

Exchange With Reporters on Departure for Chicago, Illinois

January 22, 1997

16th Street Explosion

Q. [*Inaudible*]*—the explosion near the abortion clinic this morning—any thoughts on that?*

The President. Let me say that we do not yet have all the facts involving the incidents this morning. But Federal officials are working with the local law enforcement officials to get to the bottom of this. I want to emphasize again, as I had to do just a few days ago, that acts of violence against people who are trying to exercise their constitutional rights are acts of terror. They are illegal. They are wrong. And we will do our very best to investigate them, to catch who is doing it, and to make sure they're punished. But as to the incidents this morning, we are still investigating them. The facts are unfolding. Whatever happened, there is never an excuse for an act of violence against someone exercising a constitutional right.

Q. [*Inaudible*]*—at the Mayflower, Mr. President?*

The President. We're on top of the situation, I believe. We're doing our very best. And obviously I'm concerned about the safety of anybody involved that might be subject to that sort of thing. But the investigators are there, and we're working hard on it.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:14 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks at Stanley Field Middle School in Northbrook, Illinois

January 22, 1997

The President. I was just thinking, if I had had a class like this when I was their age, I might have gotten into a different line of work. [*Laughter*] This is fascinating. Thank you very much, guys. I'm glad you learned about Newton's law of doing this, and I'm glad you learned how to do this.

I just thought of something—you should know too, one of you made the point about conservation of materials. Interestingly enough, in many manufacturing enterprises

today, that's one of the major sources of adding productivity and profitability to the enterprise. Being environmentally responsible is just learning how to continue to get more and more and more output out of fewer and fewer raw materials. And that applies not only to stable materials like that but also to energy input. So a big part of what technology and learning is doing to all kinds of production is allowing people to produce more output of products and services with fewer material input. Very interesting, so I'm glad you did it.

[*At this point, Secretary of Education Richard Riley commented on the standards in education and then the students continued their demonstration.*]

The President. The one thing I would say to you—we have to go, but you are going to live in the most exciting period of time in human history, in terms of what people can do with their minds and their imaginations and what people can do on their own. It's going to be a very, very exciting time. But it will only be an exciting time for people who can access it. That's why the learning is so important.

Someday you may be building—one of you may be building trains that go 500 miles an hour, that people get in, and therefore, then, they don't pollute the air. And they all travel together so they can read while they're studying during their commute times. You may be doing things you can't even imagine now because of what you're learning.

And that's the thing I would emphasize. You can't imagine what someday you might be doing with what you're just now learning here. And I envy you in that way. I think that the 21st century will be a time of enormous possibility for young people like you, and all you really need to tap it is a great education. And I'm glad you're getting it.

Thank you.

Q. I know they can do it. Well, thank you so much. We're very pleased to have you come.

The President. I'm glad to see you. Thank you.

Q. Thank you for coming.

The President. I wish I could see all the cars driving. What you should do, you should

make a movie of this. You should have everybody—inspire classes all over America.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:05 a.m. in the eighth grade classroom.

Remarks to the First In The World Consortium in Northbrook

January 22, 1997

Thank you very much. First of all, let me thank Mary Hamblet for her introduction and for that fine statement about the thrill of teaching and the changes of teaching. Would all the teachers in the audience please stand? Thank you very much. *[Applause]* I thank you all very, very much.

Thank you, Dr. Kimmelman, for your leadership and the First In The World Consortium. I thank all the other superintendents and administrators who are here. Thank you, Congressman Porter, for your leadership for education and, I might add, for your leadership for safe streets in the United States, in the Congress. I appreciate that very much.

Thank you, Secretary Riley. Everything Dr. Kimmelman said about you was true, even if you did have to write his speech for him. *[Laughter]* I like it that the Secretary of Education is prouder of being a grandfather than anything else in his life. I think that's a good signal for America's future.

We're glad to be joined today also by Mayor Daley and Congressman Blagojevich. Welcome. Cook County Assessor Tom Hines; your State senator, Cathy Parker. Welcome. Thank you for being here. Village presidents Nancy Firfer and Mark Damisch, thank you also for coming. I thank the Glenbrook Concert Orchestra for the music. Thank you all.

I am honored to be here with all of you, humbled and encouraged by your passionate commitment to education. I came today to talk about your remarkable success, hoping it will reverberate all across America and people will want to know what has been done here and how, and to talk about why and how this must be done all across America.

As we come to the end of this century and set about the business of preparing America for the next century, as I said in my Inaugural Address, it is especially important that we be

able to say we have kept the American dream of opportunity alive for all of our children. I think all of us know in our heart of hearts that that will be a slogan and a dream only, unless we give to all of our children and expect from all of our children world-class educational opportunities and world-class learning.

What I want to do in the next 2 weeks leading up to my State of the Union Address to the Congress and to the American people, is to lay out some concrete things we can do in Washington to help to achieve those objectives. We do live in a time of enormous possibility. I was just—you know, it's—the last couple of days is the first free time I've had in a while—*[laughter]*—and I was trying to create some more space in our living quarters in the White House, and I was moving some reference books around that our daughter sometimes uses and her father and mother sometime use. But I was—there was one on the Age of Reason and one on the Age of Enlightenment. And I really do think there's a good chance that the 21st century will be called something like the Age of Possibility or the Age of Promise, when people write about it a hundred years from now, because it really will be possible for more people across the world to live out their dreams and live up to their God-given abilities than ever before in human history. It will be possible. But “possible” or an “Age of Promise,” those are operative words. There are no guarantees here.

And in order to realize that promise, we've got to make sure our people are prepared for it. There is a veritable revolution in the way we work and live because of science and technology. The world which was once divided by the cold war is now united by not only free markets and open trade but by common security challenges that threaten all open societies. Young people are continually entering jobs that weren't invented a couple of years ago. The young people in this great hall today will be doing jobs, many of them that have not been imagined by any of us here. And it's very important to understand that.

I spent a day at the National Institute of Health, not very long ago, going through in some detail the status of the human genome