

May 10 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1997

the most of his or her life, enlisting millions and millions of volunteers to guarantee children a healthy start, access to basic skills, a mentor, a safe environment, and the chance to serve themselves. Republicans and Democrats alike applauded this summit. It highlighted successful efforts to guarantee children a safe environment.

Now, this bill the House passed ignores the real spirit of the summit, its bipartisanship and its focus on what works. The plain evidence of what is working right now to save our children is nowhere apparent in this bill. It's the same old tough rhetoric without any prevention, without any change in the environment to make it harder for gangs to function, or without real toughness in every State in America. Perhaps most troubling, the House bill rejects my call to cut off young people's access to guns, now the third leading cause of death for young people between the ages of 13 and 24. We must begin with the simple precaution of child safety locks. It's heartbreaking when a gun owned by a law-abiding parent is used by a child to hurt themselves or others. According to a National Institute of Justice survey, 185 children died in 1994 because of accidental shootings. Now, if we can have safety precautions to prevent children from opening bottles of aspirin, surely we can have the same safety precautions to prevent children from using guns.

Extending the Brady bill is critical as well. If you commit a violent crime as a 17-year-

old, you should not be able to buy a gun on your 21st birthday. I challenge Congress to pass a real juvenile justice bill, one that's tough on gangs and tough on guns and is serious about the kind of prevention efforts we know will work.

To me, a juvenile justice bill that doesn't limit children's access to guns is a bill that walks away from the problem. Not a single hunter would lose a gun because of child safety locks. Not a single law-abiding citizen would be denied a gun if we extend the Brady bill to those with violent juvenile records. But countless young lives would be saved if stolen guns became useless guns and if lawless juveniles became gunless adults.

If Congress really wants to get tough on juvenile crime, then it's time to get tough on guns and take them out of the hands of violent juveniles. We've come a long way in the last 4½ years. But to really make sure we prepare our children for the 21st century, we have got to give them a safe and orderly environment where they can make the most of their future and of the world they will soon inherit.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 2:50 p.m. on May 9 aboard Air Force One for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 10.

Address to the People of Central and South America May 10, 1997

Good morning. I'm speaking to you today from Bridgetown, Barbados. I'm proud to be the first American President to meet with Caribbean leaders in the heart of the Caribbean. This was not a meeting between Caribbean nations and the United States, it was a meeting among Caribbean nations including the United States.

We are charting a roadmap for how we can work together for the benefit of all of our people as we move into a new century. Today, every nation in the Americas but one has embraced free elections and open markets. This hopeful moment gives us real opportunities to improve the lives of all our people, but it also

demands that we work together to bring the benefit of change to all our citizens and to band together to meet the transnational threats that respect no borders.

That's what the Partnership for Prosperity and Security in the Caribbean that we signed today is all about. It lays out an ambitious action plan to expand trade with the Caribbean; to launch the Caribbean clean energy initiative to better protect the environment; to create a Caribbean scholars program so students have access to specialized training; to support the banks that make low-interest loans readily available to workers, farmers, and women's groups; and to deepen

our cooperation to fight drugs and organized crime.

Working as partners, we can help build a future of peace and prosperity for all our children to enjoy. That's what we've committed to do at our summit in Barbados; that's what we'll continue to do as neighbors, friends, and partners.

NOTE: The address was recorded at approximately 3 p.m. on May 9 aboard Air Force One for later broadcast by Voice of America to Latin American outlets. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this address.

Remarks at a Welcoming Ceremony With Caribbean Leaders in Bridgetown May 10, 1997

To our host, Prime Minister—if I had known earlier in my life that George Washington came here as a young man, I would have been here before. [*Laughter*] I thank you for the warm welcome that you have given to me and to my wife, to Secretary Albright, and our delegation.

I wanted to make the important point last night, and I would like to make it again, that while we have gathered as a group before in the White House and in Port-au-Prince, this is the first time an American President has actually held a summit with the Caribbean heads of Government in the region itself. But the point I wish to make is that this is not a meeting between Caribbean nations and the United States, but rather a meeting among Caribbean nations including the United States.

Puerto Rico and the American Virgin Islands lie at the heart of this region. We are joined today by the Governor of the Virgin Islands, Governor Roy Schneider; the congressional delegate from Puerto Rico and former Governor, Carlos Romero-Barceló; last night the delegate from the Virgin Islands, Donna Christian-Green, was here with us; and we also have Congresswoman Maxine Waters from California here.

The United States is very much aware that millions of our fellow citizens trace their heritage to these islands and that we have benefited immeasurably from them. More than ever before, we are linked economically and politically. Every nation but one in the Caribbean has chosen free elections and free markets. I am proud that the United States has long been a beacon for freedom in this hemisphere. But I am proud that so many of the other nations represented

around this table have also been long beacons for freedom.

And like all the rest of you, we are especially gratified to be joined by the second democratically elected President of Haiti. And President Preval, we're glad you're here and we wish you well and we're with you all the way.

We have a lot of work to do today, and I will try to be brief. We have to work on means to expand the quality of our lives by expanding trade, by helping small economies compete in a global economy, by strengthening the education of our children, and deepening our cooperation against crime and drugs. If we work together, we can bring the benefits of change to our citizens and beat back the darker aspects of it. We can meet the new threats to our security and enhance our prosperity.

I want this summit to be the start of an ongoing and deeper process of Caribbean cooperation. We have worked very hard, all of us have, to make this summit productive. We have a rich and full document to which we are all going to commit ourselves. But still, we must be committed to working over the months and years ahead for our people and our Caribbean community, and that is my commitment to you. This summit should be the beginning, not the end of this process.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:13 a.m. in the North West Plenary Conference Room at the Sherbourne Center.