

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

of assembly and freedom of religion, is in many ways the most important part of what makes us Americans. But we have endured because we have exercised that freedom with responsibility and discipline.

That is what we celebrate when people come to the rural heart of America and talk about what can be done to develop it. And every speaker says, what a shame it would be if we continue to allow economic decline in rural America, where the values of work and family and community and mutual responsibility are alive and well.

I ask you on this National Day of Service to think of a personal service you can all render. Yes, stand up for freedom of speech. Yes, stand up for all of our freedoms, the freedom of assembly, the freedom to bear arms, all the freedoms we have. But remember this: With freedom—if the country is to survive and do well—comes responsibility. And that means even as others discharge their freedom of speech, if we think they are being irresponsible, then we have the duty to stand up and say so to protect our own freedom of speech. That is our responsibility.

Words have consequences. To pretend that they do not is idle. Did Patrick Henry stand up and say, “Give me liberty or give me death,” expecting it to fall on deaf ears and impact no one? Did Thomas Jefferson write, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, . . . endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights, . . . among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness,” did he say that thinking the words would vanish in thin air and have no consequences? Of course not. Are you here in this great university because you think the words you stay up late at night reading, studying, have no consequence? Of course not.

We know that words have consequences. And so I say to you, even as we defend the right of people to speak freely and to say things with which we devoutly disagree, we must stand up and speak against reckless speech that can push fragile people over the edge, beyond the boundaries of civilized conduct, to take this country into a dark place.

I say that, no matter where it comes from, people are encouraging violence and lawlessness and hatred. If people are encouraging conduct that will undermine the fabric of this country, it should be spoken against whether it comes

from the left or the right, whether it comes on radio, television, or in the movies, whether it comes in the schoolyard or, yes, even on the college campus. The answer to hateful speech is to speak out against it in the American spirit, to speak up for freedom and responsibility.

That is so important to me, especially for all of you young people. I was so pleased to see at the National Rural Conference today so many young people, people who want to make their lives in rural America, people who want to believe that we can make economic opportunity come alive in rural America, that people can actually work and raise their families and children there and make a living and be good, fulfilled citizens there.

I was encouraged by that. After all, most of us in this country who make the speeches and make the decisions have lived most of our lives. We have already lived the American dream. We are here in positions—your university president, your Senator, the Vice President, and I—we’re here because of what America has already given us. If they took it all away from us tomorrow, we would have had more than 99.999 percent of the people who ever lived in all of human history. It is for those of you who still have your lives before you that we must most urgently work to keep the American dream alive.

When I assumed this office, I told the American people that I thought we had two great responsibilities standing on the verge of a new century. One was to keep the American dream alive for all of our people, that if you work hard and play by the rules you should have a chance to live up to the fullest of your God-given capacities. And the second was to make sure that our country remained the world’s strongest force for peace and freedom and democracy, so that we could operate in a world where people competed based on what was in their minds and their spirit and what they did with their hands and not what they did with their weapons. And we have pursued those courses with a vengeance.

If you look at where we are now after 2 years in terms of our objectives, to restore economic growth, to grow the middle class and shrink the under class, to help to rebuild the bonds of society by strengthening work and family and the sense of security the American people have, to give us a Government that costs less but works better, and to help people do more to help themselves, it is clear that much

has been done but much, much more is still there to do.

The deficit is down. Trade has been expanded. We have the lowest unemployment and inflation rates combined in 25 years. We are moving ahead in so many ways to make our people more secure, more police on our street in rural areas and in cities and no Russian missiles pointed at the people of the United States for the first time since the dawn of the nuclear age.

But make no mistake about it, my fellow Americans, this is an unusual time, different from past times. The global economy, the revolution in technology, the changing patterns of work, all of these things, all of these things have created a situation in which we are able to create large numbers of jobs in the United States—in Iowa the unemployment rate the last time I checked was 3.3 percent—large numbers of jobs where people do not have an increase in their income or increase in their sense of job security.

So you have this unusual circumstance today with the economy growing, the deficit going down, all the indicators seeming to point us in the right direction, and more than half of the adults in America are working harder for the same or lower wages they were making 10 years ago.

That is the challenge to America today. It is a challenge faced by every advanced country faced with foreign competition, faced with technology, faced with all the changes you know well about. But it is a special challenge in America because there is more inequality here than in most other wealthy countries, and yet, we are the country that values the American dream. Whoever you are, wherever you're from, if you work hard and do your best to develop your ability, you will be rewarded. And so I say to you: That is our challenge, to reward people who make the effort you are making by being here today in this great university and all others in America who are willing to work.

So I ask you to think of just this point—there are so many issues to discuss and we talked about a lot of them today—but here I ask you to think of only this: What is the role of education? The middle class in America, my fellow Americans, is splitting apart today, something we have not known since the end of the Second World War, where inequality is increasing among Americans with jobs. It is splitting

apart, and the fault line is education. Why? Because in a global economy, where new technologies are always changing the nature of work, what we can earn depends on what we can learn. More than ever before, the prospects of people all across our country are determined by whether they have enough education to learn and learn and learn and whether there is available to them a system to keep learning for a lifetime.

Therefore, I say to you, as you hear the debates that are about to resume in the Congress about the Government deficit—yes, we have a deficit; it's a lot smaller than it was when we showed up 2 years ago, and it's going down some more, but it's still there. But the budget deficit is not the only deficit we have. We also have an education deficit, and you have millions and millions and millions of Americans who go home every night and sit down across the table and look at their wives or their husbands and their children and wonder whether they have failed, because as hard as they work, they cannot make it in the modern economy. And I tell you, the only way to turn that around is to revolutionize the availability and the quality of education to all of our people, without regard to their race, their income, their region, or their age. This should lead us to a clear conclusion: With a budget deficit and an education deficit, we cannot solve one at the expense of the other without hurting our country for a long time to come. We cannot back off of our commitment to education.

There are proposals in the Congress today to require students to begin paying interest on their student loans while they're still in school. That will increase the cost of education, reduce the number of people who would take student loans. Over the long run, it would reduce the number of people successfully completing their education. We ought to be cutting the cost of education to our young people, not increasing it, to get more people in and through college.

There are proposals to limit, and some even want to outright eliminate, the national service program. They say, "Oh, well, it's not necessary." Look at what is going on in rural Iowa. Look at what these young people are doing. Yes, they're earning money for a college education, but they're also doing things all across America to immunize children, to build housing for the elderly, to walk streets and keep them safer for all of our people, hundreds and hun-

dreds and hundreds of things to build community in America. We should not eliminate it; we should have more young people getting their education through the national service program.

So our program is very different. We say, yes, reduce the deficit, but increase Head Start. Give our public schools more funds to meet national standards of excellence, to have computers in every rural school, to do the things that are necessary to open up educational opportunities to all of our children. We say, invest the small amount of money it would take to enable every State in the country to have apprenticeship programs to help the young people who don't go to college but do want to get some education and training after high school so they could be in good jobs, not dead-end jobs. We say, make available to every university and college in America the direct student loan program which is now available here at Iowa State, which cuts the cost of lending to the students, which cuts the bureaucratic hassle to the colleges and to the students, and which saves the taxpayers money.

If the Congress wants to know how to reduce the deficit and increase education, the answer is, don't give in to the special interest lobby seeking to limit the availability of direct loans. Let every school in the country have the option to do what we've done here. Let these young people get lower cost loans with better repayment terms direct from the Government. Cut out the middleman. You will reduce the deficit, increase the number of college loans, increase the number of students, and move this country into the future. That is the right answer for this problem.

And finally, let me say, with all this talk of tax cuts, remember we have two deficits. There should be no tax cut if it's going to increase the deficit. No tax cut should be adopted except in the context of reducing the deficit. It should be modest. It should be targeted to middle class people who need it. And I believe it should be targeted to education—a deduction for the cost of education after high school to Americans all across this country. That is the right kind of tax cut.

One of your distinguished alumni, George Washington Carver, said it best when he said, "Education is the key to unlock the golden door of freedom." Well, when he said it, he was thinking of personal freedom, personal opportunity, individual opportunity. But those of us

who are here, your president, your Senator, the Vice President, and I, we benefited from a new insight about education because we were raised in the aftermath of World War II. We were raised by a generation of people who in return for their service in the war were given the benefits of the GI bill. And guess what? It didn't just give individual opportunity and personal freedom to all those people, it exploded the possibilities of America. And we grew up in the most prosperous country the world had ever known because of millions and millions and millions of people getting individual opportunity.

Now, I can tell you with absolute certainty, even in the face of all the difficulties and complexities of the modern world, that education is more important to the future of all of us as Americans today than it was to America at the end of the Second World War when the GI bill was adopted.

So yes, let us continue to fight to tame the beast of the Government deficit. You should know the budget would be balanced today were it not for the interest we have to pay on the debt run up between 1981 and 1992. But we have to do better. We have to do better.

But as we do it, let us do it in a way that increases our commitment to and our investment in education, because that is the selfish thing to do as well as the selfless thing to do. Believe me, folks, if I could wave a magic wand and do two things to ensure the future of America so that I would know it wouldn't matter who was elected to any office, it would be these things: I would give every child a childhood in a stable family and guarantee every American a good education. That should be our mission. There would be no poverty, great hope, and an unlimited future if that could be done.

Lastly, let me say this: In Washington, the rhetoric often becomes too political and extremely partisan. What we heard today at this rural conference, we heard from Republicans and Democrats and independents. We heard people talking about the real problems of real people: How can a family make a living on the farm? What should be in the new farm bill to allow people to have other kinds of economic development in rural areas? How can we relieve the stress on families where, between the mother and father together, they may have three or four jobs and not enough time to be with the children? How can we guarantee the benefits of technology, access to health care, trans-

portation for the elderly, decent middle class housing in rural areas?

And these things were discussed in practical, commonsense, old-fashioned American language so that at the end of the day, no one knew, having heard it all, what they heard from a Republican, what they heard from a Democrat, who these people voted for in the last election. Why? Because they were talking about the real stuff of life, not words used to divide people.

So I ask you to remember this: We'll always have our fair share of politics in the Nation's Capital, and the further away you get from the real lives of real people, the more partisan the rhetoric tends to become. But you, you in this

great university and in this community, can have a huge influence in saying, "Put one thing beyond politics. Do not sacrifice the future of our education on the altar of indiscriminate budget cutting. Reduce the deficit in the budget. Reduce the deficit in education. Give the next generation of Americans the American dream."

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:10 p.m. at the Hilton Coliseum. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Larry R. Curtis of Ames, IA, and Fred (The Mayor) Hoiberg, Iowa State University basketball player.

Remarks to the Iowa State Legislature in Des Moines

April 25, 1995

Thank you very much, Mr. President, Mr. Speaker, Governor Branstad, Mr. Chief Justice and members of the supreme court, distinguished Iowa State officials. And former Congressman Neal Smith, my good friend, and Mrs. Smith, thank you for being here. To all of you who are members of the Iowa Legislature, House and Senate, Republican and Democrat, it is a great honor for me to be here today.

I feel that I'm back home again. When I met the legislative leadership on the way in and we shared a few words and then they left to come in here, and I was standing around with my crowd, I said, "You know, I really miss State government." [Laughter] I'll say more about why in a moment.

I'd like to, if I might, recognize one of your members to thank him for agreeing to join my team: Representative Richard Running will now be the Secretary of Labor's representative. Would you stand up, please? Thank you. [Applause] Representative Running is going to be the representative of the Secretary of Labor for region 7, Iowa, Nebraska, Missouri, and Kansas. And if you will finish your business here pretty soon, he can actually go to Kansas City and get to work—[laughter]—which I would appreciate.

I'm delighted to be back in Iowa. I had a wonderful day here, and it was good to be here

when it was dry—[laughter]—although a little rain doesn't do any harm.

We had a wonderful meeting today at Iowa State University, with which I'm sure all of you are familiar, this National Rural Conference we had, designed to lay the groundwork for a strategy for rural America to include not only the farm bill but also a rural development strategy and a strategy generally to deal with the problems of rural America, with the income disparities with the rest of America, the age disparities with the rest of America, and the problems of getting services and maintaining the quality of life in rural America.

I want to thank Governor Branstad for his outstanding presentation and the information he gave us about the efforts being made in Iowa in developing your fiber optic network and developing the health care reform initiatives for rural Iowans and many other areas. I want to thank Senator Harkin for his presentation, particularly involving the development of alternative agricultural products as a way to boost income in rural America. And I want to say a special word of thanks to the people at Iowa State. They did a magnificent job there, and I know you are all very proud of that institution. And you would have been very, very proud of them today for the way they performed.

I'm also just glad to be back here in the setting of State government. You know, Gov-