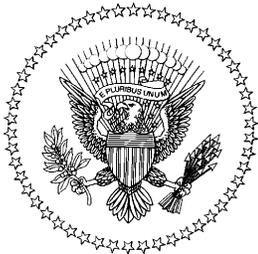


Weekly Compilation of
**Presidential
Documents**



Monday, April 26, 1999
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Editor's Note: In order to meet publication and distribution deadlines during the NATO 50th anniversary weekend, the cutoff time for this issue has been advanced to 5 p.m. on Thursday, April 22. Documents released after that time will appear in the next issue.

WEEKLY COMPILATION OF PRESIDENTIAL DOCUMENTS

Published every Monday by the Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration, Washington, DC 20408, the *Weekly Compilation of Presidential Documents* contains statements, messages, and other Presidential materials released by the White House during the preceding week.

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Week Ending Friday, April 23, 1999

**Memorandum on Delegation
of Authority**

April 16, 1999

Memorandum for the Attorney General

Subject: Delegation of Authority Under Sections 212(f) and 215(a)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including sections 212(f) and 215(a)(1) of the Immigration and Nationality Act, as amended (8 U.S.C. 1182(f) and 1185(a)(1)), and in light of Proclamation 4865 of September 29, 1981, I hereby delegate to the Attorney General the authority to:

- (a) Maintain custody, at any location she deems appropriate, and conduct any screening she deems appropriate in her unreviewable discretion, of any undocumented person encountered in vessels interdicted on the high seas in the general area of the Northern Mariana Islands in 1999, including the stateless vessel located west of the Northern Mariana Islands and identified by United States authorities on or about April 12, 1999; and
- (b) Undertake any other appropriate actions with respect to such aliens permitted by law.

This memorandum is not intended to create, and should not be construed to create, any right or benefit, substantive or procedural, legally enforceable by any party against the United States, its agencies or instrumentalities, officers, employees, or any other person, or to require any procedures to determine whether a person is a refugee.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

**Remarks at a Majority 2000 Dinner
in Weston, Massachusetts**

April 16, 1999

Well, first of all, I would like to thank Senator Kennedy and Senator Daschle for their introductions. [*Laughter*] I don't want Senator Kennedy to be upset at Senator Daschle. I told Senator Daschle I did not want Kennedy to introduce me. [*Laughter*] And he drew the wrong conclusion—I just didn't want Patrick up here making those gestures introducing me. [*Laughter*]

I tell you, Patrick, I have never heard you so funny; you've got a second career. [*Laughter*]

Like everyone else, I want to thank Alan and Susan and all of the others who helped to raise the funds tonight. I'd also like to thank the people who provided our meal and those who served it. And I want to thank our wonderful, wonderful musicians, Gary Burton and his pianist. They were terrific. Thank you very much. You guys were great. Thank you.

As Senator Kennedy said, I am profoundly indebted to the people of Massachusetts. Massachusetts has been wonderful to me and to Hillary, to Al and to Tipper Gore, to give our administration the support that we need and to send such remarkable people to the Congress. A majority of all of the Congress people from Massachusetts, all Democrats, are here tonight. And I thank Congressman Moakley, Congressman Delahunt and Congressman Meehan, Congressman Markey and Congressman Tierney, along with Congressman Kennedy.

We're also glad to be joined tonight by Congressman Earl Blumenauer who is from Oregon. He's a long way from home, and we're glad he's here. Thank you very much.

And our wonderful Democratic whip, Dave Bonior, who took me to his district in Michigan today to meet with the Albanian-Americans and to hear their stories, along with Congressman Gephardt.

I, too, want to say how profoundly grateful I am for what Senator Kerry said, how much it means and for what he does for you, and for Senator Kennedy. And as others have said, we could not have better leaders in the United States Congress than Senator Daschle and Congressman Gephardt.

I could give you 1,000 examples. But suffice it to say that I do not believe that we would be here tonight in the position we're in with the country in the position it is in had it not been for their leadership and their support for me, and their always willingness to come in and have these fascinating discussions and, even when they think I'm wrong, to tell me they think I'm wrong. And we try to work it out, work together, and go forward together. And it's been a remarkable partnership.

I also would say, to echo something Dick Gephardt said—and I want all of you to know—you know, most of you have been to enough of these political fundraisers that you're used to politicians getting up and blowing smoke over one another, you know, and saying that they think this one is the greatest person since the redwoods began to grow in California and all of that—[laughter]—the other one was born in a log cabin he built himself—all of those. [Laughter] You're used to hearing all that sort of stuff. I know that. And you think that we all leave, we go back to telling bad stories on one another, and cutting each other down.

I'm telling you, the team of leaders we have now and the people that represent you in Massachusetts, there is a profound mutual respect borne of shared goals and shared dreams for the American people. I told all my folks when I became President—I said, "I didn't work in Washington before, and I'm going to make my fair share of mistakes. But one of the great advantages that I have is that I lived in a little State where I was expected to show up for work every day and where I didn't have to spend half my time worrying about what was in the newspaper

that day and who was up and who was down and who was leaking and who was not."

And my theory is, if we stay together and work together and we're loyal to each other and we air our differences honestly, and we show up for work every day, eventually something good will happen for the American people.

Now, I think the evidence is that that happened. But what you need to know is that's the sort of leadership we have in our party. Dick and David and Tom and the rest of our crowd, they're like what you expect from the Massachusetts delegation. They show up for work every day. They do not get paralyzed by this story or that story, or spending all their time trying to manipulate who's up and who's down in Washington today. They have an agenda, rooted in their concerns for you and our children's future, and they show up.

And it's just like any other job. I know we'd like for you to believe that you've got to be just one step short of Albert Einstein to do all these jobs we do. But a lot of it is deciding what the right thing to do is, clearly laying it out, and going at it day-in and day-out, year-in and year-out.

So I want to thank you for investing in the future of the Democratic majority in the Congress, because they have proved for 6 long years that they have good ideas, good values, and great work habits, and they will deliver for the United States of America, thanks to your help. And I thank you very much.

I also want to say, Alan, thank you very much for collecting the money for the relief effort in Kosovo. Let me just briefly say the camps in Albania are teeming tiny Macedonia, with its own ethnic difficulties to deal with, trying to preserve its democracy. It's deeply strained. We need all the help we can get. And frankly, the relief agencies are very, very good; they are very efficient; they don't waste the money, and cash is better than in-kind contributions, because the needs shift daily. And anything you can do to help that, I hope you will.

Now, I'm not going to put you through another speech of any length, but I want to take 5 minutes and ask you to think about why you should want these people in the majority in 2000. And when it happens, I'm

going to miss it. [*Laughter*] But I just want to tell you for 5 minutes, I want you to think about this.

Yes, our economy is going well, and I'm grateful for it. And welfare rolls are about half what they were, and I'm grateful for it. And the crime rate is at a 30-year low, and I'm grateful for it. America is working again. And we've been a force for peace from Northern Ireland to the Middle East and to Bosnia, and I'm grateful for it. We've asked the world to join with us in fighting the more modern threats of terrorism and weapons of mass destruction and global warming. And we've got a direction that we're on that's good, and I'm grateful for it.

But I want to ask you to just take a couple of minutes and think about why you should want these people in the majority. Because in the year 2000, when the voters are asked to vote, there will be those who come forward and say, "Well, things are rocking along, and I'll tell you what you want to hear and I'll give you what you want to get, and let's just go back to business as usual."

The worst thing we could do is to forget what got us here over the last 6 years. What got us here was taking on the hard problems and working like crazy, day-in and day-out, week-in and week-out, and challenging the American people and challenging the elite leaders of all the major sectors of our society to think about unmet problems and unseized opportunities. And as I look ahead to the 21st century, I am grateful America is working again. I'm grateful that the economy is benefiting ordinary people more than ever before. We have the lowest unemployment rate we've ever recorded among minorities in this country, since we started keeping separate statistics almost 30 years ago. I'm grateful for that.

But we have some big unmet challenges, and I won't go through our whole agenda, but we've got an agenda to deal with every one. The aging of America is a huge challenge. And if we don't deal with Social Security and Medicare and long-term care, and do it in a responsible way, then when all of us baby boomers retire, we will put an unconscionable burden on our children and their ability to raise our grandchildren. We have a strategy that will deal with it.

We have more and more families who work and raise children at the same time, both single-parent and two-parent households. We have not done enough in the United States to help people balance work and family. We are better than any other major country at creating jobs. We have many strengths that other countries would give anything to have. But we have not done as well as we should and as well as we can without in any way hurting economic growth, and helping our families to balance their childrearing responsibilities and their work responsibilities. We have to do more in health care, more in child care, more in providing leave time from work without losing jobs. We must do it. There is no more important work than raising our children, and we can do better.

The third thing we have to do is to make sure—we're Democrats; this is our job—we have to make sure everybody gets a chance to be a part of the new economy. As low as unemployment is, there are still places where it's high. There are places where there has been no new investment.

We have a strategy to keep the economy growing and to spread the benefits of it. For one thing, if our plan prevails over the Republican plan, we're going to pay the debt of this country down to its lowest point since before World War I, over the next 15 years. That means low interest rates, high investment, and more jobs everywhere. And we're going to give the same incentives for people to invest in poor parts of America we give them today to invest in poor countries in the rest of the world. I think that is nothing but right.

Don't take it away from the rest of the world; just give the poor parts of America a chance to get their piece of the American dream, as well. And I think that is terribly important, and Democrats ought to be for that.

We have to keep working to prove we can clean up the environment and grow the economy, and we have an agenda to do that. The most important thing I want to say to you tonight is that we have a job to do at home that mirrors the job we are trying to do in Kosovo today.

Isn't it ironic that, on the verge of a new century and a new millennium, where most of us—most of the people in this room have this great dream of a 21st century world that is more peaceful, more prosperous, and more free than any time in all of human history; where people work together across national lines to lift each other up and solve problems together, whether they're the spread of disease or climate change or the threat of terrorism or narcotrafficking or weapons of mass destruction. We're working together to make good things happen and to press bad things down.

And this whole vision with this explosion of modern technology and science is threatened by the prospect that we will marry modern technology with the most ancient hatreds known to human society, rooted in the fear of people who are different from us.

Now, we are in Kosovo—I think Dick referred to this—to the E-mails we were reading coming out of Albania. We're in Kosovo, first of all, because innocent people are being driven from their homes, having their villages burned down, having their family records destroyed, with their children being raped, and people being murdered, because we think we can help to stop it, and because we have learned the hard way in the 20th century if something like that's going on and you think you can help to stop it and you don't, and that part of the world is just going to get worse. So it's a humanitarian thing.

But it's also a part of what we want the 21st century to be like. Doesn't it seem bizarre to you that on the one hand, we talk about the Internet being the fastest growing human communication system in all of human history; we talk about having our kids study halfway around the world; we relish in the ethnic and racial and religious diversity of Boston. Detroit—we used to think of Detroit as being diverse because—and I can say this because I'm from the South—because Southern blacks and Southern whites couldn't make a living in the South after the Second World War, so they went to Detroit to get a job in the auto plant. That was our definition of diversity.

Wayne County now has people from 150 different national ethnic groups. Not Chicago, not New York, not Los Angeles—De-

troit. And we're sitting here worried about people who still want to kill each other over 600-year-old grievances. They want to fight over smaller and smaller and smaller pieces of land instead of thinking bigger and bigger and bigger about how, if they all got together, what a future they could make for their children.

And so I tell you that we're there for humanitarian reasons. We're there for strategic reasons. And we're there because we do not want our children to live in a 21st century world where very smart people filled with very narrow hatreds can access technology, weaponry, missile technology, and torment the world because they're growing smaller in spirit, when they should be growing larger in vision—especially in the heart of Europe, which is so critical to our security.

And we have to keep working against it here, which is why the Democrats are for stronger hate crimes legislation and for the "Employment and Non-Discrimination Act," and why we have supported national service. Alan Khazei is here; he founded City Year. I'm the biggest flak he's got. I go all over the world talking about City Year. I knew when I ran for President in 1991 and 1992 that one of the things that we needed to do was to build a stronger sense of community in America, across racial and cultural and religious and economic lines. And I had this vision that we could get young people involved in service and help them go to college.

And I went to City Year in Boston, and I knew what it was I wanted America to do. I'm very proud of the fact that in its first 4 years the national service program, AmeriCorps, has had as many volunteers as the Peace Corps did in its first 20 years. And you owe that to them.

Now, I want to close with this thought. One of my favorite lines that President Kennedy ever spoke was the speech he made about Germany and the cold war in Berlin. Most people remember, "*Ich bin ein Berliner*" and all that. But he said this—I want you to think about this in terms of Kosovo—in the middle of the cold war, John Kennedy said, "Freedom has many difficulties, and our democracy is far from perfect, but we never had to put up a wall to keep our people in."

Now the Berlin Wall is down. The barriers of communism have fallen. But all over the world today, there are places where people are building walls in their hearts because they feel that they only count if they can look down on somebody who is different from them. And those walls are every bit as powerful as the Berlin Wall was, and in a profound way, harder to tear down.

America must both do good and be good on this issue of community and our common humanity. It is our great challenge and perhaps the most compelling reason that the Democratic Party should be America's majority party in the 21st century.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:15 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Alan D. Solomont, former national finance chair, Democratic National Committee, and his wife, Susan. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks. This item was not received in time for publication in the appropriate issue.

The President's Radio Address

April 17, 1999

Good morning. Of all the duties we owe to one another, our duty to our parents and grandparents is among the most sacred. Today I want to talk about what we must do to strengthen the safety net for America's seniors, by cracking down on elder crime, fraud, and abuse.

For more than 6 years, we've worked hard to keep our families and our communities safe. And we've made remarkable progress, with violent crime dropping to its lowest levels in 25 years. For elderly Americans who once locked themselves into their homes in fear, the falling crime rate is a godsend.

But the greatest threat many older Americans face is not a criminal armed with a gun but a telemarketer armed with a deceptive rap. And our most defenseless seniors, those who are sick or disabled and living in nursing homes, cannot lock the door against abuse and neglect by people paid to care for them. So America's seniors are especially vulnerable to fraud and abuse. Therefore, we must make special efforts to protect them.

That is why the 21st century crime bill I'll send to Congress next month includes tough measures to target people who prey on elderly Americans. First, we must fight telemarketing fraud that robs people of their life savings and endangers their well-being. Every single year illegal telemarketing operations bilk the American people of an estimated \$40 billion. More than half the victims are over 50. That's like a fraud tax aimed directly at senior citizens.

Last year we toughened penalties for telemarketing fraud, but we should stop scam artists before they have a chance to harm America's seniors. My crime bill will give the Justice Department authority to terminate telephone service when agents find evidence of an illegal telemarketing operation or a plan to start one. This new law will send a message to telemarketers: If you prey on older Americans, we will cut off your phone lines and shut you down.

Second, we must fight nursing home neglect and abuse. Nursing homes can be a safe haven for senior citizens and families in need. To make sure they are, we've issued the toughest nursing home rules in history and stepped up investigations at facilities suspected of neglect and abuse. But when one out of four nursing homes in America does not provide quality care to their residents, and when people living in substandard nursing homes have as much fear from abuse and neglect as they do from the diseases of old age, we must do more.

My crime bill gives the Justice Department authority to investigate, prosecute, and punish nursing home operators who repeatedly neglect and abuse their residents. With prison sentences of up to 10 years and fines of up to \$2 million, these new provisions make clear we will settle for nothing less than the highest quality care in America's nursing homes.

Third, we must fight health care fraud. Every year health care fraud costs American taxpayers billions of dollars, draining resources from programs that benefit our seniors. As Vice President Gore announced last month, my crime bill will allow the Justice Department to take immediate action to stop false claims and illegal kickbacks and give

Federal prosecutors new tools to tackle fraud cases.

Finally, we must fight retirement plan rip-offs. My crime bill will toughen penalties for people who steal from pension and retirement funds. To borrow a line from Senator Leahy, who is working closely with us to strengthen the safety net for our seniors, the only people who should benefit from pensions are the people who worked for a lifetime to build them.

I look forward to working with Congress in the coming days to give our senior citizens the security they deserve. That is an important part of our efforts to protect our parents and our grandparents, to advance our values, and build a stronger America for the 21st century.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 4:45 p.m. on April 16 in the Roseville Recreation Center in Roseville, MI, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 17. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 16 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Message to the Citizens of Oklahoma City on the Fourth Anniversary of the Bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building

April 14, 1999

Greetings to everyone gathered in Oklahoma City to remember those who died in the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building.

The bombing on April 19, 1995, stole the lives of 168 people and brought grief to the victim's families and to our entire nation. This cowardly act of terrorism outraged not only the people of the United States, but also civilized men and women everywhere.

As you gather to mark the fourth anniversary of that tragedy, I know that your memories of the loved ones you lost are undiminished by the passing of time. I know, too, that all Americans still share your sorrow.

Four years ago, you were brought together by your devastating loss. In the years since, you have reached out to forge new ties of community, turning your shared sadness into

a source of strength for all Americans. As you prepare to dedicate the national memorial at next year's observance, I commend you for your courage and your dedication in creating a lasting tribute to the memory of your loved ones.

Hillary and I are keeping all of you in our thoughts and prayers.

Bill Clinton

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on April 19.

Remarks at the Award Ceremony for the National Teacher of the Year

April 19, 1999

Thank you very much. Thank you, Terry. I also want to acknowledge and welcome Congresswoman Patsy Mink from Hawaii, who is here with her husband, John. We're very delighted to see them. I'd like to thank the Chief State School Officers for sponsoring this award, along with Scholastic—and I believe Gordon Ambach and Ernie Fleishman are both here.

Terry said I'd given 131 speeches on education. I didn't know that until I just came in here. [*Laughter*] I wasn't keeping count. It is true that a few years ago I started reeling off all my teachers, beginning at kindergarten. And when I started running for office a long time ago now, I remember I asked—the fellow who was helping me put my first campaign together said, "People don't know much about you; we've got to do a little biographical film, and we ought to put one of your teachers in it." And I said, "Well, I still carry on a correspondence with my sixth grade teacher, Kathleen Scher." I did until she died at about 91 years of age. And I used to see her about once a year.

"But you can't use her," I said. And they said, "Well, why? That sounds like a wonderful story." I said, "It is, but she's liable to tell you what she told me the day I finished my elementary school career." [*Laughter*] True story. My sainted sixth grade teacher, who is one of these wonderful—she lived with her first cousin, and they lived until their late eighties or early nineties, and they taught school for a gazillion years. And she

looked at me when I left elementary school for the last day and she said, "Bill, I just don't know about you." [Laughter] She said, "You know, if you ever learn when to talk and when to keep quiet, there is nothing you can't achieve. But if you don't learn the difference, I'm not sure whether you're going to be Governor or wind up in the penitentiary." [Laughter] So we found someone else to do the film. [Laughter] But Kathleen Scher continued to write me for the rest of her days, including a letter I have that I received just a week before she passed away.

So I want to thank all of you for being here today. I also would like to thank Terry for the magnificent perspective she's provided to us for years now, in the Department of Education, on education and on teachers. And I'd like to thank her for mentioning Kosovo today. I know a lot of you—probably in every school in the country, now, children are looking at maps and learning about the world we live in. And I think that's very important because it is such a small world, growing smaller.

I went out to San Francisco a couple of days ago to speak to the newspaper editors, and I said that it is truly ironic that here we stand on the verge of a new century and a new millennium—where education is more important than ever before, because we have this explosion in technology, drawing us closer to different people of different cultures, and our own country is becoming more diverse—we can imagine a future that is more prosperous and more peaceful and more interconnected, in a very human way, than ever before. We got by the cold war—thank goodness—without any nuclear weapons falling; and now we've found that that future was threatened by the oldest demon of human society, which is our fear of people who are different from us.

I'm sure at one point it was rational when tribes roamed around in isolated ways in pre-historical times and fought over limited resources and saw people in different tribes who were different from them, and they were maybe afraid for rational reasons. But today we have an opportunity to sort of celebrate our differences and enjoy them, as long as we understand they have to operate within a framework that says, underneath, the com-

mon humanity we all share as children of God is more important than those things which distinguish us one from another. That's really what's at stake there.

And it would be ironic, indeed, if after two World Wars and a cold war being fought on the continent of Europe, and all the lessons we have learned over this century, that it would be in southeastern Europe and the Balkans where our vision of the 21st century would come apart.

So this conflict in Kosovo, in a fundamental way, is either the last conflict of the 20th century or the first conflict of the 21st century. And it's very important that our children understand that.

I just want to say one word about it, and then I will come back to the task at hand. But I do have to announce today that I intend to send to Congress an emergency funding package to pay for our military and humanitarian needs for the operation in Kosovo; to ensure that we have the resources to sustain the air campaign until we achieve our goals, while maintaining our high level of general military readiness; to provide critical humanitarian assistance and relief to the hundreds of thousands of refugees; and to provide for resources for the nations in the region, the neighbors of Kosovo, who have suffered so much from the effects of this conflict.

One of the things that a lot of people don't understand is that this is putting an enormous burden on Albania, the poorest country in the region, taking all those refugees, struggling to maintain a democracy. It's putting enormous burdens on Macedonia, a very small country trying to manage its own ethnic differences, now having these refugees loaded on top of them. It causes real problems for Bulgaria and Romania. This is a difficult thing for the neighborhood.

So I hope that the Congress will act on this. The need for this funding is urgent, immediate, clearly in the national interest. There are literally lives hanging in the balance. And so I hope, in the spirit of genuine bipartisanship, the Congress will move the package right away.

Now, let's talk about why we're here. The first Teacher of the Year Award was presented in 1952 by a man who was one of

my heroes as a child growing up, Harry Truman. He did it right here on the White House grounds. The recipient was a Miss Geraldine Jones, who taught first grade in Santa Barbara, California, in a school whose name I rather like, the Hope School. [Laughter] Harry Truman said on that occasion that next to one's mother, a teacher had the greatest influence on what kind of a citizen a child grew up to be.

Every year since, Presidents or members of their families have personally handed out this award, as Terry said, to recognize not only the awardee and all of you, but, through you, all teachers in our country.

Eight hours a day, 5 days a week, 9 months a year, teachers hold the future of America in their hands. They teach our children to read, to write, to calculate, to sing, to play, to paint, to listen, to question, hopefully to work with others, and think for themselves. They excite our children's imaginations, lift their aspirations, open their hearts, and strengthen their values.

Everyone probably can recall a story like the one I told you at the opening of my remarks today. Many of us can remember our teachers in stunning detail—their faces, their expressions, their voices, their favorite admonitions, the way their hands gripped the chalk at the blackboard. We can still, most of us, summon the pride we felt when they praised us and the absolute chill we felt when we were scolded. [Laughter]

The role of teachers, while hard to exaggerate, unfortunately, is too often easy to overlook. Teachers do their jobs, quietly, largely isolated from other adults. Their work, therefore, is seldom glorified by Hollywood and rarely sufficiently rewarded by society.

Andy Baumgartner is our Teacher of the Year. He spent 2 years in the United States Marines. He gained inner confidence, self-motivation, physical stamina at Parris Island and Camp Lejeune. I imagine they have been useful to him in dealing with young children. [Laughter]

Since he is a former marine, I think it's worth pointing out that today we rightly honor the men and women serving in and around the Balkans as patriots. We should also honor our teachers as patriots.

Andy's colleagues marvel at the way he rivets the attention of his kindergarten students by keeping himself in constant creative motion. That's the first impression I had of him. [Laughter] I have met a person who has even more energy than I do. [Laughter] One minute he's using popcorn and M&M's to teach counting. The next, he's conducting a sing-a-long to "This Land Is Your Land." A few minutes later, he's marching the class up the hill behind the school to conduct a solemn funeral for a departed pet tarantula named "Legs." [Laughter]

As the father of a son with a learning disability, he knows firsthand the struggle many parents go through to get the individual attention their children need. He works hard to give that kind of attention to all his students.

When he's not teaching, he can be found directing a school play, teaching other educators, writing guidebooks for parents, working in community theater, participating actively in his church. He is an example of the kind of vital, active American that Alexis de Tocqueville marveled at when he came here so long ago and talked about the unique quality of our citizenship.

If he were alive today, de Tocqueville, I think, would agree that America could do more to honor classroom teachers like Andy Baumgartner. Perhaps more of our best and brightest young people would choose teaching as a career if we did more to lift our teachers up and honor them. Even though I am one, we don't need many more lawyers, we have plenty of financial analysts on Wall Street, but we desperately need more teachers.

When our finest young people pass up teaching, they're missing out on rewarding careers, and we're missing out on a chance to put our talent where we need it the most today. With 53 million children in our public schools, the greatest number ever, from more diverse backgrounds than at any time in our history, certainly since the turn of the century, with enrollments growing and a wave of teacher retirements about to hit, our schools will have to hire 2 million more teachers in the next decade.

At the same time, we're trying to bring down class size and that requires more teachers. And the new teachers must be better trained. A quarter of all secondary school teachers today do not have majors, or even minors, in the subjects they are teaching. And of course, the deficit is worse in low-income neighborhoods where the need is greatest.

Now, these are enormous challenges. I believe we can meet them if we act now when our economy is the strongest it has been in a very long time. But we have to act now. There are things the Federal Government can do, to be sure, and I want to talk a little about them. But I'd like to point out that we provide only about 7 percent of the funding of total public school funding in America. That's a higher percentage than it was when I became President. When we were cutting the deficit and cutting programs, we doubled our investment in education in about 5 years. But it's still important to remember that a lot of this has to be done at the State and local level.

And so as the Governors of our various States enjoy great prosperity, and as the crime rate comes down and, presumably, therefore, they don't have to keep spending all their new money on building prisons, as was the case when I was a Governor, too often, I certainly hope that as much money as possible will be put into our public school systems, to hire those teachers and to raise teacher pay. That has to be done at the State level, primarily, and it is absolutely imperative.

At the national level, we're going to do what we can to pass a bill to build or modernize thousands of schools, to help to hire 100,000 highly trained new teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. The studies, of course, confirm what a lot of our teachers have been saying for a long time, that smaller classes means more individual attention, more discipline, and more learning. Last fall Congress reached across party lines to put down a downpayment. They paid for about a third of these 100,000 teachers. I certainly hope we can finish the job this year.

We have to redouble our efforts to recruit more of the best and brightest young Ameri-

cans into teaching. A lot of our young people in the AmeriCorps program are getting some of their college education paid so they can go and become teachers. Our budget now calls for an investment to provide 7,000 college scholarships for students who will commit to teach in the poorest inner-city and rural schools. It calls on an investment to get 1,000 Native American young people to teach on Indian reservations and in other public schools with large Native American populations.

It calls for more money to recruit and train members of the United States military when they retire to become teachers through our Troops for Teachers program, something that has really been very, very successful. Our 25 million veterans represent a vast pool of potential teachers. Many of them, because they're drawing military retirement, can actually afford to be teachers. [Laughter] And most of them have their kids grown. So it's a pool that we need to look at and draw on. Our Teacher of the Year, here, is pretty good evidence that soldiers can be quite good teachers. We ought to make it easier for others to do the same thing.

Third, in our budget we provide more funds for teacher training. I think it's quite important that teachers, our new teachers especially, demonstrate that they know what they're supposed to teach. But we cannot expect the schools out there, who have to teach the kids, to be able to do what they're supposed to do unless we provide—we in the public sector—provide the resources we need not only to recruit but to properly train the teachers in the subjects they have to teach.

Fourth, we should do more to make our schools attractive places where people want to work. In our "Educational Accountability Act," we have a lot of funds for better schools and for turning around schools that aren't performing and for after-school and summer school programs to help the children who need extra help.

Now, last thing I'd like to say is something I've already said. I know I've given 131 speeches on education—I now know that—so I've learned a new fact today, and I love facts. But the larger truth is this: Everybody is for education in general, but not enough

people are for it in particular. It's easy to give a talk, and harder to foot the bill. And I think it is very important that we not only remain committed to substantive reforms—you know, I believe that every school district should have a "no social promotion" policy, but I don't think the kids should be branded failures. I think if they're not making it, then they should get the extra help they need. And that's why we have moved on from \$1 million, and \$20 million, to \$200 million, to \$600 million this year in Federal support for after-school programs and summer school programs. We're working at this. But America needs to focus on this.

We're going to honor Andy. I'm going to bring him up here to give him his award, and he's going to give a speech, and we're all going to practically laugh or cry. And it will be a wonderful thing. But I want America to hear this when they see you tonight on television. We have 2 million teachers to hire in the next few years. And in the best of all worlds, they would, every one of them, be just as committed and just as knowledgeable and just as effective as you are. And it isn't going to happen unless we make the necessary decisions and put the necessary priorities in place, not only in Washington but in every State capital and every local school district in the country.

So I say today, the best way we can honor America's teachers is for the rest of us to give them the tools to succeed with our children in the 21st century. *[Applause]* Thank you.

Ladies and gentlemen, the 1999 Teacher of the Year, Mr. Andy Baumgartner.

[At this point, the President presented the award to Mr. Baumgartner, who then made brief remarks.]

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:10 a.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Therese Knecht Dozier, Special Adviser on Teaching to the Secretary of Education; Gordon M. Ambach, executive director, Council of Chief State School Officers; and Ernest Fleishman, senior vice president, Scholastic, Inc. Mr. Baumgartner teaches kindergarten at A. Brian Merry Elementary School in Augusta, GA. The transcript made available by the Office of the

Press Secretary also included the remarks of Mr. Baumgartner.

Statement Commemorating the Deportation and Massacre of Armenians in the Ottoman Empire

April 19, 1999

This week marks the commemoration of one of the saddest chapters of this century: the deportations and massacres of one and a half million Armenians in the closing years of the Ottoman Empire.

We join with Armenian-Americans across the Nation and with the Armenian community abroad to mourn the loss of so many innocent lives. Today, against the background of events in Kosovo, all Americans should recommit themselves to building a world where such events never occur again.

As we learn from the past, we also build for the future. In this country, Armenian-Americans have made great contributions to every field, from science to commerce to culture. Meanwhile, the people of Armenia, who suffered not only from the massacres but the ravages of two World Wars and the pain of 70 years of Soviet rule, at last have obtained their independence and their freedom. Armenia is pursuing democratic and market reforms, assuming its rightful place among the members of the Euro-Atlantic community of nations. We wish the people of Armenia—and all of their neighbors in the Caucasus region—success in their efforts to bring about the lasting peace and prosperity that they deserve. America will continue to support these efforts.

On behalf of the American people, I extend my best wishes to all Armenians at this time of remembrance.

Statement on the Deaths of David and Penny McCall

April 19, 1999

Hillary and I are saddened to learn of the deaths of David and Penny McCall, two Americans who dedicated their lives to helping people in need around the world. They were killed in an auto accident, along with a French colleague, Yvette Pierpaoli, and

their Albanian driver, while engaged in their life's work.

They were in Albania on a mission for Refugees International to explore the possibilities of setting up a region-wide radio network to help Kosovar-Albanian refugees locate lost family members.

By reaching out to help the Kosovar refugees and war-affected people throughout the world, they stood for the best of the American spirit. Our thoughts and prayers are with their loved ones.

Remarks on Presenting the Presidential Medal of Freedom to Former Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany

April 20, 1999

The President. Secretary Cohen, Mr. Berger, distinguished Ambassadors, Senator Roth, Congressman Pickett, other Members of the Congress, retired Members of Congress, present and former members of the diplomatic corps, and to our German and American exchange students who are here: Welcome to the White House.

Today it is my privilege to confer America's highest civilian honor on a great statesman of the 20th century, the Federal Republic of Germany's longest serving Chancellor, Helmut Kohl.

President Kennedy first saw the design for the Medal of Freedom on July 3, 1963, just a week after he had gone to Berlin and challenged a new generation of Germans to forge a future of freedom and unity, of European integration and American partnership. No one did more to fulfill the hopes that President Kennedy expressed on that trip than Helmut Kohl.

Very few non-Americans have received the Medal of Freedom. The last year a foreign leader was honored was 1991, when President Bush presented the award to Margaret Thatcher. That day we celebrated a partnership among nations and leaders that helped to end the cold war with a victory for freedom.

Today we honor a partnership dedicated to building a 21st century Europe that can preserve the freedom and peace and find

genuine unity for the first time. Today we honor the leader whose values and vision have made that possible.

In 1991 the world was very different. The Berlin Wall had come down, but a profound gulf separated the eastern half of Europe from its more affluent neighbors to the West. Everyone agreed that something had to be done to bring Europe together, but not everyone had a clear idea of what that something should be.

Some people thought NATO should go the way of the Warsaw Pact, and that in its place we had to build something new, untested, unproven, a community that embraced everyone but imposed no true obligations on anyone. Others felt that our challenges in Eastern Germany and Eastern Europe consisted simply of sending assistance and plenty of advice. They were in no hurry to open our institutions to nations and people they thought of as distant and foreign.

But Helmut Kohl understood that we needed a bold vision, backed by a practical blueprint, grounded in the institutions that had served us so well for so long. He said, "We are all called upon to construct a new architecture for the European house, a permanent and just peace order for our continent."

Consider the splendid house that has risen since then. Germany is united. Europe has achieved economic and monetary union. NATO has three new members. The European Union soon will embrace nations from the Baltics to the Balkans. What a remarkable few years it has been.

The story of Helmut Kohl is the story of 20th century Germany. He was born in 1930 in Ludwigshafen, a small city on the Rhine. He saw firsthand the ravages of nazism. His brother, Walter, perished in the war that tore Europe apart. But the young man, then called "*der Lange*," the tall one, was quick to see the possibilities of hope and rebirth in the postwar world.

Through the Marshall plan, he saw firsthand what Europeans and Americans could do together to spread good will and support for democracy among young people.

When he was only 16, he was one of the very first people to join the Christian Democratic Union. Indeed, his membership number was 00246. And 50 years ago, at the age of 19, he and his friends were actually briefly detained at the French border for causing what must be the friendliest border incident in history: they tried to remove some of the barriers between the countries and carried banners in support of Franco-German friendship and European unity. "*Der Lange*" was not your everyday teenager.

As Helmut Kohl's political star rose, he never wavered from those convictions. He believed young people were crucial to the future. He still believes that. And we thank him, and we thank the young Germans and Americans who are here to honor him.

He championed the Franco-German friendship as the linchpin of the new Europe, a friendship crystallized in the unforgettable moment he and Francois Mitterrand clasped hands at Verdun. He always maintained that the new architecture of Europe must be built on the foundation of transatlantic partnership. And he reached out to Russia, to Ukraine, to the other former Communist countries, to make them a part of 21st century Europe.

He served as Chancellor for 16 years. Future historians will say Europe's 21st century began on his watch. In the months that followed the fall of the Berlin Wall, he conceived a generous vision for Germany's unification and for a new partnership between the West and a democratic Russia. He saw the imperative of Europe's unification, politically and economically. He saw the need to embrace other nations into Europe's family, putting Germany in the center, not on the edge any longer, of a united, democratic Europe, a Europe where borders do not limit possibilities and where nationhood is a source of pride, not a crucible of conflict.

It is to protect that vision that the NATO allies are in Kosovo today, to defeat the cynical vision embodied by Mr. Milosevic in which the most primitive hatreds and brutal oppression are more important than mutual respect and common progress.

Anyone who respects the legacy of Helmut Kohl knows that for peace to survive in Europe our alliance of democracies must stand,

and stand together, against dictators who exploit human differences to extend power. And we must stay true to our vision long after we achieve military goals. Germany was buoyed by hope through the Marshall plan; Greece and Turkey, rescued by the Truman doctrine; central Europe, helped by the West in this decade, after the fall of the Berlin Wall. Those were wise investments. We must be equally farsighted toward southeastern Europe.

Among all the success stories of the late 20th century, none is more dramatic or instructive than the rebirth of Germany as a free and democratic nation. Germany's story has taught the world two profound truths: First, that it is possible for a people who love light and laughter to descend into the blackest darkness; and second, that it is also possible for a people to return to the light and lead others by their example.

Germany is proof that war and ethnic hatred are not inevitable; that they do not represent a permanent aspect of the human condition; that the unacceptable is not written by fate into our destiny. But we can and must remain willing to act, because the work of building a new world never ends. That is the lesson of America, the lesson of Germany, the lesson of the 20th century.

In 3 days the leaders of NATO and its partner nations will gather in Washington to mark the 50th anniversary of our alliance and to chart NATO's future path. The challenge we face in Kosovo has demonstrated beyond a shadow of a doubt that America and Europe need an alliance that combines our strength to protect our values and project stability eastward in Europe; an alliance ready to meet new challenges to our security, with allies able to contribute to the effort; an alliance open to new democracies making the right choices; an alliance that continues to work with Russia despite tensions that arise when we disagree.

As Helmut understood so well, our vision of a Europe whole and free will not succeed unless it embraces a partnership with democratic Russia. And it will not succeed unless it is embraced by Russia. That is the kind of alliance that must and will emerge from the Washington summit.

I can think of no better way to begin this week of allied solidarity than by honoring Helmut Kohl. When I was elected President, Helmut had been Chancellor for a decade. Seven years later, I find myself the senior leader of the G-8. In countless ways, I learned from him. In Bonn, I once told an audience that my opinion on most issues could be summed up in four words: I agree with Helmut. [*Laughter*] Those words have never failed me.

After our first meeting in 1993, he summed it up when he said, “the chemistry is right.” Well, the chemistry was right every time we met: Right when we planned NATO enlargement; right when we discussed our shared hopes for Russia; right when we talked about multilateral issues over a multi-course dinner at Helmut’s favorite Washington restaurant, Filomena’s—[*laughter*]—even right when he made me eat *saumagen*—[*laughter*]—and in spite of that—[*laughter*]—I hope our dinners continue far into the new century.

With the 21st century breaking over the horizon, we can look back on the 20th century, with its grave threats to our common humanity and its great leaders—Churchill, Roosevelt, de Gaulle—for unifying Germany and Europe, for strengthening the Western alliance and extending the hand of friendship to Russia, Helmut Kohl ranks with them. His place in history is unassailable. And he has been a true friend of the United States.

In 1989, the year of Germany’s rebirth, we heard Beethoven’s ninth symphony as if for the first time, with Schiller’s “Ode to Joy” capturing the feeling of a world coming together. In that same poem, ironically written just after the American Revolution, Schiller wrote that the circle of universal freedom begins very simply with the friendship linking two people.

Helmut, President Kennedy stirred the world at the Berlin Wall when he said, along with freedom-loving people everywhere, “*Ich bin ein Berliner.*” Today a grateful United States says to you, “*Du bist ein Amerikaner.*”

In countless ways you have been an American. It is my honor to award you the Medal of Freedom.

Commander, read the citation.

[*At this point, Comdr. Michael M. Gilday, USN, Navy Aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medal. Chancellor Kohl then made brief remarks.*]

The President. I would like to invite all of you to join us in the State Dining Room for a reception in honor of Chancellor Kohl.

Thank you very much, and we’re adjourned.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:37 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher of the United Kingdom; and President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro).

Remarks Following a Meeting With the Economic Team

April 20, 1999

Attack in Littleton, Colorado

Thank you very much, please be seated. Ladies and gentlemen, let me begin by saying that we all know there has been a terrible shooting at a high school in Littleton, Colorado. Because the situation, as I left to come out here, apparently is ongoing, I think it would be inappropriate for me to say anything other than I hope the American people will be praying for the students, the parents, and the teachers. And we’ll wait for events to unfold, and then there’ll be more to say.

Domestic and International Economy

I have just met with my economic team to discuss the steps that we will be taking in the weeks and months ahead to continue to advance our prosperity at home and abroad. As you know, the economy continues to grow in ways that benefit ordinary citizens that are virtually unprecedented. This is happening thanks in no small measure to policies we instituted in 1993 to help to change America to meet the changing challenges of the new economy.

We recognized that the new economy demanded fiscal discipline, so we balanced the budget. Now we’re working to use the surpluses to strengthen Social Security and Medicare. The new economy requires and rewards greater skills, so even as we reduce

spending in many areas, we have almost doubled the National Government's investment in education and training.

In the new economy, we are linked to all the nations of the world in a web of commerce and communications. So we have worked to expand and to build—to expand trade and to build a 21st century trading and financial system that will benefit ordinary citizens in our country and throughout the world.

The financial crisis that began in Asia in 1997 put our progress at risk and presented a very severe test to the global system that we have worked so hard to build. Though our economy has continued to grow, we have been affected by the Asian financial crisis, as you can see by the trade figures, by what has happened in steel, and by the loss of markets by our farmers.

It's clear to me that we had to do something to contain the crisis, to restore growth, to prevent such crises from happening in the future. In September I went to the Council on Foreign Relations in New York and set out a strategy with concrete steps to speed the recovery. We joined with other major industrial nations to act to spur growth. Now, 7 months later, we see a growing number of signs that those steps have taken hold. Some economies once in crisis are beginning to turn the corner.

But substantial risks and challenges remain. This is not a moment for complacency. It's a moment to act to prevent financial crisis from reaching catastrophic stages in the future.

In a world of 24-hour markets, we will never be able to banish such crisis altogether, and no single proposal will solve all the problems we have seen over the last 2 years. But acting on the lessons we have learned from this experience, we can find a way to harness the benefits of an open global economy while taming the global cycles of boom and bust, just as we have found ways to moderate those swings in our own domestic economy. That is the central challenge we face on the financial front.

Working with the other industrial nations in the G-7, we have already taken several important steps, from developing a new contingent line of credit for countries with strong

economic policies to helping to restart the economies of Asia to limiting the fallout of the crisis in Latin America.

Now, the leading industrial nations must be prepared to take the next steps in the design of a strong financial architecture that can be a platform of prosperity for all of us in the next century. We have worked to shape an international consensus and to develop an agenda for long-term reform of the global financial system.

I know this is something that is very hard to grab headlines with, but if you think about what the world has been through in the last 2 years because of the problems in the global financial system, and if you account for the fact that 30 percent of our growth until last year has come from expanded trade, it is clear that for the United States, for ordinary citizens in the United States, and for their counterparts throughout the world, there are few more important things for leaders to be doing than working on building a stable financial architecture for the new century.

Tomorrow Secretary Rubin will outline in greater detail our proposals on a series of important initiatives. Starting with this weekend's gathering of financial officials in Washington, we will work to build support for these proposals among our colleagues at the summit of the world's leading economies in Cologne later this year. And eventually, we want to bring in all nations who have a stake in the health of the global economy.

The emerging national economies need to be a part of this dialog, and all of them need to be convinced that we are trying to do things that will improve the lives of average working families everywhere.

Our approach includes the following key elements:

First, we industrial countries should take steps to reduce the entire financial system's vulnerability to rapid capital flows and excess leverage. For example, we should strengthen bank regulations so they actually take into account the real risks of lending.

Second, we should continue to develop a better way to respond to crises, including appropriate sharing of responsibility by the private sector.

Third, developing countries should take more responsibility as well, by strengthening

financial regulation and bank supervision and developing sustainable debt management policies, thus avoiding excessive reliance on short-term debt. We will seek to reinforce these policies through the actions of the international financial institutions.

Fourth, the international financial institutions should focus their efforts on encouraging developing countries to adopt sustainable exchange rate regimes and the macroeconomic policies necessary to support them.

Fifth, we must ensure that the most vulnerable citizens do not bear the brunt of these crises. That means the IMF and the World Bank must pay more attention to social safety nets, working with countries to lay strong foundations during good times and to maintain adequate protections during bad times. In moments of crisis, budgets for core social programs should be preserved or at least should not bear the full brunt of necessary cuts.

Sixth, we must remember that the poorest countries, nations that private capital flows are bypassing altogether, need help because they are burdened with unsustainable levels of debt. Last month I asked the international community to take actions to forgive \$70 billion in global debt, at a meeting we had here with representatives of over 45 African countries. No nation committed to good governments and economic reform should be crushed by a debt burden that it is so heavy it will punish ordinary citizens and prevent growth, no matter what people do.

Now, if we take these steps, we can build an international marketplace that reflects our values. And we can achieve something that I think people in the United States want very badly: We can put a human face on the global economy. We can show people, here and around the world, that there won't just be economic numbers showing growth, but their lives will be actually improved by the work we do to draw closer together.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:34 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House.

Message to the Congress Transmitting an Account of Federal Agency Climate Change Programs and Activities

April 20, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with section 573 of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1999, as contained in the Omnibus Consolidated and Emergency Supplemental Appropriations Act, 1999 (Public Law 105-277), I transmit herewith an account of all Federal agency climate change programs and activities. This report includes both domestic and international programs and activities related to climate change and contains data on both spending and performance goals.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
April 20, 1999.

Remarks on the Attack at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colorado, and an Exchange With Reporters

April 20, 1999

The President. I want to begin by saying that Hillary and I are profoundly shocked and saddened by the tragedy today in Littleton, where two students opened fire on their classmates before apparently turning their guns on themselves.

I have spoken with Governor Bill Owens and County Commission Chair Patricia Holloway and expressed my profound concern for the people of Littleton. I have spoken to Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder, who, along with Attorney General Reno, is closely monitoring the situation. I've asked the Attorney General and the Secretary of Education to stand ready to assist local law enforcement, the schools, the families, the entire community during this time of crisis and sorrow.

A crisis response team is ready now to travel to Colorado, and I strongly believe that we should do whatever we can to get enough

counselors to the families and the children as quickly as possible. I know the other communities that have been through this are also ready to do whatever they can to help.

I think that Patricia Holloway would not mind if I said that, amidst all the turmoil and grief that she and others are experiencing, she said to me just a moment ago that perhaps now America would wake up to the dimensions of this challenge if it could happen in a place like Littleton, and we could prevent anything like this from happening again. We pray that she is right.

We don't know yet all the hows or whys of this tragedy. Perhaps we may never fully understand it. Saint Paul reminds us that we all see things in this life through a glass darkly, that we only partly understand what is happening. We do know that we must do more to reach out to our children and teach them to express their anger and to resolve their conflicts with words, not weapons. And we do know we have to do more to recognize the early warning signs that are sent before children act violently.

To the families who have lost their loved ones, to the parents who have lost their beloved children, to the wounded children and their families, to the people of the community of Littleton, I can only say tonight that the prayers of the American people are with you.

Thank you very much.

School Violence

Q. Mr. President, you tried to get this message out last fall. Is there anything additional that you can say or that the Federal Government can do to prevent things like this from happening?

The President. Well, I think on this case it's very, very important that we have the facts, insofar as we can find them out. You know, we had the conference here last fall; the Attorney General and the Secretary of Education prepared the handbook for all the schools that we asked to be widely used; and we do have, from bitter and sad experience, a great cadre of very good, effective grief counselors. My guess is that they will be needed in abundance there for the children.

I think after a little time has passed, we need to have a candid assessment about what

more we can do to try to prevent these things from happening.

Q. Mr. President, there seems to be an epidemic of these kinds of incidents now. There was Paducah, Kentucky; Jonesboro, Arkansas; Springfield, Oregon; and several others. Would you characterize this as an epidemic affecting the Nation's school system?

The President. I wouldn't want to use that word. What I would like to know is whether we can take—we can learn enough from this, which in its dimensions apparently is much greater than even the others were, and see what else we can do.

I had a very interesting conversation this afternoon with Congresswoman Carolyn McCarthy, who, as all of you know, lost her own husband, and the son sustained a wound as a result of a shooting incident on a commuter train. And that's what we talked about.

I think tonight we owe it to the people of Littleton and to the families involved in this tragedy to let them go through the grieving and deal—and try to get the facts. And then the rest of us have a responsibility to do everything we can to make sure this doesn't make 1999 a year like last year, that we don't have another rash of this, that we really can be more effective in preventing it.

And I wish I could say more tonight, but I don't think I can.

Q. Mr. President, have you been told, sir, that the death toll is as high as the 25 figure that we've heard? And secondly, sir, every time one of these things happens, we go through this chorus of handwringing and say we've got to stop it from happening again. Is there anything specific and concrete that you'd like to see happen that hasn't happened yet?

The President. Well, I don't want to make—there are, but what I would like to do is take a couple of days, because we don't know what the facts are here. And keep in mind, the community is an open wound right now. They have suffered as much as anyone can suffer. This is the largest group of fatalities, whatever the numbers are—and I've heard various numbers, even as much as 5 minutes ago, right before I came out.

I'd like to answer that question, but I think anything I say tonight can only add to the

pain of the people in Littleton and not serve to solve the problem. So I will answer that question when I have more facts and after we let a little time pass.

Q. Mr. President, you said America should wake up. Wake up to what, sir?

The President. Well, I think there are a lot of kids out there who have access to weapons—and apparently more than guns here—and who build up these grievances in their own mind and who are not being reached. And it's not just Littleton. We know that now. We've had lots and lots and lots of places. So it's—I don't know how many of you have been there. I've actually been there. I know the community, and it's a wonderful place.

And I think I can't do better than what Patricia Holloway said, the commission chair: If it can happen here, then surely people will recognize that they have to be alive to the possibility that it could occur in any community in America, and maybe that will help us to keep it from happening again.

But you know what we put out before. You know the efforts we've made. And I just think that tonight we need to focus on the families that lost their kids, on the children that are wounded, on the grieving of the community, give this thing a day or two for the facts to emerge. And then I'll try to have more to say to you.

Q. On just that point, Mr. President, at the time you had that conference last year, your administration said the students are still safer sitting in the classroom than they are walking down the street. Do you think Americans still think that's true? Do you think that's true?

The President. Well, statistically, for all the whole 53 million kids in our schools, it's true. But from the fact we're hearing about what happened at this school and the possibility that explosives were out there, that hand grenades were available, that other things were there, it obviously wasn't true there. That was obviously the most dangerous place in Colorado today.

So I don't want to—but that doesn't—that shouldn't make people believe that every school is in danger. What it should make every community do is to study this handbook we put out and see what lessons can be learned here.

But again, tonight I think the American people ought to be thinking about those folks in Littleton. Tomorrow and in the days ahead, we'll have a little more time to kind of gather ourselves and our determination and go back at this again.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:48 p.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Governor Bill Owens of Colorado and Jefferson County Commissioner Patricia Holloway.

Remarks to the White House Volunteers

April 21, 1999

Thank you. You know, Hillary and I look forward to this day so much every year. We want to thank you for what you do. We want to say to America we could not run the White House without you.

It happens that this day was scheduled on what has turned out to be a very sad day for America. And since, in my mind, you represent the best of American citizenship by what you do here every day as volunteers, I think it is important that we take a little time to ponder how we, as American citizens, should respond to what has occurred in Colorado.

First of all, I think it is important that we remember that we must come together and pray together but also commit to act together. In Littleton, we saw and we continue to see horror and agony. We also see in that horror and agony the ties that bring us together as a national community—the police officers rushing toward the sound of gunfire with bravery and professionalism, the students risking their own lives for their friends, the doctors and paramedics summoning all their skills under astonishing pressure, the parents and neighbors whose love and concern sustained their children through that last long night and who will be called upon to do much more in the days and weeks to come. We see, in a moment of agony, what is best in our community and in our country. I have been particularly struck by the story of Mrs. Miller, the teacher who heard the gunfire and led dozens of students to safety

in the choir room, who worked to keep them calm and quiet for hours while students removed ceiling tiles to let in more air. Doubtless we will learn more stories of quick thinking and grace under pressure as the details unfold. All of us are struggling to understand exactly what happened and why. There is a deep desire to comfort the grieving and counsel the children. We must also focus on what we are going to do.

In Littleton, agents from the ATF and the FBI already are on the ground, providing tactical assistance to local authorities. Highly trained crisis workers are ready to help people cope with their loss. Fortunately, one of the most outstanding centers in the Nation for this sort of work is in Denver.

Perhaps the most important thing all of us can do right now is to reach out to each other and to families and their young children. It is very important to explain to children, all over America, what has happened, and to reassure our own children that they are safe.

We also have to take this moment, once again, to hammer home to all the children of America that violence is wrong. And parents should take this moment to ask what else they can do to shield our children from violent images and experiences that warp young perceptions and obscure the consequences of violence, to show our children, by the power of our own example, how to resolve conflicts peacefully.

And as we learned at the White House Conference on School Safety and as is reflected in the handbook that the Secretary of Education and the Attorney General sent to all of our schools, we must all do more to recognize and look for the early warning signals that deeply troubled young people send often before they explode into violence. Surely more of them can be saved and more innocent victims and tragedies can be avoided.

In the days ahead we will do all we can to see what else can be done. For now, when the school has apparently just been cleared of bombs and not all the children who were slain have been carried out, I think it is important on this day that we continue to offer the people of Colorado, the people of Little-

ton, the families involved, the sure knowledge that all of America cares for them and is praying for them.

So I ask you to now join me in a moment of silent prayer for those who lost their lives, for those who were wounded, for their families, and those who love them and care for their community.

[At this point, a moment of silence was observed.]

Amen.

Now let me say that on this sad day I also want America to know that I came here to be with you because, in many of the sad moments of this administration and many of the greatest moments of our happiness and achievements for the American people, the ability of the White House to connect to them rests solely in the hands of people who are not paid employees of the Federal Government. Most Americans still have utterly no idea how many hundreds and hundreds of people volunteer at the White House, without which we could not do our jobs.

I got a note the other day from a person thanking me because the child of a friend of his had received a letter from the White House. And he said, "I know you didn't sign that letter, but children expect to get their letters answered." That is just one example of things that would not happen, were it not for you. All over America, whenever someone comes up to me and tells me that they've had some contact from the White House that I know came because of a volunteer, I am once again grateful for what you do.

So I thank you for sharing this very profoundly sad moment with me and with our country. But I also thank you for making it possible for us to do our work—for the people of Littleton and the people of America. We are very, very grateful.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:37 a.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building.

**Statement on the Nomination of
Gen. Eric K. Shinseki To Be Chief of
Staff of the United States Army**

April 21, 1999

I am pleased to nominate Gen. Eric K. Shinseki to be Chief of Staff of the United States Army. If confirmed by the Senate, General Shinseki will succeed Gen. Dennis J. Reimer, who will be retiring later this year after 37 years of distinguished active duty service.

General Shinseki currently serves as the Vice Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army. Immediately prior to assuming his present position, he served as Commander in Chief of United States Army Europe and concurrently as Commander of NATO's Stabilization Force in Bosnia. He brings to the position of Chief of Staff extensive operational and joint experience as well as proven leadership ability and a deep concern for the soldiers, civilians, and families of the United States Army.

During his distinguished career, General Shinseki served two combat tours in Vietnam and has commanded at every level from company through theater army. As Commander of the Stabilization Force, he directed the operations of the three Multinational Divisions in Bosnia, promoting implementation of the Dayton accords.

General Shinseki assumes the post of Chief of Staff as the U.S. Army proudly celebrates 224 years of dedicated service to our Nation in war and peace. With General Shinseki as Chief of Staff, I am confident that the total Army—active, Reserve, and National Guard—will continue its tradition of excellence, dedication, and professionalism as it enters the 21st century.

**Statement on the Nomination of Lt.
Gen. James L. Jones, Jr., To Be
Commandant of the United States
Marine Corps**

April 21, 1999

I am pleased to nominate Lt. Gen. James L. Jones, Jr., for appointment to the grade of general and assignment as Commandant of the United States Marine Corps. If confirmed by the Senate, General Jones will suc-

ceed Gen. Charles C. Krulak, who will be retiring later this year after 35 years of distinguished active duty service.

General Jones brings to the job of Commandant a wealth of operational experience, exceptional leadership skills, and strong strategic vision.

During his distinguished career, General Jones served a combat tour in Vietnam, commanded the 24th Marine Expeditionary Unit, served as Chief of Staff of Joint Task Force Provide Promise in Bosnia and Macedonia, and was Commanding General of the 2d Marine Division. As Deputy Chief of Staff of the Marine Corps for Plans, Policy and Operations and, most recently, as Senior Military Assistant to Secretary of Defense, he has demonstrated keen insight into defense policy and the crucial role of the Marine Corps in protecting our national security.

General Jones assumes the post of Commandant as the Marine Corps takes on the challenges of the 21st century. With General Jones as Commandant, I am confident that the Marine Corps will continue its long and proud tradition of defending America's interests and values.

**Statement on Congressional Action
on Proposed Education Flexibility
Partnership Legislation**

April 21, 1999

I am pleased that a little more than a year after I proposed national ed-flex legislation to the Nation's Governors, an overwhelming majority in Congress has passed a solid ed-flex bill. I look forward to signing it without delay. This bill will offer States more flexibility in their use of Federal funding in exchange for demonstrated increases in student achievement.

I am particularly pleased that the conference report strengthens accountability measures and preserves our effort to reduce class size in the early grades. The bipartisan work on this legislation shows we can and must work together to improve our Nation's schools.

Now Congress can move on to the most important aspects of the Nation's education agenda—finishing the job of hiring 100,000

well-prepared teachers to reduce class size, passing my initiative to help build and modernize 6,000 public schools, and re-authorizing the Elementary and Secondary Education Act with my plan to hold States and school districts accountable for results.

**Statement on the Damage
Assessment of China's Acquisition of
Nuclear Weapons Information and
the Development of Future Weapons**
April 21, 1999

I welcome the Intelligence Community's damage assessment on the "Implications of China's Acquisition of U.S. Nuclear Weapons Information and the Development of Future Chinese Weapons" and the review of the damage assessment by a panel of independent experts led by Admiral Jeremiah, as requested by the House Select Committee, chaired by Congressmen Cox and Dicks. I appreciate the careful analysis by the intelligence community and the independent panel, as well as their efforts to make as much information as possible available to the public on this crucial issue.

The findings of the damage assessment underscore the need to implement fully the Presidential Decision Directive I issued in February 1998 to strengthen security and protections at the U.S. nuclear weapons laboratories. I commend Secretary Richardson for his efforts in this regard and look forward to the review of lab security I requested by the President's Foreign Intelligence Advisory Board, chaired by Senator Warren Rudman.

Measures to protect sensitive nuclear weapons information must be constantly scrutinized, whether this information is at the national laboratories or at other U.S. Government institutions. Therefore, I am asking the National Counterintelligence Policy Board to assess potential vulnerabilities at other institutions associated with nuclear weapons besides the national laboratories and to propose any concrete steps that may be appropriate to strengthen protections against efforts by China and other countries to acquire sensitive nuclear weapons information.

I have also asked DCI George Tenet to review the recommendations made by Admi-

ral Jeremiah on intelligence collection and resources and to act promptly on these recommendations.

**Memorandum on Humanitarian
Relief for Kosovar Refugees**

April 21, 1999

*Memorandum for All Federal Government
Employees*

*Subject: Humanitarian Relief for Kosovar
Refugees*

As you are no doubt aware, Slobodan Milosevic's ethnic cleansing of Kosovo has resulted in a grave humanitarian disaster, the displacement of almost 1.4 million Kosovar Albanians, and the slaughter of thousands. The refugees now in Macedonia and Albania, and those who continue to arrive each day, are in urgent need of food, shelter, and clothing. Relief organizations are working around the clock to provide this assistance, but these organizations and the refugees they serve need support from all of us.

I have heard from many Federal employees who want to know what they can do to help in this time of crisis. We can best help alleviate the suffering in the Balkans by providing financial support to relief agencies on the front lines. The Federal Government has established a toll-free telephone hotline, 1-800-USAID-RELIEF, that you may call to be referred to a number of private humanitarian organizations that are providing vital relief. The organizations are also located on the USAID Internet website, www.info.usaid.gov, under the listing for Kosovo. The organizations are on site, they know how to deliver the relief, and they need financial support.

Together we can provide the humanitarian assistance that the people so urgently need, while we work with our NATO allies to create the conditions that will allow them to return safely to their homes and rebuild their lives.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the contents of this memorandum.

**Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion
With Students on Violence in Schools
at T.C. Williams High School in
Alexandria, Virginia**

April 22, 1999

The President. Thank you, Mr. Porter. I think all of you know that we are being joined by several million students through various media outlets that are covering this, and so let me begin by saying I'm delighted to be here at T.C. Williams High School. Thank you, Mr. Porter. Our superintendent, Herb Berg, is here, and I'm glad to be back in this school district again that has hosted me for so many important educational announcements.

Senator Robb and Congressman Jim Moran are both here with us, along with Mayor Kerry Donley. I thank them for joining us, and our two teachers, Ellen Harmon and Barbara Finney.

I want to spend most of my time today listening to you. I have a few questions I want to ask, and I'm going to turn it over to the teachers as soon as I make a few opening remarks. But I got up this morning, and I made some notes and worked over them again, and I'd like to say just a few things.

First of all, we're here, obviously, because of the terrible tragedy in Littleton, Colorado, and because, even though it is the worst example of school violence we've seen, it is by no means the only one. And indeed, I think that some of the people joining us today are from Paducah, Kentucky, and Jonesboro, Arkansas—at least those two communities which had examples of school violence last year.

I think it's important that all over America students and teachers have a chance to discuss their feelings about this, their ideas about what we should do, and it's especially important for younger children, who might be quite traumatized and wonder whether they are, in fact, safe at school. So I want to talk a little about all of that.

There is really nothing more important than keeping our schools safe. And we've tried to do a lot of things in that regard over the last few years, having a zero tolerance for guns and drugs policy, putting new community police officers in schools where

they're needed, trying to support more counselors in schools, more after-school, more mentoring programs, more conflict resolution programs. We've tried to help school districts and students and teachers, who wanted to do it, to have—for younger children, elementary and junior high school—using school uniform policies or dress code policies where they wanted to implement those things. But we know that there are things which have to be done sort of beyond the Government and beyond anything Government can do.

I spent a lot of time thinking about this, but I want to say, last night and today I thought about the work that my wife has done on this for many years, and I went back and reread the chapters in her book that deal with the problems that children have in coping with violence and the responsibilities of parents and the larger society. I thought about the work that the Vice President's wife, Tipper Gore, started doing well over a decade ago on this whole issue. And I think we have to ask ourselves some pretty hard questions here. What are the responsibilities of students themselves? What are the responsibilities of schools? What are the responsibilities of parents? What is the role of the larger culture here? Is there a sense in which the fact that all of you are exposed to much higher levels of violence through television, through video games, that you can actually figure out how to make bombs on the Internet—does that make a difference? Does it make these kinds of things more likely to happen? What are our responsibilities?

But before I open it to you, I'd just like to make one other comment. I think, particularly for young people who may be quite frightened as a result of this, or for parents who may wonder about the safety of schools, I think it's worth restating two or three basic things.

First of all, on balance, our schools are still the safest place our kids can be in most communities under most or all circumstances.

Secondly, I think it's worth reminding everyone that in spite of these horrible instances, our country is still fundamentally a good and decent place, and our people are good and decent people. And we have seen

the way the community of Littleton responded to this: people standing in line for hours to give blood, people showing up to volunteer their services as counselors and in other ways, with the way people have reached out to each other. We see a kind of microcosm of how America has reacted to this.

And I think it's important that the young people of our country know this and that the parents know this, that they should remember we—as horrible as this is, we have seen once again what is basically decent and good about America. And we should remember that most schools are more nearly represented by the kind of conversation we're having around here today than by the horrible incident we saw in Colorado.

So I think that's enough for me to say. But I'm interested in what you think about it, what your reactions are, what you've done here to try to avoid this, and what you think the responsibilities of the rest of us are, starting at home and going all the way up to the President, and also the cultural issues I mentioned.

You know, we have to acknowledge, as Hillary does in this book—and I went back and read some of the things we talked about over the last 20 years—that we do have more violence among younger people in America than other cultures do. And everyone has to take a hard look at what all the elements of our society are that contribute to that and what we can do to diminish it.

I also would like to say—let me just mention one other thing. I think it's important because of the action in which we're involved in Kosovo today. We don't know all the facts about what happened in Littleton, but one of the things that's come out of this that's really made an impression on me is that the young men who were involved in this horrible act apparently felt that they were subject to ridicule and ostracism, and they were kind of social outcasts at the school. But their reaction to it was to find someone else to look down on. And apparently, they were very prejudiced against African-Americans and Hispanics, and observed Adolf Hitler's birthday, and otherwise reacted to that.

This is something that you see a lot around the world and throughout human history,

that people who themselves feel disrespected, instead of developing an enormous sympathy for other people who have been subject to discrimination, instead look for someone else to look down on so they can always say, "Well, I may be dissed at school, or I may be subject to disrespect in some other environment, but at least I'm not them."

And I think that's a larger problem we really have to fight, because you look around this room—of course, we're in perhaps the most diverse school district in America today—but this is a great opportunity for us, as long as we lift other people up and recognize the inherent dignity and worth of all individuals and all ethnic, religious, and cultural groups.

And so I think that's another point that needs to be made here: They had the wrong reaction to the fact that they were dissed. Hey, look, everybody gets dissed sometime in life, even the President—[laughter]—sometimes, especially the President.

So these are some of the things that I was thinking about that I hope will spark your thoughts. And I think I'll turn it back to you and to the teachers to discuss this in any way you'd like.

[Ellen Harmon, a teacher at T.C. Williams, opened the floor to the students for discussion.]

The President. Yes, pass the mike.

[Teacher Barbara Finney stated that she had a group of mediators at the school and introduced one. A veteran student mediator stated that the mediation program helped a lot of students and believed tragedy in Littleton grew out of a build up of anger or aggression that really should have been let out. Another student mediator described the mediation and conflict resolution process at T.C. Williams.]

The President. I wanted to ask this question, because I honestly believe that young people can help each other, particularly at this age, maybe more than adults can, maybe in some cases more than their parents can, if things get out of hand.

But what I want to ask you is, how do they get there, if they're really angry? What if they're too embarrassed about what they

think is being done to them to talk about it? Do they get there only when they come to you, or do other kids say, "Hey, these two people are having trouble," or "these two groups are having trouble. You need to go to them." Can you all talk to me about that?

[A participant said students may be referred to mediation or could approach the teacher in charge confidentially. She said the situation in Littleton, CO, appeared to have resulted from the build up of anger, and part of the process at T.C. Williams was to let the students vent their anger, which helped resolve the problem.]

The President. Go ahead.

[A student said the school had instituted a confidential safety hotline so students could reach the peer mediation people in the school and indicated that if something similar had been available in Littleton, the problem may have been prevented.]

The President. So you're saying if they had a hotline, as opposed to a peer mediation group, then someone who was afraid—

Student. No, they work together—they work together.

The President. That's what I mean. In addition to. So, if someone were afraid, they could call the hotline and say, "Here's what I think is going on."

Student. Yes. And it's confidential, you just—

The President. Okay. Suppose I call the hotline and say, "Listen, I just talked to one of these people, and they're talking about getting guns and shooting people." Then what happens? I called the hotline, here. What happens?

Student. Peer mediation can be contacted with that, because you have given us a name, or Mr. Porter can talk to them or something.

The President. I think this is good. That's wonderful.

Okay.

[A student, who is a peer mediator, said that classmates participating in mediation were able to speak openly without fear of punishment or judgment and that this allowed more openness, giving the students a broader perspective. Another student noted that perhaps part of the problem in Littleton was its

school's lack of diversity as opposed to T.C. Williams which has so many different social, racial, and national groups that no one is left out. A third student stated that the administration and teachers at T.C. Williams did an excellent job resolving problems before they emerge.]

The President. First of all, I think that's a very brave thing for you to say. But there's no doubt that those people are very good people, that they have a good school, that they thought things were rocking along—which is why—that's why what you said, I think, is very important, that there needs to be some organized outlet that people can access privately. Because nearly everybody in America believes this couldn't happen in their school. So I think having this way to call and say, this is going on—we all need warning systems.

Go ahead.

Student. But, see, the problem is—what I feel is, I feel the administrators knew about this because a lot of people say, like, on the news and stuff, the students seemed to know about this crew already and seemed to not have done nothing about it. They didn't bother to prevent it, because they had a page in the yearbook for this crew and everything already.

The President. Yes, but the point I'm trying to make is that—a lot of people seemed to have known in general, but most people didn't—a lot of the people who knew, I think, didn't know that they might do what they did. And that's why it's important to feed all this stuff in someplace, because there are people who do know that—let me come back to the beginning here. I'd like for you all to talk about this.

Let me just say what I was going to say. One of the things that all kids are taught by their parents, you know, is this old "sticks and stones will break my bones, but words will never hurt me." That ain't true—if you'll let me use bad grammar. [Laughter] That's not true, because a lot of this stuff starts with words, you know?

And even in what I do and the people I deal with, it's amazing how much energy is lost and how many things are not done for America because people in Washington, DC, at the highest levels of power and influence,

get hurt by what other people say about them—mean, bad things other people say about them. And then they get in the position where they try to bait each other to say mean, bad things, you know.

And I think that somehow, maybe we all—particularly in a culture that desensitizes people to violence, if they're profoundly alienated; and I still think that's a big part of this—all of us have to do a better job of teaching young people not to let themselves be defined by the words other people use against them.

That's something that really struck me when I read these accounts, is how alienated these young people were because these athletes were saying bad things about them or who else was saying bad things about them. They were different. So then, they had to look for somebody to feel bad about.

And that's why I like this peer mediation thing, because it tends to take the sting out of words at the earliest possible time. But people really still get hurt so badly by what is said about them. And somehow, we've got to make people more immune to that.

Go ahead.

[A student noted the two students in Littleton had bombs, which they may have learned to make with information from the Internet. He asked what the Government was going to do to prevent the dissemination of this information.]

The President. You know, when the bomb blew up in Oklahoma City and the Federal building was destroyed and all those people were killed, we pointed out that the way the Internet is going with these webpages, people can learn how to build bombs like that on the Internet. And there is a limit to how much we can control it. And we're looking for ways to try to at least help parents deal with what their children can get off the Internet, and a way to use ordinary law enforcement tactics effectively against people who are trying to do illegal things over the Internet. But it's very difficult.

I mean, one of the things that's wonderful about the Internet is kind of its capacity for infinite expansion. And that's one of the great things about it. I don't know how many teachers here now get research papers where

all the sources are off the Internet. But it's great. That's the good news. The bad news is it's almost impossible to find this stuff, sort it out, and figure out whether it's illegal or not, and do something about it.

But I agree with you, it's going to be one of the big challenges we face, because there's been a lot of talk about—if you've seen in the last 3 or 4 days—about whether the Internet plus having very young people play very violent video games and where they learn to shoot people and stuff, that those two things have added an extra element to an otherwise already pretty violent culture. And I think we're going to have to take another look at it.

It's not easy. I don't want to pretend that it's easy. If you look at how many thousands and thousands of pages, webpages, are being added to the Internet every day, it's the fastest growing organism in human history for communications. And it presents us a great challenge.

[A student stated that it would be very hard for the Government to control the information on the Internet in a society with a free press and free speech. He believed the responsibility rested with parents and teachers to monitor what children access on the Internet.]

The President. Well, I do think it's important that in all these discussions, we not take the focus away from the home. I agree with that. If you look at all the facts that we know from the incidents that happened last year—all the school violence incidents—it appears that there were some cases in which the parents were—to go back to what you said about how other kids knew and they didn't call in—there appears that there were some cases in which the parents knew that the kid had a problem, including an obsession with guns and bombs, and there were other cases where they didn't know and might not have been able to know. But I do think that we shouldn't minimize that.

The only thing I want to—to go back to what you said about the Internet—I agree with that. You don't want me to choke off the Internet. It's one of the greatest things that ever happened. But we've got to figure out a way to apply the ordinary restrictions

of the criminal law in that context, just like you would any other. I think that's all you're saying, is we need to—if somebody's doing something illegal there, we should. But the problem is, how do you—how do parents limit their children's access to something they shouldn't be able to see? And I do think that the role of the Internet, and the way it's bringing everything into the home, has made a parent's job much more difficult. And it's harder to know what to do and how to do it. It's much, much harder. And I think we ought to just fess up to that.

But I'm sympathetic with you. We don't want to destroy what's great about the Internet. It's revolutionizing the American economy. It's opening up opportunities for people, opening up educational opportunities, bringing whole libraries to homes of people who could never afford them. I mean, it's doing a lot of good. But we've got to figure out a way to deal with these downside risks.

[A student stated that it appeared administrators and students in Littleton knew there was a problem, and thought administrators should have contacted the parents. Ms. Finney said she heard another Littleton student say on the news that he heard the suspects planning the attack last year and she believed he should have taken the initiative to tell someone.]

The President. I want to hear from the students, but that goes back to what you said. What I would like to—the message to go out across all the millions of students like you that are listening, and all of the schools, is that no matter how good your school is and no matter how good your programs are, we need a little humility here. And you're not doing something bad if you hear people talking about doing something or you see them becoming profoundly alienated in ways that could be destructive, if you tell someone who's in a position of responsibility to do something about it. They're not going to be punished if they hadn't done anything wrong, but we might be able to prevent more of these things.

I do think that one of the lessons that will come out of this incident, no matter what the facts turn out to be, is that there has to be a hotline, there has to be some sort

of early warning system; there has to be a climate in which children feel, young people feel that they can ring the alarm bell when they see something like this.

[Another student introduced herself to the President.]

The President. Oh, yes, you've been waiting a long time—she's been waiting longer than anybody else. *[Laughter]*

[The student cited a lack of morality and urged more disciplinary action from school administrators.]

The President. I agree with that. But what happens if all of that still doesn't work because young people at some point develop a whole other life? I mean, when you look at what is apparently the fact here, these—they created a whole new culture for themselves, a whole other life, which—we don't know the facts yet about what their parents did or didn't know, about what the schools did or didn't know. I think it's important for us not to make hasty judgments about Littleton.

I agree with what you say. But I also think in addition to what you say, we've got to have some warning system to protect everybody else.

Go ahead.

[A student expressed his disagreement with the news media placing blame on movies and video games and said people should be spending more time with their children. Another participant said discipline should start at an early age, not in the teen years. Another student pointed out that blame often falls on high-crime areas but that Littleton is a white suburban area. She asked if this would take the focus off of racial groups being the cause of the problems.]

The President. Well, I hope so. You know, it's interesting; all of these instances of school violence, even though they occurred in schools which some had a lot of racial diversity, some had not much racial diversity, but they all occurred away from inner-city areas with very high unemployment and high general crime rates. They tended to occur more in small towns and rural areas or suburbs,

where you normally would not think that society itself falling apart around you would happen.

Now, part of that could be the absence of the kind of warning and alert systems that you often have in the big city schools. I mean, a lot of big city schools, for example, all routinely have metal detectors and things like that because they know they've got to protect their kids. But I think what it means is that whatever is out there in our culture, whether it is the failure of parents to teach their kids, whether it is that plus then the extra exposure to violent experiences when you're young, kind of one step removed through media or video games or whatever, whatever it is—what it shows is that the people in rural America and in suburban America, in low-crime America and upper income America are just as vulnerable to having alienated young people in gangs or in isolation take violent action. I think that's what it shows. And it should destroy any of our racial or economic stereotypes about this. This is something that can happen anywhere. That's the point you made, and I think that's right.

[A student stated having the hotline and peer mediators was great but noted that T.C. Williams also had social workers and psychologists, which offered students choices. He asked how many of the other schools in the country had these alternatives.]

The President. Well, the truth is that some do, and some don't. More and more, I think, schools are doing that. Some have economic constraints. Some may not think they need them. But I believe that—I can tell you this. One of the things I have tried to do is to make it possible for schools to have more trained personnel and more options to serve children that have a whole variety of different needs.

And I suspect that one positive thing that will come out of this awful incident is that schools all over America today will be doing an inventory of what kinds of supports they have for their children. And they will—I expect, just because we're doing this, your principal and your teachers will be flooded with inquiries over the next 2 weeks about what you have done here, about the peer mediation thing, about what kind of social workers

you have, what kind of psychologist do you have, what kind of support do you have, because I think we will see everybody taking a serious look at this.

I'm glad you made that point, though, because there are people who have genuine emotional problems that require more professional, intense, longer term help than even the peer mediators can provide. So I think that's an important point you make.

[A student stated that other schools should have the alternatives offered at T.C. Williams so these things don't happen again and then asked the President when he or the Government was going to take immediate action for the other students in the country.]

The President. Well, first of all, you should know that we have provided, already, funds—last year—for a lot of these services for schools. And the Attorney General and the Secretary of Education put out a booklet that basically cited the best practices in all the schools.

We don't—the Federal Government doesn't run this high school. You know, you have a local school board, and most of the money comes from the State. We give some money, so—but what we did, we sent out a handbook, which basically had the best practices, for early warning signals, for preventive programs, for the kinds of things that you do here. And we've provided a lot of support to help schools to have the services they need to make them more safe.

Now, in the next few days I'm going to send another piece of legislation up to the Congress to do even more of this. But for it to work, people have to use the resources that are there and implement the systems that are there, and it has to be done in every school in the country.

Let me just say—this is kind of along the lines of your question—when I called the County Commissioner in Littleton, Colorado, the woman who is in charge of the local county government there, she was very, I thought, quite brave, considering it was in the middle of this crisis. The school hadn't even been—not all the children had been taken out yet. And she said, "Well, if this can happen here, it can happen anywhere, and maybe, finally, every school in America

will do what is necessary to try to prevent this.”

So we have—last year we had the first White House conference in history on school safety. We have sent things to every school in America, and we have—and I said, I’m going to send another bill this week, or in the next few days, to do more. But it has to—every school has to realize that if you want to be safe you have to be prepared, just like you are here.

Yes.

[A student stated that parents, teachers, government, and students should work together to prevent school violence and provide for the common welfare of the community. Another student said students are often more in tune with other students and that having the opportunity to be an anonymous source of information, as was the case with the T.C. Williams hotline, was very important. Another student said the racism should stop, and everyone should feel they were part of a group. Another student stated that there were no guarantees against future violence and high school students all over America need to be more sensitive and considerate of one another, which would help eliminate animosity.]

The President. I must say, these things you say to me are among the most impressive things of all, because all of us want to be part of groups, and we are part of groups whether we like it or not. We’re all part of groups. You know, we just—from the families we’re born in and the lives we live. And the trick is to convince people that it’s good to be part of a group, a racial, an ethnic, a religious, a cultural group, to be an athlete, to be a scholar, to be into music, to be into whatever. But it’s not—it doesn’t have to be negative when compared with someone else. That’s the thing that breaks your heart.

And also, it’s very important—another reason I like this hotline and I like what you said is that it’s very hard to be 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 years old; and if you are very lonely and very alienated and you feel you don’t belong with anybody or anything, and then all of a sudden, one or two other people come along, and they’re just like you, and then you find something on the Internet that you can

read that you can relate to, and then things begin to spin out of control. And I think what you said about reaching out to people who seem to be alone and have nobody to care about them. I think that’s very, very important as well.

I think that you know it a lot better than I do. But as old as I am, I can still remember, it was—I had some pretty tough times when I was 13, 14, 15, 16 years old, and I had a very fortunate life. You realize how hard you have to work to keep from getting into patterns that will be destructive throughout life where people feel that they only count when they’re in a group, that then they’re opposed to somebody else, they can look down on somebody else. It is the curse of human society throughout the world.

Go ahead. You two, and then—this young man hasn’t spoken yet, but go ahead. We’ll get you the mike as soon as he is finished. Who wants to go next? Go ahead.

[A student said young people were more desensitized than they were 20 years ago and that the media needs to take some responsibility. She cited the popularity of violent movies as an example. She also stated that the value of human life had declined and that some of these violent students may not have understood the impact of what they had done.]

The President. Yes. Let me say this: I really respect all of you very much to have said that this is a matter of personal responsibility, family responsibility, and you don’t want to blame the culture. I respect you for saying that—I don’t want to blame the movies or blame the video games; what you’ve said and how you’ve talked with your mother and everything.

But I think you have to recognize—let me just say, for example, when I was your age, if anything, the racism was more pronounced, the social hierarchies in the schools were dramatic—between those who were in and those who were out—people fought regularly on the school grounds, and they were vicious to each other and—but you didn’t have as much gun violence.

And I think it is unquestionable that more people have more access to more weapons, and more people at an earlier age can move

from profound alienation and misery into using violence against other than was the case 20 or 30 years ago, because they either have—they have more opportunities and because they've been desensitized and maybe because they don't have a chance to sit down with a mother or a father the way you do every night.

So the only thing I'm saying is, I think it's important not to oversimplify this. And I hate it when people blame someone else and don't take responsibility for what they did, but I don't think we can be blind to the fact that there are more opportunities and there is a greater openness to taking violent action on the part of alienated people today than there was 20 or 30 years ago.

And I think the experience that these children have before, maybe—maybe even when they're very young, before they form proper barriers in life about what's right, what's wrong, what can or can't be done, makes them quite vulnerable.

Go ahead. Who was next? This young man.

[A student expressed his concern for people who were into Gothic culture and rock music because he feared they would take the blame for instigating the situation in Littleton. He also expressed concern about being able to say things in school when angry, because when angry, people say things they would not otherwise say.]

The President. So how do you think we should deal with that?

[The student said that people should be more careful about what they say when they are angry, that there were healthier ways to deal with anger. He said the school provided counselors and psychologists for students to talk to when angry, but he was able to discuss his problems at home with his family.]

The President. Good for you. Let me say, just generally, I don't think—if all of you who have participated in this conflict resolution thing—maybe you've seen enough of this in other students to know this—but I can tell you from having lived a lot more years, this is a big problem later in life, too. Sometimes it's a bigger problem for men than for women because of the cultural sort of preconceptions of our society.

If you don't learn to talk about your feelings when you're young, and you don't have a constructive outlet for it, it just gets harder and harder and harder as you get older. And we're talking today about avoiding terrible tragedy. But we ought to talk just a minute about having a good life. You know, most people won't do anything really terrible, and most people will have some sort of life, but if you want to have a good life, you have to have some constructive outlet for your feelings.

And that's one thing that I really like about this whole way we're talking today. And I hope that it's something that will go out across the country and will change the way young people just live their lives. And I hope it's something you can take out of high school, because you'd be amazed how many people my age, in very responsible positions, still can't manage their anger because they never learned to have a constructive way to talk about it.

So this is not just—I mean, I know we're here to talk about this school violence, and I don't want to get off the subject, but I think that this is a general problem of life. And you have said a very important thing. And I hope that all of you will remember this, that it's not just something for high school. And to avoid having bad things happen, learning to manage your anger and to actually share how you really feel about something and get it behind you is one of the most important aspects of growing up. And you would be amazed how few people can really do it right.

[A student stated the need to take a look at how easy it was for the two Littleton students to get guns and expressed her belief in the need for regulation of weapons.]

The President. There is no other country in the world where it is so easy for people to get and misuse weapons. And we have a culture of having a right to own weapons and a right to use them and a big hunting culture, and I grew up in it, participated in it, and enjoyed it very much.

But I have—every little thing I've tried to do, from the passing of the Brady bill to the passing of the assault weapons ban, all these things have met with violent opposition, as

if I were trying to destroy the American way of life. And all I'm trying to do is keep more people alive.

And so I think that we need—we don't have, really, time to talk about this, because I want all of you to talk, but this will be a part of what we are trying to do, to strike a better, proper balance between making it harder for people who are violent to get guns and misuse them, without interfering with the constructive role that it plays in our society.

Go ahead. Oh, I'm sorry.

Ms. Harmon. I was just going to say, we're running a little short on time. Maybe we could take a few more questions. It's up to you.

The President. Yes. Go ahead.

[A student stated we are one of the most free countries in the world and that the easy answer to a dilemma like Littleton was to restrict freedom or rights—or mandatory uniforms and clear backpacks. He cautioned against raising security levels at the cost of freedom.]

The President. First, I think that's a point well taken. You mentioned school uniforms, let me tell you the position I took on that. I spent some time in Long Beach, California, which is the third biggest school district in California, which means it's huge. And it's the biggest school district that early introduced the school uniform policy, not applied to high schoolers for obvious reasons. But they did it in part because when the junior high schoolers had uniforms, which were basically just two-color outfits they wore every day, it distinguished them from the gangs, which created a safety problem. And it made all the kids safe.

But they found, interestingly enough, that kids from upper income as well as lower income families did better in those very troubling years where you're moving right into your teenage years. And it lowered dropouts; it increased attendance; it reduced discipline problems. It worked fine. What we tried to do was to say if the community decided they wanted to do it, then we would help them. And we've seen it happen a lot.

Now, my only question in this regard, in the order question you asked—and, again, I

think it's very important that we not rush to judgment in Littleton. Those people are still grieving. They are still heartbroken. We do not have the facts there. It is very important that none of us make judgments about that now. But we can make judgments about how we want all schools to run.

But one of the things that struck me there was this whole black trenchcoat deal, and whether or not—if the hotline, if they'd had a hotline, and whether or not you had this kind of stuff there—whether the school administrators should have been able to say, “We're not going to have a school uniform policy, but we'll have a nonprovocative dress code policy.” Is that too much of an infringement on individual liberty?

We can't answer that question. You've raised a good question. But let me just give you the other side of it. And you have to decide, in every case, whether it's an infringement on liberty or it's like going through a metal detector at an airport. I don't know how many times—before I became President, I was just traveling around like all the rest of us—how many times I went through a metal detector at an airport, and I set it off because of my belt buckle or the money clip in my pants or whatever, so I had to turn around, take it all out, go back in blah blah blah. Well, when all this started, people said, “Well, is this going to be an infringement on our liberty, right?” And then people saw planes hijacked and blown up, and they said, “Please infringe on my liberty a little bit”—[laughter]—so that no one felt—I say, nearly no one felt that it was an undue infringement on our liberty.

I'll give you another, maybe, what you think is a harder case, motorcycle helmet laws. You'll say, “I ought to have a right to split my head open if I want.” But that's not entirely true, because if I hit you and you split your head open, and you wouldn't have if you'd had your helmet on, then I and society are supporting you, in a way.

So these questions—I am glad you made the point, but the point needs to be debated against the larger—the other large issue of individual freedom versus heading this stuff off. That's all I'm asking. And you might keep little models in your head about the importance of free speech, see, on the one hand,

and the airport metal detector on the other, and then whenever somebody comes up with a specific, argue it within that framework.

[A student stated that the First Lady knew what she was talking about in saying that it takes a whole village to raise children and that if everyone would just look out for everyone else's children, good things would happen.]

The President. I agree with that. Thank you. [Laughter] I think that's very important, that—one of you asked me what I was going to do. I think that the import of what everybody said, all of you said today, is that we all have responsibilities here. And that all these children are our children, and we all have responsibility.

Who's next?

Ms. Harmon. I'm sorry to have to say this, but the afternoon is drawing to a close here; students do have to move on. And we're delighted—

The President. You guys have got to get on the buses, right?

Ms. Harmon. Yes, coming up anyhow. We're very happy that all the students could participate today, and we're so glad that you shared your thoughts in the candid way that you did. So thank you very much. And especially thank you to President Clinton for coming here and sharing and listening to us as well. We're delighted to have you here.

The President. Let me just say this—I know we've got to sign off—first, you were terrific, and I thank you. I thank you for being honest. I thank you for being forthright. Second, in the next few days, as the agony of the grief fades in Colorado and as the facts tend to come out more, I think—I'm speaking not only to those of you who are here in this room, but the millions of children all across our country who are listening and the teachers and the educators—we are going to be working hard on this. And anyone who has more ideas for us needs to feel free to send them to us at the White House, and send them to the Secretary of Education.

We are working to reach out to the country. We want to do what we can to create more environments like this one and to do everything we can to minimize the chance

that anything like this will happen again. And we want to, in the process, reassure the children and the parents of America that overwhelmingly our schools are good, safe places.

Thank you.

NOTE: The roundtable began at 12:45 p.m. in the media center. In his remarks, the President referred to John Porter, principal, T.C. Williams High School; Herb Berg, superintendent, Alexandria City schools; and Mayor Kerry Donley of Alexandria.

Statement on Earth Day

April 22, 1999

Today, the last Earth Day of the 20th century, is an opportunity to celebrate America's achievements in protecting our environment and public health and to dedicate ourselves to meeting the environmental challenges of the new century ahead.

Working together, we have made tremendous progress since the first Earth Day in cleaning our air and water, protecting our communities and children from toxic threats, and preserving our precious lands. Americans have demonstrated time and again that we can safeguard our environment even as we grow our economy. I am proud of all that Vice President Gore and I have done to advance these efforts over the past 6 years.

Today the Vice President announces a national strategy to reduce air pollution and restore pristine skies in our national parks and wilderness areas so future generations can see and enjoy them in all their natural splendor. This is but one effort to leave this a better land for our descendants. I join the Vice President in calling on Congress to approve our lands legacy initiative, dedicating permanent funding so that years from now Americans can continue protecting and restoring the deserts, mountains, coastlands, and plains that are so much a part of our Nation's heritage.

A new century brings new environmental challenges—perhaps the greatest is global warming. There is no clearer reminder that we are, indeed, all members of one global community. Only by acting together—as a nation, and in partnership with other nations—can we avert this common threat. This

is a challenge the Vice President and I are fully committed to meeting.

It is my sincere hope that when Americans gather 100 years from now to celebrate Earth Day, they will remember us as dedicated stewards of our Nation's air, water, and land, and will instill the same spirit in all those who follow.

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.

April 19

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation with President Boris Yeltsin of Russia concerning the situation in the Balkans.

In an afternoon ceremony in the Oval Office, the President received diplomatic credentials from Ambassadors Martin Butora of Slovakia; Sheila Sisulu of South Africa; Dato Ghazzali bin Sheikh Abdul of Malaysia; Farid Abboud of Lebanon; Leonard Nangolo Iipumbu of Namibia; Alfred Toro Hardy of Venezuela; and Peter Moser of Austria.

The President announced his intention to appoint Solomon D. Trujillo as a member of the National Security Telecommunications Advisory Committee.

The President announced his intention to appoint Solomon D. Trujillo as a member of the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations.

The President announced his intention to appoint Shahara Ahmad-Llewellyn to the Board of Governors for the United Services Organizations, Inc.

The White House announced that the President proposed a \$6.049 billion emergency supplemental package to fund the military and humanitarian efforts in Kosovo.

The White House announced that the President met with FEMA Director James Lee Witt and 14 members of the Project Im-

pact Fire Services Partnership for Disaster Prevention.

April 20

The President announced his intention to nominate Gwen C. Clare to be Ambassador to Ecuador.

The President announced his intention to nominate Oliver P. Garza to be Ambassador to Nicaragua.

The President announced his intention to nominate Dr. Ikram Khan to be a member to the Board of Regents for the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences.

The President declared a major disaster in Missouri and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and flooding beginning on April 3 and continuing.

The President declared a major disaster in Georgia and ordered Federal aid to supplement State and local recovery efforts in the area struck by severe storms and tornadoes beginning on April 15.

April 21

In the evening, the President met with Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom in the Residence.

The President announced his intention to nominate Richard L. Morningstar to be Ambassador to the European Union with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

The President announced his intention to appoint James R. Houghton and Susan D. Auld as members of the National Skill Standards Board.

The President announced the appointment of John Dillon as a member of the Advisory Committee for Trade Policy and Negotiations.

April 22

In the morning, the President had a telephone conversation from the White House with Attorney General Janet Reno in Littleton, CO, concerning the attack at Columbine High School.

In the afternoon, the President traveled to Alexandria, VA, and later, he returned to Washington, DC.

In the afternoon, the President met with NATO Secretary General Javier Solana in the Oval Office.

The President announced his intention to nominate Joyce E. Leader to be Ambassador to Guinea.

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 Services officers.

Submitted April 20

Frank Almaguer, of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Honduras.

John R. Hamilton, of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Peru.

Donald W. Keyser, of Virginia, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, for the rank of Ambassador during his tenure of service as Special Negotiator for Nagorno-Karabakh and New Independent States Regional Conflicts.

Submitted April 21

Gwen C. Clare, of South Carolina, a career member of the Senior Foreign Services class of Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Ecuador.

Oliver P. Garza, of Texas, a career member of the Senior Foreign Service, class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Nicaragua.

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Richard L. Morningstar, of Massachusetts, to be the Representative of the United States of America to the European Union, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary.

Submitted April 22

Anna J. Brown, of Oregon, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of Oregon, vice Malcolm F. Marsh, retired.

Kermit Bye, of North Dakota, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Eighth Circuit, vice John D. Kelly, deceased.

Faith S. Hochberg, of New Jersey, to be U.S. District Judge for the District of New Jersey, vice Joseph H. Rodriguez, retired.

H. Alston Johnson III, of Louisiana, to be U.S. Circuit Judge for the Fifth Circuit, vice John M. Duhe, Jr., retired.

Ikram U. Khan, of Nevada, to be a member of the Board of Regents of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences for a term expiring May 1, 1999, vice Alan Marshall Elkins, term expired.

Ikram U. Khan, of Nevada, to be a member of the Board of Regents of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences for a term expiring May 1, 2005. (reappointment)

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 April 19

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Transcript of a press briefing by Office of Management and Budget Director Jack Lew, Deputy Secretary of State Strobe Talbott, and Deputy Secretary of Defense John Hamre on the fiscal year 1999 supplemental budget request for Kosovo

Statement by the Press Secretary: Visit of Hungarian President Goncz

Statement by the Press Secretary on the President's meeting with FEMA Director James Lee Witt and members of the Project Impact Fire Services Partnership for Disaster Prevention

Released April 20

Transcript of a press briefing by Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, Secretary of Defense William Cohen, and National Security Adviser Samuel Berger on the NATO 50th anniversary celebration

Statement by the Press Secretary: Imprisonment of Four Baha'is in Iran

Text of the citation for the presentation of the Presidential Medal of Freedom to former Chancellor Helmut Kohl of Germany

Released April 21

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Released April 22

Transcript of a press briefing by Press Secretary Joe Lockhart

Announcement of nominations for U.S. District Court for the District of Oregon, U.S. District Court for the District of New Jersey, U.S. Court of Appeals for the Fifth Circuit, and the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Eighth Circuit.

**Acts Approved
by the President**

Approved April 19

H.R. 1376 / Public Law 106-21

To extend the tax benefits available with respect to services performed in a combat zone to services performed in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia/Montenegro) and certain other areas, and for other purposes