

our military will become our only line of defense.

Of course, it also costs money to help struggling young democracies to stand on their feet as friends and partners of the United States, as we've tried to do from Poland to Russia to Nigeria to Indonesia. It costs money to make sure nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union are secure, for the terrorists and leaders who wish us harm do not acquire the means to kill on a more massive scale. It costs money to support the peacemakers in places like the Middle East and the Balkans and Africa, so that regional conflicts do not explode and spread.

But all of you know, better than most, that freedom is not free. And all of you know, far better than most, that the costliest peace is far cheaper than the cheapest war.

I am pleased to report to you today that the Democrats and Republicans in Congress are working together on a strong compromise that will allow us to meet some of our most urgent needs in foreign affairs, to prevent war. We're not finished yet, but there is a bipartisan center like that which has carried America for 50 years at this hopeful moment now at work in the Congress. I am grateful for it, and our children will be safer for it.

In less than 2 months, we'll be able to say the conflict and bloodshed that took so many American lives came from another century. So we gather today for the last time in this century

to dedicate ourselves to being good stewards of the sacrifice of the veterans of our country.

As we look ahead to the large challenges and the grand opportunities of the new century and a new millennium, when our country has more prosperity than ever before, and for the first time in my lifetime has the ability to meet those challenges and to dream dreams and live them because we are unthreatened by serious crisis at home and security threats abroad, let us resolve to honor those veterans, to redeem their sacrifice, to be stewards of the lives they never got to live by doing all we can to see that the horrors of the 20th century's wars are not visited upon 21st century Americans. That is the true way to honor the people we come here today to thank God for.

Thank you very much, and God bless America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:50 a.m. in the Amphitheater at Arlington National Cemetery. In his remarks, he referred to John W. Smart, commander in chief, Veterans of Foreign Wars; Jeni Cooke, Chaplain, Department of Veterans Affairs; Lee Thornton, master of ceremonies; Gen. Raymond G. Davis, USMC (Ret.), Congressional Medal of Honor recipient; and Miss America 2000 Heather Renee French, her father, Ronnie, her mother, Diana, her sister, Gretchen, and her brother, Jamison.

Remarks on Education Appropriations and an Exchange With Reporters November 11, 1999

The President. Well, good afternoon. I am delighted to be joined by Secretary Riley and by Bruce Reed, my Domestic Policy Adviser, and by these teachers from our area, some of whom have actually been hired through our class size initiative.

All of you know today is Veterans Day. I've just returned from Arlington Cemetery. We always discussed how best to honor the contributions of our veterans on this day. One good way is by reaching agreement on a budget that honors our values, the values for which they served, that enhances opportunity, reinforces responsibility, strengthens our community and the

future of our children. We have made important progress toward that end.

Last night, after many days and hours of discussion, Congress agreed to continue supporting our efforts to hire 100,000 new, highly qualified teachers to reduce class size in the early grades. That is truly good news for our children and for their future.

We know that school enrollments are exploding, record numbers of teachers are retiring. Research is clear that students do learn more in smaller classes with quality teachers. Every parent and teacher in America knows that a child in a second-grade class with 25 students

will not get as much attention as he or she needs and deserves.

Just this week, we learned that our class size initiative, which Congress agreed to last year, is working. Communities are using the funds from last year's agreement to hire more than 29,000 teachers and reduce average class size for 1.7 million children to 18 students a class. That's why I've made honoring our commitment to reducing class size such a high priority in these budget negotiations. The agreement we have reached has bipartisan support, and it keeps us on track to hiring 100,000 teachers by 2005.

As I said in my State of the Union Address, we don't just need more teachers, but better ones. This agreement furthers that goal as well. All teachers hired under this program must be fully qualified. The program gives school districts the flexibility to use 25 percent of the funds from this program to train and test new teachers. It also increases flexibility, with the involvement of the Secretary of Education, to get extra funds for school districts that have a high percentage of their teachers that are not certified to teach the subjects they have been hired to teach, so that they can become fully qualified in those subjects.

Through this plan, taxpayer dollars will go for reducing class size in public schools. And I want to thank Members of Congress from both parties. I'd like to particularly mention Chairman Goodling, the chairman of the House committee, for working with us on this, and Senator Patty Murray, who has been such a strong advocate for the class size reduction initiative. But there are many others, as well, who came together in this agreement. This is a victory for America's children.

In addition to reducing class size, we've made progress on other vital education initiatives, as well, more than doubling funds for after-school programs and increasing funding for computers in our schools, for mentoring to prepare our children for college, for the Hispanic education programs. We're also making progress on other vital budget priorities, from hiring up to 50,000 new community police officers, to setting aside funds to preserve natural resources and protect our environment for future generations.

I am committed to continuing this work with Congress to reach agreement on the issues still outstanding, including ensuring assistance for those who have suffered from the devastating

impact of Hurricane Floyd, to paying our dues to the United Nations. And if we can just continue in this bipartisan spirit, very soon, we will complete work on a budget that honors our values, lives within our means, and looks to our future.

Thank you all for being here today, for symbolizing what we've been working for.

World Trade Organization Talks in China

Q. Mr. President, Ambassador Barshefsky—[inaudible]—stay in China for a third day—[inaudible]—WTO negotiations. Are they getting close to a deal? How much progress have they made?

The President. I think the best thing I can say at the present is what I said yesterday: They are working, and when I know whether we've got an agreement or whether we haven't, I'll let you know. But I think the less we say now, the better. These are difficult negotiations, and they're working on them.

President's Visit to Kosovo

Q. Sir, can you tell us why you are going to Kosovo, and is the plan to winterize every home in Kosovo overly optimistic, given that many nongovernmental organizations have reported that people are living in tents and don't appear that they will have a winterized area of their home in time for the winter season?

The President. Well, I'm going for several reasons. I'm going to thank our troops and see how they're doing, to support the United Nations' operation there, and to see how we're doing in helping the peace to take hold and meeting basic human needs.

As to the last question you asked, I can't give a definitive answer because I don't know what the possibilities are. I think we have to do what is necessary to make sure that people are not too cold this winter because they exercised their right to go home.

I want to remind you that in some ways we have this problem because almost everybody who left Kosovo went home, because the world community acted more quickly here than we acted in Bosnia, where there are still hundreds of thousands of refugees who have not gone home because the Bosnian war went on for 4 years and a quarter of a million people died there. So I'm—it's a problem, but I think we'll deal with it, and I think the Kosovars know that it's a problem because they all got to go

home so fast. And we just have to work it through and find out whatever is necessary to get them through the winter.

One more. I'll take one more. Go ahead.

Africa and Caribbean Trade Legislation

Q. Mr. President, in your conversation with Mr. Lott, you have raised the African and CBI legislation. Did you get any assurance from him that there would be action on that before the end of the session?

The President. Oh, I'll tell you exactly what he said, and actually, I think he's basically right about this. He said, we've got every available resource now, all of our available resources thrown into resolving all the remaining budget issues. As you know, we stand up—Senator Lott and Senator Daschle and Speaker Hastert and Mr. Gephardt and I, we stand up and we give these talks, and we answer your questions. And for every question we answer, there are scores of people that are required to do all this work and hammer out the agreements to turn it into legislative language, to work out the mechanics of how it's going to get on the calendar and all that.

So what Senator Lott said was that he strongly supported the legislation, as do I. Senator Daschle strongly supports it. They want to know that we have—put mechanically—that we have a way to resolve all the budget issues and deal with getting it up, getting it voted on at the appropriate time next week. And if we can get this resolved, then they're going to try to get the Africa trade/CBI bill worked out. And I do think this is a completely good-faith offer on their part.

There are still some differences between the Senate and the House approach. The House bill doesn't have CBI in it. And there will, inevitably, be some disputes about some provisions of the CBI bill. I think we can work through them all. I do believe there is a majority in both Houses for this legislation. But it just takes—it's not something that can be done without some time and care. And right now, every-

one's energies are focused on resolving the budget agreement.

So I pledged to him that we would do our best to resolve the budget agreement as quickly as possible—to reach a budget agreement. And he pledged to me that if we got it done in time, if they could physically do it, he would try to hammer out an agreement on Africa/CBI that both Houses can support. And I think it's terribly important, so I hope very much we can do it.

Sales to China of Radar Equipment by Israel

Q. Sir, can you take a question on Israel? Could you tell us, sir, how it is that Israel got the notion that it would be prudent to sell radar equipment to the Chinese, and what are you doing about it?

The President. Well, we have raised it with them because we raise—whenever any of our friends sell sophisticated equipment that might be American in origin that is inconsistent with the terms under which the transfer was made, then we raise that. That has not been acknowledged yet; the facts are in dispute. So I think before I can tell you what I'm going to do about it, we have to be absolutely sure what the facts are.

Our people had questions, and they had good reason to have questions. But sometimes when you hear these things, it's not always right. So the story is accurate that we've raised the matter, but it is inaccurate to say that we know it's an actual fact that such a transfer has occurred. As soon as we do know the facts, then we will decide what is appropriate, and I'll be glad to tell you that. I just—but I don't want to say anything that I'm not sure is true. And I do not believe that the Israeli Government has confirmed this yet, and I think the matter is still in some dispute.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:54 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House upon returning from Arlington National Cemetery.