likely to come from families with difficult situations, or at least difficult economic situations. We must turn this problem of juvenile violence and gangs around before they reach their adolescent years if we don’t want to reap the whirlwind of this.

One way we have to do it is with the right kind of welfare reform. Three-quarters of the people in America on welfare are already under welfare reform experiments because of the action our Government has taken to encourage strategies to move people from welfare to work.

My criteria is simple. I don’t mind being tough on requiring people to work, but we ought to want for people on welfare what we want for ourselves. What do we want? We want to succeed at home and at work.

We want to be good parents, and we want to be good from nine to five. We want to feel good about ourselves when we come home from work, but we want to feel good about ourselves when we leave home with our kids behind. That is the simple test. So I say: tough on work, yes; tough on kids, no way. Be good to the kids. Invest in child care.

And we've had time enough now to see who is right. We have 1.3 million people less on the welfare rolls today than the day I took the oath of office as President of the United States. That's the way to move people from welfare to work, support them with child care and then require those work requirements.

And the most important thing we can do is make a wholesale commitment to educational excellence and educational opportunity in this country. We have got to do more. People say we've done a lot on that in the last 15 years. Not nearly enough. We've expanded Head Start but not enough. We've worked to shrink class sizes and help teachers be retrained. We've worked to encourage States to set high standards and to give them the flexibility they need to meet the standards. We've worked to open the doors of college wider than ever, increasing the Pell grants, changing the student loan program so that people could borrow the money at lower costs with less hassle and then have the option to pay it back as a percentage of their income, so that no young person should ever drop out of school because of the burden of a student loan.

But we have to do more. I am determined to see every classroom and every library in every school in the United States of America hooked up to the Internet by the year 2000 so the poorest kids can get the richest education and have access to all the information that any student anywhere in the world had.

I believe that the best tax cut we could give the American people is a tax deduction for the cost of college tuition up to \$10,000 a year. I believe that we ought to make at least 2 years of college after high school just as universal as a high school education is today.

I think everybody ought to have access to it. That's why I have proposed a \$1,500 refundable tax credit, enough to pay the entire tuition cost at the typical community college

in the United States, so that everybody of any age can at least go back and get 2 years of college, so they can do well in the world toward which we're going.

If you want to inspire young people of the future, you at least ought to be able to tell them—you at least ought to be able to tell them—you ought to be able to look them right in the eye and say, you will go to college if you do this. That's the least that we can do in Washington to help those of you who are out there in our neighborhoods help to rescue this generation of young people and give them something to say yes to and a bright future to embrace.

So these are the things that I think we ought to be focusing on. Things that help people make the most of their own lives, not a guarantee but an opportunity. Things that help build strong families. Things that help build strong communities. They'll build a strong country. And it's one thing to preach to people that they ought to be responsible—and I'm for that—but if they are responsible, they ought to be rewarded with opportunity. The two things should go together as a bargain.

Let me say one other thing. Now that the cold war is over, we have, unfortunately, not a world free of danger. We've got a lot of security problems. You know it as well as I do. We just dealt with it with a terrible, terrible loss of our Air Force personnel in Saudi Arabia.

What is leading to all this terrorism around the world? What does it have in common, when the Hutus and the Tutsis just slaughter each other in Rwanda or Burundi? What does that have to do with people rioting in Northern Ireland? What does it have to do with the Bosnians, the Muslims, the Croats, and the Serbs and what they did to each other for 4 years after living together in peace for decades? What does it have to do with the continuing tensions in the Middle East?

Well, I think it has to do with human nature being vulnerable every day to taking the easy way of defining ourselves in terms of who we're not, instead of who we are; defining ourselves in terms of who we can look down on, instead of what we can look up to. What leads to an Oklahoma City bombing? What were those people thinking in that

group in Arizona where our Federal officials broke it up the other day before—when they had that massive weapons cache and all those—at least they have been charged with plans to blow up all kinds of Federal facilities? What are they thinking about when they burn all those churches and synagogues or, in a few cases, mosques and Islamic centers? What are they thinking about?

I'm telling you, it's something endemic to human nature, something you have to teach your kids about all the time, something we all have to fight. It's almost like, every day you wake up and the scales are going inside you, you know, hope and fear, hatred and reconciliation. But there are people all over the world that look like they just can't exist unless they go out and kill somebody who is different from them—or at least keep them at arm's length.

And nobody has ever perfectly solved this problem. There are no perfect answers because, again, it deals with the human spirit and the things that are endemic to human nature. But that's why I know that even though we desegregated our schools and threw racism out of public facilities and elected African-Americans and Hispanics and Asian-Americans to Congress, passed civil rights laws, this job is a never-ending job, here and around the world. It's a never-ending job.

That's why, notwithstanding the political movement of the moment, after I studied it for several months, I thought we could and should make some changes in the affirmative action laws, but that we should mend them and not end them. I thought it would be a mistake to end them and walk away.

I think it's a mistake not to try to keep working for voting rights and greater impact of voting rights. And notwithstanding the recent Supreme Court decisions which, of course, we will all honor, we still have to be on a mission of making sure that the Congress of the United States represents the American people in a fair and plural way.

And it's why we have to keep standing against this rash of church burnings. You know, it's hard to think of anything an American could do that didn't kill a lot of people that would offend our sense of decency more than burning a house of worship. This whole

country got started in part by people coming here so they could build their own churches and worship God in any way they pleased, and they wouldn't be oppressed here. That's how we got started.

In the darkest hours of our country, when we lived with the awful curse of slavery, and then later with the problems associated with the attempt to escape it, if it had not been for the African-American church—if it had not been for the African-American church, what would have happened? We might have plunged this country into an orgy of violence and killing and lost tens of thousands more people and hardened our hearts against one another in ways that it would have taken a century or more to overcome.

An attack on a house of worship, whether it's a big old Southern Baptist church, or a big old black Baptist church, or a tiny synagogue, or a Muslim mosque that only a few people ever frequent, is an attack on the whole idea of America. And it represents our problem in dealing with this curse of hatred based on race and religion and ethnicity that is sweeping the world and fueling so much of this terrorism.

I want to thank you for what you have done. The NAACP has worked with law enforcement and government and business and religious leaders to help us catch and prosecute people, and to help us rebuild, and to help us prevent these burnings. You know that my administration stands behind you. We created a national task force on these church burnings, headed, I might add, very ably by two of the finest African-Americans in our administration: Deval Patrick, the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights; and Jim Johnson, the Assistant Secretary of Treasury for enforcement.

We've got over 200 FBI and ATF agents working to solve these crimes, going through the evidence, doing the investigations. And we're making arrests. In just the last 3 weeks, arrests have been made in connection with fires in Missouri, North and South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, and Washington. And just this past Monday, while you were here, two members of the KKK were charged with the burning of the Mt. Zion A.M.E. church in Greeleyville, South Carolina, where I visited just last month.

This morning before I left the White House, I met with a bipartisan group of congressional leaders to thank them for quickly and unanimously passing bipartisan legislation to make it easier to prosecute arson attacks against houses of worship. Also, that legislation authorizes a \$10 million Department of Housing and Urban Development loan guarantee program to be used for church rebuilding, to work with the money that's been raised by the National Council of Churches, the guarantees of volunteers that have been given by Habitat for Humanity and others.

But we must do more. Two weeks ago, I began to convene religious leaders and Governors and others in the White House to talk about what else we can do. I asked the head of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, James Lee Witt, who's used to working with local community groups when we have natural disasters, to work with the Justice and Treasury Departments, with the Governors to frame a national prevention initiative. One of the big problems here in preventing these crimes is that you've got so many of these little churches that are out on country roads, and they're old wooden structures, and they don't even have a full-time staff, so they can't afford to have full-time people there as night watchmen.

Keep in mind, so far there's no evidence of a national conspiracy. Most of these people are not armed when they sneak in in the middle of the night to do this. If you just had bright lights and somebody hanging around most of the time, it wouldn't happen.

Last week I transferred \$6 million to local communities in 13 States across the South. That's enough to pay for one new police officer in a county to drive around on these back roads to patrol the churches at night or for lighting or for whatever else they want to use it for to try to prevent, prevent the fires from occurring in the first place.

And tomorrow the Vice President is meeting with leaders of the insurance industry at the White House to build on their pledge to work in partnership with all of us to prevent these crimes, and to make sure that we can still get insurance for these churches. I've heard a lot about that from people, and it's important.

So we're going to do everything we can to stop these fires, to catch who is doing it, to rebuild. But I say again, this work we're doing here is dealing with a flaw in the human spirit that all of us have to fight always. We cannot—we cannot—let significant numbers of the American people turn into cowards, acting in the dark of night, on racial, ethnic, or religious bigotry. We cannot do that. We cannot let people in this country develop terrorists cells to manifest their hatred of their own Government in the greatest experiment in self-government in human history.

If we are going to continue to be a force against terrorism and against hatred in the rest of the world, we have to continue to purge ourselves of it. That's why earlier this month I signed a proclamation designating July as the National Month of Unity for Americans. I asked religious leaders of all faiths and citizens from all walks of life to reach out to one another, to strengthen the ideals that light our way and keep this country strong.

We have not always lived up to our promise. We're people; we're human; we make mistakes; we're imperfect. But we have never stopped trying. And we have never stopped moving. And as we enter this great new century, we have got to say that we're going to stamp out the fires of hatred and bigotry. We have got to say we are going to find a way to reject intolerance and heal our divisions. We have got to find a way to say, as your president has said, this is the new day begun.

I just want to leave you with this thought. A couple of nights ago I met with a group of business people to talk about a number of issues, and one of them said to me—he said, "Mr. President, I've been in business for over 30 years. I've built facilities in more than 25 nations. I have seen this world changed a lot." He said, "There is no country in the world today in better shape for the next century than the United States." And he said, "Our diversity, the fact that we are all so different is an enormous asset in a global economy where information and ideas have to be exchanged at a rapid rate and people have to understand each other and deal with each other." He said, "That's why it's so important that we learn how to work to-

gether and be together, because if we do, there is no stopping this country.”

I’ve said several times in the last few weeks—I’ll just close with this—it seems like my life as your President has been dominated by fire in the last couple of weeks, arguably for longer than that. But I mean, literally, on the one hand there’s the church fires, which are the symbol of everything that is wrong, that we want to reject when it occurs in our country. And on the other hand, there is the fire that burns in the Olympic flame that’s making its way to Atlanta.

And I’m sure every one of you has read as this flame has moved through your States of all these community heroes who are picked to carry the torch for a kilometer. Some of them were in wheelchairs and had to roll along; some of them were very old and had to walk along; some of them were great athletes and could fly along so fast the flame almost went out. But every one of them had one thing in common: They were picked to carry that torch because they were, first and foremost, great citizens.

There was a 74-year-old woman in Nevada that had taken 100 kids in who had been abandoned, so she took them in. There was a man who came in in Washington, one of the torchbearers at the White House, probably about 60, African-American man, who had devoted his life to rescuing the lives of children. And he walked up with 12 of his kids, and they were white, black, brown, and Asian-Americans. He had given his life to them.

There was a Catholic nun who had devoted her whole life to fulfilling the Catholic social ministry in her community. There was the deaf president of Galludet University, our Nation’s deaf university, who is in his late fifties. And when he left what he was doing with us, he was going that week to run a 100-mile race. There was a young woman who played basketball at the University of Tennessee whose body was crushed in an accident, and she thought her life was nearly over, her athletic career was certainly over. But by sheer force of will, she got herself back into shape, resumed her basketball career, helped them win a national championship, and is one of the leaders on our basketball team.

All of these people shared one thing in common—they’re all different races, all different religions, all different backgrounds—they lived their citizenship. They bridged the differences between us. They were looking for the future. They saw themselves in terms of who they were, not in terms of what they weren’t. In terms of what they could become, not who they were supposed to hate. In terms of what kind of partnerships and teamwork they could build, not how they could be divided.

That is the mission that the NAACP will carry, with great success and energy and commitment and conviction, to the hearts and minds of these young people into the 21st century. That is the mission we must be on. And that is what I hope and pray we will be discussing in this election season: How can we give to our children the kind of America they deserve to have.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:30 p.m. at the Charlotte Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Bishop William Graves, Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Memphis, TN; Hazel Dukes, chair, planning committee, and J.R. Williams, organist, NAACP 87th convention; and Rev. Benjamin Hooks, former executive director, NAACP.

Remarks at Central Piedmont Community College in Charlotte July 10, 1996

Thank you. Didn’t she do a good job? Let’s give her another hand. Tracy was great. Thank you. [*Applause*]

I’d like to thank Dr. Zeiss for hosting me here and for all the work that he does to give so many people an opportunity. I want to thank my good friend Congressman Mel Watt for the representation that he gives to you and for the service that he gives to our Nation.

I thank Harvey Gantt, who’s been my friend for a very long time, for joining me here today and for his commitment to the education of all Americans and the opportunity for all the citizens of the great State of North Carolina.

I want to thank all of you for making me feel welcome. I was greeted when I came here by Brian Johnson, the president of your student body, and I got to learn a little bit about the students who are here and this fine institution. I thank the mayor and the other local officials who are here and the educational officials from the State of North Carolina.

I am glad to be back in Charlotte. This is a little different experience. The last time I was here I got to do something Presidents don't get to do; I got to go to the Charlotte speedway and drive my own car, because there was a Mustang owners convention, and I am one. So I had a great time.

Today I want to talk about what puts all of you who are students here in the driver's seat for America's future. I think that this institution—and many people have talked about my abiding love affair with community colleges—but just look around you. Listen to Tracy's story. To me, the community college is the institution in America which most clearly reflects how we ought to be organized, how we ought to work together, and what we ought to be trying to do as we move this country into the 21st century.

You think about it. Compared to a lot of educational institutions, it's not very bureaucratic. It's flexible. The curriculum changes all the time, based upon the needs of the people and the changes in the economy. It's also a highly democratic—that's small "d"—institution. [*Laughter*] It's open to everyone. It also embodies the values that I think this country needs to work on as we move to the future; everybody can have an opportunity. They can't seize it unless they're responsible enough to take control of their own lives, just like Tracy did. And there's a real sense of community here.

You go to any community college in America—and I've been to some in which there was as many as 70 or 80 different ethnic groups represented in a single community college—and the sense of community comes out of people's shared values and reaches across their racial, their ethnic, and their religious differences, so that people are stronger by working together than they are by emphasizing their division.

That's what this whole country needs to do. This country would work better if it worked more like a giant community college. Indeed, one of the things that Vice President Gore and I have tried so hard to do is to make our Federal Government less bureaucratic, less rule-oriented, more goal-oriented, to give people opportunities but not guarantees, and to give you a better service at a lower cost. I would be remiss, since I'm here in Charlotte, if I didn't say that the best example of that may have been created by a native of Charlotte, Erskine Bowles, who is here with me today, who ran the Small Business Administration.

When I became President, somebody who wanted help from the Small Business Administration, no matter how little their business was, had to fill out a form that was an inch thick, and it took weeks to get an answer. Under Mr. Bowles' leadership we cut the form to a page; we cut the waiting time to a matter of a couple days; we cut the budget of the SBA and we doubled the loan volume of the SBA; and we increased the diversity of the loan volume, including more women and more minorities, and never lowered the standards for anybody. We just did it the way community colleges do it, giving everybody an opportunity in a nonbureaucratic, efficient, effective way.

I want to ask all of you just for a few minutes today to think about where we are in the history of this great country. We just celebrated our 220th birthday. We're 4 years away from a new century that begins a new millennium. We're going through a period of rapid change in our economy and the way we work, the very nature of the workplace. It's affecting how we live and how we raise our children and how we organize our families and communities.

And we have also gone through a great change in the way we relate to the rest of the world in terms of our opportunities and our crises. We have more economic opportunity than ever before because of the global economy. But because of the global economy, people who don't have the kind of educational opportunities that are offered here at the community college are likely to get left behind and not have a chance at those opportunities.

We don't have to worry about nuclear war as much as we once did. And I'm proud to say that for the first time since the atomic bomb was dropped 50 years ago, there's not a single nuclear weapon pointed at the children of the United States of America. I'm proud of that.

But as we learned in the heartbreaking loss of our men in uniform in Saudi Arabia, when the Federal building blew up in Oklahoma City, when we thwarted the plans that were laid in Arizona a few days ago for terrorism, we have new security threats that are the direct result of having more open borders, more easy access to information, a higher technology world. And what I want you to think about is, how are we going to make the most of the future? How are we going to meet our challenges and preserve our values? How are we going to reward work and family?

I believe more than I can say that America has a mission to get to the 21st century with the American dream alive for every person who's willing to work for it, with the American community coming together, not being more divided, bridging the gaps of race and religion and ethnicity and gender and region and even the incomes you start out with in life, to find common cause the way you do here.

And finally, maintaining the leadership of this country for peace and freedom and prosperity throughout the world. And I think the only way to do that is to reassert a basic bargain, opportunity in return for responsibility from all citizens and a strong sense of community in which every single person has a citizen's responsibility to make not only your families but your neighborhoods, your communities, and your country a stronger, more united place. That is how we will make the most of our future.

Our job in Washington is to give you the chance to make the most of your own lives, not to guarantee results. When I became President, we had a drifting economy, an exploding deficit, the slowest job growth since the Great Depression. I asked the Congress to adopt a plan to reduce the deficit, to dramatically expand trade, to give tax relief to the hardest pressed working families, to—even while we were cutting spending—invest

more in education, in research, in technology, in environmental protection in ways that would grow the economy.

I said I believe this will help our economy. I think it will cut the deficit in half and create 8 million new jobs. Well, 3½ years later, we know the results. Our deficit is going to be cut by more than half, and our people have now produced 10 million new jobs in 3½ years, 320,000 of them plus in North Carolina.

There was a mention about the minimum wage a minute ago. There has always been a debate about the minimum wage. Some people say if you raise it, it will cost jobs. Ninety percent of the studies say that if you raise it in a modest manner to keep up with inflation, it does not cost jobs.

Our economy—I just got back from a meeting of the great seven industrial powers of the world in France. Together, all of them together in 3½ years, have produced 10½ million jobs, a half a million in the other six countries and 10 million in America. We can afford to raise the minimum wage and give people a decent standard of living.

Last week I met a woman who was a student in a program like many you have here, in Chicago, at a festival there in which all the different eating establishments from all the different ethnic groups came out to the great Grant Park, overlooking Lake Michigan in Chicago. And I was going from booth to booth sampling the food. It was a hard job, but I had to do it. [*Laughter*] It's one of those things you just have to do when you're President. [*Laughter*]

But this young woman was—she said, “Mr. President, I appreciate the fact that you're trying to raise that minimum wage. I hear them talking about how the only people who make the minimum wage are teenagers who live at home and middle class families.” She said, “I'm a 28-year-old single mother of two. I work full time for the minimum wage, and I go to college at night, and I need it.”

I saw on television a few months ago a woman interviewed down in Virginia who worked in a factory. And they said to this lady—she was in her fifties—they said, “Well, they say you might lose your job if we raise the minimum wage.” And she

looked at the interviewer, and she said, "Honey, I'll take my chances." [Laughter]

So I say to you we've got to bring the benefits of this economy to everybody. But the real answer to doing that is to focus on creating the opportunity for people to continually improve themselves. And that's where education comes in. We all know that education has always been important for individuals. Today it's more important for individuals than ever before, and it is critical to the future of this country. We have to be able to move people into the work force with the skills they need and the ability they need to learn new skills throughout a lifetime. That is what I came here to say to you today.

And I have said to people for a long, long time now, it has been apparent at least—and I say, at least—6 years, since we saw the 1990 census, why there's increasing inequality in America, why, even when we grow jobs, inequality seems to increase. It's because too many people in the adult work force in the United States did not get a chance to go to a community college like this one and get skills that would give them a good job with a prospect of a growing income. That is a clear and overwhelming reason.

And so we have worked hard, not just to increase Head Start and to help schools lift their standards in K through 12, but to increase access to higher education. In our first 3½ years we redid the student loan program so that people could borrow the money in a way that was faster and less costly and young people borrowing money and schools that participate in our direct loan program could have at least four different options about how to repay the loans, including limiting your repayment to a certain percentage of your income so no one would ever be discouraged from borrowing money for fear that they would be bankrupt in trying to pay it back.

We increased the Pell grant program which I bet is popular. And I might say, I'm trying to increase it again. We passed AmeriCorps, as your president said, the national service program. And already 45,000 Americans have had a chance to earn some money to go to college by working in their community to help people solve problems at the grassroots level.

But I want to say to you that I do not believe that's enough. I don't think it's enough. I think we have to do more to raise the quality and the opportunities in the public school years. And the Vice President and I have made a personal commitment to see that every classroom and every library in every school in America is hooked up to the Internet by the end of this decade so that all children, no matter how poor they are, no matter whether they're in rural or urban districts, can access the same information that young people in the wealthiest school districts in America can. I believe in that.

But I also know that we have to find a way to get more adults to come back to community colleges and get skills so they can upgrade their own earnings prospects and strengthen their children's future. And we have to make available a college education to every person who wants to access it.

And I have made three proposals I want to reiterate here today because I think together they would revolutionize the prospects of ordinary Americans. The first thing I want to say is everybody who wants to go to college ought to be able to go. And I have proposed—I have proposed—that's assuming they do the work and deserve to stay. I have proposed giving every family a tax deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for the cost of college tuition for 4 years for graduate school or whatever.

But I believe the critical thing here—if you look at how our economy is structured, the critical thing is to make 2 years at a community college as universal an experience as graduation from high school is now. We need to put a 13th and 14th grade into the American psyche; every American should think that it's just as essential as getting a high school diploma. It ought to become second nature to every person.

And I have proposed also giving families a tax credit, refundable for people who don't owe that much tax, of \$1,500 a year for the first year of community college and a guaranteed \$1,500 credit for the second year for everyone who maintains a B average. That would open up community college to all Americans. That would cover the vast majority of tuition bills in all the community colleges in America. It would help us to ingrain

in people the notion that you can't quit after high school. Even if you have to go out and go to work, you ought to be going to your community college while you're working.

And the last thing I want to say is we need to do something for the folks in the work force who lose their jobs, who are dramatically underemployed. For years and years and years, your Government, I think, has hung on to a job training system that doesn't work. There are 70 different Federal job training programs. You need a slide rule and a computer and a place on the Internet to figure out whether you're qualified for one of these 70 programs. It breaks your head just thinking about it.

What I'd like to see us do is to get rid of all these programs, create a big pot of money, and give people a skill grant when they lose their job or if they're underemployed, worth about \$2,500 a year and say, you can spend up to 2,000 of this at a community college or getting an education and training; you can spend 500 searching for a new job. You decide how to spend it. The Government doesn't need a bureaucracy to tell you that the best place is a community college within driving distance of almost everybody in America.

And I want you to think about it. If we made it possible in America for every adult who is stuck in a difficult economic situation to go back to community college, if we said we will pay the tuition of every person who is starting in community college for up to 2 years, if we said, if you want to go to a 4-year school or to a graduate program we would give you a tax deduction for the cost of tuition, if we did those things, it wouldn't be long before we would see inequality diminishing, the American people growing together the way we did after World War II, because the single most important ingredient in opportunity for all responsible Americans is having access to an adequate education for the 21st century. That is a commitment I think we ought to make together.

And let me just say this as I close. I ask you to think about what you wanted your country to look like in the 21st century. I think about it in terms of what I want America to look like when my daughter is my age and has her own children. I believe this coun-

try can be greater than it is today. I believe our best days are ahead. I believe if we can find a way to deal with the security threats that face all civilized people around the world and our problems here at home and if we can create opportunity for everybody who is willing to be responsible and if we can come together across our differences in a stronger community, that the best days of this country are still ahead.

We can create opportunity for everybody who is responsible enough to work for it. We can build a stronger American community and revel in our diversity. We can maintain our leadership in the world. It all starts, however, with being committed to organize ourselves the way this community college is and being committed to giving every single American citizen the kind of opportunities that you celebrate here every day.

Keep up the good work; support it. This is not a partisan issue; it's America's future.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:50 p.m. in the Quadrangle. In his remarks, he referred to Tracy Tallent, graduate, and Tony Zeiss, president, Central Piedmont Community College; and Harvey Gantt, Democratic candidate, U.S. Senate.

Statement on Action To Eliminate Cigarette Vending Machines From A&P Stores

July 10, 1996

Every year hundreds of millions of packs of cigarettes are bought by children and adolescents. In a 1995 survey, more than 90 percent of 10th graders said it was "fairly easy" or "very easy" to obtain cigarettes. That is why my administration has proposed measures to reduce significantly the unlawful sale of tobacco products to young people.

I am pleased to commend the American business leaders who have also stepped up to the plate to tackle this problem. Today, Mr. James Wood, chairman and CEO of A&P, and the A&P board of directors have announced that they will remove all cigarette vending machines from their stores by the end of this month. In doing so, they have responded to the challenge and taken responsibility for a problem everyone—par-

ents, teachers, corporate leaders, community leaders, and clergy—must overcome together.

If more business leaders such as Mr. Wood and companies such as A&P took this type of decisive action and worked together with government, I am confident that we would achieve dramatic success on our efforts to keep cigarettes out of the hands of our children.

Remarks on the School Reconstruction Initiative

July 11, 1996

Thank you very much. I want to welcome Senator Moseley-Braun here, along with Senator Claiborne Pell, Senator Bob Graham, Congressman Ben Cardin, and Congressman Elijah Cummings. I thank them all for their concern for this issue and their leadership.

I think some of you know that I had originally planned to make this announcement in Senator Graham's home State in Florida, but Hurricane Bertha had other ideas. So before I get into the announcement, let me say that we are all watching the course of that storm. We pray that it doesn't cause extensive damage. The people of the Southeast know that we will be there to help them if it does. FEMA is now on the ground, and they are prepared. Our thoughts are with the people of the Southeast. And again, we're hoping for the best.

I'm here to announce a national commitment to rebuild our schools so that they can serve our children in the 21st century. Our Nation's mission must be to offer opportunity to all, to demand responsibility from all, and to come together as a community so that we can build better lives together. Our most basic expression of these values is perhaps the education we offer to our children.

We've worked hard to make our young people the best educated in the world as we enter the 21st century, putting in place a comprehensive strategy to renew our schools, to lift our standards at every level. We've expanded the Head Start preschool program. We've helped schools to help to set and to meet higher standards. We've also worked

hard to develop higher standards and better training for our teachers. And we've created an important network of school-to-work programs for young people to be properly trained if they don't go on to 4-year institutions of higher education.

We're now on our way to connecting every classroom and library in the United States to the Internet by the year 2000. We're making our schools safer with the zero tolerance for guns in our schools and by encouraging and supporting communities to take their own initiatives, including school uniforms, imposing curfews, and stronger enforcement of the truancy laws. We're opening the doors of college wider than ever, through lower cost student loans, including better repayment terms; expanded Pell grant scholarships—Senator Pell, thank you for that; AmeriCorps; and our proposals to give families tax cuts to pay for higher education.

But all this progress is at risk if our children are asked to learn in a landscape that is littered with peeling paint and broken glass, if our teachers are asked to build up children in buildings that are falling down.

I remember the schools that I attended. They were pretty typical. Most of them were fairly old when I was there. They weren't fancy, but they were clean, they were well-maintained, they were treated with respect. They sent every student a clear message: You are important to us. We take your education seriously. That was how my parent's generation kept faith with us, and that is how we must keep faith with our children.

Now, Senator Moseley-Braun mentioned this report from the General Accounting Office. I want to hold it up again because I want to urge every Member of Congress, every Governor, every State legislator, every local school official, every school board member who cares about the condition of education and the future of education in our country to get a copy of this report and to read it. The report came out 3 weeks ago. It was requested by a number of Senators, and it confirms that we are not honoring this generational compact.

I want to thank here, before I go forward, the Members of the Senate and the House who have been interested in this, those who are here whom I've introduced and, espe-

cially, Congresswoman Nita Lowey who is sponsoring efforts in the House along with Congressman Cardin and Congressman Cummings and others, but most especially Carol Moseley-Braun. She was the first person who brought this matter to my attention as an area where the National Government ought to do something. And she has been literally dogged in her persistence in this issue, staying with it day-in and day-out, week-in and week-out, month-in and month-out. The school children of our Nation owe her a debt of gratitude.

The report shows that our Nation's schools are increasingly rundown, overcrowded, and technologically ill-equipped. Too many school buildings and classrooms are literally a shambles. According to the report, one-third of our schools need major repair or outright replacement; 60 percent need work on major building features—a sagging roof, a cracked foundation; 46 percent lack even the basic electrical wiring to support computers, modems, and modern communications technology. These problems are found all across America, in cities and suburbs and one-stop-light towns.

This is a matter of real urgency. In just 2 months, our schools will open their door to the largest number of students in the history of our Republic, 51.7 million. And enrollment is expected to continue to rise over the next few years. We have to rebuild these schools for another reason as well. Increasingly our schools are critical to bringing our communities together. We want them to serve the public not just during the school hours but after hours, to function as vital community centers, places for recreation and learning, positive places where children can be when they can't be at home and school is no longer going on, gathering places for young people and adults alike. Bringing our schools into the 21st century is a national challenge that demands a national commitment.

Today I am proposing that the Federal Government for the first time join with States and communities to modernize and renovate our public schools. We will provide \$5 billion over the next 4 years for school construction and renovation. Together with investments by States and localities, this

would result in \$20 billion in new resources for school modernization. That's a 25 percent increase over the next 4 years.

Our school construction initiative would be flexible. It would give communities and States the power to decide how to use the new resources. It would help those who help themselves, requiring local communities to take responsibility for this effort. And it would focus on sparking new projects, not merely subsidizing existing ones.

The schools of the future should be safe and spacious, good places to learn. The schools of the future should be equipped with computers, new media, and state-of-the-art science labs. And the schools of the future should not only teach our children during the day but bring together families and neighbors in the evening as community schools. Our initiative can help to make these goals a reality.

You know, we expect an awful lot of our schools. We expect a lot of our students in this age of possibility. And all Americans have a lot riding on their living up to these expectations. But we cannot expect our children and our teachers to build strong lives on a crumbling foundation.

This generation has a duty to give the next generation a future of genuine opportunity. Our children deserve the best. I am determined that they will get it. And this proposal will go a long way toward helping those folks who are out there on the frontlines of education to succeed and to build the brightest, the best prepared, the most secure, and the most successful generation of young people in the history of our Nation.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:15 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

**Letter to the Women of Srebrenica,
Bosnia, on the Anniversary of the
Fall of Srebrenica**
July 11, 1996

To the Women of Srebrenica:

Today you have come together because of a horrible, tragic event that changed your lives forever. There can be no justification for the barbaric terror you and your loved

ones endured, or for the losses you continue to suffer.

Over these past four long years, the United States has joined the international community sending humanitarian aid and later 20,000 peacekeepers. We have rebuilt roads and bridges. Now we are creating a commission to help you find your missing boys and men. And we are sending \$5,000,000 to help you start businesses and get back on your feet economically.

These things we can do. But we know that it will take you, from the inside, to repair the fabric of life that has been ripped into shreds by aggression and hate.

And so the thoughts of our nation are with you as you gather in Tuzla not only to remember the past, but to shape your new future. The world is watching with deep admiration as you have invited women across Bosnia-Herzegovina to join you, reaching out across the lines drawn by war, to create a future of compassion and hope.

Hillary and I believe strongly in your mission to reunite your country. We applaud your courage, your strength, and your wisdom. We stand with you today in spirit, to say, "You are not alone."

Bill Clinton

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

July 7

In the afternoon, the President gave videotaped testimony in the White House Map Room for the Branscum-Hill trial in Little Rock, AR.

July 9

The President announced his intention to appoint Beverly Fisher White to the Advisory Committee to the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corporation.

The President announced his intention to nominate Brig. Gen. Robert Bernard Flowers to be a member and U.S. Army Corps of Engineers representative to the Mississippi River Commission.

July 10

In the morning, the President traveled to Charlotte, NC, and he returned to Washington, DC, in the evening.

The President announced that he sent fiscal 1997 budget amendments to the Congress.

July 11

The President declared a major disaster in the U.S. Virgin Islands and ordered Federal aid to supplement territory and local recovery efforts in the area struck by Hurricane Bertha on July 8-9.

July 12

The President announced his intention to nominate Nils J. Diaz and Edward McGaffigan, Jr., to be members of the Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Nominations Submitted to the Senate

The following list does not include promotions of members of the Uniformed Services, nominations to the Service Academies, or nominations of Foreign Service officers.

Released July 11

Rod Grams,
of Minnesota, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the 51st Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Thomas Hill Moore,
of Florida, to be a Commissioner of the Consumer Product Safety Commission for a term of 7 years from October 27, 1996 (re-appointment).

Claiborne deB. Pell,
of Rhode Island, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the 51st Ses-

sion of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

**Checklist
of White House Press Releases**

The following list contains releases of the Office of the Press Secretary that are neither printed as items nor covered by entries in the Digest of other White House Announcements.

Released July 6

Transcript of a press briefing by OMB Director of Communications Larry Haas, Agriculture Secretary Daniel Glickman, and OMB Administrator of the Office of Information and Regulatory Affairs Sally Katzen on the meat and poultry inspection system

Released July 8

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Transcript of remarks by Vice President Albert Gore and Joseph Chery on the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms youth crime gun interdiction initiative

Transcript of a press briefing by Treasury Under Secretary Raymond Kelly on the youth crime gun interdiction initiative

Statement by Press Secretary Mike McCurry on the President's meeting with President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland

Released July 9

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Transcript of a press briefing by Secretary of Commerce Mickey Kantor on the Presidential economic and business development mission to Croatia and Bosnia

Statement by Press Secretary Mike McCurry on the appointment of Steven K. Pifer as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Russia, Ukraine, and Eurasian Affairs at the National Security Council

Statement by Press Secretary Mike McCurry on the appointment of Anthony J. Blinken as Special Assistant to the President and Senior Director for Strategic Planning at the National Security Council

Fact sheet on training and equipping the Bosnian Federation

Released July 10

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Statement by Press Secretary Mike McCurry on the massacre of 80 civilians by Hutu rebels in Burundi

Released July 11

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Transcript of a press briefing by National Economic Adviser Laura D'Andrea Tyson and Deputy Assistant to the President for Economic Policy Gene Sperling on the President's school reconstruction initiative

Transcript of a press briefing by NSC Senior Director for Nonproliferation Dan Poneman on the agreement between North Korea and the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization

Statement by Press Secretary Mike McCurry on interference by the regime of General Bare in the Nigerian elections

Statement by Press Secretary Mike McCurry on progress in implementation of the U.S.-North Korea Agreed Framework

Statement by Press Secretary Mike McCurry announcing the President's letter to the women of Srebrenica on the anniversary of the fall of Srebrenica

Released July 12

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Mike McCurry

Statement by Press Secretary Mike McCurry announcing the commemoration of the second anniversary of the sinking of the "Thirteenth of March" vessel off the Cuban coast.

**Acts Approved
by the President**

Approved July 9

H.R. 1880 / Public Law 104-157

To designate the United States Post Office building located at 102 South McLean, Lincoln, Illinois, as the "Edward Madigan Post Office Building"

H.R. 2437 / Public Law 104-158

To provide for the Exchange of certain lands in Gilpin County, Colorado

H.R. 2704 / Public Law 104-159

To provide that the United States Post Office building that is to be located at 7436 South Exchange Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, shall be known and designated as the "Charles A. Hayes Post Office Building"

H.R. 3364 / Public Law 104-160

To designate the Federal building and United States courthouse located at 235 North Washington Avenue in Scranton, Pennsylvania, as the "William J. Nealon Federal Building and United States Courthouse"