

Remarks on Presenting the National Medals of Science and Technology July 26, 1996

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you. Please be seated. We're honored to be joined today by Senator Chris Dodd; Chairman Ben Gilman; Congressman George Brown; Secretary Kantor; Secretary O'Leary; Secretary Shalala; Chairman of the Council of Economic Advisers Joe Stiglitz; Dr. Laura Tyson, the head of the National Economic Council; Dr. Neal Lane, the National Science Foundation Director; and Dr. Harold Varmus, the Director of NIH; Mary Good, the Under Secretary of Commerce for Technology; and of course, the President's adviser on science and technology, Dr. Jack Gibbons, who has done a wonderful job. I want to thank him for everything he's done.

I am very honored to be here today to present the winners of the National Medals of Science and Technology. Scientists have always been at the center of our national defense and our national conscience. Sometimes they have been one and the same. Thirty-three years ago today President Kennedy, with the advice and counsel of his science adviser, Jerome Wiesner, and the scientific community, called upon our Nation to take a step back from the shadows of war by supporting a limited nuclear test ban treaty. In that famous speech, President Kennedy envisioned a farther reaching treaty that banned all testing everywhere, including underground.

Today I am proud to tell you that when the Conference on Disarmament reconvenes in Geneva on Monday, we will be one step closer to realizing President Kennedy's vision of a safer world. The United States will support without change the comprehensive nuclear test ban treaty that the chairman of the negotiating committee proposed when the negotiations adjourned last June. The United Kingdom, France, and Russia have also announced their support for this document. Now I call upon other members of the Conference to do the same. I urge them to endorse and forward the chairman's text without change to the United Nations so that the General Assembly can approve the treaty and open it for signature in September. What a remarkable thing that would be.

This is an exciting time for our entire world and, of course, for America. Today we are enjoying the Olympic games, and as we applaud the

athletes in Atlanta we have to remember that the technological advances of many, many people throughout the world have made it possible for all of us to enjoy it, perhaps more when we aren't there than even when we are, although having been there I can vouch for the virtue of being there.

We also have to remember that America is engaged in another kind of competition, the competition for leadership in the world in science and technology and for the jobs and economic growth and social stability that they create. Here at home our economic strategy is working. Our people have created more than 10 million new jobs in the last 4 years. We've cut the deficit by more than half, and we're the first administration to cut it 4 years in a row since John Tyler in the 1840's. Every time I say that and someone's impressed, I have to add that President Tyler was not reelected. [Laughter] But I think it was a good thing, anyway, that he did.

Real hourly wages are rising again after dropping for a decade. The combined rate of unemployment, inflation, and home mortgages are the lowest in three decades, so our country is moving in the right direction. But to stay on top in the global economy, clearly we have to do more. I've done everything I can to increase our commitment to support scientific research and development at every level, especially at our universities. Government investment in technology is responsible for the computer, the jet aircraft, and the Internet. Once these inventions were the stuff of science fiction. Now it is hard to imagine life without them. No investments we've ever made has paid off better in jobs, in growth, in opportunity. Breakthroughs of the kind we applaud today do not just happen overnight. They represent years and years of investment and hard work. If we want the best science in the world, we must have the best scientists.

Last fall I launched a program to connect every classroom in America to the Internet by the year 2000. I want to make a college education available for every American who is willing to work for it. I want to make at least 2 years of education after high school as much

of a standard for everybody as a high school education is now.

All these things will help us to grow the economy and to allow America to grow together into the 21st century. But if we really want the America of our dreams, we must have research and development at universities and at every level as a funding priority for America. We must extend the research and development tax credit to encourage the private sector to do its part as well. This is absolutely critical.

Today I'm announcing a research contract to build the world's fastest and largest supercomputer at the Department of Energy's Lawrence Livermore Laboratory in California. This new supercomputer will be 300 times more powerful than any in the world. If it were an Olympic pole vaulter, for example, that means it would beat the current world record by about 600 stories on a typical building. [Laughter] This computer will be able to do in one second what it would take a person with a hand-held calculator 30,000 years to accomplish. It will bring us closer to a comprehensive test ban by helping to maintain the safety and reliability of our own nuclear stockpile without resorting to nuclear testing.

Unlike other supercomputers developed for national security purposes, it can quickly be switched to important civilian applications as well: developing new drugs and medical devices, improving weather forecasting, designing safer and faster airplanes, exploring space. In partnership, the Department of Energy and IBM will help us to build this machine which will go on-line in 1998. The new supercomputer is the result of our investment in research and development. It will help to make sure that America enters the 21st century as the world leader in computing power and that we retain that lead for decades to come.

In a few moments it will be my privilege to present the National Medals of Science and Technology to a number of very distinguished Americans, to whom we're all grateful. When I do, I'll have the honor to award a special posthumous National Medal of Technology to the late Secretary of Commerce, Ron Brown. Many of you who knew and worked with Ron know that he was a tireless advocate of Government leadership in research and development, especially in technology. He understood that it was the key to producing world-class technology to ensure America's leadership in the global

economy. He knew that he could do his job better in promoting our economic interests around the world if we were still leading in research and development, in technology, in partnerships with the private sector.

He knew the American spirit of innovation is one of our greatest national resources. And for him it was embodied in the Department of Commerce's advanced technology program. Under his leadership, that program prospered and forged remarkable, remarkable partnerships with the private sector, with remarkable results. I regret to say that there are some who disagree with us on this in the Congress. I think it is more ideology than evidence. And I hope, in the spirit of science, we can look at the evidence and realize that Ron Brown was right. It's hard not to miss him at an occasion like this which would have given him so much pride in our Nation and its prospects.

As I present these awards, let us all remember the impact that the work of these people have on our world. Police officers are stronger and safer because their bulletproof vests are stronger. People undergoing organ transplants have a better chance of complete recovery. Our aviation safety is more secure.

Like the athletes in Atlanta, these men and women have devoted themselves to being the best at what they do. Their vision, their genius, their constant commitment to do their work better have made America a better place and the world a better place. They deserve the highest measure of our respect and praise, and they also deserve our support in following policies that will enable them and those who will succeed them to keep alive the burning torch of research, development, science, and technology in the United States for as long as we are here.

We cannot let them down when they have done so much for us. I ask you to join me in honoring them and, Major, you can begin to read the citations.

[At this point, Maj. Michael Mudd, USA, Army aide to the President, read the citations, and the President presented the medals.]

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, we're about to adjourn. I do want to make one announcement. After my hamhanded attempt, Dr. Samuelson succeeded in putting the medal over his own head. And I don't know how many of you, like me, read his textbooks in college, but that is not the first problem that he could

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solve that I couldn't. [Laughter] So it's been another exercise in Presidential humility from you, sir. Thank you very much.

It's been a wonderful afternoon. Thank you. God bless you all, and good day. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:50 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to U.S. Representative Benjamin A. Gilman and economist Paul A. Samuelson, National Medal of Science recipient.

Statement on the Death of Hector Garcia

July 26, 1996

Hillary and I are deeply saddened to learn of the death of Dr. Hector P. Garcia. The founder of the American GI Forum, Dr. Garcia fought for half a century for the civil and educational rights of Mexican-Americans. A national hero and decorated Army veteran, Dr. Garcia became the first Hispanic-American to be awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom, the Nation's highest civilian honor.

Recently, Texas A&M University in Corpus Christi, his hometown, dedicated the Hector P. Garcia Plaza and established the Hector P. Garcia Scholarship Endowment. It is a fitting tribute to a man who fought for the rights of Hispanic-Americans, veterans, and all Americans throughout his life. Hillary and I extend our deepest condolences to his family and to all the Latino community.

The President's Radio Address and an Exchange With Reporters

July 27, 1996

Centennial Olympic Park Bombing

The President. Good morning. The bombing at Centennial Olympic Park this morning was an evil act of terror. It was aimed at the innocent people who were participating in the Olympic games and in the spirit of the Olympics, an act of cowardice that stands in sharp contrast to the courage of the Olympic athletes.

On behalf of all Americans, let me extend my condolences to the families of those who lost their lives and our prayers to those who were injured. I want to thank the brave security personnel who were on the scene. They saw the package; they alerted the bomb squad; they cleared the crowd. They prevented a much greater loss of life.

I also want to compliment the medical personnel of all the hospitals, those who were operating the ambulances, they and the volunteers who were helping people who were down at the scene. Those of us who watched it throughout the night last night could not have been failed to be impressed by their courage, their competence, their real heroism under pressure.

Last night I was awakened by Mr. Panetta shortly after the explosion, and I continued to receive reports and follow events until the press conference early this morning. Then this morning the Vice President and I spoke to the president of the International Olympic Committee, the president of the Atlanta committee for the games, the Governor of Georgia, the mayor of Atlanta, the Attorney General, and the Director of the FBI.

I want to make clear our common determination. We will spare no effort to find out who was responsible for this murderous act. We will track them down. We will bring them to justice. We will see that they are punished. In the meanwhile, we are all agreed the games will go on. We will take every necessary step to protect the athletes and those who are attending the games.

I know that the people who've worked so hard to put on these Olympics, the people of Atlanta, the thousands and thousands of volunteers, are more determined than ever to see them to a successful conclusion. Already we see the spirit at work this morning. The mayor