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During the last decade, one institution after another has looked within itself, decided on improvements, and acted to fix its problems and reflect its principles. Our task now is to bring that process of reform to the United States Government. All of us know Government's problem: Too often it is not accountable, not effective, not efficient. It's not even compassionate. Only by changing it can we protect America's general interest against selfish special interests.

My rescissions will help knock out one part of the special interest problem at work in Congress today, but the changes I want are even bigger. I want to end the PAC contributions which are corrupting our system. I want to place term limits on Congress, and I want to lead the American people in making changes that will make the 21st century another American century.

One challenge is to make our people educated, literate, and motivated to keep learning. And that's why I'm trying to reform our education system from top to bottom.

Our people must have a sense of well-being about their health and that of their children and families. My health care reform plan will guarantee them access to the finest health care system in the world and make that care affordable.

And next, help me return our civil justice system to its original purpose: dispense justice with civility. Eighteen million lawsuits a year are choking us, costing individuals and businesses billions, a tremendous drag on our morale as well as our economy.

And in the next century, as we look at the likely economic competition as well as the likely opportunities, they will be beyond our borders. That means we must open up more foreign markets to sell our goods and our services and to sustain and create jobs for our people.

Reform of Government, education, health care, our legal system, opening markets abroad: addressing these issues is fundamental to America's future. Already America has changed the world. Today I'm asking you to help me change America. If Congress won't change, we'll have to change the Congress. The battle has been joined, and it's your future that we're fighting for.

Thank you for your support. And may God bless the United States of America.

Note: This address was recorded at 10:30 a.m. on March 27 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast after 9 a.m. on March 28.

Remarks to State Attorneys General

March 30, 1992

Well, may I salute Ken Eikenberry and Jeff Amestoy and all the State attorney generals, and salute also—whoops, there he is down there—our own Bill Barr, who I think is doing an outstanding job. And I know he's working closely with everybody in this room.

Bill has his forces moving out on several fronts, from tort reform to relief of prison overcrowding. We've also started what we call the "Weed and Seed" initiative, our plan to get the roots, rip them out, of the inner-city violence, and then plant seeds of hope with more educational opportunity, with more job training, with a new approach to health care. And then we are going to keep hammering away on the need for enterprise zones. This plan joins Federal, State, and local forces to go after and to take back our hardest hit neighborhoods. They're crucial missions, and I am determined to see them achieved and let nothing stand in the way.

The efforts of the Justice Department help shape the kind of legacy that we leave for future generations. And our children must inherit a society that is safe, is sane and just. And I've also spoken of other meaningful legacies like jobs and a world at peace and certainly strong families. The American heritage which I describe is one where children can sit on their porch with-

out the fear of getting caught in an ugly crossfire, where decent people don't have to hide behind locked doors while gangs roam the streets, where the message is clear: When it comes to the law, if you're going to take liberties, you're going to lose your own; you're going to pay.

We cannot pass this legacy onto our children tomorrow unless we start going after tough crime legislation today. And for 3 years running, we have called on the Congress to pass a tough crime bill. We've pushed hard. Many of you have been at our side in trying to get something done. I want a bill that won't tie the hands of the honest cops in trying to get their jobs done, one that shows less sympathy for the criminals and certainly more for the victims of crime. And most of all, I want to get a crime bill that I can sign.

But law and order mean more than just safe streets and bigger prisons. Reforming the system also means going after public corruption in our cities and our States, the rot that eats away at our institutions and at our trust. Over the past 3 years, this administration has moved aggressively to hunt down corruption and stop it dead in its tracks.

For the record, in '89 and '90 alone the Department secured over 2,200 convictions, 2,200, in public corruption cases. Judges, legislators, and law enforcement officials, part-time crooks, full-time fakes: Nobody is immune. And this kind of crime does society real harm because these swindlers aren't satisfied merely with making crime pay; they stick the taxpayer with the tab. And millions and millions of hard-earned tax dollars are disappearing from public treasuries every single year and showing up in corruption's back pocket. And this is money that could be building roads or balancing budgets. I am preaching to the choir on this subject because you all are out there on the cutting edge, on the front line all the time, trying to do something about the problem.

But the problem is greater than a few individuals who stopped caring. The problem is a system that has stopped working. And the old bureaucratic system of big Government has ground to a halt. And it's not accountable; it is not effective; and it is not efficient. It's not even compassionate. And the chronic problems we see today are sad proof that the old approaches are producing new failures.

So in this election year, it's understandable, I'm sure, that we hear a lot of talk about change. You all have been fighting for change. I think I have. And yes, the time has come for change, far-reaching, fundamental reform. That's the kind of change that this country needs in the fighting-crime field; not just in fighting crime, incidentally, and not just in Government but all across the board.

And that's why I've—proposing school choice reform—just finished almost an hour meeting with our Secretary of Education on that one—so that choices about education can be made from the kitchen table, not from the halls of bureaucracy. Where it's been tried, it has been effective in improving the schools that are not chosen as well as those that are.

And I've proposed a health care reform to improve access for those who need it the most.

Legal reform, we need your help on. We've got good proposals up there on Capitol Hill. Our legal reform is shaped so that Americans can start solving their problems face to face instead of lawyer to lawyer. I'm amazed at the number, the great increase in lawsuits that is really putting a damper on so many aspects in our society.

The kind of change that I'm describing is hard. It has its enemies, and the battle lines have been drawn: the allies of change versus the defenders of the status quo. So, I want to make it very clear which side I'm on; I know which side many of you are on.

So, let the cynics say that this is only a fight for the next election. We know it's a battle for the next generation. And I'm very glad you all are here. And what we'll do is go over here, and I'd love to have suggestions from you as to how we might be doing our job better down here. And of course, I'd be glad to take questions. If they're technical, I'll kick them off to perhaps the most able Attorney General a guy could hope to have with him.

Thank you all very much.

Note: The President spoke at 10:36 a.m. in

the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Kenneth O. Eikenberry, attorney general of Washington, and Jeffrey L. Amestoy, attorney general of Vermont.

Exchange With Reporters Prior to Discussions With President George Vassiliou of Cyprus

March 30, 1992

Cyprus

Q. President Vassiliou, are you going to ask the United States to pressure Mr. Denktash to make some progress?

President Vassiliou. Well, I am grateful to the President for his support for a solution of the Cyprus problem, and I'm sure that the fact that he's meeting here, with him in an election campaign period, is the best proof of his interest. And I'm grateful.

President Bush. I am interested, and I just hope we can help. Our Ambassador's been wonderful and tried, a Special Ambassador, but now he's going on to greater pursuits. But we can't let him get too far away because he's very interested in all of that. No, but we'll talk about it, and I think your visit up there in New York probably is very important. I hope the new Secretary-General is energized. He told me he wants to be.

President Vassiliou. He's very interested. He wants to do it, and he needs your support.

President Bush. Well, you can——

Q. Mr. Denktash said he would like to meet you someplace.

President Vassiliou. Meetings are always easy to arrange; what is important is to have willingness to solve the problem.

Aid to Former Soviet Union

Q. Mr. President, sir, are you going to send your Soviet aid package up to the Hill tomorrow?

President Bush. Listen, I can't tell you that right now. But we've been working on one for a long, long time, as you know. As I indicated Sunday, we'll have something to say on that very soon. I can't say about tomorrow, any package going up.

I don't think people know how long it takes. This is the Soviet—we've been working on this for 6 months, and we get a lot of people telling us, well, you've got to—I mean, it's very complicated when you're trying to get the whole world to come together on it.

[*At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group came in.*]

Cyprus

Q. Mr. President, is Turkey to blame for the current impasse in the Cyprus talks?

President Bush. We're going to have a good talk about Cyprus. Anytime I see my friend, the very able President here, we have good, fruitful discussions. And I'm anxious for him to bring me up to date not only as to how things were at home when he left but how his talks in the United Nations went. As you know, the United States has felt that the United Nations has had and will continue to have a key role in all of this. So secondly, I hope the President knows that we have tried, with various interested parties, to be helpful. Sometimes you think you take a step forward, and you end up sliding back a little bit.

President Vassiliou. Yes.

President Bush. And I want to see what we can do to be sure that now, at this critical time, we don't take a step backwards. But I'm available. The United States is interested in trying to help solve this problem, and I need to hear from President Vassiliou what he thinks now I should be doing as President. We're going to stay right involved with him. It is very important.

Q. Mr. President, how much can one expect in this election year in the United States?

President Bush. The election will have no adverse effect on our efforts, either in terms of my commitment of time, whatever