

imagination. Government programs alone can't do it. Educational professionals alone can't do it. There is something for all of us to do. But it begins with us here in Washington passing our agenda.

So again, I would say, if you believe we should prepare children for school better, if you believe we should set higher standards for our public schools, if you believe we should expand college opportunity and encourage national service and provide a transition from school to work and create a system of reemployment to replace unemployment, and if you believe we have to challenge every American to be a part of this ethic, then I ask for your support. I ask for your support in the Congress. I ask for your support in your institutions. I ask for your support in the country.

Education has always been important for democracy. Democracy is always a gamble, at every election, in every crisis, at every turn in the road, because it requires that a majority of the people have enough information in the proper context with a high enough level of security to make the right decision, sometimes under the most arduous circumstances. We are now being called upon to make a lot of those right decisions. And one of those right decisions is the simple question of how we can guarantee the success of this democracy into the 21st century. It begins with the program that I have discussed today. And I ask for your support, and I thank you for what you're doing to make the American dream real for so many millions of Americans.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:33 a.m. at the Washington Hilton. In his remarks, he referred to John Thompson, Georgetown University basketball coach.

Remarks on the Ames Spy Case and an Exchange With Reporters *February 22, 1994*

The President. Ladies and gentlemen, I know that all of you have been informed about the arrest of the CIA employee and his wife for espionage. I just want to make a couple of brief comments.

First of all, I have been kept informed of this investigation for some time now. It is a very serious case. I congratulate the FBI and the CIA for the work they did in cracking it. We will be immediately lodging a protest to the Russian Government. And because of the nature of the case, there's really nothing more I can say at this time. Thank you.

Q. Mr. President, is this the worst case?

The President. I don't want to characterize it, but the FBI and the CIA did a very good job on this. They worked on it for a long time, and I can tell you that it is very serious.

Q. Mr. President, what does this say about the state of Soviet-American—or Russian-American relations? Is the cold war over or not?

The President. I don't want to comment on that. We'll be dealing with that over the next few days.

Q. Were any Americans harmed?

The President. What did you say?

Q. Were any Americans harmed?

The President. I can't comment on the case any more. Thank you.

Interest Rates

Q. Mr. President, could you comment on Mr. Greenspan's remarks about interest rates, interest rates going to continue to go up?

The President. I don't think so. I was encouraged by what he said. Alan Greenspan said that he thought that we had the best conditions for fundamental economic growth in two decades or more—I think that's quite encouraging—and that there was no reason to believe we had any problem with inflation. And if that's true, if we're going to have steady growth and no inflation, then we ought to keep relatively low interest rates.

Q. Did he miscalculate in bumping up short-term rates?

The President. I don't want to comment any more on that. I think the people setting the long-term rates should know what he said, there will be no—there's no reason to believe there's an inflation problem.

And let me also say that there's still a pretty good gap between the short- and the long-term rates. Historically, they have been, if you go back over 20, 30 years, they've been

closer together. So the fact that the short-term rates went up a little bit, still the long-term rates could be lower than they are, considerably lower than they are. And the difference between short- and long-term rates would not be out of whack with 20, 30, 40-year historical average.

So I think the main good news for Americans is that Mr. Greenspan said that conditions for long-term growth are good; conditions for low inflation are good. And that's what we believe, and we're going to keep working on it.

Q. But he did say that long-term rates would go up, did he not?

The President. No, he said they had gone up, didn't he? I mean, he thought they—if we had explosive growth, they'll go up because we'll have more people wanting money.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:39 p.m. in the Colonnade at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to the arrest of Aldrich Hazen Ames and Maria del Rosario Casas Ames.

Remarks on Signing the Executive Order on Educational Excellence for Hispanic Americans

February 22, 1994

Thank you very much, Secretary Peña, Secretary Cisneros, all the people here from the Department of Education, along with Secretary Riley, including Norma Cantu and Gene Garcia, who have been recognized. When I was listening to my longtime friend Dick Riley up here speaking, I was thinking that this group could have forgiven me perhaps for putting someone in my Cabinet who spoke English with such a heavy accent. [Laughter] You know, sometimes people from South Carolina are hard for even the rest of us southerners to understand. I remember once when Senator Fritz Hollings from South Carolina was running for President and he was in a roast, and Senator Kennedy from Massachusetts spoke at the roast. And he said that he was glad to be there in honor of the first non-English-speaking American ever to seek the Presidency. He'll probably resign this afternoon—[laughter].

We've had a wonderful day today, Dick Riley and I have, the kind of day we always wanted to have, fighting for better education in America. We were the Governors of our respective States together for a long time in the seventies and the eighties. We saw what education could do and what the lack of it could mean. And I want to thank him personally from the bottom of my heart for the extraordinary work that he has done as Secretary of Education.

This morning I started off the day by going jogging with about a dozen students from the Northern Virginia Community College, and it was interesting. Their average age, I'd say, was probably 26. One was a native of Peru; one a native of Iran, just became an American citizen; one a native of Sierra Leone; one a native of Scotland. And as a matter of fact, I think only 7 of the 12 were native-born to the United States.

Then I spoke to the American Council on Education and was on the platform with Juliet Garcia from the University of Texas at Brownsville and others today, and we had a terrific time. I want to thank her and all the rest of you who are here representing various organizations, including the Hispanic Education Coalition. I think I have you all down here: Laudelina Martinez, the president of the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities; those here from the National Council of La Raza; the National Puerto Rican Coalition; Aspira; also MALDEF; the Cuban American National Council; the National Association for Bilingual Education; the Association of Hispanic Federal Executives.

I'd also like to acknowledge the members of the Congressional Hispanic Caucus who are here, including the chair, Congressman José Serrano; Congressman Bill Richardson from New Mexico—and we thank you, sir, for your extraordinary Burmese mission dealing with Aung San Suu Kyi; all America's proud of you for what you've done—Congressman Ed Pastor; Congressman Robert Menendez; Congressman Carlos Romero-Barceló; Congressman Lincoln Diaz-Balart; Congresswoman Lucille Roybal; Congressman Robert Underwood; Congressman—is Solomon Ortiz here? I don't think so. I think that is everyone.