

The President's Radio Address August 20, 1994

Good morning. This morning I want to talk with you about crime and violence. All of us know it's too familiar a threat to Americans in almost every neighborhood in our country.

Right now, just as I'm delivering this address, the family, friends, and neighbors of a 13-year-old boy are gathered in a church not far from the White House to lay him to rest. His name was Anthony Stokes. He was shot last Saturday night apparently by another boy about the same age.

Later this morning, as Anthony Stokes' family buries him, House and Senate negotiators will meet to finish work on the crime bill. Soon after, each Member of the House of Representatives will face a simple choice, to pass the toughest attack on crime in history or to block it one more time. We must not walk away from the American people in the fight against crime.

Anthony Stokes was killed just 2 days after Congress succumbed to intense political pressure and allowed the crime bill to be derailed. We fought hard over the last 10 days to get it back on track. And it is back on track because Members of Congress of both parties have worked together in good faith, determined to deliver a crime bill for the American people.

Now Congress must finish the job and pass the crime bill I've been fighting for for nearly 2 years now. When they do, it's going to make a difference in every town, every city, every State in our country.

It's a tough bill. It'll put 100,000 new police officers on our street, a 20 percent increase in the number of officers walking the beat, protecting our neighborhoods, and preventing crime as well as catching criminals. It will shut down the revolving door on our prisons and make violent criminals serve their time. Police officers and law-abiding citizens should no longer have to watch in fear and frustration as dangerous criminals are put right back on the street. It will stiffen penalties for criminals who prey on children. It will protect unsuspecting families from sexual predators in their communities by requiring local authorities to alert them to their presence. It will lock the most dangerous criminals up for good by making "three strikes and you're out" the law of the land.

But this crime bill is smart as well as tough, because our approach recognizes what the law enforcement community has been saying for years and years. There isn't a single victim of crime who wouldn't trade the toughest sentence in the world for some way to have prevented the crime from happening in the first place.

That's why this bill includes an unprecedented effort in crime prevention, to help kids stay away from crime and drugs and gangs. It gives them something to say yes to. At the same time, we make it clear there are some things young people must say no to. The crime bill bans juvenile ownership of handguns. There's no reason why kids should be carrying guns to schools instead of books.

Finally, it bans deadly assault weapons that were designed to be used in war for rapid-fire combat. Today they are the weapons of choice for gangs and drug dealers who use them to outgun police officers and to kill innocent people. They don't belong on our streets, and the crime bill will take them off.

And the entire crime bill will be paid for—and this is important—not with a new tax, not by taking money away from some other needed service but by reducing the size of the Federal bureaucracy to its lowest level in 30 years.

This crime bill answers the call of every parent afraid that random violence will harm a child, of every police officer who's been hurt or killed by the terrible fire power of an assault weapon, of every innocent, law-abiding man, woman, and child in America. The crime bill offers this pledge: From now on, our Government will do everything we can to make sure that people who commit crimes get caught, that those who are guilty are convicted, that those who are convicted serve their times, that those who can be saved from a life of crime are found when they're young and given a chance to do better.

For all these reasons, and for a young man named Anthony Stokes who's being laid to rest today, we must not let this chance pass us by. We must seize the opportunity before us to make a dramatic difference in every neighborhood. And as we do, I hope we can make a difference in the way our Government works.

Let today mark the beginning of a determined effort on the part of all of us to work in good faith across party lines. I have shown my good faith, and in so doing I have taken the risk that all people take when they talk to people who have opposed them.

Soon the Congress will have a chance to show the risk was worth it. And once they pass the

crime bill, the way will be clear for us to attack other problems together, across party lines, as the American people want us to do and as we should.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on Cuba

August 20, 1994

Over the past 2 weeks, the Government of Cuba has taken actions to provoke a mass exodus to the United States. These actions have placed thousands of Cuban citizens at risk in small boats and rafts and have had a direct impact on our national interest.

I want to thank the Cuban-American community for their courageous restraint in not taking their own boats to Cuba to fuel the exodus and thank the officials of Florida, Governor Chiles, the congressional delegation, the people from Dade County, and others, who have worked so closely with us.

Yesterday I announced steps to counter Castro's efforts to export his problems by provoking an exodus. Today I'm announcing additional actions consistent with the Cuban Democracy Act to limit the ability of the Cuban Government to accumulate foreign exchange and to enable us to expand the flow of information to the Cuban people.

Specifically, cash remittances to Cuba will no longer be permitted. Family gift packages will be limited to medicine, food, and strictly humanitarian items and transfer of funds for humanitarian purposes will require specific authorization of the Treasury Department. Second, the only charter flights permitted between Miami and Havana will be those clearly designed to accommodate legal immigrants and travel consistent with the purposes of the Cuban Democracy Act. Third, the United States will use all appropriate means to increase and amplify its international broadcasts to Cuba.

The solution to Cuba's many problems is not an uncontrolled exodus; it is freedom and democracy for Cuba.

The United States will continue to bring before the United Nations and other international organizations evidence of human rights abuses, such as the sinking of the tugboat *13th of March*. Meanwhile we will pursue this course with vigor and determination.

Remarks on Anticrime Legislation and an Exchange With Reporters

August 21, 1994

The President. The vote in the House of Representatives tonight is a great victory for all law-abiding Americans. It's also a victory for all Americans who have longed to change the way Government works here in our Nation's Capital, who have wanted us for a long time to go beyond labels and partisan divisions and false choices to commonsense solutions to our most profound national challenges.

For 6 long years, under two previous Presidents, our families were under siege; violence on our streets increased. Washington talked a lot about crime during these years but did not act.

Well, tonight Democrats and Republicans joined together, and they acted. They reached across party lines to pass the toughest and smartest crime bill in the history of the United