AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

conduct rigorous scientific tests to make sure the meat is not contaminated with deadly strains of *E. coli* and salmonella bacteria. Third, companies will have to improve their sanitation procedures. All too often, food is contaminated because simple sanitary rules are not followed.

All these changes will be phased in over the coming months to make sure they are done right. These new meat and poultry contamination safeguards will be the strongest ever. They are flexible, and they do challenge the private sector to take responsibility. They also use the most up-to-date science to track down invisible threats. They protect the public without tangling business in redtape.

Parents should know that when they serve a chicken dinner they're not putting their children at risk. Parents should know that when a teenager borrows the car to get a fast food hamburger, the hamburger should be the least of their worries. Our new food safety initiative will give families the security to know that the food they eat is as safe as it can be.

To be sure, parents will also still have to take responsibility. There is no way to make food entirely free from risk; nature simply won't let us. So everyone should follow warning labels, be careful how you handle raw meat and poultry, and make sure it's well cooked before you serve it to your family.

These days families have enough to worry about. They shouldn't have to fear the food they eat is unsafe. With the tough steps we're taking today, America's parents should be able to breathe a little easier.

Have a safe and happy Fourth of July weekend.

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

Remarks Prior to Discussions With President Aleksander Kwasniewski of Poland and an Exchange With Reporters

July 8, 1996

President Clinton. Let me begin by saying I'm delighted to welcome President Kwasniewski to Washington and to the Oval Office, and I want to thank him for the hospitality that he extended to the First Lady a few days ago.

The United States and Poland have established a strong partnership. We've worked together in the Partnership For Peace. Our troops are serving together in Bosnia. We are the number one foreign investor in Poland. And I am very pleased with the state of our relations and the aggressive leadership that the President is giving to his nation.

We're going to discuss a lot of issues that are affecting our future relations and the future of Poland, including the question of NATO enlargement, which has been a disciplined, open process since 1994, now, since the United States initiated it. And I want to reiterate my conviction that the process will continue and will bear fruit in the way that we have done it. I think that we are doing it in the right way, and that's the way I think we should continue to do it.

But I'm looking forward to our discussion. I've wanted to meet him for some time, and I got a great report on Poland from Hillary the other night, so I'm looking forward to it.

NATO Expansion

Q. Mr. President, will you talk about the timing? As you say, this has been going on since 1994. Will you talk about the timing of NATO expansion?

President Clinton. We will. Certainly we will. We'll talk about what is planned for the December ministerial and what will happen after that.

Q. Senator Dole has talked about 1998. Are you willing to be as precise as that?

President Clinton. Well, first of all, I'm glad that he supports the expansion of NATO. And secondly, I think it's important for me as President to adhere in all my public comments to the things that we've agreed among our NATO Allies to do. Keep in mind, this is a process that has to proceed by consensus, and we have to have the support of all the Allies to do what we wish to do. So, I will continue to say what I have said all along. But you should make no mistake about it, NATO will expand.

Former Governor Richard Lamm of Colorado

Q. President Clinton, it looks like here in the United States, Governor Lamm is going—former Governor Lamm is going to enter the Presidential race. I wonder what your sense of that is and whether you're worried that it might erode some of your support?

President Clinton. I just don't know. I've known him a long time. I like him. And I hope if that happens—hope his wife will do what she said she was going to do. [*Laughter*] Did you see what she said?

Q. Which was what?

President Clinton. That she'd be for me if she thought it would undermine our position in the election. [*Laughter*] I like him very much, and he'll have to do whatever he wants to do. And I hope we have a good, positive debate.

Q. Are you surprised that someone who is supposed to be a friend of yours would enter the election?

President Clinton. No.

Airplane Hijacking in Cuba

Q. A Cuban plane has just been hijacked to the U.S. Navy base in Guantanamo Bay. What is your reaction to that?

President Clinton. I understand the passengers have been returned, and the pilot stayed. And as far as I know, there was no further incident.

Q. Thank you.

[*At this point, one group of reporters left the room, and another group entered.*]

NATO Expansion

Q. Mr. President, have you proposed any new timetable for NATO expansion?

President Clinton. Let me, first of all, welcome President Kwasniewski to the White House and to the Oval Office. And I want to thank him for the warm hospitality extended to my wife last week. She had a wonderful trip to Poland and has given me a great report on it.

We are going to discuss NATO enlargement and a number of other things. As to that, I want to emphasize that the United States secured the agreement of our allies in NATO to expand NATO, and we did it under circumstances where we agreed that we would follow a certain deliberate process. We will do that. We will probably take some further steps on that when the ministerial meets in December. I'm certain that more action will be taken there. But the important thing is that NATO is going to expand and we're going to do it in a deliberate fashion, in an open fashion, as we have said all along.

The second thing I'd like to say is I'm very pleased with our present level of cooperation. I appreciate the service of Polish troops in Bosnia. I appreciate the participation of Poland in the Partnership For Peace. And our economic relations are growing stronger every day, and I'm very pleased with the level of investment of the United States in Poland. I hope we will be able to continue that.

I'd like to ask the President to make a statement, and then we'll answer your questions.

President Kwasniewski. Well, you understand Polish a little bit, for after so many years in the United States you speak English early.

[*At this point, President Kwasniewski continued speaking in Polish, and a translation was not provided.*]

Q. Mr. President, when are you going to say who and when will be admitted as new members of NATO?

President Clinton. Well, that's what we're going to discuss in December. But I know it is something that is sometimes perhaps frustrating to you, but you have to realize, NATO is a group that operates together. And a NATO pledge is a solemn pledge; it's a security pledge. And one of the ways that we have secured agreement from all of our allies with all the various factors involved to expand NATO is that we have worked with them together in a very deliberate fashion.

So our next meeting is in December. I think further steps will be taken in December. And I think that is what I should say at this point, consistent with my obligation to them.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:31 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on the Youth Crime Gun Interdiction Initiative

July 8, 1996

Thank you very much. Joseph and Tina Chery, your son must have been a remarkable young man to inspire such devotion and vision, and we thank you. We thank you for your work, and we thank you for your courage and heart in being here today. And we thank you, too, ma'am. Thank you very much.

Mr. Vice President, Secretary Rubin, Attorney General Reno, Under Secretary Kelly, thank you all for your good work. Senator Robb, thank you for being here today, sir, and for your leadership.

I thank the police chiefs, the prosecutors, the public officials from all across America who are here today, who know better than anyone that we will never be able to protect our children from violence or take our streets back for them and away from guns and drugs and gangs unless we all work together, as Mr. Chery said.

In the State of the Union Address I challenged our Nation to focus on this issue of youth violence. It is a supreme irony that we are living in an age of greater possibility for young people to live out their dreams than at any point in our history, but we are moving into the 21st century with youth violence on the rise, with too many of our children killing children, and too many others raising themselves on the street, and too many others simply vulnerable because they're going about their lives and they happen to be in the wrong place at the wrong time because we permitted those wrong places to develop and we permit them to continue to exist.

I'll never forget the young man I met in Long Beach, California, who was in a junior high school. He told me that his school had developed a school uniform policy because of the gangs in his neighborhood. And they figured if they all wore green clothes to school every day nobody would shoot them. And he said it was the first time in 3 years he'd gotten to walk to and from school without having to look over his shoulder.

There is no future for these young people unless we move to take it back for them. As the Vice President said, we have worked very hard with many of you and others to place a comprehensive strategy to take back our streets from guns and gangs and violence and drugs. Many of you have been a part of it; we thank you for that. And the strategy is beginning to work. We believe this will be the 4th year in a row when the crime rate will go down.

But we all know there is still way too much crime in America, and we know that while crime is going down in the country as a whole, youth violence is going up. While drug use has been going down and cocaine use has dropped dramatically, casual drug use by young people is going up. So we have to do more to focus our strategy on youth violence.

That's why we strengthened the safe and drug-free school law, why we instituted a policy of zero tolerance for guns in schools, why we're now encouraging communities more strongly than ever to enforce their truancy laws and to take steps ranging from school uniforms to community curfews.

The drug strategy announced this spring by General McCaffrey focuses on young people. We are mounting a nationwide crackdown on gangs. And this spring I sent to the Congress legislation to make it easier to prosecute gangs. This January in the State of the Union Address I said that if a teenager commits a crime as an adult, he should be prosecuted as an adult, and that is a proposition that is gaining wider and wider agreement.

But as we take on this problem of youth violence, if we're serious about it we cannot avoid dealing with one of its most terrifying elements, teens with guns. This is an amazing fact; listen to this. The number of teenagers committing crimes without guns is the same today as it was in the 1970's, two decades ago. Let me say that again. The number of teenagers in the United States today committing crimes without guns is the same today as it was 20 years ago. The number of homicides by teens who have guns has tripled.

Today, if a gang member is caught committing a crime with a smoking gun in his hand, often as not, the gun is simply put in a police locker with little further investigation. Yet we know that gangs often buy in bulk from a single, shadowy supplier, a criminal network that channels an arsenal of weapons to young criminals or would-be criminals.