

had leading up to this conference, and then we'll get right into the first panel.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:13 a.m. in the Great Hall of the Memorial Union at Iowa State University. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Terry E. Branstad of Iowa and Martin C. Jischke, president of the university.

Remarks at the National Rural Conference Closing Session in Ames *April 25, 1995*

First of all, let's give all the panelists a big hand for all the work they've done. [*Applause*]

I would like again to congratulate the Secretary of Agriculture and the Deputy Secretary and others on the fine work they did here. I want to thank the president of this fine university and all the people who have worked so hard to make this a success.

I want to remind all of you—I think you can see today that we care a lot about these issues and we're committed to doing something about them. So if you had ideas that were not expressed, fill out those forms and give them to us. They will not just be thrown away.

Finally, let me thank the State of Iowa, Senator Harkin, the Governor who is not here anymore but spent some time with us. Attorney General Miller was here, and we have the State treasurer, Mike Fitzgerald, and the State agriculture commissioner, Dale Cochran. Thank you all for being here.

Let me close by leaving you with this thought: The balance of power, political power, in this country has shifted. Never mind whether you think it's Republican, Democrat, liberal, or conservative. It's basically shifted to a suburban base. And most of those folks in the suburbs either once lived in a city or once lived in the country. But most—a lot of them are doing reasonably well in the global economy. And if they aren't, the only thing they may think they need from the Government is help with a student loan for their kids. And otherwise they may view anything any public entity does as doing more harm than good.

What we have seen today on this panel—and I know, and most of you don't, but I know that we had people up here who are Republicans and people who were Democrats. And I'll guarantee you, listening to this conversation,

you couldn't tell one from another. Why? Because what works is practical commitment to partnerships and to solving problems each as they come up, to developing the capacities of people, to dealing with the options that are there, and to going forward.

So we have two problems today in coming up with good legislation in the farm bill and in coming up with other approaches that are appropriate. One is that Washington tends to be much more ideological and partisan than Main Street America, particularly rural America. And we need more of Main Street up there, not more of what's up there down here.

The other is that demographically our country's political center has shifted away from the urban areas and the rural areas into the suburbs, and a lot of the people who have to make decisions on these matters, without regard to their party or their philosophy, have no direct experience or direct lobbying in the best sense on these issues.

Therefore, I think what we need—I cannot tell you how strongly I feel this—is for, in States like Iowa and every other State here represented, we need for people of good will to try to get together at the community level, across party lines, and come up with positions on these matters that can be communicated to the Congress, because Dick Durbin and Tom Harkin and Senator Grassley and others on the Republican side will be trying to craft legislation that makes sense in some way that will be much more difficult unless your voice is heard in partnership, not partisanship, and the voice from the rural heartland. I implore you to do that.

Meanwhile, I pledge to you that your day here has not been wasted. I have learned a lot, and we will act on what we have learned.

Thank you so very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:47 p.m. in the Memorial Union at Iowa State University.

Remarks to Students at Iowa State University in Ames *April 25, 1995*

Thank you so much. Thank you, Mr. Vice President, for your stirring speech. He tells all those jokes, and then he goes about disproving them with his speech. [*Laughter*] Thank you for your service to America. When the history of our administration is written, there may be differing opinions about the quality of the decisions that I have made, but no one will doubt that the right thing was done in naming Albert Gore Vice President and then providing him the opportunity to be the most influential Vice President in American history.

I also want to thank my friend Tom Harkin for being here with me and for what he said and for his heroic efforts in the United States Senate on behalf of the people of Iowa and the people of this country. Whether they are farmers or people in rural areas, students, or the disabled, he is always there. I'd also like to say that I know Tom lived here for a while with his wonderful wife, Ruth, who was once the county attorney here in this county. She is now the head of the Overseas Private Investment Corporation. And she has done more to create American jobs by financing international trade than any person who ever held her position. And you can be proud of her as well.

I want to thank Mayor Curtis for welcoming me here to Ames. I was looking forward to meeting Mayor Curtis, but to be fair, I'm such a big basketball fan, I was hoping to meet the other "Mayor" here as well. If I could shoot like that, I'd still be in the NBA; I wouldn't be up here today. [*Laughter*] And thank you, President Jischke and all of you at Iowa State, for making us feel so welcome. I thank the band for playing. And I'm glad they provided seats for you to see the event. When I used to play at things like this, they never gave us a seat, so I'm glad to see your smiling faces. And thank you, singers, for singing and for looking so wonderful up there.

Ladies and gentlemen, we had a wonderful rural meeting today, and I want to talk a little

bit about that. But before I do, I want to thank all of you who have come up to me already today and expressed your sympathy with and support for the people in Oklahoma City. There was a sign over there—show me that sign you all waved. I want everyone to see that. It says, "Oklahoma City, Iowa Cares."

You may know that this is national service week in the United States, and today is our first annual National Day of Service. That's why I'm so glad to see all the young AmeriCorps members here doing their work.

I know that all of you are thinking about how we can serve and help the people of Oklahoma City as they work through the next stages of their tragedy. I can tell you that when Hillary and I were there on Sunday, we saw people who had not slept, who were working heroically, some at considerable risk to themselves, to try to clean out the last measure of the wreckage and to try to find those who are still unaccounted for, working in the hospitals, working on the streets. The police and firemen—many of them had not seen their families for days.

The response of our country to this bombing shows what a strong country we are when we pull together. I saw it when you had the 500-year flood here and I thought all the topsoil was going to be somewhere in the Gulf of Mexico before it got through raining. But I really saw it down there in the face of this terrible madness that those fine people have endured.

We must take away from this experience a lot of things. But we must never forget that it was a terrible thing. I will do all I can to make sure that we see the wheels of justice grind rapidly, certainly, fairly, but severely. But we must take away from this incident a renewed determination to stand up for the fundamental constitutional rights of Americans, including the right to freedom of speech. We have to remember that freedom of speech has endured in our country for over two centuries. The first amendment, with its freedom of speech and freedom