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Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the Prevention of Nuclear Proliferation

May 16, 1994

To the Congress of the United States:

As required under section 601(a) of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Act of 1978 (Public Law 95–242; 22 U.S.C. 3281(a)), I am transmitting a report on the activities of United States Government departments and agencies relating to the prevention of nuclear proliferation. It covers activities between January 1, 1993, and December 31, 1993.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
May 16, 1994.

Remarks at the NAACP Legal Defense and Educational Fund Dinner

May 16, 1994

Thank you, Elaine. Thank you, I think. It's pretty hard to follow Elaine Jones, especially when she's on a roll like she was tonight. [*Laughter*] And the rabbi, sounding more like a Baptist preacher every day. [*Laughter*] And Vernon, who speaks well when he's asleep. [*Laughter*] And Dan Rather with a sense of humor. [*Laughter*]

Ladies and gentlemen, I come here overwhelmingly to do one thing, to say on behalf of a grateful nation, thank you. Thank you to the Legal Defense Fund. Thank you to Thurgood Marshall, in the presence of his wonderful wife. Thank you to Bill Coleman. Thank you to Jack Greenberg. Thank you to Julius Chambers. Thank you, Elaine Jones. Thank you, all of you who have made it possible for us to come here today to celebrate the 40th anniversary of *Brown*. Thank you. I thank Bob Bennett and Chester Davenport and all those who made this dinner possible. But most of all, I just wanted to say thank you.

I was sitting out there looking at Elaine, listening to her say all these nice things, waiting, wondering how many days it would be before I would get my next lecture—[*laughter*]—and what new challenge would be presented.

Thurgood Marshall and this organization won 29 victories before the Supreme Court but none as important as *Brown*. It changed our country and our lives. In a clear voice it said that we could no longer be two nations, separate and unequal. We are one people, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all. That's what it said. And it said that about the schools. And I was thinking what a difference it had made. I was thinking tonight as Elaine gave me my report card on judges and told me to do a little better—[*laughter*]—that today, since I have been privileged to be your President, there is a new minority in the Nation: A minority of those who have been appointed to the Federal bench are white men. A majority are women and people of color. And yet, the appointees that I have sent to the Senate have the highest percentage of people rated well-qualified by the American Bar Association of any President since those nominations have been made. And I am proud of that. And *Brown* v. *Board of Education* helped to make that possible.

Oh, there's lots of other good things that happened because of *Brown*. I wonder if some of the people who are in my administration today could be there were it not for *Brown*. Thurgood Marshall and Bill Coleman and Jack Greenberg, they believe we're one nation indivisible under God, we're all going up or down together. What I wonder is whether the rest of us still believe that and, if so, whether we are prepared to endure the rigors of this time to make that real.

You know, I was raised in the South when I knew a lot of people who were second-class citizens. I lived in a State where it took the President of the United States calling out the National Guard simply to let my friend Ernest Green and eight other people go to high school. And thanks to the work of this organization, my daughter got to go to that school system and never know that, and I'm grateful.

I think it's important for us not to let young people today forget that. Tomorrow, Secretary Riley and Ernest Green and Thurgood Marshall, Jr., and I are going to Martin Luther King Junior High School in Beltsville, Maryland, to teach young people why *Brown* and its ideas are still important, why they still

matter. But we have to ask ourselves whether we think they still matter.

Recently in various speeches, my good friend Vernon Jordan and then, last weekend at Howard, General Colin Powell have reaffirmed the fundamental meaning of *Brown* in the face of blacks and whites alike who seem to be retreating from its lesson, either out of fear or resignation that it is no longer possible to make it real in our lives.

We see an alarming new study among African-Americans that warns of a pervasive sense of alienation, especially among the young, so that fully half of them want to opt out of the American system. They want to separate themselves. They believe that they're already a nation within a nation. That's why so many large crowds, I think, are drawn to the message of those who preach separatism in a negative way. There are too many extremists of all kinds across the entire political and racial spectrum who think the only way they can advocate their own ideas and build themselves up is by putting other people down, sometimes in the most devastatingly vicious ways.

I say to all of you, we have to ask ourselves: Do we still believe in *Brown*? And if we do, what are we prepared to do, not only to stand up for it but to make it real in our time?

Tomorrow we must celebrate *Brown* with the realization that a lot of folks have a mood that threatens to sever the ties that bind us. And we must confront a new segregationism that would tear us apart. To do it, we must recognize that *Brown* was ultimately not an answer but a challenge. And now 40 years later, you and the LDF must challenge me and our Government, and together we must challenge the Nation to revitalize the meaning of *Brown* in our time.

When the courts were hearing *Brown*, America was reading a book by Ralph Ellison, called ''Invisible Man.'' He died just a month ago today. That book had an incredible impact on me. And still today when I see people denying each other's humanity, I remember the words of Ralph Ellison, and I think we are trying to make people who make us uncomfortable, who threaten us, who frighten us, invisible. But they will not go away. There are too many of us in this country today who simply don't accept one another's legitimacy.

Last March, the leading moral voice for tolerance and reconciliation in Northern Ireland came to our country. His name is John Hume. He's a Catholic member of the British Parliament who represents a city in Northern Ireland where Catholics and Protestants have waged fights and built walls of hatred for 300 years. The day after he had dinner with us at the White House, he gave a speech in which he said this: ''The essence of the Irish problem is a division in the hearts and minds of our people . . . let us walk to Abraham Lincoln's Memorial and look at the message of peace that's written there for everybody, *E Pluribus Unum*—from many, one. The essence of unity is the acceptance of diversity.''

To be sure, there can be no unity when people have not learned to accept one another as they are and when they think they can only fulfill themselves by denying others' humanity. But accepting diversity is only half the story. And that is our challenge today. Diversity is not an end in itself, although it is a very good thing; it is simply the only way we can build in a free society a larger community to which everyone belongs, in which everyone has a common stake in the future, and in which everyone can have a decent life.

Anyone who knows the history of this organization knows you don't have to have the same skin color to have the same values. But we also have to be able to frankly speak about our problems and our differences.

You know, I thought a lot about what I should say here tonight, and I got all kinds of advice. Like I normally do when I get in trouble, I discarded it all and decided to say what I thought. [*Laughter*] If you think about what's going on today—what motivated Vernon to say what he did in his Urban League speech and General Powell to say what he did, what motivates people to go hear Mr. Farrakhan in large crowds—what are all these cross currents? Why is it that we're having trouble living with *Brown* and living by *Brown*? Well, it's because *Brown* didn't solve all of our problems, and we've got some new problems. And in the face of those, there's more than one response, and it's really tough.

No one can doubt that we are much, much, much better off today because of *Brown* and all those other decisions that said we had to be one people. It changed us forever for the better. But no one can doubt that it couldn't solve all the problems. There's still racism. There's still inequality. There is more trouble with violence and the breakdown of family and community and the absence of work in parts of our country. The vacuum that has created has given rise to all kinds of terrible conditions.

We had, in a town near here, last weekend, a 13-year-old boy who just won a scholarship that could have led him out of poverty through an excellent education—the promise of *Brown*—shot dead on a street corner because he happened to be in the wrong place; two groups of people were feuding and shooting at each other.

We have here in this community a poor neighborhood where people decided that if they wanted their kids to be able to play in the yard and their old folks to be able to sit on park benches, they'd have to do what rich folks do. So they just built a little fence around their living quarters, and they got some security guards. And sure enough, they might as well have been out in some fancy neighborhood in southern California: The kids could play again and the old folks could sit again in safety.

But we have these problems. Now, what are we going to do about them? There seems to me four things we can do, and three of them are wrong. One is, we can come to a dinner like this and talk about how wonderful *Brown* was and preach until the day we die and not do anything to deal with the problems of this time. If so, we will lose a whole generation of young people to other courses of action.

Or we can do what I said—Elaine mentioned if you preach venom, you get a talk show; if you preach love, you get a yawn. Deborah Tannen, a professor at Georgetown, has written a book called ''You Just Don't Understand.'' She says we're caught up in what she calls a ''culture of critique,'' where shouting matches drown out constructive conversation and where you only really have any status at all in society if you're just slamming somebody else and putting them down and you don't really have to do anything as long as you just talk. So you can do that, you can say the wrong things and reject the spirit of *Brown* and do nothing but cash in, and that's wrong.

Or you can do what is disturbingly working: You can say the wrong things; you can preach division; you can deny the Holocaust ever occurred. But you can help people solve real problems. You can tell families they've got to stay together, and daddies they've got to take care of their kids, and people they ought to stay off drugs and everybody ought to show up for work every day. And that is a very dangerous thing, because in the end, we will still lose; because in the end, you cannot have a democracy where you lift up one group by putting somebody else down. But it is a tempting thing when people are doing things that change lives.

I say this to make this point. People desperately wish their lives to change. They want to do something that will make a difference. They want safer streets, not nice talk. They want schools that work, not nice talk. They want children to be raised by caring parents, not nice talk. So we have to recognize that the only acceptable thing to do is to do what Thurgood Marshall and Bill Coleman and Jack Greenberg did 40 years ago. We have to not only talk the talk, we have to walk the walk. We have to not only advocate *Brown*, we have to deal forthrightly and aggressively with the problems we face today in a way that actually changes people's lives. That is what we have to do.

There are a lot of people that don't think we can do this. There are a lot of people that are filled with doubt. I had Members of Congress walk right up there and vote for the Brady bill last year—after 7 years of fooling around with it and looking for excuses and caving in and finally passing it—who did not believe it would make a difference. But it has. It's just like *Brown*: It hasn't solved all the problems, but it has saved lives already. We had people put their political careers on the line here last week, walking down the aisle in the House of Representatives to vote for the assault weapons ban, putting their necks on the line, afraid it might not make a difference. But it will.

And I'm telling you, that is the kind of thing we have to deal with, knowing that there is no ultimate perfect answer but that we expect something that will not occur if we think we can simply advocate the ideas that are embodied in the *Brown* decision and not change our own behavior and the behavior of our country to give our kids a safe and decent and well-educated childhood to put things back together again. There is no alternative for us if we want to keep this country together and we want, 100 years from now, people to celebrate the 140th anniversary of *Brown* v. *Board of Education* in the greatest country the world has ever known, fully diverse, where everybody, all God's children, can live up to the fullest of their God-given potential.

And in order to do it, we all have to overcome a fair measure not only of fear but of resignation. There are so many of us today, and all of us in some ways at some times, who just don't believe we can tackle the big things and make a difference. But I tell you, the only thing for us to do to honor those whom we honor tonight is to tackle the big things and make a difference.

I'm proud that Elaine Jones and all the rest of you are trying to deal forthrightly with the problem of violence and the fear it produces and what it's doing to drive our people apart. I want you to think about what we can do to honor the sacrifices of those whose shoulders we stand on tonight. They did not do all this work to preside over the collapse of American society, to give people an equal opportunity to get an inferior education, to give people an equal opportunity to be unemployed, to give people an equal opportunity to stand on the street corner and be gunned down by some kid that nobody ever loved enough or disciplined enough or cared enough about to give a different way of living to.

We cannot stand chaos and destruction, but we must not embrace hatred and division. We have only one choice.

Let me read this to you in closing. It seems to me to capture the spirit of *Brown* and the spirit of America and what we have to do today, starting with what is in our heart. These are lines from Langston Hughes' wonderful poem "Let America Be America Again": "Oh yes, I say it plain, America never was America to me. And yet I swear this oath, America will be." Let that be our oath on this 40th anniversary celebration.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:15 p.m. in the International Ballroom at the Washington Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to Elaine R. Jones, director counsel, LDEF; Rabbi David Saperstein, director, Religious Action Center, Union of American Hebrew Congregations; Vernon Jordan, dinner chairman; Dan Rather, dinner host; Cecelia Marshall, widow of Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall; William T. Coleman, former Secretary of Transportation; Jack Greenberg, Columbia University law professor; Julius L. Chambers, chancellor of North Carolina Central University; Robert Bennett and Chester Davenport, dinner corporate cochairs; Ernest Green, one of the Little Rock Nine who integrated the public school system in Little Rock, AR; Thurgood Marshall, Jr., Deputy Counsel and Director of Legislative Affairs for the Vice President; and Minister Louis Farrakhan of the Nation of Islam.

Memorandum on Assistance to the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

May 16, 1994

Presidential Determination No. 94–25

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Drawdown of Commodities and Services to Assist the International Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia

Pursuant to section 548(e) of the Foreign Operations, Export Financing, and Related Programs Appropriations Act, 1994 (Titles I–V of Public Law 103–87) (the "Act"), I hereby:

direct that the provision of commodities and services to the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal will contribute to a just resolution of charges regarding genocide or other violations of international law in the former Yugoslavia; and

direct the drawdown of commodities and services of an aggregate value not to exceed $6 million from the inventory and resources of the Departments of State, Justice, and Defense, the Federal