

The policies and actions of the Saddam Hussein regime continue to pose an unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security and foreign policy of the United States, as well as to regional peace and security. The U.N. resolutions affirm that the Security Council be assured of Iraq's peaceful intentions in judging its compliance with sanctions. Because of Iraq's failure to comply fully with these resolutions, the United States will continue to apply eco-

nomie sanctions to deter it from threatening peace and stability in the region.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
February 3, 1998.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 4.

Remarks Announcing the High Hopes for College Initiative February 4, 1998

Let's give her a hand; she was great. Bravo! [Applause] Thank you very much. Fabiola, you can introduce me any time you want. [Laughter] You were magnificent, and I know your family is very proud of you today.

Mr. Vice President, thank you for all the work you've done on our education initiatives. Secretary Riley, thank you for what you said and for what you've done. And I want to thank you and all your people, Leslie Thornton and the others who worked on this. I want to thank Gene Sperling—the Vice President has already blown his head up too big—[laughter]—but he has been working on this issue with deep personal conviction for 5 years. Now, all of you who know Gene know that since he never sleeps, that is the equivalent of 10 years' work for anyone else. [Laughter]

I thank Harris Wofford and all the people at AmeriCorps, including the young volunteers who are here today; Linda Chavez-Thompson; and especially Congressman Chaka Fattah, for whom this has been a life passion. I thank the Members of Congress, both Republicans and Democrats, who are here and those who could not come today. We have an extraordinary representation from Congress among those who are here and among those who are not. I thank the college presidents who are here and the over 300 they represent, and the heads of organizations who are here.

And I think before I begin I should recognize a man who has been a mentor to all of us, and a great friend to Hillary and to me for many years, Mr. Eugene Lang, would you please stand. Thank you, and God bless you, sir, for

everything you have done. [Applause] Thank you.

Since this is my only public appearance of the day, before I begin it is important, I think, to say a few words about the situation in Iraq. Later today, Secretary Albright is going to report to me about her intensive week of meetings with our friends in the Persian Gulf, Europe, and Russia. I'm encouraged by the strong consensus she found that Iraq must fulfill all the United Nations Security Council resolutions and that it must allow international weapons inspectors full and unfettered access to all suspect sites. All of us would prefer a genuine diplomatic solution. I want to reiterate that to every single American. All of us would prefer a genuine diplomatic solution.

The best way to stop Saddam from building nuclear, biological, or chemical weapons is simply to get the international inspectors back to work with no restraints. Keep in mind, they have done a marvelous job. They have uncovered more weapons potential and weapons stores than were destroyed in the entire Gulf war. But I will say again, one way or the other, we are determined to deny Iraq the capacity to develop weapons of mass destruction and the missiles to deliver them. That is our bottom line. [Applause] Thank you.

Now, back to the moment. Last week in my State of the Union Address, when I spoke about what we had to do to strengthen America for the 21st century, I said I wanted an America where everybody has a chance to work, where everyone has a chance to get ahead with that work, where people have the chance to live up

to their God-given potential, where our Government provides opportunity and our citizens exhibit the responsibility to give something back to their communities. This is the kind of America the High Hopes initiative we announced today will put within our reach.

Thanks to the new \$1,500 HOPE scholarships, the lifetime learning tax credits, the education IRA's, education grants for serving with AmeriCorps, streamlined loans, and expanded Pell grants, we have opened the doors to college wide to those willing and able to work for it. Now we have to make sure that all our students, especially those from our hardest pressed families, have a guardian angel helping to guide them to those doors and to make sure they are ready to walk through them. That's what this is all about.

You know, I was listening to Secretary Riley's lilting southern accent, looking at the Vice President, thinking about all three of us white southerners up here, overrepresented on the platform—[laughter]—and remembering the last 20 years that Dick Riley and I have worked together on these issues. There's a reason we feel so passionately about this.

When I was born in Arkansas, the per capita income of my State was 56 percent of the national average. That's what the average income was. And I came from a family without a lot of money. Nobody in my family had ever been to college before, but by the time I got out of Ramble Grade School in Hot Springs, Arkansas, I never had any doubt that I was going to college. My family told me I was going to college; all my teachers told me I was going to college; all the people at my church told me I was going to college; everybody told me I was going to college. It never occurred to me that I wouldn't go to college, and yet no one in my family had ever been to college before. I was in an environment which made it very difficult for me to fail. That's the environment I want for every child in America.

Now, Congressman Fattah has a similar story. His grandmother set him early on his path to college. She used to tell him and his five brothers, "Unless you're dead or dying, you're going to school." [Laughter] Apparently, the acorn does not fall far from the tree. I just found out that on this, perhaps the most important day of his public service, Chaka Fattah would not let his son, Chip, come to the ceremony because he wouldn't permit him to miss class.

But you know, a lot of our young students are not as lucky. They grow up without realizing how important or how possible college is. There may not be anyone in their homes to push them to take algebra, to take those other classes that are important to college. They probably don't know how to secure scholarships or grants or loans. And maybe most important, there may not be anybody pumping them up with hopes and dreams.

That's why we have to make mentorship a way of life in America. The High Hopes initiative will enlist colleges and community groups to form partnerships with thousands of middle schools and give more than a million students both the information and the inspiration to seize the opportunity of college.

Our balanced budget for 1999 includes \$140 million to help these groups harness the power of citizen service and reach out to students, no later than seventh grade, and work with them all the way to high school graduation. Trained mentors and role models will help children pick challenging courses, tutor them when they need some extra help, take them on college visits and other academic field trips, and help them during the college application process.

And with Representative Fattah's leadership, we will make sure children and their parents receive a 21st Century Scholar certificate telling them how much aid for college they will receive well in advance, so they will never have any doubt that if they do their part they can, in fact, go on to college.

I want to thank the more than 300 college presidents and more than 50 major education, religious, civil rights, and service groups who have embraced this initiative. And to show you the depth of support—we've already seen how many Members of Congress have come here for this today—I'd like to ask the leaders of these groups and the college presidents who are here today to stand and be recognized. Look at them. Thank you very much. [Applause] Thank you.

Again, I want to thank the Republican and Democratic Members of Congress who are here. I want to thank Linda Chavez-Thompson and the rest of the members of my Race Advisory Board for their help with this initiative. They found already that early mentoring and tutoring has made a remarkable difference in the lives of minority students. And they believe, as I do,

that these High Hopes scholarships—partnerships—will help close our Nation’s opportunity gap and help us to build that one America.

I want to thank General Colin Powell and the people who are working in the Presidents’ Summit on Service. Remember, when we had that summit, they identified making sure that every child in America who needed it had a mentor as one of the five things we ought to be able to guarantee to all of America’s children.

I want to thank, as I said, Eugene Lang, and all others who have gone into their personal pockets to give children this kind of guarantee long before the rest of us were involved in the endeavor.

The High Hopes partnerships are just one of the ways we’re working to raise expectations and lift the sights of our young people. Because we know that high school dropout rates are still too high, especially among Hispanic students, the Vice President just announced a \$600 million effort to focus more classroom attention on those most at risk. We’re also expanding Head Start to a million children; enlisting thousands more college students to make sure all our 8-year-olds can read; working to add 100,000 qualified teachers to the first, second, and third grades to get average class size down to 18; challenging our States to adopt high academic standards and to ensure that all our children master the basics.

In every community in this country, there are children with an enormous ability, who just need a little spark to go on to great things. There’s a child in rural Tennessee who, with a helping hand and a higher education, will go on to a career in medical research; a child in southwest Washington who, with the guidance of a caring college student, will go on to become a college president; a first generation American in Texas who might go on to become President of the United States.

We have to have high hopes for all of our children. And we have to make them know that they can have high hopes for themselves. A great nation that aspires to even greater things in a new century in a new millennium cannot afford to leave a single child behind. And we don’t intend to.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:40 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Fabiola Tafolla, a recent college graduate and mentorship program participant who introduced the President; Leslie Thornton, Chief of Staff, Department of Education; Eugene Lang, founder and chairman emeritus, “I Have a Dream” Foundation; President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; and Gen. Colin Powell, USA (Ret.), chairman, America’s Promise—The Alliance For Youth.

Remarks at the National Prayer Breakfast *February 5, 1998*

Thank you very much. Thank you very much to my good friend and sometimes golfing partner, Senator Akaka, to all the Members of Congress here, Reverend Graham, other head table guests, ladies and gentlemen, especially to the organizers of this wonderful event.

For 5 years now, Hillary and I have looked forward to this day. For me it’s a day in which I can be with other people of faith and pray and ask for your prayers, both as President and as just another child of God. I have done it for 5 years, and I do so again today.

At each of these breakfasts, from our shared experiences and our prayers, God’s grace always seems to come, bringing strength and wisdom

and peace. Today I come more than anything else to say thank you. First, thank you, Connie Mack, for your wonderful message and the power of your example. I also thank all of you here for many things in the last 5 years and ask your help in helping us to work together to make our Nation better and the work that God has sent me to do and you to do.

I thank you for helping me to strike blows for religious liberty—with the work so many of you in this room have done to help us to protect the rights of Federal employees to follow their faith at work—our students in school. In particular, I want to thank Reverend Don Argue, the former president of the National Association