

for three things. First of all, the huge funding increases for education—but they were properly targeted. This 100,000 teachers, this is truly historic. The United States—this is the educational equivalent of what we did when we put 100,000 police on the street. And I will remind you that we now have the lowest crime rate in 25 years. We have never done that before. And we had the same partisan argument then. We were told that it wouldn't work, that it was interference in local government, even though all the police chiefs of the country were screaming, "Give it to us." Now we were told the same thing here.

This is an historic commitment by the United States to put 100,000 teachers out there for smaller classes in the early grades. That, plus the historic commitment we made to after-school and summer school programs, plus the continued funding to hook up all the classrooms to the Internet by the year 2000—these things are truly historic.

Now, I wish we had been able to persuade the Republican majority to give us the school construction and rehabilitation proposal, because we need modern facilities, and that proposal is a paid-for-tax cut in the balanced budget that would enable us to build or rehabilitate 5,000 schools. I think that's important. I still think we ought to be a nation which says we should

have high standards, and I wish we had had an explicit proposal on that. And I believe in the empowerment educational opportunity zones to reward schools that end social promotion and fund more after-school and summer school programs.

Now, those are three things that I would like to have. But we can debate those and work for those in the election. We have differences of opinions, and they have more Members than we do. They're against the Patients' Bill of Rights, and we're for it. They were against reforming—passing the tobacco reform legislation and against the campaign finance reform. But when you compare where we were for 8 months with where we are today, and how good this is for America, that the things that I talked about in the State of the Union in education, in the environment, in the international economy, and saving Social Security, these are huge victories for the American people.

We did the best we could, and I think the best we did by staying together was very good, indeed. And I think the American people will believe so, too.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:30 p.m. in the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks at the Plenary Session of the Wye River Conference on the Middle East in Queenstown, Maryland

October 15, 1998

I wish to welcome Prime Minister Netanyahu, Chairman Arafat, and the members of the Israeli and Palestinian delegations here. As I said earlier today at the White House, there is hard work ahead if we are to reach an agreement here and get the peace process moving again. Secretary Albright and I and our entire team are ready to do whatever we can.

As the press contingent prepares to leave, let me say that all of us are determined to keep our energies focused on the talks themselves. Therefore, we have agreed to confine our dealings with the media on this subject to periodic briefings to be conducted by spokespersons. We

have a lot of work to do, a limited amount of time to do it in, but we're ready to get to work.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:07 p.m. in the Main Conference Room at the Aspen Institute Wye River Conference Center. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Binyamin Netanyahu of Israel and Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority.