

Remarks Following the White House Strategy Meeting on Children,
Violence, and Responsibility and an Exchange With Reporters
May 10, 1999

The President. Please be seated, everyone. We're getting our group up here, you see. It's a little slow—it's a large and, as you can see, diverse and distinguished group. We just had a wonderful meeting in the East Room of the White House. We had not only the Vice President and Tipper and Hillary and I, but many members of our administration and four Members of Congress: Senator Brownback and Senator Reid and Leader Gephardt and Representative Jennifer Dunn were there.

And we listened to several hours of discussions; over 40 people spoke, many of them already heavily involved in the efforts to give our children a safe childhood and protect them from violence.

This was exactly the kind of session I had hoped for, where everyone was talking about the problems and the opportunities; everyone was talking about what could be done to accept responsibility. No one was pointing the finger of blame.

In the weeks and months ahead, as we launch our national campaign to prevent youth violence, we will build on the strong foundation of this day and on many of the things which have been said and many of the people who have said them.

I want to say a special word of appreciation to the young people who are here today and who are working in their own communities to try to help their fellow students have a safe and wholesome life.

As the national campaign gets underway, we know we'll have to overcome the old ways of doing business. We've seen some of that today as well, in the remarkable support that gun manufacturers have given to many of our common-sense gun proposals. We see in the efforts of networks like ABC and CBS, and private family foundations like Kaiser, and agencies like the FCC, all of whom have supported the television rating systems, and giving parents the tool of the V-chip to protect children from excessively violent programming.

We know that there is more for each of us to do at home and at school, in Hollywood and in the heartland and here in Washington. Every

parent, every teacher, every leader has something more to do.

First and most fundamentally, we must do more to help parents fulfill their most important responsibilities, those to their children. Challenging parents to turn off the television when they don't like what they see, to use the new tools the Vice President announced recently to keep an eye on the computer screen, to refuse to buy products that glorify violence. If no one consumes these products, people will stop producing them. They will not build it if you don't come.

To the media and entertainment industries, I also say we need your wholehearted participation in this cause. There are many changes which have occurred over the last generation in our society. It is true that we've had a lot of breakdowns in families, schools, and communities. It is true that we have had a rise in the availability of weapons. It is also true that there has been a coarsening of the culture in many ways. And those who influence it must be sensitive to that.

I mentioned today that not very long ago there was a fascinating story on the birth of Hollywood, the virtual creation of Hollywood by immigrants, on one of our cable channels. And the story really graphically demonstrated how these immigrants, who came to the United States, faced initial discrimination, went to California to make a new life—created an image of America, and an image of the American dream and an image of American life in the movies that they made that had a very positive impact on the culture of America for decades.

We cannot pretend that there is no impact on our culture and our children that is adverse if there is too much violence coming out of what they see and experience. And so, we have to ask people who produce things to consider the consequences of them—whether it's a violent movie, a CD, a video game. If they are made, then at least they should not be marketed to children.

Finally, I urge Congress to join in this campaign by passing the legislation necessary to keep guns out of the hands of children. As a

group of gun manufacturers and sportsmen made clear today, these are commonsense measures that they support.

There are also other things that we can do, that I hope we will do to provide more support for counseling services, for mental health services, for other things which will help to improve our efforts.

Again, let me say, I want to thank the Vice President and Tipper Gore for the work they have done on these issues for years. I want them to come forward and speak. But first, I want to ask the First Lady to speak and acknowledge that she has to go to a school as soon as she finishes talking here.

She had the idea for us to call this national conference and to try to organize a national grassroots campaign. It was a good idea, and it looks like a lot better idea after today's meeting. So I want to thank Hillary for everything she's done and ask her to come forward and say a few words.

[At this point, Hillary Clinton, Tipper Gore, and Vice President Al Gore made brief remarks.]

The President. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Situation in the Balkans

Q. [Inaudible]—forces? Is that good enough?

Q. Mr. President, are you encouraged by word of a Serb withdrawal?

The President. Well, I'm encouraged by any good word, but I think that the conditions that we set out are the minimal ones to make this work. I don't think that the—after all the Serbs—after all the buildup and the hundreds of thousands of Kosovars have been driven out, many, many killed, I don't think they'll come back with that. So I think we have to do better.

But any little daylight, any little progress is—it's better than it was the day before. We just have to bear down and keep working, and we'll work through it.

But I think that forces have got to be withdrawn. There has to be an international security force there. Otherwise, they won't come home. And that's the important thing.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:06 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of Hillary Clinton, Tipper Gore, and Vice President Al Gore.

Message to the Congress on Certification of Satellite Fuels and Separation Systems Exports to China

May 10, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the provisions of section 1512 of Public Law 105–261, the Strom Thurmond National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1999, I hereby certify that the export to the People's Republic of China of satellite fuels and separation systems for the U.S.-origin Iridium commercial communications satellite program:

- (1) is not detrimental to the United States space launch industry; and

- (2) the material and equipment, including any indirect technical benefit that could be derived from such export, will not measurably improve the missile or space launch capabilities of the People's Republic of China.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 10, 1999.