

Message to the Congress Reporting Certifications Required by the Ratification Resolution of the Amended Mines Protocol of the Convention on Conventional Weapons

May 24, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

In accordance with the resolution of advice and consent to ratification of the Amended Protocol on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Mines, Booby-Traps and Other Devices, together with its Technical Annex, adopted by the Senate of the United States on May 20, 1999, I hereby certify that:

In connection with Condition (1)(B), Pursuit Deterrent Munition, the Pursuit Deterrent Munition shall continue to remain available for use by the United States Armed Forces at least until January 1, 2003, unless an effective alternative to the munition becomes available.

In connection with Condition (6), Land Mine Alternatives, in pursuing alternatives to United States anti-personnel mines or mixed anti-tank systems, I will not limit the types of alternatives to be considered on the basis of any criteria other than those specified in the sentence that

follows. In pursuit of alternatives to United States anti-personnel mines, or mixed anti-tank systems, the United States shall seek to identify, adapt, modify, or otherwise develop only those technologies that (i) are intended to provide military effectiveness equivalent to that provided by the relevant anti-personnel mine, or mixed anti-tank system; and (ii) would be affordable.

In connection with Condition (7), Certification with Regard to International Tribunals, with respect to the Amended Mines Protocol, the Convention on Conventional Weapons, or any future protocol or amendment thereto, the United States shall not recognize the jurisdiction of any international tribunal over the United States or any of its citizens.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
May 24, 1999.

Remarks at the City Year Convention

May 24, 1999

Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen of City Year, I can't tell you how glad I am to be back. I want to thank President Swygert for making us all feel at home at Howard. I thank Senator Wofford and his predecessor, Eli Segal, and Mark Gearan, our great Peace Corps Director, for their presence here.

I'd like to thank especially all the companies who have helped you, and one in particular, Timberland, your founding sponsor, especially because they are setting a standard for corporate America by giving their employees time off for volunteer work.

I want to thank Alan and Michael, their wives, their families who have supported them through these long years, for all the wonderful things they have done for you and, through you, for America. And I want to thank Stephen for the jacket, although I still have the sweatshirt, and I still wear it, and it's nowhere near worn out.

And I will have it and that jacket with me for the rest of my life. I thank you so much.

Now, to all of you who are young, 10 years of life for City Year seems like a very long time. For those of you who are not so young, like me, it seems like yesterday, the 8 years ago, when I saw City Year in Boston—like yesterday, vivid in my mind.

So, to me it wasn't so long ago that Alan and Michael were just two young students with this big idea, an idea for making idealism work in practical ways in the lives of ordinary people. A lot of their classmates at the time told them their big idea was just pie in the sky. I've often wondered what pie in the sky looks like; now I see you, and I know. You are the pie in the sky, and you are as real as real can be.

When I was going around the country as a candidate for President in 1991 and 1992, I told the people of our Nation that our politics

in Washington had become too much about the pursuit of power, devoid of principle and divorced from people; that there had to be a way to use the power given to people in public life through the Constitution, to actually connect it back to people, to make it about some larger purpose for America and for the lives of people, and not just about the perpetuation of people in office.

When I saw *City Year*, I knew that I had found that concrete, living, breathing embodiment of what I thought politics ought to be about. In 1991 I called it the New Covenant. It has come in common parlance to be called the so-called Third Way. It simply means that Government can't solve all of our problems, but it can't leave people to sink or swim on their own, either. It means that we have an obligation, all of us, to give every single person the tools to make the most of his or her life. It means that we have an obligation, together, to create opportunity for those who have been forgotten, to take responsibility for the welfare of not only ourselves and our families but of our whole community, and to build that community out of every single American, excluding no one because of their background, their race, their religion, or any other trait that has nothing to do with undermining our common humanity.

And much to the surprise of everyone in America but my mother, I got elected President—[laughter]—and I had a chance to put those ideas into action. One of the most important days of my Presidency was that wonderful, wonderful day when I got to sign the bill creating AmeriCorps. I signed it, Mr. Wofford, with the pen that President Kennedy used to establish the Peace Corps. Soon, Mr. Gearan's Peace Corps will have 10,000 members in a year—that's the most they've had in a generation, and we thank the people who have served in the Peace Corps as well.

This spring, since the time I signed the bill creating AmeriCorps, more than 100,000 young people have answered the call to citizen service in America, including those of you in *City Year*. It is remarkable what has been accomplished, or in your terms, how many millions of starfish you have collected. Because you have proved, beyond any question, that this is a good and decent and wonderful thing, we are now working with the Congress to reauthorize AmeriCorps to create opportunities so that, if

we can pass it, we'll have 100,000 young people able to serve in AmeriCorps every single year.

There has never been a more important time to do this. We are enjoying the longest peacetime expansion in our history. It has given us the lowest minority unemployment, the highest homeownership ever recorded. Just yesterday there was a wonderful article in the *New York Times* about the ways in which young African-American men, who have long faced bleak job prospects, are now joining the economic mainstream. But you know, because of the service you have done, there are still millions of Americans in inner cities and rural areas such as Appalachia, the Mississippi Delta, our Indian reservations, for whom the prosperity of our time is not yet a reality.

You know there are a lot of people who don't have decent houses to live in. You know there are a lot of children who still don't have access to good health care. You know there are a lot of places that, because they are poor, still have pressing environmental problems. You know, because I have seen you in the last year or so more often than ever before, that there are natural disasters which afflict us all and need help to heal. You know all these things.

And we have, therefore, both a unique obligation and, because of our prosperity and security, a unique opportunity to galvanize people as never before in the cause of citizen service. I cannot thank you enough for what you have done. But there is one particular thing I would ask you to focus on. It relates to all the work you do in the schools with America Reads, the mentoring program, and many other kinds of things that you have done. I believe that community service can have a profound impact in diminishing, even erasing, the sense of alienation and isolation so many of our young people feel.

Last week Hillary and I went to Littleton, Colorado, where we visited with the families of the children and the teacher who were killed, where we talked to the young people still in their wheelchairs from their grievous wounds. There have been too many such instances in our country in the last couple of years, even amidst all of our rising prosperity and our falling crime rate.

And one of the things that struck me so strongly, in following all the accounts of what happened and what could have motivated those two young men to descend into darkness and

take the actions they did, was the repeated description of the sense of alienation they felt, that they and their group were somehow looked down on by others in their school and that, in reaction, they not only felt bitterness against those who were looking down on them, they turned around and looked for someone else to look down on.

This is an endless cycle. Everybody has a beef in life—everybody. [Laughter] Everybody has resentments because of slights or mistreatment, whether imagined or real. A big part of living is finding ways to overcome your own smallness, to get out of your own skin, to let go of all the things not only that you have imagined have happened to you but the things that have really happened to you that should not have.

And I couldn't help thinking how lonely those young men must have become, trapped in their own fears and resentments and hatreds, how distant they must have drifted to get to the point where they could literally dehumanize the other children that they were living with, so they could then justify killing them. That is the exact opposite of what you embody.

I was looking at your colleagues standing behind me. That's a pretty good picture of America, the America we have and the America we're going to be. We're growing more and more and more diverse. That means that we will have more and more and more groups, not fewer. And that can be a very, very good thing. If we respect each other's differences, if we even celebrate each other's differences, life will be a lot more interesting in America than it ever has been before.

But underneath all that respect for diversity there must be a solid anchor of respect for what unites us across the lines that divide us, a belief that we really do share a common humanity, a common journey of life, that none of us is a repository of all wisdom but all of us have something to give as well as something to learn. We have to believe that. And then we have to find a way to both respect individual liberty and the right to privacy and still be connected to one another in specific and concrete ways.

And so I say to you, there are still a lot of our kids who may even become strangers in their own homes as they turn inward and retreat and disengage. But those who join City Year, AmeriCorps, they become part of a team, and they are by definition important, every sin-

gle one of you. So I say to you, this is a message that our kids need to get. Oh, they get it just from the power of your example, if you're out there reading to them or you're out there mentoring them or you're out there working in their schools to rehabilitate them, but you must speak to them.

Most of you at some point in your lives have been bitterly disappointed, have been profoundly despondent. Many of you have done things that you're now ashamed of, that you wish you hadn't done. But you have decided not to give up and not to give in but to reach out and give to others. That is a message every child in this country needs to get.

And as you see, from where these instances of violence have occurred, this is not a problem that solely afflicts the poor. You can have plenty of money in your home and the fanciest computer equipment and the most advanced knowledge of technology and still be poor in spirit. I'm telling you, you can reach the poor in spirit among our young. You can tell them that no matter what has happened, no matter what's bugging them, no matter who is dissing them, no matter what they have a beef about, real or imagined, what you're doing is a better way to live, and they ought to join you and live that way, too.

Each of you is a thousand people strong and maybe stronger. I have thought a great deal, in these last weeks, about how people drift away and how they are lost and how the whole idea of family is to bring people up, not only to be individuals but to be a part of something better and stronger. And when we expand that to our communities and to our country, we do better.

But we are still losing too many of our kids. I can't help wondering how many children have been saved from lives of despair because they found City Year or AmeriCorps. I can't help wondering how many of you have a story of real difficulty, more profound than any of the stories of the young people who have taken guns to their classmates in the last few years.

Why did it not happen? Because somebody reached out and gave you a chance to have a meaningful life that is connected to other people—and in so doing, to find meaning in your own life. Because somebody said to you, "You know, it doesn't matter whether you're tall or short, wide or narrow, black or white or Hispanic, or anything else. You're a person. You're

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an American. You've got something to give. We need you. Be on our team." That is a message that needs to get out to every child in this country—every child.

And I want you to know that if we can continue to expand your ranks, to expand the range of your activities, to deepen the commitment of people to letting you do your job, to get Washington to support you and go beyond politics as usual around here and realize this is something that is just good, good, good, I am convinced that you have the power to change America, forever, for the better. And I believe you will.

So I ask you, with all the other things that you're doing, when you leave this great convention of idealism, give a little spark to every kid you see on every street corner, not just the ones that are in your project, just somebody you see standing. Tell them about what you're doing. Tell them about what it's meant to you. Tell them to hold their heads up and put their shoulders back and take a deep breath. Whatever it is, it's not that bad. Tomorrow's better. Don't let—don't let this happen. Don't let it

happen to any child who can be saved. You can keep a lot of them from drifting away. You already are, every day, in ways that you're not even aware of.

I want people to look at you, and think about America, and say, "This is what I want for our children and our grandchildren. This is what I want America to be. This is why I want to serve." And in so doing, you will be enriching yourselves beyond your wildest dreams.

Keep going. I love you. I'll save my jacket. I'll save my sweatshirt. I'll save my memories. You keep going. We need you.

God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:25 p.m. in the Cramton Auditorium at Howard University. In his remarks, he referred to H. Patrick Swygert, president, Howard University; Harris Wofford, chief executive officer, and Eli Segal, former chief executive officer, Corporation for National Service; and Alan Khazei and Michael Brown, cofounders, and Stephen Spaloss, member, City Year; and Columbine High School gunmen Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold.

Remarks at the White House Community Empowerment Conference in Edinburg, Texas

May 25, 1999

Thank you. Give her a hand. [*Applause*] Wasn't she great? Well, ladies and gentlemen, I think I should begin by saying that the Vice President and I said simultaneously that we would be happy to write Trini a letter of recommendation for study in nursing or in advanced communication. [*Laughter*]

I'd like to tell you how delighted I am to be here to see all of you. I thank Secretary Cuomo and Secretary Glickman, Administrator Alvarez. We're also delighted to be joined by Congressmen Hinojosa, Congresswoman Jackson Lee, and Reyes; Congresswoman Juanita Millender-McDonald from the State of California; Mayor Kurt Schmoke has come from Baltimore; my Deputy Chief of Staff, Maria Echaveste. One of our nominees who is from this area, Irasema Garza, the nominee for Director of the Women's Bureau at the Department of Labor, is here.

I'd also like to say, as always when I come down here to the valley, I'm delighted to see former Congressman Kika de la Garza. We're glad to see you, sir, looking so well. We miss you.

President Nevárez, we're delighted to be at the University of Texas-Pan American, and I have enjoyed my stay here and am impressed by your work here. And I thank you for coming to welcome us.

Mayor Ochoa of Edinburg and County Judge Pulido and the other mayors and judges and officials who are here, let me thank all of you for coming and for being a part of the White House Empowerment Conference, but even more important, for being a part of the community empowerment movement.