

May 26 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 2000

The Justice Department has vigorously defended this vital program and will decide on an expedited basis what further legal action to take. I am also calling on the food industry to use its vast resources to help ensure that

all meat processing plants maintain the strictest possible safety standards.

This administration will continue to use every available tool to ensure that our food supply remains the safest in the world.

The President's Radio Address

May 27, 2000

Good morning. Memorial Day weekend is a special time to honor those who have fought for our freedom, but also to gather with our family and friends at picnics and backyard barbecues. Where we take pride in serving up plenty of good food, we should also take pains that the food we serve is good for us. Today I want to talk about new steps we're taking to empower Americans with the latest and best information on food and nutrition.

For 20 years now, the Federal Government has been setting guidelines for good nutrition based on the best scientific evidence. And for over 6 years, the Government has required nutrition labeling on most foods. With better information, Americans are making better choices. We're eating less fat as a percentage of our diet, more fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and average blood cholesterol levels are going down.

Yet despite this progress, the vast majority of Americans still don't have healthy diets, and some changes in our lifestyles are making matters worse. We're eating more fast food because of our hectic schedules, and we're less physically active because of our growing reliance on modern conveniences, from cars to computers to remote controls. As a result, more and more Americans are overweight or obese, including one in 10 children. This is an alarming trend, because obesity and bad eating habits contribute to four of the leading causes of death: heart disease, stroke, cancer, and diabetes.

To address these challenges, experts from around our Nation will meet next week in Washington for a summit on nutrition sponsored by the Departments of Agriculture and Health and Human Services. It will be the first national nutrition summit in 31 years. To kick off the summit, today I am releasing the Federal Government's new Dietary Guidelines 2000. They're

updated every 5 years. These guidelines serve as the gold standard of nutritional information. They determine, among other things, the nutritional content of the lunches served to 26 million of our children every day in school.

These new guidelines strengthen the message that doctors and scientists have been telling us for some time now: We should choose more whole-grain foods and a variety of fruits and vegetables every day, and we should moderate the saturated fat, cholesterol, sugar, salt, and alcohol in our diets.

There are two new guidelines this year as well. One emphasizes the importance of handling and storing food safely. The other makes clear the enormous benefits of building physical activity into our daily lives. Just a brisk 30-minute walk five times a week, for instance, can cut the chance of developing or dying from heart disease in half.

I'm also pleased to announce today that this summer the Federal Government will propose that packaged meat and poultry sold in stores must come with nutrition labels. This is just plain common sense. Shoppers value the fact that when they pick up a box of cereal or a frozen meal, they can check the nutrition labels and see how many calories or grams of saturated fat these foods contain. That's the same kind of information that ought to be put on every package of ground beef. Currently, fewer than 60 percent of retailers do so, because nutrition labeling for meat is voluntary. It's time we made it mandatory.

Providing citizens with accurate information that affects their lives is one of Government's most vital responsibilities. But citizens have a responsibility to use that information wisely, as well, especially when it comes to the food they provide their children and the habits they encourage in them. So this weekend, have a good

time. Let's all eat well and eat right. Let's enjoy the outdoors and get some physical activity and be thankful for the bounteous times in which we live and the country that makes us so proud.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 4:39 p.m. on May 26 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 27. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on May 26 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.

Statement on the Ulster Unionist Council Vote in Northern Ireland *May 27, 2000*

I am delighted that, with today's historic developments, the Northern Ireland peace process is back on track. I congratulate David Trimble and the Ulster Unionist Council on their decision to return to self-government in Northern Ireland. This is a giant step toward fulfillment of the historic promise of the Good Friday accord to provide self-government to all the people on the basis of equality, consent, and the use of exclusively peaceful means. The parties are now ready to reenter the Executive and Legislative Assembly in the coming days. It is

now possible for the politics of conflict to be transformed into the politics of consensus. I applaud the leadership of Tony Blair, Bertie Ahern, and all the parties. The wind is back in the sails of peace in Northern Ireland.

NOTE: The statement referred to Ulster Unionist Party leader and Northern Ireland First Minister David Trimble; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; and Prime Minister Bertie Ahern of Ireland.

Remarks at a Memorial Day Ceremony in Arlington, Virginia *May 29, 2000*

Thank you very much. Secretary Cohen, thank you for your kind remarks and for your leadership. General Ivany, Superintendent Metzler, Colonel Durham, Secretary West, Secretary Slater, General Shelton and the Joint Chiefs, General McCaffrey, Members of Congress and the diplomatic corps, veterans and family members, members of the Armed Services, members of the Armed Services who gave their lives for our country, my fellow Americans.

We are blessed again today, together again in this magnificent amphitheater in our National Cemetery, to remember our fallen heroes. We honor, as well, all the proud veterans who would have made the same sacrifice if God had but called His heroes home in a different order.

As you entered the grounds this morning, you saw every gravestone decorated with an American flag. Indeed, this day of remembrance was first known as Decoration Day, launched in 1868 by the Commander in Chief of the Grand

Army of the Republic who designated this day for decorating the graves of comrades who died in defense of their country. Some still mark this holiday in the same way.

On Thursday before Memorial Day, this year and every year for more than 40 years now, the entire regiment of 1,200 soldiers of the 3d U.S. Infantry has honored America's fallen heroes by placing American flags before every single one of the more than 260,000 gravestones here at Arlington; then remaining on patrol 24 hours a day all weekend long to make sure each flag remains standing.

All across our country in small towns and large cities, veterans groups represented here today perform the same sacred ritual. I want to recognize and thank the members of the Old Guard and the veterans all across America for their patriotism, devotion, and commitment to honoring the original meaning of Memorial Day. I thank them very, very much.