

May 22 / Administration of George Bush, 1991

Q. How do you feel about Saddam Hussein's actions?

The President. Condemn it. The most brutal thing we've ever seen. It was without any moral underpinning. The whole world rose up against him. Do you remember, he tried to say it's him against—the Arabs against the United States? But the United Nations said something different: It's the whole world against his brutality. When you see what he did to the environment, when you see what he did to the people of Kuwait, when you see the principle that he offended, principle of aggression against a neighbor—nonaggression against a neighbor, why, you say this man has no redeeming value. He's a bad person. Unfortunately, there are people like that in the world.

Well, I had better run, but thank you. Thank you so much.

Q. Thank you so much. Thank you for visiting.

The President. I like to do—you've got a good man over here, hoping he's a teacher. You did a great job. Thanks a lot. It made it much more interesting this way. Thank you all. Good luck. Nice to see you.

Reporter. Mr. President?

The President. No press conference. Let me explain something to you guys in the class. The press—these ones you see—now, you'll see him on Channel 4 tonight. No, on NBC tonight. So, you watch. And their job is to ask me questions and for me to give answers as best I can. Sometimes I do it. We have press conferences. Maybe you've seen it. And then sometimes they'll understandably want to get an answer to a question. But I can't do it all the time.

I have to do it in a rather organized fashion. So, we do it mostly in press conferences.

But they've got their job to do, like he is and wants me to answer. I'm not going to answer it right now. Not that I'm afraid to answer the question, but I just have to get on the schedule, and once we get bogged down, we're in the middle of a press conference. But that's the way it works. But you'll see some of these people tonight. Jim [Jim Miklaszewski, NBC News], you'll see. And who else have we got? But it'll be on the television. Brit Hume back there with ABC—and they come along. See, they come on most of the trips, not all. Sometimes we answer the questions, and then they write the stories. You'll see them reporting on the visit to the school tonight. That's the way it—now, whether Time magazine over here—you ever heard of Time? Well, see, now, he's going to write a glowing piece about this education program. [Laughter.] We've got high hope.

But everybody, all these guys—and they won't say it, but they'll all be impressed with what they've seen here. And in various ways that will help other schools take the initiative that your school has taken.

Hey, listen, thanks a lot. Nice to see you. Good luck to you.

Note: The question-and-answer session began at 12:30 p.m. in the Discourse Room. In his remarks, the President referred to Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander; Rajiv Gandhi, former Prime Minister of India, and his wife, Sonia; and President Saddam Hussein of Iraq. A tape was not available for verification of the content of this session.

Remarks to Students and Faculty of the Saturn School of Tomorrow in St. Paul, Minnesota

May 22, 1991

Thank you, Governor. Let me just say I'm here to—thank you very, very much. I'm here to talk about education. But with that North Stars introduction, let me put it this way: they took it on the chin last night, but who knows? We've got a whole new skating

match out there today. I have just seen in the classroom—re: the computer—what Minnesota has seen on the ice. I think we saw a lot of Bellows, a lot of Gagner, a lot of

Jon Caseys in the classroom—first-class kids starring in what they're doing.

I met with Tom King of the Saturn School. He's the Bob Gainey of this operation. I tell you—he's got some up-and-coming North Stars on this team here. I was delighted to see them. I wanted to thank Governor Carlson for his courtesy and his welcome, his commitment to education. I want to especially single out the man you first heard from, our new distinguished Secretary of Education, Lamar Alexander. He is revolutionizing education in this country.

As we talk about education, it would not be right if I didn't single out the community leaders, the teachers, my fellow computer students. I'm sorry that Senator Durenberger is not with us today; he has an important vote. But I'm glad to see that he is already a cosponsor of our legislation today.

Today I came out here to learn and also to talk about American leadership. We are committed to the idea of America remaining a force for good in the world—the home of free markets and free people, the land of democracy and opportunity. We're also committed to leading the way in educational innovation. Our strategy for achieving this leadership is called America 2000. And what America 2000 is all about is a challenge, challenging all the methods and the means of the past. Here in Minnesota, from St. Paul and Minneapolis to Cyrus and Miltona, you're sailing this country into the future. You are creating public school choice. Minnesota is out front, it is the wave of the future, and you are to be congratulated.

Like you, other schools, businesses, and communities all across America are creating the new generation of American schools—North Carolina has Project Genesis, Ted Sizer has a Coalition of Essential Schools, Washington State's schools are setting the pace for the 21st century.

[At this point, audience members interrupted the President's remarks]

Isn't it wonderful about democracy? They have a right to speak, and I think I have a right to be heard. But we're used to this.

Let me say that Oliver Wendell Holmes once wrote: "I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand as in what direction we are moving. To reach

the port of heaven, we must sail sometimes with the wind and sometimes against it, but we must sail, and not drift, and not lie at anchor."

With America 2000 we are not standing at anchor. We've shoved off and set sail. From now on, business-as-usual will be very unusual. You know, in cities all across this nation, people have started changing the American school. They know that there have been enough studies, enough commissions, enough blue ribbon panels, enough white papers, and it's time we got down to the business of inventing new schools for a new world. We took the first step in 1989 with the Nation's Governors, Democrats and Republicans alike, we established the six national education goals and set the clock ticking for the end of this decade—to the end of the status quo.

Those goals are—these are the six goals: first, to ensure that every child starts school ready to learn; second, to raise the high school graduation rate to 90 percent without lowering standards; third, to ensure that every American student leaving the 4th, 8th, and 12th grades can demonstrate competence in five core subjects; and fourth, to make our students first in the world in math and science, and that's what we saw a little of today; and fifth, to ensure that every American who is an adult is literate and has the skills necessary to compete in the global economy; and sixth, to free every American school from drugs and violence so that learning can take place.

So our challenge now—yours and mine and the Secretary's and the Governor's—is to reinvent the classroom—Lamar and I call it creating "New American Schools"—for the year 2000 and beyond. It's just one part of our America 2000 strategy to meet those six lofty goals that I just mentioned. No one says it's going to be easy. But it's a battle for our future that we must and will win.

For today's students, we're designing better and more accountable schools. For tomorrow's students, we're creating a new generation of schools. For the rest of us—today's work force and yesterday's students—we're transforming America into a nation of students, lifelong learners who

continue to grow and explore every single day. And finally, all across this nation, parents and teachers—and God bless our teachers—and the neighbors are getting together in communities to make learning happen.

We're talking about breaking the mold, building for the next American century. Re-inventing—literally starting from the bottom up to build revolutionary new schools, not with bricks and mortar but with questions and ideas and determination. We're looking at every possible way to make schools better while still keeping our eyes on the results.

And that's why I've come here to Minnesota. Just down the river from this bluff stood St. Paul's first school, a crowded—it was a one-room log cabin that a Mrs. Rumsey called to order about 150 years ago. Back then, Minnesota was a wilderness, although settlers soon transformed it into a teeming center of growth and enterprise. Here, along the banks of this great river, rail lines and grain mills and hard-working pioneers forged the center of the agricultural empire called the Great Plains.

These days, Minnesota remains a land of opportunity for many: small business start-ups generate most jobs here in the Twin Cities, and big businesses ranges from agriculture to medicine to transportation to high tech. Minnesota remains a pioneer, and you can take great pride in that, leading the Nation in educational choice. You have guaranteed that every family in the State can choose which public school its children will attend. Minnesotans know that education means opportunity. Many people helped promote these great reforms, many here in this audience today. One who is not here, one such person, is Al Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers—who was here last week, I understand. And he is very enthusiastic about your progress.

I just came from a wonderful day, a wonderful experience, from the Saturn School of Tomorrow, right here in downtown St. Paul. And I want to thank Tom King and Charlie Burbach for the grand tour. Frankly, I was a bit surprised by the place—so much technology, and such young kids. But then at my age, they all look young;

I will admit it. But someone asked me if I wanted to see a high-tech machine used for "HyperCard"—I thought he was talking about my fibrillating heart. [*Laughter*]

Let me share with you the basic idea behind this school, as I understand it, as your experts explained it to me, as our Secretary of Education explained it to me—one that could only have become reality because of the bipartisan support that it received. Saturn is a citywide magnet school, with over 200 middle-school students coming from all over the district. Each morning, they arrive at this old YWCA building ready to learn on state-of-the-art technology: computers that teach reading and math; videodisc systems that access libraries and encyclopedias—and let me thank the members of these two libraries, the directors, for letting us use this wonderful facility today. Thank you very, very much. Off-site classrooms in science and art museums that give kids hands-on learning. I asked one kid, expert in the computer already, about the sixth grade level, "What do you want to be?" He wanted to be an artist. And you can get that from this kind of innovative approach to education.

The curriculum—you all know it, but the rest of this country doesn't—includes core subjects, and yet it is designed to respond to a changing world—one of global communications, computer programming, chemistry, personal wellness, and community volunteering.

Let me tell you a true story—some here may have heard it—that happened when the founder of Control Data, William Norris, stopped by the Saturn School to see the fourth and fifth graders at work. He noticed that one fifth grader—maybe the guy I just saw—was busy wiring a small motor to a model car. It might have been Elijah, it might have been Sarah who I met with. A fourth grader nearby was on the computer connected to the model car. Mr. Norris asked him, "What's going on?"

And the kid said, "I'm writing the computer program to make the car start and stop," this from one of your fourth graders. And Mr. Norris—and this is a true story—Mr. Norris asked him how that worked, and the boy explained the first few steps. Then he stopped.

So Mr. Norris, the head of Control Data, asked him to keep going so he could get a few more details. And the kid said to his partner, "What's the matter with this guy? He doesn't seem to understand anything about computers!"

Part of Lamar and my program is that adults are never too old to learn. I'm trying, I'm starting in on the computers. Learned a lot today, as a matter of fact. I've had three computer lessons. The point is, it doesn't take the head of Control Data to see that Saturn doesn't look like a regular school. No old-fashioned desks. Kids on the floor, playing with "mice"—not your kind, their kind, those little gadgets calling up the information on the computer. In fact, its motto is "High Tech. High Teach. High Touch." That's because it isn't a regular school. Whether these kids know it or not today, what they are doing is exploring new frontiers in American education.

And yet, the school's director is realistic. He says: "Look, we see it as a work in progress. We have as many questions as we have answers. We don't hold it up as a solution; it isn't something that can be cloned."

Like any new idea, we don't know what tomorrow holds for the Saturn School. And there may be aspects of its approach that, from time to time, generate controversy. But when we say "break the mold," we've got to give communities the power to experiment, to think anew, to be daring.

I like what works. I'm confident about the prospects of new American schools in communities all across this country. The new generation of schools is but one part of our America 2000 strategy. With more accountability, with more choice in our schools, with a national commitment to life-long learning, with the active engagement

of community, our business community in the business of education, we will embark on a new voyage in the American experience.

You know, it's going to take time. We can begin today by pulling up the anchor and hoisting the sails. We've set our sights as a country now on new horizons, ones of opportunity and freedom and American leadership.

Again, I am inspired by what I saw here today. And I want to take this message of progress and innovation, creativity all across our country. I thank each and every one of you. I wish you all the best in your work, and God bless each and every one of you. Thank you very, very much.

Well done, everybody. Now, it is my pleasure, and it won't take a minute, to sign our new education bill that we will send up to the Congress today. I ask for your support. I guarantee you, you won't be disappointed if it passes. It's in keeping with what the people of Minnesota are doing. Thank you all very much.

Note: The President spoke at 1:24 p.m. in the courtyard at the St. Paul Public Library. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Arne Carlson of Minnesota; Minnesota North Stars hockey players Brian Bellow, David Gagner, and Jon Casey, and coach Bob Gainey; Dr. Thomas King, associate director of the school; Secretary of Education Lamar Alexander; Senator Dave Durenberger; Theodore R. Sizer, professor at Brown University and founder of the Coalition of Essential Schools; Albert Shanker, president of the American Federation of Teachers; and Charles Burbach, principal of the school. Following his remarks, the President returned to Washington, DC.