

passed? How many, if they occurred after the Taxpayer Bill of Rights was passed, were a violation of those law's requirements? And then, where are we going to go from here? That's the most important thing.

For quite a long while now, the Vice President and Secretary Rubin have been working on a project, part of the Vice President's National Performance Review, to change and improve the IRS, and Secretary Rubin will have some more to say about that later. But we believe that we have to respond to what was said.

There were some difficult issues posed, and you have pointed out some of them in your reporting. But I think that we should continue to press ahead with change. But I think it's very important that all the American people have confidence that they're going to be treated fairly and that taxes will be collected in a fair, nondiscriminatory, and nonburdensome manner, and that we will not have any kind of abuse there. And so we intend to push ahead.

Q. But are you concerned that the Government's tax collecting agency faces credibility and

confidence problems because of the specter of those hearings?

The President. Well, I think they raise some legitimate points that ought to be responded to. I believe the IRS is functioning better today than it was 5 years ago. I think it has to improve more. And I think we should not try to sweep any of these problems under the rugs. I followed the hearings with great interest, and I am glad to see that there has been some action based on the evidence that was adduced at the hearings already, and there will be more. But I think it's also important to know that we have done a lot of things to try to make the IRS more accountable, more professional. We can do more. We should not politicize it, and we should not do anything that will in any way call into question whether it's being even-handed or fair in the future.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10 a.m. on the South Lawn at the White House.

Remarks at a Meeting With the President's Advisory Board on Race September 30, 1997

[*John Hope Franklin, Chair of the President's Advisory Board on Race, introduced the President and the Vice President.*]

The President. Thank you very much, Dr. Franklin, members of the board, ladies and gentlemen. First let me, again, thank the board for its willingness to serve. And to those of you who came to Little Rock last week for the 40th anniversary of the integration of Central High, I thank you for coming there. It was a very important occasion, I believe, and one that all of us who were there felt was immensely rewarding.

I want to talk today about how we go forward from here. When I was at Little Rock Central High School, after we had this magnificent ceremony celebrating the 40th anniversary of the event and the original nine students went into the school, I went back outside and spent quite a long while talking to the students and the young people who were there. And all they

talked to me about was how we were going to go forward. And I just listened to them.

I think you made a very important beginning by urging that we focus on education and economic opportunity, things which cut across racial lines but are necessary to bring us together.

One of the young men in the audience said to me that—he said, “I don't think they had these gang problems 40 years ago, and I'm worried about that now.” It was very touching, you know. So I think it's very important that we throw this into the future now, we begin to focus on it, and I agree that we should begin with education and economic opportunity.

But if I could go back to the original mission of the board, I also think it's important that we have the facts. So this afternoon, I know you're going to hear from noted scientists and demographers who will share their research on our changing population patterns and attitudes on race, and I think that's an important thing.

Secondly, I think it's important that we continue this dialog. I got as much out of the hour

or so I spent after the ceremony in Little Rock just listening to the young people talking as I worked my way down the lines of people who were there as anything else. I'm going to have a townhall meeting on this subject on December 2d, and I will continue to do what I can to support you in reaching out to Americans of all backgrounds and actually discussing this so that we build bridges of mutual understanding and reconciliation.

But finally and in the end, we have got to decide what it is we are going to do. This summer I announced the first of what I hope will be a long series of actions consistent with the work we are doing here with the board when I said that we would have an initiative to send our most talented teachers to our most needy school districts by offering them scholarships for their own education if they would, in turn, teach in those districts for a number of years. I think that will be very helpful.

Later today our Housing and Urban Development Secretary, Andrew Cuomo, will announce new efforts to end housing discrimination in America. First, HUD will issue \$15 million in grants to 67 private, nonprofit housing groups, State and local governments to combat housing discrimination and to promote fair housing practices. And then Secretary Cuomo will double the number of housing discrimination enforcement actions over the next 4 years.

It's clear to me now that there is more housing discrimination in America than I had thought there was when I became President, and that that has been kept alive too long in too many neighborhoods, keeping, among other things, too many families from sending their children to the schools of their choice. So I applaud what Secretary Cuomo is doing, and I will strongly support him.

Let me say again, I look forward to today's discussion. I think it's important that we build on that—where I thought we were at the end of the ceremony in Little Rock, where there was a great sense among the people there and I felt around the country who were watching it, a great sense that now we have to do things, and that every individual American just about is interested in this issue and understands how important it is and understands that we'll all have to do our part if we expect to come out where we want to be.

So, Dr. Franklin, I look forward to going on with the discussion. And I think maybe the Vice

President might like to say a word or two, and then we could go forward.

[The Vice President praised the President's initiative on race and thanked the board members for serving. He stated he had learned from Chairman Franklin that the question of race should be addressed by first acknowledging difference and establishing mutual respect, before trying to transcend that difference and reach out for the highest common denominator. He then said that he looked forward to the discussion.]

Chairman Franklin. Well, there are two things that we could do. One is, we can tell you what we've done. Secondly, we can ask you if you want to raise any questions about what we should do or what we are doing.

The President. Well, why don't you begin by telling us—giving us all a report on what you have done.

[Chairman Franklin introduced board member Robert Thomas, president and CEO of Nissan U.S.A., who said he had found that the racial issues were indeed real and were greatly exacerbated by issues regarding poverty. Board member William Winter, former Mississippi Governor, noted the diversity in his grandchildren's school and stated that education, particularly of young people, was the key to success in achieving one America. Board member Suzan Johnson Cook, Bronx Faith Community Church pastor, concurred that education and diversity were critical issues. She emphasized that people in the faith community had been energized by the initiative and were eagerly seeking ways to cooperate across denominational lines and also with the corporate community and the labor community. Board member Angela Oh, lawyer and civil rights activist, suggested that the initiative should be guided by compassion, vision, intelligence, and courage, and should welcome input from nontraditional sources. She noted that there were not many vehicles set up for public participation other than townhall meetings but that there was a lot of energy and interest, even among cynics. Board member Linda Chavez-Thompson, AFL-CIO executive vice president, reiterated that a lot of people wanted to participate in the townhall meetings and that the Nation's youth must be involved, and she emphasized the importance of economic

issues. Board member Thomas Kean, Drew University president, commented that there was no other place in the world where so many different groups had come to live together, resolving race and ethnic issues in a democratic manner, and then stated that dialog on those issues was extraordinarily important in itself. Chairman Franklin explained that the board had been working along two tracks, to emphasize shared aspirations, ideals, and values, and at the same time to discover practical ways to realize overall goals, such as the new HUD efforts to combat housing discrimination.]

The President. I would just say, I think there are, in addition to the kind of town meeting formats and maybe—I think it's very important to try to see, identify, and highlight some laboratory situation—either laboratories because you think that people are doing something that works, it ought to be able to be done somewhere else. And I agree with Suzan—I mean what's going on in the Bronx today, if she'd told anybody 10 years ago that this would be happening in the Bronx, nobody would have believed you. To what extent is that unique to the Bronx, to what extent is it something that could be done anywhere else, how did it happen—those things, I think, are important.

There is another sort of laboratory that I think would be worth looking at, and I'll just give you one example. I believe now that the Fairfax County School District just across the river is now the most diverse school district in the United States. I think it has even more ethnic diversity than the New York or the Los Angeles or the Chicago school districts. I believe that's right. According to the USA Today article on it last week, they have kids from 182 different countries with over 100 different language groups in this one school district.

Now, that goes back to Governor Winter's picture there of his grandchildren. It would be interesting to know, to me, I think—and maybe we should all go there together. I'm just giving you this as an example; we could go somewhere else and do the same thing. How are these differences dealt with within the schools for the children? How are the kids dealing with their diversity and their shared values? Is there an explicit attempt to do this? How do they get along?

Then I would say, is their experience consistent with or inconsistent with their parents'

experience in the workplace? What I have seen over time—I hate to use—a much-used buzzword is “empowerment,” but what I have seen is that all these racial issues get much worse when people feel like they don't have any basic control over their lives, which is obviously why you asked us and our administration to focus on the economic and educational issues first.

But I think it would be interesting to see how, in a place that is very much—I don't think this should be the only one—but a place that is very much sort of standing out in big capital letters, what the future might become in America: How are the kids doing? How are their parents doing? What is the difference in how their parents are being treated at work and how the kids are treated at school? Are there any differences? What kind of dialog goes on in the homes of these people between the parents and the children about their experiences at school and at work, and are there differences there?

It seems to me that somehow we have to imagine how all of this is going to play out in the real world. And anything the Government does, for example, needs to really make sense in terms of how these folks' lives are playing out. And so I think maybe one of the things we ought to do is try to either organize either a set of expeditions or a confined set of what you might call townhall meetings with people who have actually lived in the kinds of circumstances that we imagine America's future to be. And I think that would be one suggestion that I have, and I'd kind of like to be a part of that, if you don't mind. [*Laughter*]

But anyway, I think about this all the time, because I always think about how we can—and Dr. Franklin and I talked about this the first time we visited—how we finish our sort of unfinished business and still recognize that time is not waiting for us and our children are being thrown into a world that is radically different. So that might be one way to proceed. I think we might learn a great deal if you could get some of these children and maybe even some of their parents together and have an honest talk about how the kids are doing in the schools, how the parents are doing in the workplace and in the larger society, and what that tells us about where we need to go in the future.

[Chairman Franklin commented that board members had found an enormous number of experiments already going on in various parts of the country that might be helpful.]

The President. One of the things that I believe this group should strongly consider doing is actually publishing a kind of a compendium of those local efforts with a brief description of how they work, who the leader is, and how you can contact those people and let—one of the things we're trying to do is to replicate what works around the country. And I think that it's obvious that when people have challenges and problems, they're not going to sit around waiting for some—for the President or a national body or anybody else to start talking about it.

So what I would recommend is that one of the things we consider doing is trying to, without pretending to be exhaustive, take—I don't know—20, 50, 100 of the things that you believe work the best, get a brief description of them, have a person who can be contacted, ask them if they would mind our promoting them, and find a way to publish it and widely disseminate this around the Nation so that we can generate more interest among more people in, if not copying, at least adapting what has worked to places where there aren't such efforts going on.

Chairman Franklin. I think that our Executive Director already has some plans in that regard. Judy Winston is planning some how-to kits and various things like that.

The President. Judy will get them well-published. [Laughter]

[Executive Director Winston discussed plans to provide information on promising practices regarding interracial dialogs to the public, not just in published form at the end of the board's year of study but on a website for immediate access and response. The Vice President then asked for examples of unique and particularly promising approaches to dialog or promoting diversity. Board members described various programs operating in California, Mississippi, North Carolina, New York, and New Jersey, and encouraged further efforts by individuals, businesses, and labor organizations. Chairman Franklin then thanked the President and the Vice President for their support and their participation in the discussion.]

The President. Thank you.

The Vice President. Thank you very much.

The President. Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:16 a.m. in the East Room at the Mayflower Hotel.

Remarks on the Retirement of General John M. Shalikashvili in Arlington, Virginia

September 30, 1997

Mr. Vice President, Secretary Cohen, Secretary Albright, Secretary Goyer, National Security Adviser Berger, Director Tenet, General McCaffrey; to the Service Secretaries, the Joint Chiefs, the Unified Commanders in Chief, Members of Congress, members of our Armed Forces; to all the friends of General Shalikashvili who are here today, including former Secretary Perry, former Chairmen and members of the Joint Chiefs, former officials of the Department of Defense. We all come together in grateful tribute to John and Joan Shalikashvili.

This is, frankly, a bittersweet day for me. I am full of pride but also some regret. For the last 4 years, I have counted on Shali for his

wisdom, his counsel, his leadership. He has become an exceptional adviser and a good friend, someone I knew I could always depend upon when the lives of our troops or the interests of America were on the line. And I will miss him very much.

General Shali is a great American with a great American story. A childhood seared by war, he has given his life to the cause of peace. From an immigrant learning English, he has become the shining symbol of what America is all about. He's never forgotten what his country gave him, nor has he ever stopped giving back to it. His service to our Nation, spanning 39 years, rises