

May 18 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1994

education in the United States over the past twenty-eight years. The White House,

WILLIAM J. CLINTON May 18, 1994.

## Statement by the Press Secretary on Draft Registration and the Selective Service System

May 18, 1994

The President has announced that he has approved a National Security Council recommendation to maintain peacetime draft registration and the Selective Service System (SSS).

In letters to the House and Senate, the President stated that “. . . it is essential to our national security to continue draft registration and the Selective Service System. While tangible military requirements alone do not currently make a mass call-up of American young men likely, there are three reasons I believe we should maintain both the SSS and the draft registration requirement.”

First, the President stated that the SSS and registration provide “. . . a hedge against unforeseen threats and a relatively low cost ‘insurance policy’ against our underestimating the maximum level of threat we expect our Armed Forces to face.”

Next, “. . . terminating the SSS and draft registration now could send the wrong signal

to our potential enemies who are watching for signs of U.S. resolve.”

And finally, “. . . as fewer and fewer members of our society have direct military experience, it is increasingly important to maintain the link between the All Volunteer Force and our society at large. The Armed Forces must also know that the general population stands behind them, committed to serve, should the preservation of our national security so require.”

The NSC review leading to the President’s decision has been conducted since January and consisted of representatives from the Office of the Secretary of Defense, the DOD Inspector General, the Joint Staff, the Corporation for National and Community Service, the Office of Management and Budget, and the Selective Service System.

The President urged Congress to support the administration fiscal year 1995 request for \$23 million for the Selective Service System.

## Exchange With Reporters Prior to a Meeting With Military Leaders

May 19, 1994

*Representative Dan Rostenkowski*

*Q.* On Rostenkowski, sir, should the public be concerned at all that you and he have the same lawyer?

*The President.* No.

*China*

*Q.* Mr. President, did you send Michael Armacost to China to negotiate some kind of deal?

*The President.* Well, we’ve had a number of Americans in China and speaking with the Chinese, and those conversations are ongoing. And

I think until they are resolved, one way or the other, I shouldn’t say more about them.

*Q.* It’s being reported that you have made a decision to go ahead and renew MFN.

*The President.* We are still in discussions with the Chinese. I don’t know that I should call them negotiations; that’s not an accurate characterization. We are having discussions with them about our differences and about the importance of our relationship. And I will have a decision on the matter in a timely fashion. No decision has been reached yet; we’re still talking with them.