

I can take to keep guns away from schools. I want the action to be constitutional, but I am determined to keep guns away from schools.

For example, Congress could encourage States to ban guns from school zones by linking Federal funds to enactment of school zone gun bans. At least we could tie the money we have for safe schools to such a ban. At any rate, I am confident that the Attorney General will give me advice about what action I can take. We must reverse the practical impact of the Court's decision. If young people can't learn in safety, they can't learn at all.

Now, according to the Center for Disease Control in Atlanta, violence threatens schools in communities of all shapes and sizes. They've identified 105 violent school-related deaths in just the last 2 years. And we know there are common elements to violent deaths among young people. Usually, the victim and the assailant know each other, the incident starts as an argument, and usually there is a firearm present.

Schoolyard fights have been around as long as schoolyards. But it used to be that when kids got in fights, they fought with their fists, adults broke them up, and the kids got punished. Today, there are guns on the playground, guns in the classrooms, guns on the bus. In 1990, the CDC found that 1 in 24 students carried a gun in a 30-day period. By 1993, it was down to 1 in 12. The number of high school students carrying a gun doubled in only 3 years.

This is certainly a national crisis, and we must have a national effort to fight it. We need a

seamless web of safety that keeps guns out of the hands of our children and out of our schools. That's why we fought for the provision in last year's crime bill which now makes it a Federal crime for a young person to carry a handgun, except when supervised by an adult. And that's why we must make sure that anyone who does bring a gun to school is severely disciplined. And that's why we're going to find a way to ban guns inside or near our schools.

I'm committed to doing everything in my power to make schools places where young people can be safe, where they can learn, where parents can be confident that discipline is enforced.

We all know that we have to work together to get this done. Principals and teachers must take the lead for safe schools and teaching good citizenship and good values. And parents have to recognize that discipline begins at home. The responsibility to raise children and to make them good citizens rests first on the shoulders of their parents, who must teach the children right from wrong and must get involved and stay involved in their children's education.

I pledge that we'll do our part to help make our schools safe and the neighborhoods around them safe. But in the end, we'll only succeed if we all work together.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 2:48 p.m. on April 28 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on April 29.

Remarks at the White House Correspondents' Association Dinner April 29, 1995

Thank you very much, Ken. To all the members of the White House press who are here; to all the members of the White House staff and the administration who are here and who have to endure this every year with me. [Laughter] Let me say I have had a wonderful time tonight. I kind of hate to come up here; I'd rather listen to Conan talk to that worthless redneck on the screen—[laughter]—for another half an hour.

I identify with Conan O'Brien. Like me, he's a young man who came from obscurity—[laugh-

ter]—and chose a sidekick with more inside experience. And despite his many accomplishments, 250 million Americans never get to see him in prime time. [Laughter]

I feel your pain. [Laughter]

Speaking of young people, it was announced tonight, you know, that my Press Secretary, Mike McCurry, and his wife, Debra, just had their third child, Christopher. I want to make another announcement: Before my term is over, Christopher will become the youngest member of the White House Press Office—[laughter]—

just barely younger than the rest who work there. *[Laughter]*

You know, I practiced for this night. I had all this humor and everything, but—and I really believe that you could tell I—I really liked that—whoever that awful person is that played me. *[Laughter]* I thought it was wonderful.

The Book of Proverbs says, “A happy heart doeth good like medicine, and a broken spirit drieth the bones.” And I believe that. But I think you will all understand that—and I hope my wonderful comedy writers will understand—if I take a few moments tonight not to be too funny here at the end because of the tragedy in Oklahoma City, which has captured us all and which still is the focus of our efforts, for understandable reasons tonight, as the rescue workers are still laboring and as the law enforcement officers are still working.

Tonight, as Ken and I were sitting here, and he let me read his latest essay about the heroism of the people in Oklahoma City. And I want to say something personal to all of you. I know that for virtually everybody in the press in this room, this has been a very painful experience for all of you, too, who have covered it, and to have been Americans, to have been parents and children and brothers and sisters, and to have identified with the human tragedy on such a massive scale.

And what I want to do tonight is to tell you that I really appreciate the way this incident has been presented to the American people. I think you have made an extraordinary effort to capture both the horror and the humanity of the situation, to somehow grasp and communicate to your fellow citizens the incredible honor with which so many people have performed in these last difficult days.

Most of you were able, and I think it was difficult, to show commendable restraint in not jumping to any conclusions about who did this terrible thing. And most of you have really done a great deal to help the American people find some renewed strength and energy. And I thank you for that. And I hope in the days ahead you will be able to continue it.

As this story unfolds, I would ask you to continue to return to Oklahoma City, to update our country on how the families who have suffered so much are rebuilding their lives, and to remind us about the countless heroes we have all seen there. The terrible people who did this thing do not deserve to be celebrities,

although they will become famous. But the victims and their families and the people who have labored, they don’t deserve to be forgotten.

The heroes of this tragedy embody the unbreakable spirit of our Nation. They should always be remembered, the hundreds of rescue workers who defied the rain, the cold, the heartache, and a very real risk to their own lives. People like Rebecca Anderson, a nurse with four children, whose parents still live in my home State, who was hit by a piece of concrete and later died trying to help others. Even in death, she continued to serve the living by giving her heart to save the life of a man from Oklahoma and one of her kidneys to save the life of a woman from New Mexico.

Now, folks, that is the real America. Sometimes all of us forget it a little bit. Sometimes all of us are too bound up in what we are doing. But this country is bound together in a way that the people like those who committed those crimes in Oklahoma can never understand. And I know our Government is not perfect, and I know it makes mistakes. But this is a very free country and a very great country. And a lot of the people who are out there complaining about it today would not even be able to do what they do in the way they do it in most of the other democracies in the world today. And we should never forget it.

I say this tonight not to pour cold water on this wonderful evening and not because I haven’t enjoyed it—I think I laughed harder tonight than anybody else here—but because as long as this work is going on, I think I owe it to you to tell you for all of our sometimes conflicting interests, I am really proud of the work the American press corps did in bringing this to the American people. And the work is not over. The understanding is not over.

We have a lot of difficult decisions to make in the weeks and months ahead. As you know, I feel very strongly that the country should adopt stronger measures against terrorism. It will be debated in the Congress. Some of the measures are complex. You will have to explain them to the American people. I ask only that in all of this, you never forget the human dimension that you have so skillfully and heroically brought home to all the people of this country.

We are going to get through this, and when we do, we’ll be even stronger. We’ve been around here now for more than 200 years because almost all the time more than half of

us wind up somehow doing the right thing. And we will do the right thing again.

I'd like to close with words written by the wonderful poet W.H. Auden over 50 years ago: "In the deserts of the heart, let the healing fountain start. In the prison of his days, teach the free man how to praise."

We praise America tonight, and we thank you for bringing it home to us in such a powerful way in these last days.

Good night, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:47 p.m. at the Washington Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to Ken Walsh, outgoing president, White House Correspondents' Association, and entertainer Conan O'Brien.

Remarks to the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors in New York City

April 30, 1995

Foreign Minister Peres, thank you for your powerful words, the example of your life, and your tireless work for peace. Rabbi Lau, Governor Pataki, Senator Moynihan, Senator D'Amato, members of the New York congressional delegation, Speaker Silver, Ambassador Rabinovich and members of the Diplomatic Corps, Mr. Mayor, and of course, my friend Benjamin Meed. I thank you and your wife for joining us and helping Hillary and me and, through us, the entire United States last year to understand the deepest and profoundest meaning of the Warsaw Uprising.

This year we mark the 50th anniversary of the end of the Holocaust. Since Biblical times, 50th anniversaries have had special meanings. Our English word "jubilee" comes to us from the Hebrew word for that anniversary. And the Scripture tells us that every 50th year is to be holy and the land should be left fallow and slaves freed upon the blowing of a shofar. It was a year in the Scriptures that closed an era and began another.

We think of such things here on the end of this century and the beginning of a new millennium, but in profound ways there can be no such closure for the half-century after the Holocaust. For all of those who lived through it and all of us who came after, the Holocaust redefined our understanding of the human capacity for evil. Anyone who has stood in that tower of photographs in the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, who has seen those unforgettable, warm, expressive faces from that small Lithuanian town, anyone who has seen

the horror even in pictures knows that we must now and never allow the memory of those events to fade.

The Bible also made the link between memory and deed, enjoining us so often to remember the years of slavery in Egypt and the acts of the wicked and then to act morally. Today we must remember those years of radical evil as though it were a commandment to do so because, as we have seen, hatred still flourishes where it has a chance. Intolerance still lurks, waiting to spread. Racist violence still threatens abroad and at home.

We are taught in our faith that as much as we might regret it, deep within the human spirit there is, and will always remain until the end of time, the capacity for evil. It must be remembered, and it must be opposed.

The commandment to remember is especially great now because, as the Foreign Minister said, this has been a very bloody century. And soon, the living memory of the Holocaust will pass. Those of us, then, who were born after the war will then have to shoulder the responsibility that the survivors have carried for so long: to fight all forms of racism, to combat those who distort the past and peddle hate in the present, to stand against the new forms of organized evil and counter their determination to use and to abuse the modern miracles of technology and openness and possibility that offer us the opportunity to build for our children the most remarkable world ever known but still carry, within these forces, the seeds of further destruction.