

AmeriCorps, are working to make our people smarter, safer, and healthier. Out in rural Kansas, Nanci Ridge has been trained by AmeriCorps to give emergency medical assistance. Now every day she helps police or fire departments or teaches school kids safety. But she spent Thanksgiving fielding emergencies at the local county hospital, giving some of the regular staff the holiday off and keeping the country protected. That's what AmeriCorps is about; that's what America's about.

And finally, let's think about the Americans who are doing so much to help our children live up to their God-given potential. Five years ago in Buffalo, New York, Lloyd Hargrave helped start a parent resource center to get parents more involved in the education of their children. Today, the center offers nightly tutoring programs to help parents do a better job at helping their children learn. And the center lends computers to families that otherwise wouldn't have them in their homes.

Working with children in that way is one of the most important things any of us can do to keep our country strong. Our Government can help, and we are. We're expanding Head Start, promoting programs in our schools like character education. But in the end, children need to know that adults care about them, that they're part of a loving family, a caring community. They need to be told by someone that they're the most important person in the world.

So this holiday season as we count our blessings and face our challenges, let us commit ourselves to giving our children a future they can be thankful for every Thanksgiving for a long, long time.

I hope you enjoy this holiday weekend, and thank you for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 10:29 a.m. on November 25 in the Laurel Lodge at Camp David, MD, for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on November 26.

Remarks on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

November 28, 1994

Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President. Jim Miller and Jim Baker, thank you for your moving and compelling remarks. Mr. Speaker, Leader Michel, Members of the Congress, members of the Cabinet, and to all of you who have come here from previous administrations and from different walks of life, proving that this GATT agreement not only tears down trade barriers, it also bulldozes differences of party, philosophy, and ideology: I thank you all for being here.

We have certainly demonstrated today that there is no partisan pride of ownership in the GATT agreement. It is not a Republican agreement or a Democratic one. It is an American agreement, designed to benefit all the American people in every region of our country from every walk of life.

Jim Baker spoke so eloquently about how this represents yet another historic choice for the United States in the 20th century. When we walked away from our leadership and engagement responsibilities, as we did after the First World War, the world has paid a terrible price.

When we have attempted to lead, as we did after the Second World War, it has not only helped the world, it has helped the people of the United States. We saw the greatest expansion of the middle class in our country and prosperity for working families in our country in the years after we tried to put together a system that would preserve peace and security and promote prosperity after World War II.

We have done as much as we could here at home to try to deal with the difficult and daunting economic challenges we face, to bring the deficit down, to shrink the size of the Government, to simultaneously increase our investment in education and technology and defense conversion. But we know that without the capacity to expand trade and to generate more economic opportunities we will, first of all, not be able to fulfill our global responsibilities and, secondly, not be able to fulfill our responsibilities to the American people.

I'd like to address a third argument, if I might, just from my heart. It's been raised against this agreement and raised against

NAFTA. Jim Miller adequately disposed of the arguments that this is a budget buster and that this somehow impinges on our sovereignty. That isn't true. And he did a very compelling job of that. But let me say there is another big argument against this trade agreement that no one has advanced today but that is underlying all of this. And I saw it in an article the other day written by a columnist generally sympathetic to me. He said, "There he goes again with one of his crazy, self-defeating economic ideas, pushing this GATT agreement, which is one more prescription for the demise of the lower wage working people in America, which is the reason the Democratic Party's in the trouble it's in today, doing things like this that just kill working people."

That is a wrong argument. But that is really the undercurrent against this GATT. The idea is that since we live in a global economy and there are people other places who can work for wages we can't live on, if we open our markets to them, they will displace our workers and they will aggravate the most troubling trend in modern American life, which is that the wages of non-college-educated male workers in the United States have declined by 12 percent after you take account of inflation in the last 10 years.

Now, that has great superficial appeal. Why is it wrong? It's wrong because, number one, if we don't do anything, we'll have some displacement from foreign competition. But if we move and lead, we will open other markets to our products. And our Nation has gone through a wrenching period over the last several years of improving its productivity, its ability to compete. We can now sell and compete anywhere.

When we did NAFTA, they made the same argument. What's happened? A hundred thousand new jobs this year. What's happened? A 500 percent increase in exports of American automobiles to Mexico. What's the biggest complaint in Detroit now? The autoworkers have too much overtime they have to do. If you think about where we were 10 years ago, that's what, at home, we call a high-class problem. [*Laughter*]

Now, that is the problem we face in America. And the resentments of people who keep working harder and falling further behind and feel like they've played by the rules and they've gotten the shaft, they will play themselves out, these resentments, in election after election

after election in different and unpredictable ways, just like they did in 1992 and 1994. But our responsibility is to do what is right for those people over the long run. That is our responsibility. And the only way to do that is to open other markets to American products and services, even as we open our markets to them.

Yes, we have to improve the level of lifetime training and education for the American work force. Yes, we have to deal with some of the serious, particular problems of the American economy. But in the end, the private sector in this country and the working people of this country will do their jobs if they have half a shot at the high-growth areas of the world. And what are the highest growth areas of the world? Not the wealthy advanced economies but Latin America, Asia, and other places.

GATT, along with NAFTA and what we're trying to do with the Asian-Pacific countries and what we're going to try to do at the Summit of the Americas, this keeps America leading the world in ways that permits us to do both things we have to do at the end of the cold war, to continue to be engaged, to continue to lead, to work toward a more peaceful and secure and prosperous world, and at the same time to deal with the terrible, nagging difficulties that so many millions of American families face today.

There is no other way to deal with this. There is no easy way out. There is no slogan that makes the problem go away. This will help to solve the underlying anxiety that millions and millions of Americans face and, I might add, millions of Europeans and millions of Japanese and others in advanced economies all around the world, and at the same time make the world a better place and the future more secure for our children.

And we have to do it now. We can't wait until next year. We don't want to litter it up like a Christmas tree and run the risk of losing it. Every time I talked to a world leader in the last 6 months, they have asked me the same thing: When is the United States going to act on GATT? The rest of the world is looking at us.

So we have a golden opportunity here to add \$1,700 in income to the average family's income in this country over the next few years, to create hundreds of thousands of high-wage jobs, to have the biggest global tax cut in history, and to fulfill our two responsibilities, our responsibility to lead and remain engaged in the world

Nov. 28 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1994

and our responsibility to try to help the people here at home to get ahead. We need to get on with it and do it now.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:38 a.m. in the East Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to former Office of Management and Budget Director James C. Miller III and former Secretary of State James A. Baker III.

Statement on House of Representatives Action on the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade

November 29, 1994

Tonight the United States House of Representatives cast an historic vote for American workers, farmers, and families. This overwhelming bipartisan vote in support of the GATT legislation demonstrates our confidence in America's ability to compete and win in the global economy.

Passage of the Uruguay round will provide enormous benefits for the United States: hundreds of thousands of new U.S. jobs, \$100–\$200 billion per year in increased GDP, and a \$744 billion global tax cut.

This vote demonstrates to the American people that Democrats and Republicans can work together in the national interest. The Uruguay round agreement is the product of 8 years of work by three administrations—Republican and Democratic. A strong majority of each party cast votes in favor of the agreement.

The eyes of the world are now on the United States Senate. I call on the Senate to pass GATT with the same strong, bipartisan support as it received in the House of Representatives.

Statement on the Student Loan Program

November 30, 1994

Today the Department of Education announced that its new direct lending program has reached the congressionally mandated benchmark of 40 percent in new loan volume for the next academic year. A total of 1,495 schools will participate in this new program. The program will provide \$8 billion in loans to two million students in the next school year.

The American people want a Federal Government that works better, costs less, and expands opportunities for all Americans. The new direct lending program is an important example of re-inventing Government to better meet the people's needs.

It will reduce complexity and costs for millions of student borrowers. And the option to repay loans as a percentage of income over time

will reduce burdens on young families and make it easier for young people to serve their communities and their country.

The new direct lending program is good news for taxpayers as well. Financial analysts in a recent Morgan Stanley newsletter have already described this new program as a "budgetary winner" that will "lower Government spending and reduce the deficit." Over the long term, we expect to save taxpayers \$4.3 billion once this program is fully up and running. Direct lending represents the most innovative student financial aid program since the creation of the Pell grant program in 1973, more than 20 years ago.

Government can work better, cost less, and direct lending proves it.