

are still skeptical and may be suspicious of American involvement in the peace process?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, look at what—what has the American involvement been? I would say look at what the American involvement has been. What we have tried to do is to do whatever we could to facilitate an end to violence and the participation of those parties that would be necessary to effect a just and lasting peace. We have not tried to prejudge any of the specific issues for anyone. And all we have offered to do is to do what we could to help in the peace process, to maximize the rewards and minimize the risks of peace, as interested outsiders. We are not insiders; we are not trying to determine the details of this in any way, shape, or form.

So I don't think we've had a destructive impact there. And we certainly would not want to.

Q. Mr. President—

President Clinton. Yes, Jim [Jim Miklaszewski, NBC News]. Go ahead.

Church Burnings in the South

Q. Mr. President, despite your bully pulpit appeals, there was another church burning in Oklahoma overnight. Is it going to take something stronger from the Federal Government? And what kind of measures along that line are you considering today?

President Clinton. Well, we have, as I announced yesterday in South Carolina, we have substantially increased the number of Federal officials working on the investigation of each of these incidents. And we are examining, even as you and I are talking here, some other possible options for what else can be done. I may

have more to say about it later. I don't have anything else to add today, except we're going to get to the bottom of every one of these cases. We're going to do everything we can.

And again, I want to issue a strong plea to the American people—this is not what this country is all about. This is a deeply religious country where we—we were founded in a commitment to respect the right of every single person to religious freedom. And what appear to be a number of racially motivated instances are just—they're not only illegal, they're morally unacceptable and reprehensible, and Americans need to stand up against it. And we're looking at other ways that we can do better and do more.

Any other questions on the Irish side?

Northern Ireland Peace Process

Q. Mr. President, if the negotiations in Belfast go ahead, but without Sinn Féin because there's no IRA cease-fire, do you think they have any possibility of succeeding under those conditions?

President Clinton. Well, let's see what happens. They just got started. I don't want to get into a lot of speculation. All I can tell you is that I'm encouraged that they've begun and not discouraged that there was some procedural wrangling in the beginning. And this is a complex matter. There will be a lot of turns in the road before it's over, but I'm hopeful. And on balance, I feel quite hopeful today.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 125th news conference began at 1 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building.

Remarks on Receiving a Report on Teen Pregnancy

June 13, 1996

This is one of those moments when I have the feeling if I would stop now I'd be way ahead [*Laughter*] Thank you, Blessing Tate, for that wonderful statement. And thank you, Blessing and Salvador, both of you, for the powerful example of your lives.

Thank you, Michael Carrera, for the work you've done and for sticking with it over so many years. I want to thank Rebecca Maynard

for this remarkable study, which I believe will have a significant impact on our United States. I thank my friend Paul Tudor Jones and Robin Hood Foundation for funding it, and also for being a personal evangelist for the cause of reducing the problem of teen pregnancy in America. The first time I ever met him, it was about the second sentence out of his mouth: "We've

got to do something about this. What are you doing about it?" [Laughter]

I thank Isabel Sawhill and my longtime friend Governor Tom Kean for being willing to organize and lead this national campaign against teen pregnancy. I thank you especially, Governor Kean, for being concerned about this over so many years. Ten years ago, we were on a Carnegie commission on middle schools, and Tom Kean was asking questions about this problem then, worrying about our young people. And I thank you for that.

Thank you, Senator Kassebaum, for your leadership and your willingness to serve. We'll miss you in the Senate, but I'm glad you're going to do this. I thank you. And thank you, Congresswoman Lowey, for always being there. Congressman Barrett was here a moment ago and had to leave. But I thank you all very, very much.

There is one other person I would like to thank who is not here today, Dr. Henry Foster, who is in Hartford meeting with local officials about their teen pregnancy programs but who has been willing to work very hard on this endeavor for so many years.

I have a few remarks I want to make about this whole endeavor, but before I do, if you will forgive me since this is my last opportunity to make a public statement of the day, I want to also make a few comments about what happened last night in Enid, Oklahoma, where another predominantly African-American church was burned.

Federal agents are now on the scene. We're doing what we can to find out what happened. But it is clear that we now have a rash of church burnings over the last year and a half. All of us who have any responsibility in this area have to work overtime to get to the bottom of the crimes and to help the churches and the communities rebuild.

Today our top Federal law enforcement officials are meeting with our United States Attorneys from all over America who are here and the heads of the FBI and the ATF offices from the affected States to work together and plot a strategy about where to go from here. The State attorneys general from the affected States will be meeting to coordinate their efforts in the next 2 weeks. In advance of that meeting, I am inviting the Governors from all the affected States to come to the White House next week to work together with us to prevent future inci-

dents, to unite our communities, to rebuild the churches that have been burned.

I do want to say one more time, this must be an affair of the heart and the mind for America. This country was founded on the premise of religious liberty. That's how we got started. It's in the first amendment to the Constitution. And we have worked hard for more than 200 years to purge ourselves of racism. It is the cruelest of all ironies that an expression of bigotry in America that would sweep this country is one that involves trashing religious liberty. We have had over 30 churches burned. We have also had one mosque burned. This is wrong, and we must stop it.

We are here today because of what you've already heard. We know that strong families are the building block of our society. We know that millions of children that are born to mothers who aren't ready to be parents are robbed of their full potential.

When you see these two young people up here and you imagine what their lives are now going to be like, what their children will be like, what their contributions will be 10, 20, 30, 40 years from now, they say more than I ever could about what is truly at stake in dealing with this problem of teen pregnancy. I appreciate the fact that Governor Kean said that this is a uniquely American dilemma. It is really true. There is no advanced country in the world that has anything like the teen pregnancy problem that we do, the out-of-wedlock pregnancy problem that we do, and we have got to do something about it. We have to give these young people opportunity. We have to insist that they take more responsibility. But we must also come together as a community to help them to make the most of their own lives and to make good choices.

You heard Dr. Maynard talk about the costs of teen pregnancy. There's no point in my reiterating them now. But if you just think about all the bad things that can happen to kids, they're more likely for teen mothers. And if you think about the good things that can happen to kids, they're less likely for teen mothers. And sure, some of them make it, and we have to do the best we can to make sure more of them do very well. But the most important thing we can do is to dramatically, dramatically reduce the incidence of premature pregnancy and childbirth in this country. Let me thank again the

Robin Hood Foundation for what they have done and Paul Tudor Jones, especially.

But let me ask you again to think about this. If a million teenagers become pregnant each year, we face the prospect of dramatic social decay. If next year we will begin a period of several years when the classes of schoolchildren starting in grade school are going to be bigger than the classes of the baby boom generation for the first time since I became the oldest of the baby boomers and people about 18 years younger than me were the youngest, we are now going to have schoolchildren in numbers bigger than the baby boom generation. If we have not done something about this critical matter by the time they are biologically capable of bearing children even though they should not do so, we will pay an even greater price than Dr. Maynard's study calculates that we are paying today. And it will involve far more than money.

So I say to you, I believe there is a community responsibility. As Hillary said in her book, this is one of those problems that it really does take a village to deal with. No one has a right to say we're not responsible for these children. And all of us will be better off if there are more children like Blessing and Sal. We all have a responsibility to do that.

I do want to compliment Secretary Shalala for her work on these subjects not just as the Secretary of HHS but, as you heard, going back for years and years and years before she ever came to this post. I want to thank her and the Governors who have worked together on the cause of welfare reform. We have put in place about 62 welfare reform experiments now with 39 States, many of them designed to help young people come to grips with this issue.

Ohio's LEAP program, for example, is having a significant impact on helping teen mothers stay in school and get jobs and get off welfare. And I was so impressed with the consequences of it that we issued an Executive order ruling that that should be the policy in every State in the country. Stay in school; stay at home or in an appropriate supervised setting; follow a personal responsibility contract; turn your life around: That is what we expect from people who receive these benefits.

The other thing we have to do is to take seriously the role in this problem of older men. It's a sad fact that half of all the underage mothers in this country were made pregnant

by a man who was in his twenties or even older, someone who has no business taking advantage of an underage girl. Statutory rape is still a crime in this country. The young women are victims. Yet these laws are almost never enforced, even in the most egregious of circumstances. It is time for them to be enforced so that older men who prey on underage women and bring children into the world they have no intention of taking responsibility for are held accountable.

There are other things we have to do, too. We've come a long way in the area of child support enforcement. Child support enforcement collections have increased by 40 percent in the last 3 years from roughly \$8 billion to just a little over \$11 billion. The Federal Government working with the States have played a role in that. But we can do more.

One of the things that there is, as far as I know, absolutely totally unanimous agreement on in the Congress among all Republicans and all Democrats are the provisions that are now in every welfare reform bill to strengthen child support enforcement. If for some reason we cannot reach agreement on welfare reform this year—and I still hope we can—I believe we ought to pass these provisions that 100 percent of us agree on so that we can do more to hold people accountable for the children they bring in the world and help these kids get the money they need and help their parents get the money they need to do a good job in raising the children.

These are things that the Government can do. But we all know that the Government cannot solve this problem. The more I dealt with these issues as a Governor, the more I became convinced that the only way to deal with them was in a comprehensive way, the way that the New York Children's Aid Society has dealt with them, the way that the national campaign is attempting with them. That's why I asked leaders from our society, from every walk of life, to pull together and form a national campaign to prevent teen pregnancy.

Now, Tom Kean said they have an audacious goal to reduce teen pregnancy by a third in the next 10 years, but I believe that's an achievable goal. I believe if every child in America had access to the kind of guidance and support that these two children did, we would achieve that goal and perhaps better it.

The work of the national campaign to prevent teen pregnancy is just beginning. I think we should all make a personal commitment to support them, each of us in our own communities. They're going to be doing what all of us should be doing. They'll learn what works, spread the word, and work to replicate it through the country.

Today the Department of Health and Human Services is taking a step in that direction by releasing a guidebook called "Promoting Promising Strategies." It describes successful programs and outlines five important principles that are embodied in every single successful teen pregnancy program that we have evaluated, including, obviously, the one supported by the Children's Aid Society that produced these two fine young people here today.

First and foremost, community programs must stress abstinence and personal responsibility. A program cannot be successful unless it gives our children the moral leadership they need to say no to the wrong choices and yes to the right ones.

Second, programs must help teenagers establish clear strategies about how they are going to move their lives forward. Both these young people have strategies for what they're going to do with their tomorrows. They have dreams. They have a reason to work and look for the long run.

Third—and let me just say one other thing—that's saying that it's necessary to have strategies. Let me just follow this through. That means that we have an obligation to help all these kids go to college, among other things. Now, one of the most important proposals that I have made, from my point of view, is giving families a tax deduction for up to \$10,000 for the cost of college tuition and guaranteeing a credit of up to \$1,500 for 2 years of education after high school. But that may not be enough for some of these kids that are in trouble and don't have enough money to get from one week to the next.

So it's one thing to say that they should have a strategy for their future; the rest of us have obligations to help them live up to their dreams. If they're doing the right things, if they're being responsible, if they're making the right choices, we've got to see to it that these children can go to college or go to training school or otherwise pursue their dreams. And all of us have

responsibilities to make sure that their decisions have a chance of being carried out.

The third thing we have to do is to make sure that parents and other adult mentors are constantly involved in children's lives.

And fourth, the program has to bring together many parts of the community, schools, businesses, religious organizations. The chances of success dramatically increase when not just one group is left to carry the whole load.

Finally, the programs have to maintain a commitment to the young people over an extended period of time. You heard what Blessing said about 4 years. We can't expect young people to hear a sermon a time or two and turn their lives around. They need action and support and consistency over a long period of time.

Now, these five principles we know work: abstinence, adult and community involvement, a clear strategy to a good education and a good job, a long-term commitment. Government should support these things because they work, and we should not be supporting strategies that do not work. That's why I want to announce today that the \$30 million that I included in next year's budget to fund local teen pregnancy prevention programs will go only to programs that inculcate these five principles.

I want programs like that in every community in the country. That's what the Government can do to help the national commission meet their goal of reducing teen pregnancy by a third over the next decade. We know that we can do it.

Again, let me say that this is really about Blessing Tate, Salvador Ayala. It's about all the kids like them all across America. It's about people in the New York Children's Aid Society and people like them all across America, who were out here working on this when they never could get a headline and nobody ever notice them and they did it just because they thought it was right, the humane, the decent thing to do.

We know that we have to create a new culture, a new mind-set in our country, in which young people take greater responsibility for themselves but they understand that in so doing they have more opportunities for themselves, and in which the rest of us take responsibility for the welfare of all of our children, doing that together.

No one is too young to be told that the decision to bring a child into the world is the gravest choice they will ever make. No one is too young

to be told that there are consequences to decisions and that one way or the other, people always wind up being held accountable.

The basic bargain of our country should be, however, that if you are responsible, there will be opportunity for you. You will be party of a community of people who care about you, who believe that we must go forward together.

Pearl Buck once said, "If our American way of life fails the child, it fails us all." For too many children every year, the American way of life fails the child, and one of the ways we see it most gravely is in the epidemic of teen pregnancy. We now have people all over America that are working to turn it around. We have a national campaign committed to it. And we will do everything we can to support all of you good people who are trying to make this country

a better place for these two young people on this stage and all the young people in America they represent.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:10 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Blessing Tate and Salvador Ayala, teen pregnancy prevention program participants, and Michael A. Carrera, national training center director, Children's Aid Society; Rebecca Maynard, editor of the report, entitled "Kids Having Kids"; Paul Tudor Jones II, chair, Robin Hood Foundation; Isabel Sawhill, president, National Campaign To Reduce Teen Pregnancy; former Gov. Tom Kean of New Jersey; and Henry W. Foster, Jr., Senior Adviser to the President on Teen Pregnancy and Youth Issues.

Remarks at a State Dinner Honoring President Mary Robinson of Ireland *June 13, 1996*

Ladies and gentlemen, President Robinson, Mr. Robinson, members of the Irish delegation, Ambassador Jean Kennedy Smith, distinguished guests. Welcome to the largest gathering of Irish-Americans since the last Notre Dame football game. [*Laughter*]

Hillary and I were hoping that we might with this wonderful dinner tonight in some small way repay President Robinson and the people of Ireland for the wonderful reception that we and our American delegation received there late last year. It was, I think it's fair to say, two of the most extraordinary days in the lives of all of us who went. And we hope now to give a similar honor to the extraordinary President of Ireland.

From the beginning of her career in public life—and she was elected to the Seanad at the age of 25—Mary Robinson has stood unfailingly for those on the margins of society, for those without a voice in public affairs, for those most in need, for the rights of women and the care of the children at home and around the world. She said, "You have a voice; I will make it heard." And she has. And Ireland has heeded her strong and compassionate call, and indeed the entire world has applauded her leadership.

We are truly glad you are here, Madam President, especially at this moment when Ireland is thriving, stronger, more prosperous, and prouder than at any time in its rich history. Modern Ireland has stepped forward as a nation whose goods are traded around the world and whose music, movies, and literature are treasures of global culture. And Ireland is playing an even greater role on the world stage to the benefit of nations everywhere. Indeed, every day for the last 40 years, somewhere in the world an Irish citizen has worked for peace and humanity.

In the North, though the way is not always easy, a lasting and peaceful settlement is closer than at any time in memory, in good measure because Ireland has worked so steadfastly for every chance for peace.

The friendship between the United States is stronger than ever. Indeed, friendship is an inadequate word for the relationship between two nations as intertwined as ours. From the earliest times of our history, the Irish have been at the heart of our striving to be a better nation. By supporting Thomas Jefferson and Andrew Jackson, Irish immigrants helped to prod America to improve and broaden the reach of our democracy. They stood unflinchingly for free-