

Remarks to the American Legion Girls Nation July 21, 1994

Thank you very much. I want to welcome the delegates from Girls Nation and all the staff here. I would like to begin by congratulating Molly Spearman on being named the National Girls Nation director this year. She is a State representative from South Carolina, I understand, so that's a very good thing to do. [Laughter] I would also like to congratulate the president and vice president of Girls Nation, Laura Fernandez and Amanda Plumb.

Thirty-one years ago I came to the White House for the first time as a delegate to Boys Nation. It was part of a memorable week I will never forget. We met President Kennedy here. We got to see a number of members of the Cabinet. There was an eager anticipation in 1963 of the Presidential election that most people assumed would occur in the next year. And I think it's fair to say that most of us who went home from that experience were inspired in one way or another to pursue a career in public service, more than they ever had been before. And I have seen that happen year in and year out to young boys and young girls who come through the American Legion Boys State and Girls State programs to Girls Nation and to Boys Nation.

The Secretary of State of Wyoming, Kathy Karpan, now a candidate for Governor out there, is an alumni of this program. There will be more and more opportunities in national politics for young women in the years ahead. We now have seven women in the President's Cabinet, more than twice as many women as have ever served in the Cabinet of a President at one time, and have appointed a record number of women Federal judges and other women to important positions. By the time you're old enough to be standing here there will probably be a woman standing up here as President saying, "Well, I've done a pretty good job appointing men to my Cabinet. [Laughter] I'm up to five and looking for some more qualified people to serve."

But as you go through life, whatever you do, I hope you'll always be involved in public service. And always remember that as an American citizen in the world's oldest and most successful continuous democracy, there's always an obliga-

tion to be involved in fighting for the future. And the only way to preserve the greatest traditions and values of this country is to make sure that we get to that future.

I have done my best here to make this bewildering time of change seem more friendly to the American people and, at the same time, to help us together to rebuild many of our traditional institutions that are under fire today, our families, our communities, the very institution of work which is at the heart of the American dream.

Our economic plan has succeeded in reducing the deficit by more than at any time in history. Within 5 years we'll have a Federal Government that will be below 2 million for the first time since John Kennedy was President and I came here, the smallest Federal establishment in over 30 years. And when the Congress passes this year's budget, the two together will give us 3 years of deficit reduction in a row for the first time since Harry Truman was the President of the United States almost 50 years ago.

The Congress is about to pass a major crime bill that will put another 100,000 police officers on our streets, ban assault weapons, protect hunting weapons, make it illegal for minors to own handguns or to possess them except in the presence of a qualified supervising adult, provide billions of dollars for programs for young people to stay out of trouble as well as tougher punishment once they get in trouble.

We are looking at a welfare reform program that will literally change the institution of welfare as we know it and support parenting, strengthen the family, and strengthen work. And of course, our most highly publicized struggle today is to try to figure out how to join the ranks of all other advanced nations and finally provide health security to all of our families. Only the United States of all the advanced economies of the world has failed to do that. Now one in six Americans has no health insurance, and the majority of the American people are at risk of losing it at one time or another in their lives.

But the main point I want to make to you who are delegates here is that, as important as all these things are, public service here in

Washington is only one way to serve your country. And the things that people do back home every day in the aggregate are still more important. A lot of what we're doing here is designed to empower people in all of your communities and States to do more for themselves. We're about to name communities that are part of a 700-community contest in America to get empowerment zones for their poor areas, so that private enterprise can go in and offer people a chance to get jobs and have a better future. This crime bill, the most important thing is it will add 20 percent to the size of local police forces in America, so they can prevent crime as well as catch criminals. And I could go on and on and on. The things that happen at the grassroots level are the most important.

So I would like to close by just saying I hope you will remember, as I know all of you have, that what you are doing now is a form of public service. What the staff does in supporting this program is a form of public service. And I think over the long run perhaps the most important initiative that our administration has succeeded in putting through is the national service program, which gives thousands of young people a chance to earn money against their further education by simply serving their communities at the grassroots level.

This summer we'll have 7,000 young Americans in our Summer of Safety working on crime-related issues. This fall we'll have 20,000 young Americans working in communities all over America solving problems and earning credit against their college education. Year after next, if the Congress will keep supporting me, we'll have 100,000 young Americans working to make America a better place at the grassroots level. And all those young Americans together can do more to bring our country together and move our country forward than many people who serve in elected public office.

Let me just say one last point. One of the lessons of this time is that there is no longer an easy dividing line between what we do here at home and what happens around the world, between domestic and foreign policy. In the last year we've had more expansion of trade opportunities than at any previous time period like this in a generation because we know we can't grow our economy at home unless we can grow abroad.

We also are affected by the human rights and political and humanitarian events around the

world. And I know all of you have been very moved by the terrible travesty of over one million refugees teeming out of Rwanda, being packed into a very small area. I want to say just a word about that because we have some Americans who are there with other citizens of the world trying to serve and trying to make a difference.

Just before I came over here today, I had a briefing from the Administrator of our Agency for International Development, our AID program, Brian Atwood. We have already provided over \$120 million to help the refugees, and we are conducting airlifts there as well, flying in needed supplies. But we are very concerned about the new health care problems that are presented by all the refugees that are there. There are a growing number that are dying of cholera and many, many more who are at risk of that. So we are going to participate, indeed, in trying to lead the United Nations in responding to the cholera problem and in dealing with the other aspects of this human catastrophe. And I have asked the National Security Adviser and Mr. Atwood and the Pentagon to implement quickly a practical plan of action that can make a difference on the ground in these camps in Zaire. And I will be talking more about it in greater detail tomorrow, but I did want to say something about it because that's an important part of what it means to be an American as we move toward the 21st century as well.

Let me just say one thing in closing. There is a lot of speculation today about what the character and attitude of young Americans are. There was a cover of one of our major news magazines not very long ago showing a lot of young people and speculating about this so-called Generation X, the people who are just a little older than you, in their twenties. Well, I've got some of those Generation X folks who work here, who have worked here, and I spend a lot of time with young people. And I do not find the cynicism, the pessimism that I keep reading about.

What I find are young people who believe in this country, who believe in themselves, and who believe in the future. And I guess what I would say is, after more than 30 years, since the time I was here and the time you're here, if you ask me to summarize what I have learned, it might be an embarrassing short list. But I can say this: You cannot build a future unless you believe in it and unless you believe in your-

selves. And if you do believe in yourselves and you believe in this country and you believe in your future, you can do anything you wish to do. And I wish you well in doing it.

Thank you very much, and I'd like to ask Molly to come up now. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:11 p.m. in the East Room at the White House.

Statement on the National Security Strategy Report July 21, 1994

Today I signed and forwarded to Congress the National Security Strategy Report for 1994, as required by Section 603 of the Goldwater-Nichols Defense Department Reorganization Act of 1986. The report outlines the national security strategy of engagement and enlargement my administration has developed to meet the challenges and opportunities of the new era.

Protecting our Nation's security—our people, our territory, and our way of life—is my administration's foremost mission and constitutional duty. The central security challenge of the past half century, the threat of communist expansion, is gone. The dangers we face today are more diverse. At the same time, we have unparalleled opportunities to make our Nation safer and more prosperous. Never has American leadership been more essential.

The new national security strategy elaborated in this report charts a course for American leadership that has already begun to produce tangible results with respect to our security requirements, as shown on the attached fact sheet. Our foreign policy rests on 3 pillars:

—*Security*. Our security depends upon our willingness to play a leadership role in world affairs, but we cannot sustain our leadership role without maintaining a defense capability strong enough to underwrite our commitments credibly.

—*Economics*. For America to be strong abroad it must be strong economically at home; at the same time, domestic economic renewal depends on the growth and integration of the global economy.

—*Democracy*. The best way to advance America's interests worldwide is to enlarge the community of democracies and free markets throughout the world.

These goals are mutually supportive. Democratic states are less likely to threaten our interests and more likely to cooperate with us to meet security threats and promote sustainable development. Secure nations are more likely to maintain democratic structures and to support free trade. And even with the cold war over, our Nation's security depends upon the maintenance of military forces that are sufficient to deter diverse threats and, when necessary, fight and win against our adversaries. While many factors ultimately contribute to our Nation's safety and well-being, no single component is more important than the men and women who bear America's uniform and stand sentry over our security.

Our national security requires the patient application of American will and resources. We can only sustain that necessary investment with the broad, bipartisan support of the American people and their representatives in Congress. The cold war may be over, but the need for American leadership abroad remains as strong as ever. I am committed to building a new public consensus to sustain our active engagement abroad. This document is part of that commitment.

NOTE: The report and a fact sheet on the national security strategy were attached to the statement.