

up, and there are a lot of people on record in support of repealing it in the Senate. So I ask you for your support on that. It would be a mistake. This country needs a lot of things, but it does not need more assault weapons. And we now have been through one good set of hunting seasons in every State in America, and so every hunter who was told that that assault weapon ban represented some threat to his or her ability to go out and hunt deer in the deer seasons, or ducks in my home State, now knows that was not true.

And if it does get to my desk, of course I will veto it, and I'm confident the veto will be sustained. But this should not be brought back up. This should not even be a subject of debate in the United States. But it is still very much alive and well, and so I ask you for your help and your support in that regard.

We have got to continue to work on this crime problem until—everybody knows we will never totally eliminate crime in America; we can't transform human nature. But I do believe if we work at it we can get back to the time when people turn on the evening news and they see a horrible crime story, they're surprised instead of numb to it. And that is, I think, the goal we ought to set for ourselves, that it should become the exception rather than the rule.

And again—I know that I speak for the Attorney General—we have enjoyed working with all of you, and we're glad to be here, and we want to answer some of your questions. I think we'll have a chance to visit after we conclude the public portion of this meeting, but I thank you very much.

I asked the Attorney General if she wanted to give a speech. She said, no, you're coming to see her this afternoon. [*Laughter*]

Terry [Terence Hunt, Associated Press].

China and Taiwan

Q. Mr. President, do you think that China and Taiwan are at a turning point now?

The President. Do you mean, do I think the tensions are going down?

Q. Right, where do you think this is going?

The President. Well, I hope they are. I was encouraged by some statements that came out of both sides in the aftermath of the election. And so I hope that is what is going on.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:36 a.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Tom Udall, New Mexico attorney general, and Scott Harshbarger, Massachusetts attorney general, association president and president-elect, respectively.

Statement on the Death of Edmund Muskie

March 26, 1996

Hillary and I were deeply saddened to learn of the death of former Senator Edmund Muskie. A dedicated legislator and caring public servant, Senator Muskie was a leader in the best sense. He spoke from his heart and acted with conviction. Generations to come will benefit from his steadfast commitment to protecting the land.

Our thoughts and prayers go out to his family, his friends, and the people of Maine at this difficult time.

NOTE: The related proclamation of March 27 is listed in Appendix D at the end of this volume.