

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:30 p.m. in Waterfront Park. In his remarks, he referred to Jim McKune, volunteer carpenter; Bill Long, supervisor, bureau of maintenance; Steve Barrett, structural engineer; Gov. John A. Kitzhaber of Oregon; and Mayor Vera Katz of Portland.

Statement on the Interim Report of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses

February 14, 1996

I am pleased to accept the interim report of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses. Dr. Joyce Lashof and the Committee members have made an impressive start on helping to ensure that we are doing all we can both to determine the causes of the illnesses Gulf war veterans are suffering from, and to provide effective medical care to those in need.

I am pleased that the Committee's interim report recognizes the serious efforts underway in the administration to restore these men and women to good health. I know that the Departments of Defense, Health and Human Services, and Veterans Affairs will review the recommendations contained in this report and will continue the research, outreach, and medical programs needed to improve the lives of Gulf war veterans and their families.

I have asked Secretary William Perry, Secretary Donna Shalala, and Secretary Jesse Brown to develop an action plan for implementing the recommendations in the interim report. I am also asking the Departments to continue their record of full cooperation with the Advisory Committee as it prepares its final report over the next 10 months.

As I said last March when announcing my intention to establish the Advisory Committee, 5 years ago we relied on these Gulf war veterans to fight for our country; they must now be able to rely on us to try to determine why they are ill and to help restore them to full health. We are all indebted to the Presidential Advisory Committee on Gulf War Veterans' Illnesses for its contribution to this critical task. I look forward to reviewing their final recommendations later this year.

Remarks on Departure from Boise, Idaho

February 14, 1996

[The President's remarks are joined in progress.]

On the ground, we are doing what needs to be done not only now, in the next few days, but for as long as it takes, until the people there are back on their feet and back to normal.

Let me also say that, as I'm sure all of you know, this has been a long day for me, but it's been a very rewarding one, even though I've seen a lot of sad and heart-breaking things. And not only in my conversations here but in my trip to Oregon and to Washington, I've seen a lot of loss, but I've also seen what happens when the American people work together in a spirit of genuine community and when people exhibit individual acts of courage and kindness that seem to overwhelm the dimensions of even the worst tragedy. And I have seen that as well.

I think the lesson that I have learned more than any other in 3 years and a few days as President is that when this country works together, we never lose. And when we permit ourselves to be divided, we often wind up being less than we ought to be.

I thank again everybody here in the northwestern part of our country for what I have seen today, for the work that they have done. And I want to say again specifically to the people of Idaho, I will follow up on the suggestions that we have gotten. I look forward to working with you. And I hope, as the members of your congressional delegation suggested to me in there, Senator Kempthorne in particular, that maybe the model of cooperation that we've seen in dealing with this flood can become a model for other kinds of cooperation in the future, so that Americans everywhere feel that their Government is a partner in a common endeavor to help individuals and families and communities make the most of their God-given capacities.

Thank you. Good luck, and we'll be at work on this immediately. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at approximately 7:50 p.m. at the Idaho National Guard Ramp at Boise

International Airport. These remarks were released by the Office of the Press Secretary on February 15. The press release did not include the President's complete opening remarks. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks in a Roundtable Discussion on Education Technology in Union City, New Jersey

February 15, 1996

The President. Thank you very much, Carol. Good morning, Secretary Riley. You look great long distance there—[laughter]—glad you're in the Cabinet. Good morning, Bob Fazio, and thank you again for what you said and for the remarkable work you have done here. I want to say hello to Senator Lautenberg and Congressman Menendez, who had so much to do with starting this technology effort in this school system; and to Jim Cullen at Bell Atlantic, and the others who are here from the private sector; and the teachers, the parents, and especially the students who are here; and the students from the 65 schools in Hudson, Bergen, and Morris Counties who are with us today, thanks to technology. I want to say hello to all of you.

I have been looking forward to this for some time. And the Vice President and I have had some very exciting conversations about what we would see here and what all of you have done here. And I want to just begin by thanking all of you for making this kind of partnership work and by proving what I said in the State of the Union, that we have an obligation if we want all Americans to have the opportunities that this new information and technology age offers, we have an obligation to make sure that all of our children have access to world-class education through the finest technology. And you are doing that. And I'm very, very proud of you, and I'm very excited to listen to all of you and what you have to say today.

But I would like to talk a little bit about what we are trying to do. What we're trying to do from the White House is to work in partnership with everybody in America who is concerned about this to see that by the year 2000 every classroom and every library

in the entire United States is hooked up to the information superhighway, that all our children have access to computers and the finest educational software, and all of our teachers have the kind of training and support that, obviously, you have provided here, and that there is a kind of connection that we see here.

I am very excited about the prospects that young people like those here at this table in this room will be able to learn things that I could never have even dreamed of as a child. And while I want districts like yours to be able to stand out and be proud, I think all of you want every child to have the opportunities that your children have.

And that's why I wanted to come here to announce what our next steps are. As I said in the State of the Union, when I outlined the importance of meeting the challenge of providing all of our children an education for the 21st century, one of the primary goals I set was making sure every classroom was hooked up to the information superhighway by the year 2000.

Today, I am proposing and will include in my budget to the Congress a \$2-billion technology literacy challenge that will put the future at the fingertips of every child in every classroom in the United States. Let me explain just briefly how it will work.

We'll basically do what you have done here in Union City on a national level. We will use the resources of State and local governments and school districts, of the private sector, the schools, the students, the parents, and the teachers. The proposal is part of the balanced budget plan, as I said, I sent to Congress, and we will use these funds basically as challenge grants to try to make sure that no school district, no matter how poor, no matter how urban or rural, will be denied the opportunity to do what your children have been able to do because of your vision and work.

I ask for all the people in this country who will support this effort to get active, to get involved. Companies like Bell Atlantic can do a great deal, but they can also use a lot more help. And obviously, none of this will happen unless the school and the parents support the endeavor.