

June 18 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1996

Memorandum on the Child Support Initiative

June 18, 1996

Memorandum for the Secretary of Labor

Subject: Child Support Initiative

I hereby direct you to assist in the implementation of the plan I am announcing today to strengthen the child support system and promote parental responsibility.

I direct you to exercise your legal authority in a manner that will assist the implementation of the plan by encouraging those State employment security agencies that collect new-hire information for use in child support enforcement to report such information to the Department of Health and Human Service's pilot program

for matching new-hire data with Federal Parent Locator Service data in order to better track parents owing child support who have taken a job in another State.

The plan I have outlined will help strengthen child support operations by toughening the paternity establishment requirements for applicants for welfare and by enabling States to locate, and withhold wages from, child support obligors who have taken a job in another State. Its prompt implementation is integral to achieving our goal of promoting the American value of parental responsibility.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

Statement on the Russian Presidential Election

June 18, 1996

I spoke with President Yeltsin this morning and conveyed through him to the Russian people my warm congratulations on the election, which is a success for Russia as a whole.

On Sunday, more than 70 million Russian citizens—representing about 70 percent of the eligible voters—voted in the first round of the Presidential election that will determine who will lead the Russian Federation for the next 4 years. They were able to choose among 10 candidates representing a wide range of political views in a contested election. Russian and international observers have reported nothing thus

far to indicate any significant irregularities in the voting process.

This is an important milestone in Russia's history as a democracy and a welcome sign of just how far that country has come in a few short years. The runoff round will allow the Russian people to complete the process of electing their President.

A critical element of our post-cold-war relationship with Russia is its continuing development as a democracy. The United States will remain steady in its policy of active engagement with Russia to support political and economic reform and Russia's integration with the West.

Remarks on Church Burnings in the South and an Exchange With Reporters

June 19, 1996

The President. I would like to welcome the Governors, the other State elected officials who are here, the commissioners of public safety who are here, the Members of Congress who have come together to discuss the problem of church

burnings, which has troubled so much of our country. I expect that for our part we will cover three areas today. We want to talk about the efforts to prosecute those who are responsible for these crimes, and we want to give a report

on that. We want to talk a little about the rebuilding efforts. And I compliment the National Council of Churches and the other religious organizations and citizens that are involved there. And I think we all know we need to try to do more to prevent these burnings from occurring in the first place. So we're going to talk about some initiatives that we might be able to take together to work with communities to do more prevention work. And we may have more to say about that in the days ahead.

The most important thing to me is that as Americans we consistently and passionately come together to say this crosses racial lines, this crosses party lines, and this crosses religious lines. The first freedom in the Constitution, the first amendment, enshrines the freedom of religion in America. And whether they're black churches or white churches or synagogues or the mosque that was burned in South Carolina, we cannot tolerate any of it.

I thank all these people for coming together, particularly the Governors, to work with us to see what we can do together to stem this tide and turn it around. The American people do not support this, they are passionately opposed to it, and we need to do what we can to end it.

Q. Do you think it's a conspiracy, Mr. President, in the country against black churches per se?

The President. No. I do not believe that based on the evidence I have seen it is a conspiracy. On the other hand, I do believe a lot of these instances are racially motivated, and they tend to play off of one another. I think that, you know, just because they're not connected doesn't mean there's not a feeling there that we need to all reject together. And I must say I've been very moved by the range of religious and political organizations that have come out to speak out against this, offered to contribute to rebuild these churches. I think that this is a place where nearly 100 percent of Americans are in accord. And I think we just need to make our voices heard, and we need to do the right things. And if we can do that, I think we'll get the results that we want.

Q. Given the number of church burnings that have taken place since you spoke out about it, are you concerned that the publicity being given to the issue has perhaps had the opposite effect of what you've intended?

The President. Well, I don't think it will over the long run because the people will see that we're being effective in prosecuting these cases. And more and more people will rally in their own communities and even across community lines. We see people even across State lines volunteering to send church groups into other States to help rebuild churches and things of that kind. And I think if we develop a prevention strategy, it won't.

It was quite a sizable problem before there was a lot of national attention to it. In the last 18 months—I've monitored the numbers over the last several years—the last 18 months it's gotten quite a lot worse. So, I think we just—we have to focus on it, and we have to speak out as a country about it. And I think as we speak out together and as people see there is no politics in this—we have Republicans and Democrats here, we have people—we have African-Americans, Hispanics, and WASP's and Jews in this room together and in this country. We're all going to work together on it. We can do that.

Bruce Lindsey

Q. Mr. President, Bruce Lindsey has been named an unindicted co-conspirator by White-water investigators. Do you still have complete faith in him?

The President. Absolutely.

Q. Will this change his status at the White House in any way?

Q. Does this hit close to home to you, sir, with Mr. Lindsey being named in this way?

The President. No. He was thoroughly investigated and not charged, with ample opportunities. I've got lots of confidence in him. I'm confident he didn't do anything wrong.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:52 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House prior to a meeting with a group of Southern Governors and law enforcement officials.