

office. How do you respond to Common Cause's accusations?

The President. First of all, my campaign commitment is to seek campaign finance reform legislation which will put both parties on an equal footing and will give the Government of this country back more to ordinary Americans. I have supported that legislation strongly from the beginning. I still believe we're going to get a good campaign finance reform bill out of the committee and onto my desk in this session of Congress.

In the meanwhile, as I have said all along, I don't believe in unilateral disarmament. And I believe, if you will look, I've had a lot more advertising and attacks against our administration and our policy than we have had the financial wherewithal to respond to.

So, we've done our best to defend ourselves in the system that now exists. But I agree with Common Cause, we need a campaign finance reform bill. I'm going to work hard for it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:50 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks Commemorating the 50th Anniversary of the GI Bill of Rights *June 22, 1994*

Thank you so much, Mr. Shropshire, for that introduction and for your service to your country and for making the most of the GI bill. And thank you, Mr. Mendoza, for your service to your country and for reminding us of the future of the GI bill.

Thank you, Secretary Brown, leaders of veteran service organizations, and staff of the department of veterans administration who are here; to all the Members of Congress, Senator Robb, Senator Thurmond, Senator Jeffords, Congressman Price, Congresswoman Byrne, Congressman Sangmeister, Congresswoman Brown, Congressman Bishop; and thank you especially, Congressman Sonny Montgomery, for a lifetime of devotion to this cause. I'd like to also acknowledge three of Congressman Montgomery's colleagues in the Senate and House on the relevant committee who could not be with

us today: Senator Rockefeller, Senator Murkowski, and Congressman Stump.

Before I begin, if I might, I'd like to say a brief word about a development in Brussels this morning that is in so many ways a tribute to the men and women who have worn the uniform of this country over the last 50 years. Today Russia took an important step to help shape a safer and more peaceful post-cold-war world.

As all of you know, it wasn't very many days ago that we and the Russians were able to announce that, for the first time since both of us had nuclear weapons, our nuclear weapons were no longer pointed at each other. Today, Russia made a decision to join 20 other nations of the former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and Western Europe in NATO's Partnership For Peace, to work together on joint planning and exercises, and to commit themselves to a common future, to a unified Europe where neighbors respect their borders and do not invade them but, instead, work together for mutual security and progress.

I want to join with the Secretary of State, who was on hand for the signing in Brussels, in commending the Russian people and their leaders on this farsighted choice. And I think that all of us will join them in saying this is another step on our long road in man's everlasting quest for peace. We thank them today.

As Secretary Brown and Mr. Shropshire said in their eloquent remarks, I had the opportunity not long ago of commemorating the service of our veterans at Normandy and in the Italian campaign. Joined by some of the veterans who are here today, including General Mick Kicklighter, who did such a wonderful job in heading the committee that planned all those magnificent events, we remembered the sacrifices of the brave Americans and their Allies who freed a continent from tyranny.

Their legacy is plain to see today in the wave of democracy sweeping across a united Europe. But their legacy is also clear here at home. Fortunately, in spite of the terrible losses, most of them did come home. And with a helping hand from Uncle Sam, they sparked an explosion of American energy and industry. They built the great American mid-

dle class, the powerful example which, more than anything else, helped us over the last 50 years to win the war for freedom and democracy and enterprise, because people could look at the American veterans, the legacy they made here at home and see that our system, our values, and our ideals worked.

As all of you know, it was 50 years ago today that President Roosevelt signed the GI bill of rights. It was actually known as the Servicemen's Readjustment Act. Just as D-Day was the greatest military action in our history, so the GI bill arguably was the greatest investment in our people in American history. It provided the undergirding for what has clearly been the most successful middle class in all of history. That lesson, in many respects, is one I have tried to make the lesson of our administration: If you give the American people, ordinary Americans, a chance to help themselves, they will do extraordinary things.

Before World War II, our country typically gave veterans pensions and bonuses, but they had nothing to build a future with. That's why despairing veterans of World War I actually marched on this city in 1932, and why President Roosevelt, learning the lesson of World War I, declared that the GI bill gave "emphatic notice to the men and women of our Armed Forces that the American people do not intend to let them down."

We know why the GI bill didn't let them down. It relied on the American values of work and responsibility. It offered not a handout, but a hand up. The veterans of World War I got a handout, and they deserved it. But it was \$60 and a train ticket home. The veterans of World War II got a ticket to the American dream.

The GI bill helped over 15 million returning veterans begin that journey. It helped all of them, black or white, Asian or Latino, rich or poor. But it was up to them to seize the opportunities. And look what they did. They built countless new homes and businesses. They flooded colleges and trade schools. Out of the World War II class, 450,000 became engineers; 360,000 became schoolteachers; 240,000 became accountants. That's before we needed them all in Washington. [Laughter] One hundred and eighty thousand be-

came doctors and nurses; 150,000 became scientists, paving our way to the next century. All of us are better off for their determination.

We cannot even calculate how much our Nation has been enriched by the GI bill, how many communities have sprung up, how many companies have prospered, how many families have earned their share of the American dream. This much we do know, that the GI bill began the process of building the middle class that has been the bulwark of our prosperity ever since the end of World War II.

And it's still working today. For 50 years now, soldiers like Hugo Mendoza have stood sentry around the globe, securing our freedom, and knowing that on their return they would find also a stepping stone of opportunity. Today, as we face yet a new era of change and challenge, we have new choices to make. Almost everything I am trying to do as President is to ensure that we make the right choices so that we can secure our liberty and our prosperity and expand those great virtues across the world as we move into the next century.

Almost everything we are trying to do is animated by the spirit and the ideas behind the GI bill. Give Americans a chance to make their own lives in the fast-changing world; they will secure the American dream. They will secure our freedom. They will expand its reach if you give them the power to do it.

At Normandy I was able to pay special tribute to the first paratroopers to land in the D-Day operation, called the Pathfinders, because they lighted the way for those who followed. Today, it is up to us to be the pathfinders of the 21st century. The powerful idea behind the bill of rights for the GI's is still the best light to find that path.

Our job now is to do everything we can to help Americans to have the chance to build those better lives for themselves. That is the best way to prove ourselves worthy of the legacy handed down by those who sacrificed in the Second World War, those who have worn our uniform since, and those who have been given their just chance at the brass ring through the bill of rights for the GI's.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:25 p.m. at the Department of Veterans Affairs. In his remarks, he referred to Garnett G. Shropshire, World War II veteran, who introduced the President, and Hugo Mendoza, Persian Gulf war veteran.

Remarks on North Korea and an Exchange With Reporters

June 22, 1994

The President. Good afternoon. Today I want to announce an important step forward in the situation in North Korea. This afternoon we have received formal confirmation from North Korea that it will freeze the major elements of its nuclear program while a new round of talks between our nations proceeds.

In response, we are informing the North Koreans that we are ready to go forward with a new round of talks in Geneva early next month. North Korea has assured us that while we go forward with these talks it will not reload its five-megawatt reactor with new fuel or reprocess spent fuel. We have also been assured that the IAEA will be allowed to keep its inspectors and monitoring equipment in place at the Yongbyon nuclear facility, thus allowing verification of North Korea's agreement. We welcome this very positive development which restores the basis for talks between North Korea and the United States.

In addition to addressing the nuclear issue, we are prepared to discuss the full range of security, political, and economic issues that affects North Korea's relationship with the international community. During these discussions we will suspend our efforts to pursue a sanctions resolution in the United Nations Security Council. We also welcome the agreement between South Korea and North Korea to pursue a meeting between their Presidents.

I would like to thank President Carter for the important role he played in helping to achieve this step. These developments mark not a solution to the problem, but they do mark a new opportunity to find a solution. It is the beginning of a new stage in our efforts to pursue a nonnuclear Korean Peninsula. We hope this will lead to the resolution

of all the issues that divide Korea from the international community.

In close consultation with our allies, we will continue as we have over the past year and more to pursue our interests and our goals with steadiness, realism, and resolve. This approach is paying off, and we will continue it. This is good news. Our task now is to transform this news into a lasting agreement.

Q. Mr. President, are you going to try to insist on finding out whether or not they have already built a bomb and getting the facts on any past violations as part of these talks?

The President. Well, let me say that, first of all, we have been in touch with the North Koreans in New York almost at this moment. We will set up these talks, and we will have ample opportunity to discuss the range of issues that will be discussed in the talks. And we expect to discuss, obviously, all the issues that have divided us.

Yes, Helen [Helen Thomas, United Press International].

Q. Mr. President, what concessions did we make to bring this about? And why is it that you did not meet with President Carter face to face? Here's a man who actually met Kim Il-song, one of the few—our profiles may not jive and so forth. You would have had a great chance to debrief him, and instead, you talked to him on the telephone.

The President. We talked to him for a long time on the telephone. The only reason we didn't is because I didn't want to ask him to come all the way up to Camp David, and we had planned to go up there for the weekend. And he decided and I decided there was—we know each other very well; we've known each other for 20 years—we decided we didn't need to do it; we could just have a long talk on the phone, and that's what we did.

Q. Did we make any concessions—

The President. No.

Q. —to the North Koreans to bring this about?

The President. No. The only thing that we said was that we would suspend our efforts to pursue sanctions if there was a verifiable freeze on the nuclear program while the talks continued, which included no refueling of the reactor and no reprocessing.