

soon. That is the only solution ultimately to this humanitarian tragedy.

Yesterday I met with representatives of the world's private relief organizations, whose employees and volunteers have converged on the refugee camps. The American people should know about the remarkable skill and compassion they bring to their work. But they, too, need more assistance to continue. And I appeal to all Americans to reach out in the form of private contributions to these relief efforts so that more people can be kept alive.

Working together with the international community, both public and private, I believe we are making progress in the battle against suffering and death on the borders of Rwanda. The United States will not cease its efforts until the dying stops and the refugees have returned. This is our mission; we must continue it until it's accomplished.

Before I close, I'd also like to say a word about the terrible wildfires that are burning in the West. As of this morning, we had reports of 320 fires burning in seven States. The Inter-agency Fire Command Center in Boise reports that the Federal Government has mobilized more than 330 fire crews and more than 200 fire engines, helicopters, and air tankers. Two battalions of marines have begun training today and will be deployed to fight the fires as soon as possible. Our hearts go out to all those who have been displaced or who have lost property in these fires.

The Federal Government will continue to monitor the situation closely, to marshal the necessary resources, and to coordinate the fire-fighting efforts. This is a deeply troubling development, but we will do all we can to help them deal with it.

Now I'd like to turn the briefing over to the National Security Adviser, Mr. Lake, and to General Shalikashvili to discuss the operations in Rwanda in greater detail, and to answer whatever questions you have.

Q. How do you feel about the French going out of Rwanda, Mr. President?

Q. What about mission creep?

Q. How many troops would have to go if there are troops who have to go to Kigali, Mr. President?

The President. You've asked me three questions. I want to let General Shalikashvili respond to Andrea's [Andrea Mitchell, NBC News] question.

I don't think that—mission creep is not a problem here. And General Shalikashvili will explain why that is. We've had a long talk—we just completed about an hour and 45 minutes national security principals meeting this morning. And I do not believe that that is a problem.

With regard to—the French will have to make whatever decision they make. But I do believe you will have large numbers of people contributing to this humanitarian effort. I was most deeply moved when we met yesterday at some length and the general and Mr. Lake and others briefed the representatives of the nongovernmental organizations. I am deeply moved by the number of volunteer organizations, many of them American citizens, who are there working. I think everyone knows this is a humanitarian effort, and it will be kept at that.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:15 a.m. in the Briefing Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Sadako Ogata, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees.

Teleconference Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With the Unity '94 Convention in Atlanta, Georgia July 29, 1994

The President. Thank you, Connie. I want to add my congratulations to Nancy Maynard and to say hello to my friend Wilma Mankiller and to all of you in Atlanta at the Unity '94 Convention.

I want to say a special word of congratulations, too, to the four minority journalist associations meeting together for the first time at this groundbreaking occasion. I must say that all of us have heard a lot about your meeting and have been following it with great interest.

We're living in an extraordinary time when people in America and all across the world are searching for common ground and new solutions in a time of change. This has been a great week for America. The King of Jordan and the Prime Minister of Israel shared the stage on the White House lawn, opened a new era of dialog and cooperation between their people. At the same time, halfway around the world, 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, a significant goal of our policy with Russia over the last year and a half.

Over and over, we have learned from experiences like these that people can transcend great historical, political, and cultural obstacles in the name of progress of humanity. And we've also learned that here at home, the American people are our greatest asset as we try to meet the challenges of the coming century. All of us can take pride that we've helped Arabs and Israelis and other former enemies to bridge their own differences. But their examples must also inspire us to strengthen our own sense of community and to celebrate the rich diversity of the American culture.

The job of your associations is to see that more Americans of diverse backgrounds, races and ethnic heritage have an equal chance in journalism. It's also to make sure that the Nation sees the faces and hears the voices of nonwhite Americans whose ideas and achievements too often are ignored.

And my job here in Washington is to ensure that every citizen has an equal chance at the American dream. I've said it many times, and I firmly believe that we don't have a single person to waste, that every person, no matter what his or her background, has an idea, a vision, an opinion to share that can enrich our Nation. That's why I've been fighting to create new opportunities for people who work hard, take responsibility, try to make something of their lives. I believe everybody has something to give, and we have to make it possible for everyone to give his or her best.

One of my proudest accomplishments as President is the people I have appointed to serve in this administration. If you look at the top positions in the White House and the Cabinet today, you will see the most able, talented

group ever assembled. These appointees also happen to make up the most diverse administration in the history of our Republic.

If you look at our nominations to the Federal bench, you will see that a higher percentage of them have been rated "well qualified" by the American Bar Association than in any previous administration since these rankings have been made. A majority of those appointees are people of color and women, not a minority but a majority for the first time ever.

None of these people were chosen because they were African-American or Hispanic or Asian-American or American Indian or because they were women. They were selected because they were the best qualified for the job. And they are proof that the American dream is still alive and within reach of those who choose to pursue it.

Still, we can't ignore the burdens and barriers that prevent too many of our people from moving forward in their lives still today. It is our job to renew the American dream. I sought the Presidency because I was worried that our country was going in the wrong direction. The deficit was going up; the economy was on the decline. Washington was placing heavier and heavier burdens on the backs of middle class Americans, and we were coming apart when we ought to be coming together.

I believed then and I believe now that our job in this time is to restore the economy, rebuild our sense of community, empower individuals to take responsibility for their own lives, and put Government on the side of ordinary Americans. In just 18 months we've begun to renew that American dream. Our economic strategy will produce the smallest Federal bureaucracy in 30 years and 3 years in a row of deficit reduction for the first time since Harry Truman was President, while providing tax cuts for 15 million working American families and millions of small businesses.

What's been the result of this economic strategy? Well, the economy has created 3.8 million new jobs; inflation is the lowest in two decades. Just today we've seen more evidence that this strategy is working. Today's report shows that the gross domestic product of the United States grew at a very impressive rate of 3.7 percent in the last quarter while inflation remained low.

And more important, we're reaching out with greater energy and compassion to responsible working families who too often have to struggle

to make ends meet. Already in just a year and a half, through the increase of the earned-income tax credit, 15 million working parents have been able to get lower income taxes to encourage them to stay in the work force and to be good parents without having to go on welfare. We've made it easier for millions and millions of young people to get college loans by making those loans available with lower interest rates and more flexible repayment schedules. We've established more job training and school-to-work apprenticeships to help young people who aren't going to college find and keep good jobs. We've sought tax incentives and grant money to stimulate economies in needy areas, through things like our empowerment zones and enterprise communities and new community development banks, the reform of the Community Reinvestment Act and making low income housing credits permanent.

Some of these achievements, to be sure, have come easier than others. But I knew when I asked for this job that progress would not always be easy and that we'd have to fight for the kind of change that we need. Very often it takes years to get things done—the Brady bill, 7 years; the family leave law, 7 years; years for motor voter. But these things all work because these things together and the efforts we are making have brought us to a pivotal, exciting moment in our history.

If you just think about what's happened this week alone it's been remarkable for our Nation: on the verge of an historic victory in the toughest, largest, smartest Federal attack on crime in the history of the United States; not only making peace in the Middle East but trying to bring more peace to the families and children of America. Just think for a minute about what this crime bill means for all of us as citizens, for us as mothers and fathers, husbands and wives and children. Look at the cost of crime to our economy. Look at the cost of crime to our sense of community and to the idea that we are an American family, to our sense of personal freedom; the cost of crime to our efforts to empower every individual, including too many young people who are growing up in terribly difficult circumstances.

Crime is holding too many of us back from reaching the American dream, splintering families, making people afraid of their neighbors, interfering with our children's education, robbing us of our literal sense of personal freedom.

No matter what other goals we seek for ourselves and our families and our children and for our country, we simply have to be able to live together with a shared respect for law and order and civility.

The most important thing about this crime bill is that it creates a whole new way of thinking about how to deal with crime, one that doesn't pit one group of Americans against another. It doesn't ask us to make a false choice between tough punishment and strong prevention. It calls for a sensible balance between the two. It doesn't ask us to make a false choice between going after criminals and going after guns. It recognizes that those sorts of debates divided us for too long while more and more children were dying on our streets.

The crime bill strengthens the police, our system of punishment, and our means of prevention. It will put 100,000 more police on our streets, a 20-percent increase in the number of police officers patrolling our neighborhoods. More police trained and properly deployed means lower crime and prevention. The bill includes a ban on assault-style weapons, something few people ever dreamed would be accomplished. It includes a ban on ownership of handguns by minors. It will send a strong message to criminals that behavior that is criminal and repeated will not be tolerated and that punishment will be tough and swift. And it will invest \$9 billion in crime prevention over the next 6 years, something that law enforcement officers in every State and city asked us to do so that we could give young people more safe places to go, more positive role models, more opportunities to fulfill themselves in healthy constructive ways. And we have a program to make our schools safe so that our children can learn again in the absence of fear.

For 6 years, this crime bill was debated over and over again. Why is it about to succeed? Because after intense argument and disagreement, a majority of people were able to find common ground. They were able to put people over politics. Now, I want Congress to put this bill on my desk within 2 weeks so that I can sign it before our children go back to school.

Now, if you think 6 years was long enough to wait for a crime bill, then surely we can all agree that 60 years is far too long to wait before all American are guaranteed health security that can never be taken away. And health

security, after all, is another crucial piece of the American dream.

Many people across our country know what it's like to dig and scrape all their lives to have the opportunities that you've been given and that you've earned. If you're like me, you actually know somebody without health insurance or somebody at risk of losing their health insurance. You know somebody whose coverage is so meager, they avoid the doctor because it costs too much. You know people who are eager to work but are trapped in the welfare system because it's the only way they can be assured of health care coverage for their children. We know these people because there are millions and millions of them out there, people who struggle all their lives and play by the rules so that they can move forward, make progress, build security for their families only to be knocked off the ladder because of the pink slip, the catastrophic illness, or a simple change in jobs.

Indeed, we're moving in the wrong direction in our health care system. We're moving in the wrong direction when 5 million hardworking people, people with jobs, have lost their insurance in the last 5 years. Indeed, there's a smaller percentage of Americans insured today than there were 10 years ago.

Ever since I began pushing for reform, I've made it clear that I was open to suggestions about how to achieve it. I've listened to concerns about the approach we originally proposed. And in response to what all kinds of Americans told us, I've agreed that we should modify that approach to make it simpler, less bureaucratic, more flexible, to do more for small business. But I remain committed, and I hope all of you will be committed to giving every American health security, health that is guaranteed in law.

We must have a system, I believe, where everyone shares responsibility, a private system that works. That is certainly what the vast majority of Americans want, because today the hardworking middle class Americans have that kind of coverage.

Today we've moved a step closer to health care security. The House Speaker, Tom Foley, and the majority leader, Dick Gephardt, said they would put forward a bill that achieves universal coverage and controls costs. They've met their goal and the goal of the American people in doing that. The House bill tells the American

people that they have been heard. It is simpler, more flexible, more sensitive to small business. Gone is the bureaucracy they didn't like. Protections for small businesses have been strengthened. The bill is being phased in over a longer period of time. All Americans can keep their health plan and their doctor, and everybody will have coverage.

We know from experiences across the country that this will work. We also know what doesn't work. We have seen in State after State that if you have insurance reforms that sound very good without expanding to universal coverage, what is usually going to happen is that the cost of insurance goes up and then people's options for health care or even the number of people with health insurance, go down. But we also know from looking at the example of Hawaii that a private system of universal coverage in which employers and employees share responsibility for paying for private insurance premiums will not only control costs but will also lead to greater coverage and a healthier population.

We know it can be done. After all, in Hawaii, nearly everything is more expensive than any place else in the United States, but health care premiums for small business are 30 percent cheaper. Now, after 60 years of waiting, after 14 years in which costs have been going up dramatically, after a decade in which more and more Americans are losing coverage instead of getting coverage—and most of those who lose their insurance are working people—it's time to say to every American, if you change jobs, if you get sick, if you're laid off, if your child has a serious illness, you will always be able to afford health care as a citizen of the richest nation on Earth.

Tomorrow I'm going to Independence, Missouri, to Harry Truman's hometown, to talk about health care. Harry Truman was a man of great decency, common sense, and courage who believed that America would be much stronger if every American had health security. He was right. And he fought hard for it, though he didn't succeed. And because he was right, President after President, Presidents of both parties have fought for that goal. Well, now it's up to us to fulfill their vision and once again to renew the American dream. It's time to build on our economic progress, build on the success of the crime bill, build on the progress we're making toward world peace, and take this next

critical step by passing real, substantive health care reform. That is the challenge our generation faces today. And it is our great opportunity.

Thank you very much.

[At this point, the moderator thanked the President and invited participants to ask questions. A participant then asked about proposed Native American gaming legislation.]

The President. Well, I'm not familiar with all the details of the gaming law. Let me say this. I have worked hard with Secretary Babbitt to work with the Native American tribes throughout the country—

[At this point there was a problem with the satellite transmission.]

Have you lost my sound?

Q. Yes, we did. Can you continue? We can hear you now, Mr. President.

The President. Okay, let's try again.

I said I'm not familiar with the details of the legislation. I can tell you that for the last 18 months, Secretary Babbitt, on my behalf, has worked hard to try to work through the Indian gaming issue, to be supportive of the tribes, to protect and promote their legitimate rights, and also to urge that the income from gaming be used to diversify the economic activities of the tribes and to strengthen economic possibilities for Native Americans over the long run.

So I'm going to do my best to do that. As you know, there are a lot of thorny controversies between the States. A lot of States feel pressure to expand gaming beyond the reach of the Native American groups, and this has been a very difficult issue. But I think that our administration has worked very closely with the tribes. And I think we have shown our good faith in trying to protect these activities. We will continue to do so.

I am not familiar with the specifics of the law, so I can't comment on that. I'm sorry.

Multiethnic Media Coverage

[A participant asked how the lack of diversity in the Washington press corps affected coverage of a multiethnic America.]

The President. I'm not sure that I can answer that question. And I am fairly sure that if I do, my answer will be blown all out of proportion to anything else I say today. But let me say that I believe that all of us in positions of responsibility with influence should strive to

make our decisions through a process that involves all the American people, their insights, their understanding, their experience and it takes advantage of their talents. That's why I've worked so hard to have the most diverse administration in American history. And I believe we have proved beyond question that you can have diversity and excellence. That's another one of those false choices people are always trying to put on the American people.

So if it is true for the United States Government, it ought to be true for the American press as well. I don't think I should say more than that, but I think that ought to be enough to say.

Health Care Reform

[A participant asked how vaccination of all children in the country could be achieved without health care coverage for undocumented aliens.]

The President. Undocumented workers would not receive under our plan a health security card unless they had jobs anyway, so they got it because they were in the workplace. But under our plan we have a significant expansion in funds for public health units which are open to all people today and where a lot of the vaccinations, for example, are done today.

In my State, over 80 percent of our children, including even upper middle class children, are vaccinated through the public health units. So what we attempted to do to deal with this clear and present problem in the United States is to have a substantial increase in funding for public health and to do outreach so that we can vaccinate all the children and give basic health services to the children who are within the United States.

Racism

[A participant asked if the administration would confront the issue of racism.]

The President. Well first, let me say that I don't agree with the characterization there. If you look at the work that the Civil Rights Division of the Justice Department has done, it's been more active than any civil rights division in a generation under the leadership of Deval Patrick. Look at the Denny's settlement. Look at a lot of the other issues in which they have been involved.

If you look at the work that Henry Cisneros did in highlighting and directly confronting the

problems in Vidor, Texas, in public housing, if you look at the work that we have done in trying to involve at the grassroots level community groups of minorities in things like developing the empowerment zone concepts, the community development banks, I think it is plain that this is an administration that is committed to stamping out racism, both in a negative sense by standing up to it and in a positive sense by working to bring people together to overcome it.

If you can think of anything else I can and should do, I would be glad to have your recommendations and your suggestions. But the idea of stamping out racism, in my view, permeates everything I do. When I try to give kids a better life, a safer street, a better future, and I keep telling the American people we don't have anyone to waste, we've got to have everybody in here together—one of the earlier questions referred to how the administration—or what my opinion was about the way things were covered given the makeup of the press—I have been repeatedly criticized by various sources in this town for trying to be more diverse and try to reach out and to achieve greater diversity, although no one has ever said that we couldn't have excellence and diversity at the same time.

So I am trying to build the fight against racism into everything we do, both in a positive and negative sense. But I will say again, if anybody there—not just you, Dorothy, but anybody has any other suggestions about what I can do, I would be happy to hear them, and I will do my best to respond.

Health Care Reform

Q. If Congress passes a bill that fails to include some mechanism for universal coverage, will you sign it or veto it, yes or no?

The President. Well, what I have said is that we have to achieve universal coverage. The fight now is over how best to do it. And what I have to tell you is there is a big argument about whether it can be achieved in any way other than the way I have proposed. I will not sign a bill that I think makes a false promise to the people of the United States. We have got to sign a bill that achieves full coverage for the American people. If you don't do it, you can't contain costs, you can't give the breaks that small business needs over the long run. You can't achieve these things.

So, yes, if Congress passes a bill that is different from the one I originally proposed, would I veto it? It depends on whether it achieves full coverage. If it is a credible attempt to do that, then I'm open to it. But it must be a credible, credible bill to do that.

And that's the only thing I ask all of you to focus on now. Instead of letting the political rhetoric control this debate on health care, let us ask simply what will work.

The other day—let me just give you this in closing because this is very important, and if I don't achieve anything else today in this conversation that I've had with you, which I've enjoyed immensely, if I can achieve agreement with you on this, it would be something profound to me. This is a very complicated issue, health care. I have studied it for years and years. But the more complex it gets, the more you understand that in the end it comes down to some simple choices. In every nation that has covered everybody, quality health care can be provided at lower costs than in the United States, the only nation that doesn't cover everybody.

So what I ask us all to do, as others come forward with their ideas and bend over backwards to avoid what I think we should do, which is to require all employers and employees to take responsibility through private insurance, let us ask: Will it work? We are going in the wrong direction. We are losing coverage and exploding cost. I am not going to sign a bill that I think perpetrates these problems on the American people.

If someone else can figure out how to get universal coverage in a different way than I have achieved it, I would be open to that. I have not seen it yet. That's why the American Medical Association, the National Medical Association, the American Nurses Association, other physicians' groups, and huge numbers of businesses and consumer groups have endorsed our approach.

So that's what we ought to be doing. We shouldn't be trying to get ourselves into word games now about what mechanism is appropriate. The only test is what works. And I know my plan will work if we share responsibility and cover everybody.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:20 p.m. from Room 459 of the Old Executive Office Building.

In his remarks, he referred to Connie Chung, luncheon emcee; Nancy Maynard, cofounder, Maynard Institute; and Wilma Mankiller, chief, Sioux nation.

Remarks to the American Legion Boys Nation July 29, 1994

The President. Thank you very much. Good afternoon. Welcome to the White House. I want to say a special word of welcome to your president, Thomas Whitehead, and your vice president, Robert Mattivi, and to Jack Mercier, George Blume, and Ron Engel. And to all of you, welcome and congratulations.

I have a special treat for you today. This has been a remarkable week for America, a great week for you to be here. We had the signing of the agreement between the King of Jordan and the Prime Minister of Israel ending the state of war between them, the announcement that Russia would withdraw all of its troops from Central and Eastern Europe, for the first time since the end of World War II, by the end of August. We had the announcement today that our economy grew 3.7 percent in the last quarter, that jobless claims are down, that the robust growth is continuing. It's produced now 3.8 million new jobs in the last year and a half.

And yesterday we had the historic agreement by the Senate and the House on what will be the toughest and smartest crime bill in the history of the country, that will put 100,000 more police officers on the street, ban assault weapons, provide a "three strikes and you're out" law, and provide billions of dollars to young people for activities to give our kids something to say yes to as well as to punish people who do the wrong thing.

And then today we had an historic event just about an hour ago, where a new Justice of the United States Supreme Court, Stephen Breyer, was confirmed. And I thought it would be a nice thing if Mr. Justice Breyer, accompanied by Senator Kennedy and Senator Hatch, would come here and make his first public appearance to you. So I'd like to ask Justice Breyer and Senator Kennedy and Senator Hatch—[*applause*].

I wanted to say just a word about this, and then I'd like to ask Justice Breyer to come up

here and speak to you for a moment or two, and then they'll all have to go back to work.

Let me thank Senator Kennedy and Senator Hatch and Chairman Biden and the other members of the Senate Judiciary Committee who recommended Judge Breyer by a unanimous vote to the Senate as a whole.

This gentleman has set a standard of excellence and fidelity to the law and the Constitution of which every American can be proud. When he came before the Senate, there was a very broad spectrum of praise for his appointment among Democrats and Republicans alike, among people who consider themselves liberals and people who consider themselves conservatives.

I have now had the honor to appoint two people to the United States Supreme Court. Justice Ginsburg and Justice Breyer have now shown that we can have excellence on the Supreme Court that unites the American people, rather than divides them.

Let me say that—we were joking a little out here—the Founding Fathers in their wisdom said that there had to be somebody hanging around to resolve these fundamental constitutional disputes, and so they created the Supreme Court. And they didn't want the Supreme Court to be subject to undue pressure, so they gave the Justices of the Supreme Court a lifetime term, so they could say no to everybody, including the President. And we were laughing on the way out that Senator Kennedy and Senator Hatch are running for reelection, and of course, the President gets a 4-year term. Now Justice Breyer has a lifetime term. You are looking at the only man in America that you've met lately with total job security. [*Laughter*]

There is a reason for it. Someone needs to be free to decide what the Constitution requires