

into these deep divisions over—including political ones—differences of opinion are healthy; demonization is destructive and self-indulgent. And that's basically what we've got to work on.

If we can keep working together enough in creative tension, then everything else will work out. I'm confident of it.

### **Social Security Earning Limits**

**Mr. Blitzer.** All right, Mr. President. We have time for one final question. It's from Wolf in Washington, DC—that would be me, by prerogative, as the moderator of this discussion, this on-line interview we're having: You know the Republicans today in the House of Representatives are pushing legislation that would remove the limits, ease the limits on Social Security recipients as far as their earnings after they reach 65 until 70—a very sensitive subject, affects a lot of people watching right now, how much money they could earn and still be eligible for Social Security. Will you work with the Republicans, support them, in eliminating those caps on earnings?

**The President.** Absolutely. I'm thrilled by this. I hope this is just the beginning of a signal from them that they're willing to work on this whole Social Security area.

I think we should lift the earnings limit for two reasons. One is, I don't really think it's fair for people—if you're 65 today in America, your life expectancy is 83. And you want to be alert; you want to be physically strong. And we know as people stay more active, they're going to live better, not just longer. So I don't think we should penalize them.

Secondly, I think as the baby boomers retire, it's going to be important to have a higher percentage of people over 65, if they want to, working. This will be good for our society. I'm strongly in favor of it.

If they will send me a bill—what we call in Washington-speak, a clean bill—that is, doesn't have a lot of other things unrelated to that littered to it—I will be happy to sign it.

Then the second thing I'd like to urge them to do is to think about my proposal to dedicate the interest savings that we get from paying down the debt because of the

surplus in the Social Security tax to the Social Security Trust Fund to do two things: Number one, put the life of the Trust Fund out to 2050; that will take care of most of the baby boom generation; and number two, do something about a single woman's poverty on Social Security. Married women's poverty on Social Security, about 5 percent; overall, seniors over 65, under 10 percent now. Single women on Social Security tend to live longer, tend to have less money. Their poverty rate is somewhere between 18 and 20 percent.

So I like getting rid of the earnings limitation. It's the right thing to do. Let's just do it. But then let's lengthen the life of the Trust Fund and do something about the poverty rate among women who are retired.

**Mr. Blitzer.** Mr. President, thank you so much for joining us, from the Oval Office. Always of course, great to be in the Oval Office, and one day when you're not in the Oval Office, you'll probably be excited coming back here as well.

**The President.** I will be. I'll always be excited to come here. And maybe I'll even get to do a web chat with you afterward.

NOTE: The interview began at 1:43 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Gov. George W. Bush of Texas; President Slobodan Milosevic of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro); Gov. Michael O. Leavitt of Utah; Austria's Freedom Party leader Joerg Haider; and Steve Case, chairman and chief executive officer, America Online. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this interview.

### **Radio Remarks on Funding To Make Communities More Livable**

*February 14, 2000*

Across America, communities are struggling to protect precious lands so their children will have places to play, hike, and enjoy the great outdoors. Today I'm announcing nearly \$60 million in new grants to help communities in all 50 States create parks, preserve forests, and save open space.

And the lands legacy initiative in my new budget will provide permanent funding so that communities can conserve additional lands year after year.

NOTE: The President's remarks were recorded at approximately 5 p.m. on February 11 in the Oval Office at the White House for later broadcast, and the transcript was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 14. These remarks were also made available on the White House Press Office Radio Actuality Line.

### **Statement on the Bombing of a School in Sudan**

*February 14, 2000*

I am deeply concerned by reports that the Government of Sudan bombed a school in the Nuba Mountain region on February 8, killing and wounding many young children. It is an outrage that such egregious abuses against innocent Sudanese citizens have become commonplace in the ongoing civil war in Sudan, which has claimed over 2 million lives.

The United States calls on the Government of Sudan to cease all aerial bombardment and to refrain from any attacks on civilian targets. We also call for full and immediate access for humanitarian organizations seeking to provide relief to war-ravaged civilians in Sudan.

### **Remarks Prior to a Meeting With Technology Industry Leaders and Computer Security Experts and an Exchange With Reporters**

*February 15, 2000*

#### **Internet Security**

**The President.** The room is smaller than it looks on television. [*Laughter*] Usually I don't get so many of them coming in, except you guys are—[*laughter*].

Well, first of all, I want to welcome the leaders of the high-tech industry and experts on computer security to this meeting at the White House to talk about how to maximize the promise and minimize the risks to the Internet.

The disruptions at several websites last week highlight how important the Internet has become to our whole way of life in America and how vulnerabilities at one place on the net can create risks for all. Our administration has been working for years now to

reduce vulnerabilities in Government computers and to encourage the private sector to do more.

We know that we have to keep cyberspace open and free. We have to make, at the same time, computer networks more secure and resilient, and we have to do more to protect privacy and civil liberties. And we're here to work together.

Last month I released a draft plan to help do our part to meet these challenges. And in the budget, I asked Congress for \$2 billion for cybersecurity to safeguard Government networks, to detect attacks, to hire and train more security experts, to increase cooperation with the private sector. I want to jump-start this effort by providing \$9 million right away to begin some of these key initiatives. And so we'll do what we can.

I understand that many leading industry members, including the companies represented here today, have agreed to create a mechanism to share cybersecurity information, and I applaud that. I am asking Secretary Daley and my Science Adviser, Dr. Neal Lane, and Richard Clarke from the White House, to work with these companies to accelerate our efforts with the private sector.

Now, having said that and before we open the floor for questions, I'd like to ask Peter Solvik, who is to my right, the senior vice president and chief information officer of Cisco Systems, to say a few words on behalf of the private sector people who are here today.

Peter.

[*At this point, Mr. Solvik made brief remarks.*]

**The President.** Thank you.

**Q.** Mr. President, is there such a thing as a plan to actually secure the Internet?

**The President.** Secretary Daley says there is. [*Laughter*] Let me say, what we're going to try to do today is to talk about what the Government's responsibility is for our own systems and networks, what the private sector's responsibility is, and as I said before, how to talk about having adequate security, how to protect privacy and civil liberties, but also how to keep the Internet open.