Will you commit to saving salmon? And most importantly, what is your plan for saving salmon?

When you come to Washington State, Governor Bush, those are the questions people will be asking.

Quite frankly, Mr. President, when it comes to the Hanford Reach, I believe that the Governor needs to know that those in Washington State who are close to him opposed Federal protection of the Hanford Reach—a designation that will save the last free-flowing stretch of the Columbia River—and the best salmon spawning ground we have.

I believe the voters of Washington State deserve to know what Governor Bush’s intentions are.

And on the issue of preserving salmon on the Snake River, I have heard Governor Bush articulate what he won’t do, but I have yet to hear what he would do to protect our region’s economy while restoring wild salmon runs.

His spokesperson attacked the Vice President on his latest visit to Washington State when the Vice President indicated his personal interest in helping the region solve the tricky issues related to salmon restoration. Bush’s people offered no plan, they just attacked the Vice President for having one.

The people of Washington want to hear plans for saving salmon—not just attacks, but credible, responsible plans.

Let me be clear. When it comes to helping the people of Washington State meet environmental challenges, just saying “no” doesn’t cut it. The people of my State deserve to know what the President would do to save salmon.

When the Vice President was in Washington State recently he met this challenge head-on. He very clearly committed to saving salmon. He said that extinction was not an option. And he indicated that in his administration, he would call a summit to bring together diverse groups so we can work together to save salmon.

He faced the issue in a thoughtful, responsible way.

In fact, many of my constituents came up to me after the Vice President spoke to tell me how impressed they were with the Vice President’s understanding of the issue and his commitment to protecting our natural resources, and to thank me for his leadership on this critical challenge.

Mr. President, the ball is clearly in Governor Bush’s court, and it is time for him to provide his own answers and vision.

When Governor Bush enters the State of Washington, residents will be listening for his commitment to the Hanford Reach National Monument, listening for his commitment to saving salmon, and listening for his plan to save salmon.

The people of my State care about this issue. They deserve to hear specific answers.
legislation that is going to resolve the issue. There are a lot of reasons we see this continued violence in our country. But one of the responsibly, gun control legislation could make a significant contribution. We have already seen that in States and jurisdictions that require waiting periods, require some notification ahead of time as to who would be the purchaser of these weapons.

There was a decision made a number of weeks ago that it might be worthwhile to make the case—and we talk in abstractions so often here—and to start talking about those people who lost their lives a year ago on this very day, June 16, 1999. On that date, we didn’t have the average of 12 or 13; we lost 3 people in the United States on June 16. There was one in Chicago, one in St. Paul, and one in Newark, NJ. That was a day on which the numbers were way down from what the average death toll is.

I also point out that the names we have only come from the 100 largest cities in the United States. Cities with populations of less than 12,000 are not included in these numbers. In those 100 cities, June 16 last year, it was a far better day than most. Every one of the victims was a unique human being. Many other gun violence victims in other cities on that day didn’t necessarily die, but some did in smaller towns.

In the name of all of those who have died across the Nation a year ago today, and those who, regrettably, will lose their lives today in too many places across our country, I want to read the following names listed by the Conference of Mayors who were killed by gunfire 1 year ago in our country: Manuel Marcano, 18, Chicago; Antoine Watson, 19, St. Paul, MN; an unidentified female in Newark, NJ.

I know all Americans regret the loss of those lives. I hope that someday the national average will be something such as that, or even less, as a result of sensible, thoughtful proposals we might make to reduce the level of violence in our country.

U.S.-CUBA RELATIONS

Mr. DODD. Mr. President, next Tuesday morning I will offer an amendment that is not a radical idea, not something that ought to evoke much debate or dissension but the kind of proposal that might even carry by a voice vote under normal circumstances. Because of the nature of the subject matter, it has become controversial, and I regret that. It was my hope that the Senate would vote today on the Dodd amendment, which is currently pending on the Senate floor. Unfortunately, that vote was put off until next week.

Having said that, I want to take a few minutes to discuss this proposal and explain why I believe it makes sense to go forward to establish a bipartisan commission to review U.S.-CUBA relations.

The amendment I will be offering provides for the establishment of a bipartisan 12-member commission to review United States policy with regard to Cuba and to make recommendations for the change that might be necessary to bring that policy into the 21st century.

On Wednesday of this week, the President of South Korea, Kim Dae-jung, and the North Korean leader, Kim Jong-II, signed a broad agreement to work for peace and unity on the Korean peninsula. Needless to say, the level of hostility that has existed between these two governments for more than half of a century has been high. These two countries fought a bloody and costly war in which hundreds of thousands of Koreans lost their lives. More than 35,000 of our own fellow service men and women in this country lost their lives as well. Yet these two leaders have been able to bring themselves to meet and discuss the future of their peoples and the possibility of reunification at some point down the road.

The Clinton administration, to its credit, has announced that, as a result of these efforts, it will soon lift economic sanctions against North Korea, paving the way for American companies to trade and invest and for American citizens to travel. I support the administration’s decision and applaud them for moving forward in such an expeditious manner to complement the efforts of the North and South Korean leaders.

Similarly, despite the fact that more than 50,000 American men and women in uniform lost their lives during the Vietnam conflict, the United States and Vietnam have full diplomatic and trade relations today. In large measure, this is due to our colleagues and veterans, Senators McCaIN, KERRY, and others in this Chamber.

Even though we have a number of serious disagreements with the People’s Republic of China, we are not imposing unilateral economic sanctions against that country; quite the opposite. I predicted that the United States, very shortly, will follow the House of Representatives and vote to support permanent normal trade relations with China, which will pave the way for China to join the World Trade Organization.

My point is this: Across the globe, we are seeing efforts to normalize relations, to reconcile old grievances—the Middle East, the Korean peninsula, the Balkans, Northern Ireland. There isn’t the political will or the people who are not trying to resolve the differences that have existed for far too long.

The question I will pose by offering the amendment on Tuesday is: Isn’t it about time we at least think about doing the same in our own hemisphere, when it comes to a nation that is 90 Cuban miles, or even more, than from here to Hagerstown, MD, or Richmond, VA?

The reaction to my amendment would suggest that there is still strong resistance to doing in our own hemisphere what we are promoting elsewhere around the globe. The amendment I will offer would simply establish a 12-member commission to review U.S. policy, to make recommendations on how it might be changed or if it ought to be changed. I am not even suggesting that the commission would come back with changes. In fact, they may come back with quite the opposite result.

This proposal is not new or revolutionary. The Senate has authorized establishment of commissions to review many subjects—the Central America Commission, the Kissinger Commission, Social Security, Terrorist Threats, and many other subject matters. My point is this: Across the globe, we have managed to find reform and democracy. The Senate has authorized establishment of a bipartisan commission on the subject of Cuba in a letter to President Clinton more than 1 and a half years ago. One quarter of the Senate joined him in urging the President to take the politics out of United States-Cuba policy and to look to the wisdom of some of our best and brightest foreign policy experts to make recommendations on what we should do with respect to this issue.

I personally urged Secretary Albright to recommend that the President move forward with this proposal. Regrettably, she believed that the timing was not right for doing so. I was saddened by that decision. I disagreed with the Secretary then, and I believe that a year and a half later the arguments are even more compelling for establishing such a commission today.

We are about to change administrations. What better time to use the interval between the current one and the next one to take a fresh look at Cuba-related issues and be ready to make recommendations in the spring of the coming year as to what makes sense with regard to Cuban-U.S. relations?