

Statement on the Terrorist Attack in Algeria *January 31, 1995*

The United States condemns in the strongest possible terms the terrible atrocity in Algiers yesterday which took the lives of dozens of innocent Algerians and wounded hundreds more. On behalf of the American people, I want to express my deepest sympathy to the Government of Algeria and to the families of the victims. Such indiscriminate and senseless terror cannot be excused or justified. It can only serve to deepen

the profound crisis and increase the suffering through which Algeria is now living.

This outrage comes just one week after a similar terrorist bombing in Israel. Whether in Netanya or Algiers, extremism, violence, and terror must not silence the voices of those who work for peace and reconciliation. It is our profound hope that reason and dialog can transcend violence and hate and that a better future can be realized for all the people of Algeria.

Statement on the Observance of Ramadan *January 31, 1995*

I want to offer my greetings and sincere best wishes on the occasion of the holy month of Ramadan.

The crescent moon symbolizes Islam and with the sighting of the crescent which heralds Ramadan millions of Americans will join Muslims around the world in observing this most sacred of times. During the next month, those who follow the Islamic religion will fast and abstain from the normal routines of life in order to better devote themselves to understanding and following their faith. It is a time not just for inward reflection but for rededication to the needs of the wider community and the requirement of service to others.

At this time of spiritual peace, when recognition of the ties which bind people of good will is paramount, it is fitting to recall the strides which have been taken to bring peace to the Middle East. As enemies reconcile and dialog replaces confrontation, this is a time for reflection on the hopes and dreams of a better life and a better world shared by those of all faiths.

Let us take pride in what has been accomplished toward realization of this noble vision. But for the sake of our children—our future—let us all renew our determination and work to make this moment of peace a lasting testament to a more peaceful world for all.

NOTE: Ramadan began on February 1.

Remarks and a Question-and-Answer Session With the Mayor's Youth Council in Boston, Massachusetts *January 31, 1995*

The President. Let me just begin by—let me make a couple of comments, and then I'll answer your questions. First, I want to congratulate all of you and the mayor on this remarkable project. I wanted to do this for a couple of reasons, but one is I think this might spread across the country as more people, through the news media, hear about it. I think this is a

wonderful idea that every city in the country could profit from copying.

I also want to say I'm glad to be here with your mayor, with Mrs. Menino, but also with Senator Kennedy and Senator Kerry, who flew up here with me from Washington. We're going to dinner tonight, but they wanted to come over

here and see you. And I think that's a great tribute to you and what you're doing.

Let's talk about the dropout rate a little bit and especially as it applies to teen parents. This is a big issue. We've just been discussing this down in Washington now as a part of what we call the New Covenant. You mentioned that. The New Covenant is, for me, the obligation that we have to create more opportunity and people and citizens have to exercise more responsibility. It means that we in Government have to try to help give you the tools you need to make the most of your own lives and then all of you have to do the most you can with your lives and help your fellow citizens. That's the big reason I wanted to come here today, because I think it's so remarkable that you're committed to doing this.

Now, we know that a lot of people who have children drop out of school, and one of the things I said to the Nation and to the Congress the other night in my speech is that as we reform the welfare system our goal ought to be to prepare people to go to work, to get them in jobs, to keep them in jobs, and to do it in a way that helps them be better parents. So what I'm trying to do is to work with the States all across the country to structure welfare systems where there are always incentives for young people to stay in school and, if they have little children, that the children should be given appropriate child care and other kinds of support.

And I think one of the things that you can do is to hammer home to people that if they can, if they have enough to get by, they ought to stay in high school before they leave and go to work, because in the world that we're living in, all the people who live in Boston and all the people who live in Massachusetts are competing with people all around the world for jobs and for income. And there's been a huge decline in the earnings of younger workers who are high school dropouts. When you make adjustments for inflation and the cost of living going up year in and year out, younger workers without a high school education are making probably 20 percent less than they were just 10 or 15 years ago.

So you need to go out and tell people, look, I know it's hard right now, but you need to be thinking about the long run. One of the things we've got to do that you can do for your peers, for other young people, that I can't do

as well as you can, is say to people, "Hey, the future is not what happens in an hour, it's not what happens tomorrow, it's not what happens next week. It's what happens 5 years from now or 10 years from now." And you'll always have to think about not just now but the future. You've got to always be thinking about your future. That's what you have to do when you're young. And I know it's hard when you've got a lot of responsibilities and a lot of problems, but we have simply got to get more of our young people to realize that if they don't stay in school, then the future won't be what it otherwise could be.

[At this point, a participant stated the need for stronger laws to punish people who sell guns to children.]

The President. Well, in the crime bill that we passed last year we stiffened penalties under Federal law for all gun-related offenses, particularly those that affect young people. And I see it already, we get reports, I get reports from the U.S. attorneys around the country that they're beginning to bring cases under all these new laws with stronger penalties. What I think you need to look at is the fact that most laws that deter crime are passed in the State level, by the State legislature. And most laws then have to be implemented as a matter of policy by local police organizations. So what I think you need to do is to have someone who knows more about that than I do give you a report on what the laws are in Massachusetts and evaluate whether you think the laws are strong enough, then look and see if you think they're being properly enforced.

And let me make one other point, because this goes back to something you can do. I've worked in the area of law enforcement longer than most of you have been alive. I was elected attorney general in my State in 1976. I took office in January of 1977. And I have seen the crime wave rise and fall and rise and fall in my home area.

I lived in a neighborhood, a real old neighborhood in Little Rock when I was the Governor of my State. And I saw the crime rate rise and fall, rise and fall. And the most important thing that drove the crime rate down was neighborhood councils like this council. If there were citizens groups working the neighborhood, working with the police, calling the police when there were strangers in the area, calling police

when they said there are people here selling guns to kids, there are people here pedaling guns out of the back of their cars, it was amazing how much the crime rate could be driven down.

So I think you should look at the laws at the State level, talk to the mayor's people here at the local level about how they're being implemented but also see whether or not the young people are willing to organize themselves in these neighborhood councils in the high-crime areas. I'm telling you, it does more than anything else I've ever seen to lower crime.

[A participant asked how the President could help influence the media to present a more positive image of young people.]

The President. I don't know that I'm the best one to ask about negative portrayals. [Laughter] I tell you—well, one thing about being here, I think it helps, and I came here because you're doing something positive, and it's newsworthy, and it's different. If you want some advice about it, I'll tell you—I'll give you my advice. I think you have to follow the same advice that Senator Kennedy or Senator Kerry or Mayor Menino or the President has to follow. You have to always be looking for new ways to manifest the idea that most young people are good, most young people are in school, most young people are obeying the law, most young people care about their friends and neighbors. And every time you do something to manifest that, then that's new. That is—let me just give it to you in crass terms, because you can't blame them for this. If you start a program and it's a good program and you do it every day for 2 years, it's an important thing to do, but it may only be news the day you start it and then when you have your anniversary. But every time somebody holds up a liquor store or shoots somebody on the street, that's a new and different story. See what I mean?

So you may—you've got a lot more good people, but it might not be a new thing. So I think one of the things you ought to do is to think about, in this youth council, how many different things are now going on in Boston that are good news, that show young people in a positive light. And how many of them have been written about in the papers? How many of them have been on the local news? What can you do to get the positive story out there?

And you ought to have one person on your council who's job it is to always be thinking of some new thing you're doing that hasn't yet been portrayed. And what you will find is that over time—you can't turn this around overnight—but over time, if you're steady about it, you will slowly balance the scales, and people will say, "Hey, we've got a problem, but most of our kids are good kids."

[A participant asked if the President would give priority to school-to-work programs.]

The President. The answer is, I will. And you have to ask the Congress to do the same. Senator Kennedy and Senator Kerry and I were talking on the way up here. We have cut a lot of spending from the Federal budget, a lot. But we've tried to spend more money on education and on job training programs, starting with Head Start and including more affordable college loans and these school-to-work programs, which train young people to move into jobs and get education while they're doing it. And we're just now—we just started that program last year, and we're just now expanding it. And I'm really hoping that the new Congress will agree to this approach. Cut the inessential spending, but put more money into education, because that's really the key to our economic future as a country.

[A participant stated that many afterschool programs to keep children away from drugs and gangs were oriented toward boys rather than girls and asked about planned support for such programs.]

The President. Well, most of those decisions have to be made by the local school districts and the local communities. What we do is to try to provide the funds, like, for example, in the crime bill, one of the more controversial parts of the crime bill were the funds that Congress voted for and that I supported to provide cities, for example, monies that they could use in afterschool programs and other preventive programs, to try to give young people something positive to do.

The content of those programs, exactly whether there are enough programs for girls and they're as good and fair as the ones for boys and all that, all those are things that you have to work out here. So my answer to you is, that's what this youth council's for. You should—if the city controls the programs, talk to the city about it. If there are local groups who make

the decision, but they don't work for the mayor, call them into your council and ask them to come testify. Tell them what you don't like about the program.

In other words, use the power of this council. You're talking about making news; you've got a forum now. Next time you call a council meeting, these folks will come cover you. I won't have to be here. [Laughter] The mayor won't have to be here. And bring them in and say, "Look, these afterschool programs are fine, but they're not good enough. There's this pre-conception that only boys need it, and girls do, too, and here's what we need." You ought to use the power of this council. You ought to think about everything you would change in here, in this community, if you could wave a magic wand, and remember that you have a public forum to do it. Now, that's what the mayor's giving you.

Q. Mr. President, I was just wondering if you—I was recently accepted at Oxford, and I was just wondering if you could tell me what it's like over there. [Laughter]

Mayor Thomas Menino. Tell him what high school you went to. Tell them the background of high school.

Q. I go to ACC, Another Course to College, which is a high school—[inaudible]—

The President. And you're going to—and you're to start over there next year?

Q. Yes.

The President. What college will you be in?

Q. [Inaudible]

The President. Good for you. I know right where it is. I think you'll like it a lot. They're very nice people. The programs generally involve more reading and more essay writing and less conventional classroom work than the American programs do, so that young people coming out of American high schools, even out of very good programs, sometimes have to work harder to sort of discipline themselves to do more reading alone. So you'll have to find some friends and make sure that you do all that, because in general the system requires you to do more work on your own. But when you come back you'll be a greater writer. You'll be able to write real well.

[Mayor Menino asked the participant to explain the ACC program.]

The President. What do you want her to say, Mayor? [Laughter]

[The mayor indicated that the participant was reluctant to talk about her accomplishment.]

The President. You're being very modest, that's what he's saying.

[The mayor stated that the young woman had achieved a goal that few students attain. Another participant then described the ACC program.]

The President. So they did prepare you well, didn't they? [Laughter]

Who's next?

[A participant stated the need for more police officers trained to deal with the various cultures in the cities. The mayor then thanked the President and the Massachusetts Senators for obtaining funding for a program to put bilingual police officers in Boston.]

The President. It's a huge challenge, though, because a lot of our urban areas now have so many different racial and ethnic groups. Los Angeles County, our country's biggest county, in one county alone, have people from over 150 different racial and ethnic groups.

So it's going to be a big challenge for us to make sure we train our police officers not just in the language but also in the ways of thinking of people, because it's so easy for people who have different ways of relating to each other to misunderstand one another. And it's very important that our police officers get that kind of training. We're going to have to work hard on that.

[The mayor discussed several city programs teaching English as a second language. A participant then conveyed her father's message regarding the November 1994 elections, "This too shall pass."]

The President. I'm glad to hear that. Tell your dad he can send me a message anytime. [Laughter]

[The participant asked the President to urge colleges to create scholarship programs targeting inner-city youth, as Northeastern University had done in Boston. The mayor then described Northeastern's participation in and enhancement of a city financial aid program.]

The President. First of all, let me say I applaud Northeastern for doing it, because the cost of a college education has gone up quite a lot in the last several years. And I'm doing what I can to make it more affordable.

Let me tell you the two things that we have done and what we've tried to get others to do as well. The first thing we did was to take the existing student loan programs and Congress passed a bill that enables us to let that student loan program be administered in a different way, directly by colleges like Northeastern, so that the interest rates would be lower, the costs would be lower, and your repayment terms would be better. A lot of young people don't want to borrow money to go to college because they think, gee, if I get out and I just make a modest wage, I won't even be able to repay the loan. So under the new rules, you can borrow money to go to college, and then you can limit the amount of your repayment every year to a certain percentage of your income. So we've made available more loans.

In addition to that, through the national service program—you see a lot of these young people in the city or around here, some of them are affiliated with our national service program, and they're earning almost \$5,000 a year for every year they work in the service program for their college education. Now, what we've done is to try to challenge the colleges and universities around the country to match that. And this year, I'm trying to pass, and I hope the Congress will pass, a bill that provides for the deduction from a person's income taxes for the cost of paying tuition to any institution of education after high school, 2-year or 4-year.

So these are the things I'm trying to do to make college more affordable. When we do these things, that makes it more possible for colleges like Northeastern to go out and take their own initiatives and to do more. Like that has to be done basically State by State and college by college, because as the President, what I have to do is to try to set up a network of things that will work everywhere in the country.

[The mayor indicated that many law firms in Massachusetts had set up programs to help young people go to college.]

The President. It's the best money you'll ever spend.

[A participant thanked the President for his efforts to help college-bound youth obtain financial aid.]

The President. Well, I thank you. But let me just say one other thing about this. You know,

I said this before in a different way. Having a college education has always been an advantage. When Senator Kerry and Senator Kennedy and I went to college, it was an advantage. But it's a much bigger advantage today than ever before, because in the information age, there are fewer jobs that you can perform with no education and just a willingness to work hard.

It's also true—I want to emphasize this because one of you talked about this earlier—even for the young people who don't go to 4-year colleges, they need to be in the school-to-work program. There needs to be something that gives almost everybody, nearly 100 percent of the young people, the incentive to get out of high school and then get 2 more years of some sort of education and training.

And meanwhile we'll keep doing everything we can to make college more affordable, because I think the great advantage this Nation has, and Boston has certainly seen it because you have such a wonderful array of institutions of higher education, is that we have a higher percentage of our people going to these institutions of higher education than any other country in the world. And they're higher quality. And what we've got to do is figure out how to make it possible for young people to know about it, to believe in themselves, and then to have money necessary to go.

Q. Thank you, Mr. President.

Mayor Menino. We have—Marcos' birthday is today.

The President. It's your birthday, right? Your 18th birthday?

Mayor Menino. You'll register to vote today, too, right? *[Laughter]* We need you next time.

The President. Good for you. Happy birthday.

Mayor Menino. This woman here has a question, Mr. President. Ask the question.

Q. You just put me on the spot. Actually, I do have a question. Do you actually see letters—well, besides the—*[laughter]*.

Q. She was worried all this afternoon. *[Laughter]*

The President. The answer is, as you might imagine, with a country with 250 million people I do not see personally all the letters that come in. And we have so many letters coming into the White House that it requires literally—we have hundreds of volunteers working at the White House who help to sort our mail, who help to read our mail. A lot of retired military people come in every day and help us. We have

a whole group of people who know my positions on certain issues, who help to write our letters when people write us about certain issues.

But, what happened to your letter is this: I have—I mean, before I was coming here, what happened to your letter is I have a—in my correspondence operation, every week they pull out a certain number of letters that are either especially moving because of the personal stories involved or that represent a large number of letters I'm getting on a certain subject, so that even though I'm President and I've got, you know, millions of people writing to me all the time, I have a good feeling for what's going on.

I also get a summary every week of how many letters came in, what the subjects were about, what people said, whether they were pro or con a certain issue. But the most—the thing—every week, I love reading the mail that I get sent. And I read the letters and sign them and in that way try to really stay in touch with what people are thinking.

Mayor Menino. Why don't we have Kristy read the letter.

[*Kristy Foster then read a letter she had written to the President, thanking him for answering her previous letter about violence and for showing that he cared. Another participant asked if the President would videotape a message for their youth summit in March.*]

The President. Sure.

Q. If there's any way possible for that.

The President. Were you trained in Senator Kennedy's office? [*Laughter*] Yes. I'd be happy to. We'll do it while we're here, maybe we can do that.

Mayor Menino. Is there any other—you have the President now. [*Laughter*] How many young people of America have the President in front of them? What's the other—any other question you have to ask, really would like to ask?

Q. I have really a general question.

The President. What's your name?

Mayor Menino. Catch up with this guy here.

Q. He wants your job. [*Laughter*]

The President. Some days I'd like to give it to you. [*Laughter*] But not most days.

Q. As President of the United States, most of us know and we've heard the story of how you wanted to shake President Kennedy's hand.

What advice would you offer to other young adults that are aspiring to become involved in politics?

The President. I would recommend that you do three things. You're probably doing all three of them already. I would recommend, first of all, that you do everything you can to develop your mind, that you learn to think, and you learn to learn. That is, some of you may be strong in math, maybe you're strong in science, maybe you like English, maybe you like history. There's no—contrary to popular belief, in my view, there is no particular academic discipline to get, to have to be a successful public servant. But it's important that you learn to learn because you have to know about a lot of different things that are always changing.

The second thing I would recommend you do is more what you're doing here. I don't think, over the long run, people do very well in public service unless they like people and are really interested in them, different people, people who are different from you. Find out what you have in common, what your differences really are.

And the third thing I would recommend that you do is look for opportunities to be a leader, working in this group, working in your school, working for people who are running for office, working in the mayor's next campaign.

These things really matter. That's what I did. I mean, I came from a family with no money or political influence, particularly. I had a good education. I had a lot of wonderful friends. I was interested in people. I had a chance to work in campaigns and to do other things that gave me a chance to get started. This is a great country that is really open to people of all backgrounds to be successful in public life. But you need to learn, you need to care about people, and then you just need the experience.

[*At this point, Eugenia Kiu, chair of the council, presented the President with a cap and a sweatshirt.*]

The President. Now, let's get everybody up here.

Q. Oh, I have something to say. I would like for you and Mr. Menino to sing me "Happy Birthday."

The President. Let's do it.

[*The group sang "Happy Birthday."*]

The President. Well, it wasn't the sweetest sound I ever heard. [*Laughter*]

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:11 p.m. at Parkman House.

Remarks at the New England Presidential Dinner in Boston January 31, 1995

Thank you very much. You know, for a President who has been derided from time to time on the pages of the Wall Street Journal and other places for being too concerned with diversity, I feel that I should apologize tonight for giving you such an overconcentration of Irish blarney in the last three speakers. [*Laughter*] I hardly know what to say. And even if I do, I'll just repeat something. [*Laughter*]

They were wonderful. I want to say first to Senator Kerry, I thank you for your leadership and your wise counsel to me on so many things; for your occasional constructive criticism, which is always helpful—[*laughter*—and for always thinking about how we can reach out to people who aren't in this room and who have been vulnerable to the siren's song of the other party. We should do more of that, because we're working hard to represent them and to help them.

I also want to say that when you introduced Teresa tonight, I was sitting here thinking that next only to the President of the United States, you're about to become the most over-married man in the whole country. [*Laughter*] And I congratulate you both, and I wish you well and Godspeed.

I want to say how elated I was to be a part of a couple of events for Senator Kennedy up here in the last campaign. Whatever labels you put on Democrats, the truth is that all elections are about two things: whether a majority of the people identify with you and think you're on their side and whether you've got a message for the future. In this last election, without apology, with great energy and gusto and courage, when all the national trends were going the other way and when no one could any longer seriously claim that Massachusetts was just a different State, Ted Kennedy told the people of this State what he stood for, what he had done, and most importantly of all, why he wanted another term. He made the election about the future and the people of Massachusetts, and he won. And if the Democrats will make the

elections of 1996 about the people of the United States and the future of our country, we will win as well.

I want to thank Alan and Fred and all the others on the committee. They're the only people I know who are more indefatigable than I am when it comes to trying to push our party's agenda and move this country forward. They're the sort of "Energizer bunnies" of the national Democratic Party, and I am grateful. [*Laughter*]

I wish I could put them on television the way Mario Cuomo and Ann Richards were. Did you all see them on the Super Bowl? I don't know about you, but I've had three dozen bags of Doritos since then. [*Laughter*] I can hardly walk. And I want them to stay on. I mean, write Doritos and tell them you ate lots of those Doritos and that's the only way we can get equal time with the Republicans on the airwaves. [*Laughter*]

I want to thank your party chair, Joan Menard, and Reverend Charles Stith, my longtime friend; your secretary of state; president Billy Bulger; Speaker Flaherty; and the attorney general; all the others who are here; and a special word of thanks to your wonderful mayor, Tom Menino, for making me feel so welcome here today.

You know, when Senator Kerry and Senator Kennedy and I went with the mayor to meet with that youth council today and they had a young person from every part of this great city, from all different ethnic backgrounds, and obviously different sets of personal conditions, and we were sitting there just having a family conversation about what these young people were interested in. And they kept asking me, "Well, here's a problem." But they didn't ask me, "What are you going to do about it?" They said, "What do you think we can do about it?" It was astonishing. Over and over, "What do you think we can do about it?" And I thought to myself, if we got enough kids like this all over America, our country is in pretty good