

## Statement by Press Secretary Fitzwater on President Bush's Meeting With President Hassan Gouled Aptidon of Djibouti

April 24, 1991

The President held a meeting and working lunch today for President Hassan Gouled Aptidon of Djibouti. The two Presidents discussed bilateral and regional issues including the situation in the Horn of Africa.

The United States and Djibouti have maintained excellent relations since Djibouti's independence in 1977, and we

are pleased to have the opportunity to develop them further.

The President thanked President Gouled for Djibouti's support of the coalition and in opposing Iraq's aggression. The two Presidents reaffirmed their support for stability in the Middle East and peace in the Horn of Africa.

## Remarks at the National Summit on Mathematics Assessment

April 24, 1991

Thank you, Lamar. Thank you all. And let me just say how pleased I am to be here. I'd like to thank Dr. Frank Press for inviting me once again to this wonderful place. I know we're all grateful for the chance to have this meeting held here.

I salute Dr. Bromley, who is at my right hand in terms of science. He's doing an outstanding job coordinating the science work for the White House and taking a leadership role in many of the most important issues of our day. And, of course, Lamar Alexander. The only problem I've got with Lamar is he has the propensity for working people to death. [Laughter] And we've announced this Education 2000 just last week. He's been grinding away ever since he got in this job. And I have this ugly feeling that he's going to kill me. [Laughter]

But we were yesterday down in Annapolis together and a couple of days ago up where we saluted the Teacher of the Year, incidentally, up in West Virginia. But it's going to be like that because this is a team effort. And we don't want any of you to escape without at least letting you know we want your support, your ideas in terms of fulfilling our objectives for the Education 2000 program.

When I first heard that I was invited to a math summit, I kind of had images of

Gorby and I going head on head, you know, in long division, something like that. [Laughter] That's not to be, so let me just make some comments on the—[laughter]—maybe never, I don't know, but—[laughter]—

I like what Lamar said about Tom Romberg's challenge assumptions. That's a lot of what our program is about. "Think anew," as Abraham Lincoln called it. Your purpose here transcends public figures, talking about Bush and Gorbachev. It concerns our nation's future. Of the six national education goals that we established with the Nation's Governors down in Charlottesville, you're helping to realize one of the most ambitious: that American students be first in the world in math and science achievement by the year 2000.

This challenging goal, worthy of a great nation and its future ambitions, plays an important role in our America 2000 Strategy to reinvent the American school. We can't expect kids to meet the test of worldwide competition unless we first establish world-class standards, standards that define the knowledge and skills we expect students to learn and master.

Once we've set standards we must assess our progress in meeting them. I salute the Mathematical Sciences Education Board for hosting this conference, the National Edu-

cation Goals Panel for this forum, this afternoon's forum. And above all I thank the educators and policymakers assembled here. You've labored for years to reach consensus on standards for mathematical skills and performance, and I commend you for your commitment and for your achievement. We can't blaze a trail to the future until we know where we stand, where we're at, if you will. If you'll excuse my ending a sentence with a preposition. *[Laughter]*

The voluntary American Achievement Tests, a cornerstone of the America 2000 strategy, will measure achievement in five core subjects including, obviously, mathematics. I've challenged the Nation to have a test ready for the 4th graders of 1993 and to produce tests for 8th and 12th graders soon after.

I ask each of you to help the public understand the purposes of standards and assessments and to make sure that our achievement tests motivate and inspire students. Let's also see that these tests motivate and inspire the schools, that they make schools more accountable to the people they serve, that they restore the kind of competition and pride that's essential for educational excellence, that they tell us where we stand, so we may start the journey to wherever we want to go.

We in the Federal Government are partners, we're partners with you in advancing the cause of educational excellence. Secretary of Energy Admiral Jim Watkins—James Watkins—has chaired a committee that's produced the first inventory of Federal activities that directly influence science, math, engineering, and technical education.

As you know, we must improve training for precollege math and science teachers. We need to attract more women and minorities into science and technology. The budget that we sent to Congress this year calls for a 13-percent increase for math and science education, for a total of nearly \$2 billion. But you understand that the Federal Government—and it's right that the Federal Government can only play a limited role in making America's students the first in math and science. Dollars alone won't get the job done. Real excellence demands a commitment from us all. Everyone's got to declare, everyone must declare, we will

reinvent the American school. We will achieve our ambitious national education goals.

And it can be done in many, many ways. Yesterday Lamar and I were down, as I mentioned, down in Annapolis. And it's inspiring to go there anyway. It was a beautiful spring day and all the midshipmen were lined up. And we had Colin Powell with us, and they gave him a wonderful, warm reception. But the thing that struck me the most was a program going on right there in Annapolis where some of these midshipmen go take their Saturdays and they go and get some kids out of the minority community down there—most of the students in this program are black—and they bring them to the laboratories on the campus and they teach them elementary physics. They begin to give them some hope and some inspiration, if you will. And it was wonderful.

In the first place, I didn't understand anything the kids said because I don't know anything about physics. But it was really inspiring to see these young midshipmen who have a rigorous program, as we all know, giving of their time to help others. And that's some of what we're talking about here. It's not invented in Washington. These kids were doing it on their own down there in what we call a Points of Light program, the ability—propensity of one American to help another. And so, it was very inspiring.

Another thing I want to report on our program: part of it is that you're never too old to stop learning. And so Lamar had my arm twisted up behind my elbow—my shoulder blade once again, and I announced that I would learn to use a computer. I am computer illiterate. Everybody in this room, obviously, knows how to run a computer. But I would like to report to you that I intend to undertake and fulfill that commitment, and today I learned to turn one on—*[laughter]*—push the button down here and one up here with a green thing on it—*[laughter]*—and out came a command to somebody that I had written out on the—I pushed a button; I was worried what might happen up there. *[Laughter]* But it was fun. And I will keep it up, and I plan to.

Enough frivolity. But, look, as you consider your principles, goals, and actions for math assessment, let me just ask you to keep a few questions in mind. Consider what it means to be the best in the world and the kind of balance our students will need between theoretical math and practical applied skills for life. How can we create tests to ensure not just that our best students are as good as any in the world but that our average students achieve world-class status? How can we emphasize testing that encourages better teaching, that doesn't weed kids out but develops better math skills for all?

Every student, everyone, needs goals and challenges. Every school needs goals and challenges. I hope your work will help every single American student and every American teacher reach our national education goals.

Many of you, Lamar tells me, have already led the way. Consider one member of today's audience. Larry Williams, a math teacher of Utah High School in rural Alabama, and a member of the Mathematical Sciences Education Board, has lit a fire under his students, many of whom come from poor or disadvantaged homes. His math teams can compete with any other teams in Alabama and throughout the

southeast. When people ask how America can become first in the world in math and science by the year 2000 I point to teachers like Larry Williams, dedicated professionals who help all our children reach their potential.

All of you help set off an American educational renaissance, and I thank you for what you've done and for what you will achieve. And I came over to tell you and, once again, to pledge to our Secretary of Education that we at the White House will do our level-best to back you up every inch of the way.

Thank you all, and may God bless you.

*Note: The President spoke at 1:47 p.m. in the auditorium of the National Academy of Sciences. In his remarks, he referred to Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander; Frank Press, president of the National Academy of Sciences; D. Allan Bromley, Assistant to the President for Science and Technology; President Mikhail Gorbachev of the Soviet Union; Thomas A. Romberg, member of the assessment steering committee of the Mathematical Sciences Education Board; Secretary of Energy James D. Watkins; Gen. Colin L. Powell, Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; and Larry Williams, member of the Mathematical Sciences Education Board.*

## Remarks at a Ceremony for the Posthumous Presentation of the Medal of Honor to Corporal Freddie Stowers

*April 24, 1991*

Welcome to the White House. I salute the Vice President and Mrs. Quayle, and Secretary Cheney, other members of our Cabinet, General Vuono, distinguished Members of Congress who are with us today, and former Congressman Joe DiGuardi. I'm especially glad Joe's with us here today. To the former Medal of Honor recipients, I salute each and every one of you. To Georgiana Palmer and Mary Bowens—the sisters of today's honoree are with us, and don't they look lovely. We are just delighted.

And a note of more than trivial passing:

the honoree's great-grandnephew, Staff Sergeant Douglas Warren, of the 101st Airborne—he returned—he looks a little jet-lagged to me, but he returned just last night from Saudi Arabia. And I want to welcome you home.

And we also—to do equal time to the Air Force, why, we salute you, Mr. Stowers, also back here. He's at Langley.

So, it's a lovely day here, and we welcome each and every one of you to the White House. We want to honor a true hero, a man who makes us proud of our