AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

Week Ending Friday, March 17, 1995

The President's Radio Address

March 11, 1995

Good morning. I ran for President to keep the American dream alive for the forgotten middle class and for all of those struggling to make it in our country, to make sure all Americans have the chance to live up to their God-given potential. Today in Washington, there's a great debate about how best to do that, and the choices we make will say a lot about who we are as a nation as we enter the new century.

On one side, there's the old one-size-fits-all Washington view that big Government can fix every problem. On the other, there's the Republican contract view that the Federal Government is the cause of every problem. Well, I have a different view. I believe the purpose of Government is to expand opportunity, not bureaucracy, to empower people through education to make the most of their own lives, and to enhance our security on our streets and around the world. I believe in a Government that is limited but effective, lean but not mean, not a savior but not on the sidelines, a partner in the fight for the future. I believe in a Government that promotes opportunity but demands responsibility and that understands that we need all Americans in strong grassroots communities. That's what the New Covenant is all about, opportunity and responsibility.

Let me give you two examples. First, with regard to welfare reform, I believe we should offer more opportunity in terms of education and work to people on welfare, but we must demand more responsibility, tougher child support enforcement, responsible parenting, and the requirement that to receive benefits, young people should be in school or working toward going to work.

Or take the college loan program. Our administration believes more people should go to college, so we've offered more opportunity to millions of young people, more affordable college loans with much better repayment terms. But we've insisted on more responsibility. The cost to you, the taxpayers, of delinquent college loans has gone down from $2.8 billion a year to $1 billion a year since I took office, opportunity and responsibility.

Look at the economy. When I took office, we had no economic strategy for putting people first. Instead, we'd had 12 years in which trickle-down economics had quadrupled the deficit and investments in our people had been ignored. There was less opportunity and less responsibility. Today, we're reducing the deficit by over $600 billion. The Federal work force is down by over 150,000 and will soon be the smallest since John Kennedy was President. We cut 300 programs in our first two budgets, and this year, we want to eliminate or combine 400 more. But while we've cut, we're also helping people to invest in their future, more for Head Start to apprenticeships, to college loans, to training for adults. The results are clear: This strategy is working.

We have the lowest combined rate of unemployment and inflation in 25 years. Since I became President, we have 6.1 million more jobs. Now, there's more to do. More people want work, and too many people haven't gotten a raise and are living with economic uncertainty. We've got to keep cutting unnecessary spending and investing in growing our economy.

The old view resisted change, but the Republican contract view often goes too far. Let me give you another example. We want to save money and to change the Agriculture Department, and so do the Republicans. The old view just left the Agriculture Department alone, though agriculture has changed greatly. My approach was to close 1,200 offices and to shrink the bureaucracy. But the Republicans want to cut the school lunch program that's helped our children thrive for 50 years.

You'll see this debate played out in many areas. One involves AmeriCorps, our national service program. AmeriCorps is about opportunity and responsibility. You get a helping hand for your own education if you give one to your country. Our young AmeriCorps volunteers are partners with our communities, with nurses, pastors, police officers, doing work that won't get done any other way. They're walking police beats in Brooklyn, building homes in Georgia, fighting fires in Idaho.

Jamie Kendrick is one of these young people. He's here with me, along with some other AmeriCorps volunteers today. He works with disadvantaged children in Baltimore. And as he does, he's helping them to help others. Every week, he leads more than 90 troubled kids into a nursing home to visit older people. The seniors get companionship and a chance to share their wisdom. The children, many of whom come from broken homes, now know older people who care about them. And Jamie knows he's serving others as he earns tuition for college. This is a good deal for Jamie, for the seniors, for the young people, and for us, too. We get better citizens, stronger communities, and more education.

I want to keep AmeriCorps growing. Right now, Republicans in the House of Representatives are proposing to cut off opportunities in AmeriCorps for 15,000 people like Jamie. Then they want to end AmeriCorps altogether. But AmeriCorps isn't a bureaucracy, it's a grassroots partnership to build strong communities through opportunity and responsibility.

The House Republicans want to cut all this and more, including the Safe and Drug-Free Schools program, the summer jobs program to pay for huge tax cuts costing $700 billion over 10 years and benefiting mostly upper income Americans. AmeriCorps, the school lunch program, the Safe and Drug-Free Schools programs, all together, they cost a tiny fraction of that.

Now, I believe we must keep cutting spending, and we should give middle-class Americans tax relief to help pay for their education, their child rearing, their health care costs. But this proposal goes too far. The path to the future is through opportunity and responsibility.

Before I close, I want to emphasize that in spite of these differences, I think we can make real progress now. We don't have to give in to gridlock. I've already signed a bill to apply to Congress the laws it applies to private business, and we're about to complete a bill to limit the ability of Congress to pass mandates on the State and local government without paying for them.

There's more we can do to cut pork, not people, in the Federal budget. We're about to begin debate in the Senate on the line-item veto, an issue on which the Republican leaders and I strongly agree. We need to pass it and keep cutting unnecessary spending.

This can be a very good time for our country if we all remember our mission: to make life easier, not harder for middle income families, to grow the middle class and shrink the underclass, to make the future brighter, not darker, for our young people, to promote opportunity and responsibility.

We must keep faith with the American dream. The Jamie Kendricks of our country will do right by all of us if we will do right by them.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:06 a.m. from the Oval Office at the White House.

Statement on the Withdrawal of Michael Carns and the Nomination of John Deutch as Director of Central Intelligence

March 11, 1995

It is with profound regret that I accept General Michael Carns' decision to withdraw his name from consideration for the position of Director of Central Intelligence.

I understand General Carns' concern that allegations made against him in the course of his background investigation could be misconstrued and complicate his confirmation. The sad truth is that we live in a time when even the most exemplary individuals like General Carns, who already has given so much to his country, are deterred from serving by the fear that their records will be distorted, their achievements ignored, and their