

Vice President is visiting today. There, our proposal would help to build or modernize more than 300 schools.

As I said, there are a lot of other important elements in our plan: funds for after-school programs, before-school programs, summer school programs, money to connect all our classrooms to the Internet, money to promote the development of voluntary national standards into basics, and a nonpartisan, supervised exam to measure fourth grade reading and eighth grade math. But if you think about the most pressing big issues, the numbers of teachers and the conditions in crowded classrooms demand immediate national attention.

I wish I had time to win the philosophical debate with our friends on the other side, who somehow see helping more teachers teach and providing more school buildings as an intrusion into local affairs. It is not. Secretary Riley has dramatically reduced the regulations on local school districts and States' departments of education that were in place when we arrived here. What we are trying to do is to make sure people like you can give children like this the future they deserve. I think it's worth fighting for, and I don't think we should go home and pass a budget that doesn't take account of the educational needs of our children and the future of our country.

Let me remind you that in 1993 and '94, when I said we ought to put 100,000 more police officers on the street, I was told the same thing by the same people. They said, "Oh, this won't work; it won't help anything; it's an unwarranted intrusion into local government." It was weird—I had police departments begging me for the police, and I had Congressmen on the other side telling me, "Oh, these police chiefs don't know what they're talking about. You're really trying to run their business."

And anyway, we prevailed. And today, we've paid for 88,000 of those 100,000 police, and we have the lowest crime rate in 25 years. Wouldn't it be nice if we had 100,000 more teachers and we had the highest educational attainment in 25 years, or the highest educational attainment in history? [Applause]

Now, school is almost out of session on Capitol Hill. The Members are eager to return home for the election holiday. But we haven't finished our coursework yet, and the final exam has not been passed. And so I say to you—and let me say once again, I don't really relish education as a partisan debate because over the long run, that's not good for America. I don't have a clue whether these kids' parents are Democrats or Republicans or independents, and frankly, I could care less. I want them to have the best. I want America's future to be the best.

We are here fighting this fight because we have no other way, no other recourse to prevail on this important issue. We have worked quietly and earnestly for 8 months with no result. So now, for a few days, we are shouting loudly to the heavens; we have a moment of prosperity and a heavy responsibility to build these children the brightest possible future we can.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:40 p.m. in the schoolyard. In his remarks, he referred to Carolyne Starek, principal, Forest Knolls Elementary School; Nancy J. King, president, Montgomery County School Board; Paul L. Vance, superintendent, Montgomery County Schools; Isiah Leggett, president, Montgomery County Council; Gov. Parris N. Glendening and Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend of Maryland; and Ralph G. Neas, candidate for Maryland's Eighth Congressional District.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Estonia-United States Fishery Agreement

October 14, 1998

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*), I transmit herewith an

Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Estonia extending the Agreement of June 1, 1992, Concerning Fisheries Off

the Coasts of the United States, with annex, as extended (“the 1992 Agreement”). The present Agreement, which was effected by an exchange of notes in Tallinn on March 10 and June 11, 1998, extends the 1992 Agreement to June 30, 2000.

In light of the importance of our fisheries relationship with the Republic of Estonia, I urge

that the Congress give favorable consideration to this Agreement at an early date.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 14, 1998.

Message to the Congress Transmitting the Lithuania-United States Fishery Agreement

October 14, 1998

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the Magnuson Fishery Conservation and Management Act of 1976 (16 U.S.C. 1801 *et seq.*), I transmit herewith an Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Lithuania extending the Agreement of November 12, 1992, Concerning Fisheries Off the Coasts of the United States, with annex, as extended (“the 1992 Agreement”). The present Agreement, which was effected by an exchange of notes in Washington

on April 20, September 16 and September 17, 1998, extends the 1992 Agreement to December 31, 2001.

In light of the importance of our fisheries relationship with the Republic of Lithuania, I urge that the Congress give favorable consideration to this Agreement at an early date.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
October 14, 1998.

Remarks Following Discussions With Israeli and Palestinian Leaders and an Exchange With Reporters

October 15, 1998

Middle East Peace Process

The President. Good morning. I am pleased to welcome Prime Minister Netanyahu, Chairman Arafat, and their delegations.

For 17 months, the Middle East peace process has been stalled, placing in jeopardy all that Israelis and Palestinians have achieved together since the Oslo accords. This week’s talk at Wye River offered the chance for the parties to break the logjam and finally take the next essential steps for peace in the Middle East. We must remember as we come together again that in the end, peace is more than a process. It is, in the end, a destination. These two leaders have the power to lead their people to peace.

As I said to Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat only a few moments ago, I believe there are certain realities that underlie these negotiations. First, Israelis and Palestinians are neighbors, and what they must do, they must do together, or it will not be done at all. Second, mutual respect and understanding is required for any meaningful and enduring agreement. Otherwise, there can be no honorable, principled compromise.

As in any difficult problem, neither side can expect to win 100 percent of every point. But concessions that seem hard now will seem far less important in the light of an accord that moves Israelis and Palestinians closer to lasting peace, closer to a day when the people of Israel can have the safety and security they have been