

in what we trust Government to do, that is, the year President Reagan was elected.

So people have high aspirations for what they wish us to do, but they don't trust us to do much. And they're afraid we'll mess it up. So it's easy to derail almost any initiative by saying, well, this thing is wrong with it or that or the other thing. We are a people of—a democratic government requires some flexibility and compromise and people working together. And somehow, we've got to find a way to recreate that spirit. Now, it happened on the NAFTA debate, and it happened last week on crime in the House. It was wonderful to see these Democrats and Republicans sitting down together, cutting unnecessary spending, redirecting the programs, making sure we only told the American people we were going to spend what we could, in fact, spend from reducing the size of the Federal Government. That's what we need more of, that sort of thing.

Crime Legislation

Mr. Burns. George Stephanopoulos answered this question. I guess this is a test as to whether he's really reflecting what you believe as President of the United States. Why not break out the component parts of the crime bill? You and I both know that many of those components would fly through the Congress with no opposition—more police, more prisons. You might even win the assault weapons ban issue. Why doggedly say it's all or nothing?

The President. Well, for one thing, I'm not sure that it would all pass. There is an answer to that. The first answer is, the House adopted them separately and together. The Senate, 95 to 4, before this issue got politicized, voted for a crime bill that is very much like the crime bill now before it that is so far not being permitted to come to a vote—95 to 4. They voted for a bill that had prevention, punishment, prisons, police——

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:18 p.m. in Room 459 of the Old Executive Office Building. The broadcast of this interview was terminated due to the station's scheduled 4:30 newscast.

Statement on the Observance of International Literacy Day

August 24, 1994

On International Literacy Day, I am delighted to salute the many men and women who work so diligently to empower all people with the invaluable ability to read.

If our world is to meet the challenges of the twenty-first century, we must harness the energy and creativity of all our citizens. Nearly half of American adults lack many of the basic literacy skills so essential to success in today's complex and ever-changing world. Literacy is not a luxury; it is a right and a responsibility. And in an international community increasingly dedicated to the principles of equality and opportunity, illiteracy is unacceptable.

It takes great courage and hard work to overcome illiteracy. But with the help of dedicated teachers, tutors, and volunteers, everyone can learn the joys of reading and writing. These caring partnerships are the essence of community service, bringing hope and inspiration to all of us.

As people around the world celebrate International Literacy Day, I stand with you in working toward the goal of universal literacy. I am proud to extend my heartfelt appreciation to the countless individuals whose tireless efforts are helping to put this dream within our grasp.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: International Literacy Day will be observed on September 8, 1994. An original was not available for verification of the content of this statement.

Remarks on Crime Legislation and an Exchange With Reporters

August 25, 1994

The President. Good afternoon. For 6 long years, the American people have watched and waited as Washington talked about stemming the tide of crime and violence in this country but did not act. Today Senators of both parties took a brave and promising step to bring the long, hard wait for a crime bill closer to an end.

I want to salute the Senators of both Republican and Democratic ranks who put law and order, safety and security above politics and party.

Ordinary Americans all across our country ought to take heart today. In the last 2 weeks, Members of Congress in both Houses and from both parties have thrown off the bonds of politics-as-usual to do the people's business. That's what the people sent us all here to do. I hope this crime bill will now rapidly pass the Senate and that we can move on doing the people's business across party lines, unencumbered by the labels of the past and the false choices of the past, moving to a better future for all Americans.

Thank you.

Cuba

Q. Mr. President, Fidel Castro says there's a simple way to stop the exodus of Cuban refugees, and that is to open up a high-level dialog between Washington and Havana. What's so bad about that?

The President. Well, I think, first of all, we have asked that we resume our talks, as you know, or we have offered a resumption of talks on the whole issue of immigration. And I have been doing a careful study over the last few days of the nature of our immigration laws and their implementation, especially since the 1984 agreement signed in the Reagan administration. But that is what this issue is about.

The other issues—I think President Castro or Premier Castro needs to be in consultation with his own folks. The people of Cuba want democracy and free markets. And that's always been our policy, and that will continue to be our policy. But I would urge the American people to be firm and be calm about what is going on here now. We must not let any nation, even a nation as close to us as Cuba, even with so many American citizens of Cuban descent, control the immigration policy of the United States and violate the borders of the United States. We have to be firm in this. And we will work this through to a successful conclusion, I believe.

Q. Mr. President, what's wrong with talking to Cuba and Fidel Castro when we talk with other so-called outlaw nations like North Korea?

The President. Well, we have a different policy of 30 years standing. And I think Mr. Castro knows the conditions for changing that policy. The discussions that have been held on a regular basis for several years now between our two countries have been limited to matters of immigration. They can be held, and we would support that.

Health Care Reform

Q. Mr. President, is health care dead this year?

The President. I wouldn't say that, no. I don't think you can say that because—and I don't think the recess will kill it—was that what you were going to—and the reason I say that is because, like most of you, I have watched with great interest what has happened and what has not happened in the Senate and the House. I told you all when we started this issue a long time ago, now over a year ago, that it was a very complicated issue, that it's no accident that Presidents of both parties for 60 years have tried to find a way to solve the health care crisis and have never been able to do it, particularly in the face of intense, organized, and expensive efforts to stop it.

But I think the less I say the better right now, as long as Senator Mitchell and Senator Chafee and Senator Breaux and others are doing their best to continue this dialog. I spoke to another Democratic Senator today who said that she felt there's still a good chance that a bill could come out that people would want to vote for and think was the right thing to do. So I think we just have to let this thing develop a little bit and see what happens in these dialogs. And again, I think the less I say about it, the better.

Thank you very much.

President's Vacation

Q. When do you go on vacation?

The President. It's still up to the Congress, isn't it?

Q. Will you wait until the Senate goes into recess?

The President. Oh, absolutely. I want to wait until the crime bill is over for sure.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:36 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House.

Statement on Senate Action on Crime Legislation

August 25, 1994

The United States Senate made history today. The long, hard wait is finally over, and the American people are going to get the action against crime they have been demanding for over 6 years.

I want to thank the members of both parties, in the House and Senate, who answered the call of ordinary Americans to get this job done.

With a little good faith and a lot of hard work, Republicans and Democrats overcame the partisan divisions and false choices that have blocked anticrime efforts time and time again.

And because they did, children will be safer and parents will breathe a little easier. Police officers will no longer be threatened by gangs and thugs with easy access to deadly assault weapons designed only for war. Violent criminals are going to learn quickly that the revolving door on our prisons has been locked and bolted shut.

This crime bill is going to make every neighborhood in America safer, and the bipartisan spirit that produced it should give every American hope that we can come together to do the job they sent us here to do.

Nomination for Federal Judges

August 25, 1994

The President today nominated Fred I. Parker to the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit. The President also nominated six individuals to serve on the U.S. District Court: Helen Gillmor for the District of Hawaii; John R. Tait for the District of Idaho; Okla Jones II and G. Thomas Porteous, Jr., for the Eastern District of Louisiana; James A. Beaty for the Middle District of North Carolina; and David Briones for the Western District of Texas.

"These nominees will bring legal talent and dedication to the Federal bench," the President said. "I know they will serve our country with distinction."

NOTE: Biographies of the nominees were made available by the Office of the Press Secretary.

Statement on Signing the Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, 1995

August 26, 1994

Today I have signed into law H.R. 4506, the "Energy and Water Development Appropriations Act, FY 1995."

The Act provides a total of \$20.5 billion in discretionary budget authority for various programs in the Departments of Energy and the Interior, the Army Corps of Engineers, and several smaller agencies.

I am pleased that the Act substantially funds most of my budget requests for priority investment programs within the Departments of Energy and the Interior and the Army Corps of Engineers, including full funding for the renewable energy portions of the Climate Change Action Plan.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
August 26, 1994.

NOTE: H.R. 4506, approved August 26, was assigned Public Law No. 103-316.

Digest of Other White House Announcements

The following list includes the President's public schedule and other items of general interest announced by the Office of the Press Secretary and not included elsewhere in this issue.

August 22

The White House announced the President will attend the summit of the Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum in Indonesia on November 14-16. The President also has accepted the invitations of President Fidel Ramos of the Philippines for a state visit in Manila on November 13 and of President Soeharto of Indonesia for a state visit in Jakarta on November 16.