

July 27 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1994

should have all the resources necessary for that work.

In the short-term, the fate of minority voting rights is in the courts. In the long-term, if necessary, I will work with Attorney General Reno and Members of Congress to enact legislation

to clarify and reinforce the protections of the Voting Rights Act. Inclusion of all Americans in the political process is not a luxury; it is central to our future as the world's most vibrant democracy.

Statement on the National Rural Conference

July 27, 1994

Rural America, which makes up a quarter of our population, is vital to the overall development of our Nation's economy and future. This administration is committed to working closely with rural communities in tackling the important issues of jobs, trade, and the preservation of

the family farm as our Nation enters the next century.

NOTE: This statement was included in a White House statement announcing the National Rural Conference scheduled for December 1.

Remarks on Anticrime Legislation at the Department of Justice

July 28, 1994

Thank you very much, Chief Moose, for the introduction and for your lifetime of service to your community and for the wisdom of your words and your leadership. Thank you, Attorney General Reno, for the magnificent work that you and the others here at the Justice Department have done on the crime bill. Thank you, Lee Brown, for the work you did to make sure that we had enough funds in the crime bill for drug prevention and drug education programs and drug treatment programs. Thank you, Secretary Bentsen, for the law enforcement work you do and the comments you made today. And I want to thank all of the Members of Congress who are here. I thank Senator Metzenbaum for letting Joe Biden get even with me by calling you in the middle of the night. [Laughter] I thank you, Congressman Hughes. I thank you, Congressman Schumer, for on occasion being like a mad dog in dealing with these issues. I think you will be proud into a deep, old age for the work you have done on this crime bill, and I thank you, sir.

And I cannot say enough about Chairman Brooks and Senator Biden. I like them both very much, and it's not hard to figure out why when you hear them up here talking. I ran

completely out of my stash of donated cigars trying to get Jack Brooks to keep pushing ahead with every aspect of the crime bill. [Laughter] People always want to know, you know, what did the President give away to get this, that, or the other thing. All I gave away were mountains of crocodile tears and donated cigars because Jack Brooks wanted this country to have a crime bill. Joe Biden, I think you could see by the visible way that he is moved by this, how important it is to him. And I am profoundly grateful to him for that, and for what he said today. It is true that I called him at midnight, and that Joe asked him the next day if he remembered what the phone call was about. I wish I had asked him for a lot of other things, because I'm not sure he did. [Laughter] I could still make assertions about what we've talked about on that late night.

I thank all of you here who have worked on this bill, all the representatives of law enforcement and others who care about having a safer America.

Because the conference was finished just before we started this event, this is truly an historic day. On the verge we are of a major victory for our country. It's been a remarkable week

for America. I think all of us have joined in the elation we felt when Israel and Jordan's leaders came to this country and declared an end to their state of war and their intention to work together as friends, and took great pride in the role the United States played in bringing about that agreement. And then, less noticed but also important, the President of Russia made an announcement that by the end of August, for the first time since the end of World War II, all Russian troops would be gone from Germany and Central and Eastern Europe, and I'm proud of the role the United States has played in that endeavor. But I can't help thinking today it would be even more important if we could bring peace to the streets and the children of the United States.

The Vice President patted me on the back earlier this week when we were just sort of swelled up with happiness over the progress of things with Prime Minister Rabin and King Hussein and said, "You know, this is one of the reasons that you ran for President."

But I can tell you, this is one of the reasons that I ran for President. Almost 20 years ago now I started my career in public life as attorney general of my State, being involved in the prosecution and the appeals of criminal cases, dealing with State police and defending them when we got sued over first one thing then another.

When I became Governor, I found myself in charge of a large and growing prison system, an overtaxed but dedicated State police, with the responsibilities to do everything from trying to prevent crime to carrying out the death penalty. I have lived on a daily basis for most of my life in public service with law enforcement officials. I have been to the funerals and to the homes of people who have been killed in the line of duty, repeatedly.

I have done everything I could over all these years to learn what it is we could do together to make it easier for people in law enforcement to do their job, and most importantly, to make it better for all of us to live in this country. Now, after nearly 6 years, congressional leaders and people in both parties have agreed on what will be the toughest, largest, and smartest Federal attack on crime in the history of the United States of America.

You know, it puts more police on the street and takes more guns off the street and takes more children off the street. It puts violent criminals behind bars and gives others the

chance to avoid a life behind bars. Senator Biden and Chairman Brooks assure me this bill will be on my desk within days, and I assure you I will sign it into law without delay.

I want to ask you just for a moment, because most of what needs to be said about this bill has been said. But just for a moment, think about the meaning of this act today in terms of what all of you want for America, even those of you in uniform, what you want as citizens, as fathers and mothers and husbands and wives and children, and what you want for your children.

I got into this job I'm in because I was very worried that our country was going in the wrong direction, that our deficit was going up and our economy was going down, that we were increasing burdens on middle class Americans and reducing investment in them and their children. And I was very worried that as we move toward the 21st century, after our Nation won the cold war, that we would not be able to keep the American dream alive. And it was obvious to me that to do that, we would have to rebuild our economy and rebuild our sense of community and our families and empower individuals to do a better job of taking responsibility for themselves.

We tried to do that with a new economic policy to reduce the deficit and to give us the smallest Federal Government in 30 years and 3 years of deficit reduction in a row for the first time since Harry Truman was President and to increase investment in people and in trade, and it's working. We've got 3.5 million new jobs and a big drop in the unemployment rate. But if you think about it, even though the economy is going in the right direction, can we really hope—can we really hope to rebuild the economy, rebuild our sense of community, and empower individuals if we are frightened, if we are scared, if we are burdened by crime, if the highest rate of crime is now among people at their tenderest and most formative years, between the ages of 12 and 17 when we're trying to say, "Do this; do the right thing. You will be rewarded. You can have a good life. You can be a responsible parent. You can be a successful citizen"?

Look at the cost of crime to the economy. Look at the cost of crime to our sense of community and to the idea that we are an American family. Look at the cost of crime to our efforts to empower every individual, including all these

young people that are growing up in terribly difficult circumstances.

Remember just a few things that I have tried to tell the American people—the 9-year-old boy in New Orleans who said, “I’m asking you nicely to do something about crime because I’m afraid I might be shot;” and 9 days after he sent me the letter, he was shot dead because he just happened to be in the wrong place; the immigrant waiter in New York City who said he loved being in America, but he didn’t like the fact that his son wasn’t free, because he couldn’t go to school without his daddy walking him to school and couldn’t walk across the street and play in the park without somebody being there. And he asked me to make his son free.

All the other goals we seek for ourselves, in our families, for our children, in our workplaces, and for our great Nation, depend at bottom on our being able to live together with certain clear assumptions that, even though we are very different, we are different by race, we are different by religion, we are different by politics, there are a few basic things that will always hold us together, beginning with the fundamental respect for law, order, and our fellow human beings. And it is vanishing in too many places today.

Now, you have already heard this, but I have to say it again: For nearly 6 years this bill has been debated over and over again. Oh, the details have changed from time to time and when I was elected, I had some very specific ideas that I hoped would be in here, and you heard Senator Biden talk about his conviction about violence against women. And then in the 11th hour a few more good things were added. But for 6 years, the Congress has been trying to fashion a response to crime.

Most of the time the deliberation of Congress is a good thing, I suppose, but there are times in the history of a country when you just have to stop deliberating and act. And at a time like this when the world is changing so very fast, I think we really have to ask ourselves whether we can afford to take 6 years on a matter of this moment. Well, now it is done.

The most important thing about this crime bill, besides its specifics, which are very important, is what the chief said. He used the word “holistic.” If you’re a chief of police you can use that; if you’re a politician they tell you it looks kind of funny to say a word like that because people aren’t sure what it means.

[*Laughter*] And if you’re President, they tell you not to say it because you should never use a word that anybody’s confused about. But what it means is to go beyond old ways of thinking and false choices. Are we going to be tough, or are we going to be compassionate? Are we going to go after criminals, or are we going to go after guns? These debates have divided us for too long while children died.

And the real achievement of the Congress at this moment is that they are going beyond those old ways of thinking. They are reaching for a new consensus that reflects the world we are living in and that recognizes the absolutely horrendous conditions in which a lot of our younger people are living and the need to be very, very firm but very, very smart about the road ahead, its difficulties, and its challenges.

We had to argue with a lot of people to get this bill. We had to fight with the NRA over the assault weapons ban, but we guaranteed over 600 hunting and sporting weapons free from Government interference. I would argue that both things were the right thing to do. We had almost unanimous consent, finally, for the idea that children should not be in the possession of handguns unless they are under the supervision of an appropriate adult.

We have a measure in here that we haven’t talked much about to make our schools safer. If a child is not safe in school, how can the Republic go forward when we need education as the basis for our future? We had to fight with some of the folks in our party who thought that our approach on punishment was a little too tough. Then we had to fight with some folks in the other party who thought our approach on rehabilitation and prevention was a little too soft or too generous.

I want to say this: The prevention money in this bill is there for one reason—and I want this on the public record now—not because the President wanted it, although I did; not because the Attorney General wanted it, although she did; not because the drug director or the chairman of the Senate committee or the chairman of the House committee wanted it, although they did. The prevention money is in this bill because the law enforcement officials of the United States said, “We cannot jail our way out of this crisis. We’ve got to give our kids something to say yes to and a future.” You told us to put it in there, and that is why it is in there.

So we have had a lot of arguments—but that is the essence of democracy—and we have gone beyond these categories that kept this bill bottled up, fights over ideas, fights over interest. We put the people of this country first again, and we focused on what they needed. Now I say to you: Let's not forget that the bill is not law. It has been voted out of a conference committee. The House must vote a rule to permit it to come to the vote. Then the House and the Senate must pass it.

It is urgent that we send the message out of this meeting that not only the law enforcement community but the American people want a 20 percent increase in the police forces in this country, 100,000 police, that you want the tougher punishment, that you want the capacity

for imprisonment, that you want the prevention funds, that you want the assault weapons ban, that you want the ban on teenagers owning guns, that you want the protection for women against violence, that you want the schools to be safer, that you believe it makes sense because it deals with the problem in a human, intelligent, and firm way. And it gives us a chance to come together again as a people. Let's go pass the bill.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 11:30 a.m. in the Great Hall. In his remarks, he referred to Charles Moose, chief of police, Seattle, WA.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting the Report on International Exchange Programs

July 28, 1994

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. Chairman:)

As required by section 229(a) of the Foreign Relations Authorization Act, Fiscal Years 1994 and 1995 (Public Law 103-236), I am submitting the enclosed report on Federally-funded international exchange programs together with an analysis of the objectives of these programs and the extent to which the objectives of some of these programs are similar. Copies of the Fiscal Year 1993 report, *International Exchange and Training Activities of the U.S. Government*, prepared by the United States Information Agency (USIA) are enclosed.

United States Government educational, cultural, scientific, and professional exchange programs enhance communication and understanding between the United States and other societies. They are among the most effective tools to achieve long and intermediate range objectives of U.S. foreign policy. In Fiscal Year 1993, the Federal Government supported more than 105,000 international exchange participants at a cost of \$1.4 billion.

Among the numerous categories of exchange activities, we have identified two in which similar programs are administered by different agencies: overseas foreign language and area studies undertaken by American citizens and the ex-

changes related to the encouragement of democratic processes. The programs in foreign language and area studies abroad by Americans, as currently legislated, are managed by the Department of Defense, the Department of Education, the Department of State, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission, and USIA. The programs are identified in the attachment to this letter. In the second category in which we have identified similar programs, democracy exchanges, subtleties of defining and measuring objectives require additional time for analysis. This will be done by October 31.

In an environment of funding constraints, it is important that international exchange programs be administered in a manner that ensures clarity of objectives and cost effectiveness. To help plan and better coordinate exchange activities, I have instructed the Director of USIA to convene periodic meetings of the major exchange-sponsoring departments and agencies. I have also asked relevant agencies to submit appropriate data to the USIA Director prior to these meetings.

My Administration will continue to work closely with the Congress to realize our shared goals of improving efficiency and reducing costs.