

be treated fairly and that taxes will be collected in a fair, nondiscriminatory, and non-burdensome manner, and that we will not have any kind of abuse there. And so we intend to push ahead.

**Q.** But are you concerned that the Government's tax collecting agency faces credibility and confidence problems because of the specter of those hearings?

**The President.** Well, I think they raise some legitimate points that ought to be responded to. I believe the IRS is functioning better today than it was 5 years ago. I think it has to improve more. And I think we should not try to sweep any of these problems under the rugs. I followed the hearings with great interest, and I am glad to see that there has been some action based on the evidence that was adduced at the hearings already, and there will be more. But I think it's also important to know that we have done a lot of things to try to make the IRS more accountable, more professional. We can do more. We should not politicize it, and we should not do anything that will in any way call into question whether it's being even-handed or fair in the future.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

### **Remarks Prior to a Meeting With the President's Advisory Board on Race** *September 30, 1997*

Thank you very much, Dr. Franklin, members of the board, ladies and gentlemen. First let me, again, thank the board for its willingness to serve. And to those of you who came to Little Rock last week for the 40th anniversary of the integration of Central High, I thank you for coming there. It was a very important occasion, I believe, and one that all of us who were there felt was immensely rewarding.

I want to talk today about how we go forward from here. When I was at Little Rock Central High School, after we had this magnificent ceremony celebrating the 40th anniversary of the event and the original nine students went into the school, I went back outside and spent quite a long while talking to

the students and the young people who were there. And all they talked to me about was how we were going to go forward. And I just listened to them.

I think you made a very important beginning by urging that we focus on education and economic opportunity, things which cut across racial lines but are necessary to bring us together.

One of the young men in the audience said to me that—he said, “I don't think they had these gang problems 40 years ago, and I'm worried about that now.” It was very touching, you know. So I think it's very important that we throw this into the future now, we begin to focus on it, and I agree that we should begin with education and economic opportunity.

But if I could go back to the original mission of the board, I also think it's important that we have the facts. So this afternoon, I know you're going to hear from noted scientists and demographers who will share their research on our changing population patterns and attitudes on race, and I think that's an important thing.

Secondly, I think it's important that we continue this dialog. I got as much out of the hour or so I spent after the ceremony in Little Rock just listening to the young people talking as I worked my way down the lines of people who were there as anything else. I'm going to have a town hall meeting on this subject on December the 2d, and I will continue to do what I can to support you in reaching out to Americans of all backgrounds and actually discussing this so that we build bridges of mutual understanding and reconciliation.

But, finally and in the end, we have got to decide what it is we are going to do. This summer I announced the first of what I hope will be a long series of actions consistent with the work we are doing here with the board when I said that we would have an initiative to send our most talented teachers to our most needy school districts by offering them scholarships for their own education of they would, in turn, teach in those districts for a number of years. I think that will be very helpful.

Later today, our Housing and Urban Development Secretary, Andrew Cuomo, will

announce new efforts to end housing discrimination in America. First, HUD will issue \$15 million in grants to 67 private, non-profit housing groups, State and local governments to combat housing discrimination and to promote fair housing practices. And then Secretary Cuomo will double the number of housing discrimination enforcement actions over the next 4 years.

It's clear to me now that there is more housing discrimination in America than I had thought there was when I became President, and that that has been kept alive too long in too many neighborhoods, keeping, among other things, too many families from sending their children to the schools of their choice. So I applaud what Secretary Cuomo is doing, and I will strongly support him.

Let me say again, I look forward to today's discussion. I think it's important that we build on that—where I thought we were at the end of the ceremony in Little Rock, where there was a great sense among the people there and I felt around the country who were watching it, a great sense that now we have to do things, and that every individual American just about is interested in this issue and understands how important it is and understands that we'll all have to do our part if we expect to come out where we want to be.

So, Dr. Franklin, I look forward to going on with the discussion. And I think maybe the Vice President might like to say a word or two, and then we could go forward.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:16 a.m. in the East Room at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to John Hope Franklin, Chair, President's Advisory Board on Race.

**Remarks at a Farewell Ceremony  
Honoring Joint Chiefs of Staff  
Chairman John M. Shalikashvili in  
Arlington, Virginia  
September 30, 1997**

Mr. Vice President, Secretary Cohen, Secretary Albright, Secretary Guber, National Security Adviser Berger, Director Tenet, General McCaffrey; to the Service Secretaries, the Joint Chiefs, the Unified Commanders in Chief, Members of Congress, mem-

bers of our Armed Forces; to all the friends of General Shalikashvili who are here today, including former Secretary Perry, former Chairmen and members of the Joint Chiefs, former officials of the Department of Defense. We all come together in grateful tribute to John and Joan Shalikashvili.

This is, frankly, a bittersweet day for me. I am full of pride but also some regret. For the last 4 years, I have counted on Shali for his wisdom, his counsel, his leadership. He has become an exceptional adviser and a good friend, someone I knew I could always depend upon when the lives of our troops or the interests of America were on the line. And I will miss him very much.

General Shali is a great American with a great American story. A childhood seared by war, he has given his life to the cause of peace. From an immigrant learning English, he has become the shining symbol of what America is all about. He's never forgotten what his country gave him, nor has he ever stopped giving back to it. His service to our Nation, spanning 39 years, rises from the ranks of Army private to the highest military office in the land.

Of course, the road even for him has not always been smooth. I am told that after a grueling first day at officer candidate school, Private John Shali sneaked out of his barracks looking for a place to resign. Our Nation can be very grateful that, probably for the only time in his entire career, he failed in his mission.

I am convinced that when future students look upon this time, they will rank John Shalikashvili as among the greatest Chairmen of the Joint Chiefs of Staff America ever had.

Greatness is something that cannot be bestowed like a medal, a ribbon, a star. It cannot be taught or bought. It comes in the end only from within. General Shali has said that the three indispensable traits of a great leader are competence, care, and character. He ought to know; he embodies them.

His competence shines in the sterling record of innovation and achievement, managing the downsizing of our forces while upgrading their capability and readiness; upholding the most rigorous standards for the use of those forces in the world, where threats to our survival have faded but threats