

more dramatic proof of our progress, the Annual National Crime Victimization Survey. It says that in 1996, crime rates fell to their lowest recorded level in nearly 25 years. Property crime is down. Violent crime is down. Since 1993, murder has dropped by 22 percent, 10 percent in 1996 alone. This remarkable drop in the crime rate is no accident. The hard work of people from Washington to every community in the country made it happen.

Community policing is at the center of this success. In only 3 years, we've already funded 65,000 new police officers under the crime bill, and we're close to meeting our goal of putting 100,000 new police officers on our streets.

Our Nation's police officers will tell you that our ongoing effort to ban lethal assault weapons has also been critical to their ability to do a better job. We've banned these guns because you don't need an Uzi to go deer hunting, and everyone knows it.

But as effective as the assault weapons ban has been, we know that some foreign gun manufacturers are getting around the ban by making minor modifications to their weapons that amount to nothing more than cosmetic surgery. Well, we didn't fight as hard as we have to pass the assault weapons in the first place only to let a few gun manufacturers sidestep our laws and undermine our progress. Assault weapons in the hands of civilians exist for no reason but to inspire fear and wreak deadly havoc on

our streets. They don't belong on our streets or in our schoolyards, and they shouldn't be aimed at our children. That's why we banned them 3 years ago and why we're taking action today.

Effective immediately, the Secretary of the Treasury is suspending the importation of all modified assault weapons for 120 days while we study whether they can be permanently blocked from our borders and banned from our streets. We must continue to do everything we can to crack down on illegal firearms and the organized criminals, terrorists, and drug lords who seek them. Yesterday President Zedillo of Mexico and I signed an unprecedented international convention to help fight illegal gun trafficking in our own hemisphere and to strengthen law enforcement's ability to combat this deadly trade.

Working together over the last 5 years, we've proven that we can drive down the crime rate. Now we have to press on, confident that we can take our streets back from crime, take assault weapons and illegal firearms out of the hands of criminals, enact a tough but smart juvenile justice bill, and eventually give our families and our children the real security they deserve.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:30 p.m. on November 14 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 15.

Remarks on Arrival in Sacramento, California *November 15, 1997*

Good morning. Two years ago, I approved a BRAC recommendation to close McClellan Air Force Base, but only after I was convinced it was feasible for McClellan to privatize and that the prospects of success were strong. Since then, I've had to fight at every turn with the Members of Congress who have resisted our efforts to give the Department of Defense the tools it needs to privatize more of its operations more easily.

This year, the so-called Depot Caucus tried to block the ongoing competition for the Kelly and McClellan workload altogether. I said if they did that, I would veto the entire defense

bill. Eventually Congress reached a compromise to allow the competitions for this important work to go forward. The Secretary of Defense has assured me that although the language in the bill is not ideal, I quote, "the Department of Defense has flexibility to proceed with the remaining public-private competitions at Kelly and McClellan bases in a way that is fair to both sides." For this reason, I have decided to sign the defense bill.

We will continue to do everything we can to help McClellan make the transition. The Vice President and I have met with business and community officials. We have listened to your

concerns. Today I am pleased to announce seven steps we are taking.

First, by December 31st, the Air Force will transfer McClellan to Sacramento County at a significantly discounted price to encourage rapid economic development and job creation.

Second, the Coast Guard will remain at McClellan through at least 2004, contributing \$2 million a year to support private airfield operations.

Third, the Defense Department will retain liability for the eventual shutdown of McClellan's nuclear reactor, making it possible to support scientific and commercial research here for the next 30 years.

Fourth, the Department recently announced that it will provide an additional \$7.2 million to retrain 1,700 civilian workers who face layoffs over the next 2 years.

Fifth, our EPA Administrator, Carol Browner, will visit McClellan early next month to discuss with community leaders a schedule for environmental cleanup to promote redevelopment and job creation.

Sixth, the Defense Department will provide an additional \$11.3 million to complete funding of the casting emission reduction program at McClellan to develop environmentally friendly technology for manufacturing.

Finally, we will give high priority to capital improvements at McClellan to promote economic development and job creation.

Today we're also announcing a series of actions we're taking to help San Antonio redevelop the Kelly Air Force Base.

This is the third base conversion challenge this community has taken on. You've done a tremendous job. Your efforts are a model for the Nation. And I will continue to work with McClellan to make this third story a very successful one for this remarkable community.

Thank you very much. And I'm sorry for the weather inconvenience.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:20 a.m. at McClellan Air Force Base. In his remarks, he referred to the Base Realignment and Closure Commission (BRAC).

Remarks at the Yolo Basin Wetlands in Davis, California

November 15, 1997

Thank you very much. You can't imagine how much I wanted to get out of cold, rainy, windy Washington, DC, to come to California. [*Laughter*] But after all, this is a wetlands event.

I want to, first of all, thank Sarah for her introduction. Didn't she speak well? [*Applause*] She was terrific, I thought. And listening to her recount the experiences of the last several years of her life I think was as good a statement as any as could be made about so many of you who are here and the work you have done to make this day come to pass. I want to thank all of you very much.

I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to your secretary of natural resources, Doug Wheeler, and two people who came from Washington with me, our Deputy Secretary of Agriculture, Rich Rominger, who is from Yolo County; and he's already been mentioned, but our Deputy Secretary of the Interior, John Garamendi, who grew up not far from here,

and they've both done a terrific job for you back there.

I thank John Walker for his statement. We were dedicating a wetland in Arkansas once a few years ago, on a much warmer day, and I was a Governor, and he was a president. But after all, I'm term-limited, and he can go on forever. [*Laughter*]

I'm very glad to be here with all of you. I want to thank Robin and Greg for showing me around the area and giving me a chance to look at some of the birds and just see what you've done here. I asked him how many ducks and geese there were going to be here and whether you had any eagles or ospreys or egrets, and I got a pretty good rundown on it.

And I have to say that I have been, as you have heard already, a big supporter of these kinds of endeavors. I thank the people here from the California Waterfowl Association, and I do want to say a special word of thanks to two groups with which I have been associated,