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Iraq, and we want them to have a decent life. But we all—we must still be vigilant and steadfast about this regime.

This is—and I say again, one of you asked me this question—this is not about trusting. First, we need to be clear on what it means, and he needs to be clear on what it means. And then we need to see whether it is enforced. And if it is, fine. If it's not, then the alternative will be a clear course of action to everyone in the world.

Q. Is there any wiggle room in this agreement? Because even before you spoke, some of your critics predicted that you would buy an agreement that was not airtight simply as a way out.

The President. Well, I think it's obvious that I haven't looked for a way out here. What I have looked for is a way forward. The United States, because of our position in the world, is called upon to bring its power to bear when it's important to do so. But we also should have the self-confidence and the conscience to show forbearance as well as strength, and to do what is right.

The objective is unassailable, and he has agreed to the objective, which is full and free and unfettered access. I have told you—not my critics, I have told you—that there are details in this agreement that still have to be flushed out, and there are provisions in it which require greater clarity, and we have to have those things resolved to our satisfaction in order to go forward.

But my instinct is, talking to the Secretary-General and talking to our partners, that we can resolve those things to our satisfaction. I'm hoping that we can, but I am not prejudging it. Ambassador Richardson has got his work cut out for him tomorrow, and the rest of our team will be working closely with him. We'll see what we're doing.

Q. Can you give us examples of those things where maybe you need clarification that could provide a problem?

The President. Well, we'll do that at the proper time. The Secretary-General has asked to have the opportunity—and I think he's entitled to it—to present the memorandum of understanding to the Security Council before the rest of us comment on the details. And I think that he is entitled to that. He's worked very hard; he's had very little sleep in the last several days. And I'm going to honor his request to that.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:42 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to President Saddam Hussein of Iraq; Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom; President Jacques Chirac of France; and President Boris Yeltsin of Russia. The President also referred to the United Nations Special Commission (UNSCOM).

Memorandum on Helping Schools End Social Promotions

February 23, 1998

Memorandum for the Secretary of Education

Subject: Helping Schools End Social Promotions

The linchpin of our efforts to strengthen public education has been to raise standards and expectations for all students. As a result of State and local efforts, and with the support of Goals 2000 and other Federal education programs, students in every State in the country are beginning to benefit from higher academic standards and a more challenging curriculum.

If our efforts to promote higher standards are to lead to increased student achievement, the standards must count. Students must be required to meet them, and schools must provide each student with adequate preparation.

At present, too often standards don't count. Students are passed from grade to grade often regardless of whether they have mastered required material and are academically prepared to do the work at the next level. It's called "social promotion." For many students, the ultimate consequence is that they fall further and further behind, and leave school ill equipped for college and without the skills needed for employment. This is unacceptable for students, teachers, employers, and taxpayers.

That is why I have repeatedly challenged States and school districts to end social promotions—to require students to meet rigorous academic standards at key transition points in their schooling career, and to end the practice of promoting students without

regard to how much they have learned. As every parent knows, students must earn their promotion through effort and achievement, not simply by accumulating time in school.

This is especially important in the early grades, where students must acquire a firm foundation in reading in order to learn other subjects in later grade levels. Students should not be promoted past the fourth grade if they cannot read independently and well, and should not enter high school without a solid foundation in math. They should get the help they need to meet the standards before moving on.

Neither promoting students when they are unprepared nor simply retaining them in the same grade is the right response to low student achievement. Both approaches presume high rates of initial failure are inevitable and acceptable. Ending social promotions by simply holding more students back is the wrong choice. Students who are required to repeat a year are more likely to eventually drop out, and rarely catch up academically with their peers. The right way is to ensure that more students are prepared to meet challenging academic standards in the first place.

Schools must implement those proven practices that will prepare students to meet rigorous standards the first time. Schools must provide smaller classes, especially for the most disadvantaged students. They must be staffed with well-prepared teachers. Schools should use specific grade-by-grade standards and a challenging curriculum aligned with those standards. They must identify those students who need extra help early on, and provide it immediately. There must be after school and summer school programs for students who need them. The entire school staff must be accountable for results, and must work together as a team to achieve them for every child.

If steps such as these are taken in every school as part of an overall effort to require students to meet academic standards, we would see a dramatic rise in student achievement and a decline in student retention rates. My Administration must help States, school districts, and schools take these steps.

A growing number of States and school districts is responding to the challenge of ending social promotion. A recent study by the American Federation of Teachers shows that seven States now require school districts and schools to use State standards and assessments to determine if students can be promoted at key grades. We must encourage more States to take this step.

Chicago has also ended social promotions, and instituted a program that provides after school programs for students who need extra help and mandatory summer school for students who do not meet promotion standards. In Cincinnati, student promotion is now based on specific standards that define what students must know and be able to do. The standards are designed to prepare students to pass the State's ninth-grade proficiency test. My Administration's proposal to establish Education Opportunity Zones in high poverty urban and rural communities will help more local school systems take these and related steps to help students meet challenging standards.

As more States and localities move to end social promotions, we must help them design and implement approaches that will succeed. Therefore, I am directing you to take the following actions within 6 months:

1. *Produce and Widely Disseminate Guidelines for Educators and Policymakers on Effective Approaches to Ending Social Promotions.* Drawing on the lessons from research and practice, these guidelines should provide educators and policymakers with practical advice on how to design and implement policies that require students to meet academic standards at key transition points before being promoted. The guidelines should help schools:

- implement strategies that will prepare all students to meet the standards on time;
- end the use of remedial strategies that have been shown to be ineffective;
- provide students who do not meet the standards with immediate and effective extra help—such as after school tutoring programs and summer school—so they can be promoted on time;
- implement effective interventions for students who must be retained; and
- make appropriate use of tests and other indicators of academic performance in

determining whether students should be promoted.

2. *Help States and School Districts Use Federal Education Resources to Implement Effective Practices*. The Department of Education should develop a plan to inform States, school districts, and schools how Department of Education programs and resources, such as Title 1, Goals 2000, the 21st Century Schools Program, the Comprehensive School Reform Program, and others, can be used to implement the recommendations in the guidelines described above.

Together, these initiatives can help ensure that our students receive a solid foundation in the basic skills of reading and math, and master advanced subject matters as well. They can help improve the quality of teaching and learning in our schools, and ensure that students who need extra help get it without delay. They can help strengthen our public schools by raising standards, raising expectations, and restoring accountability.

William J. Clinton

Remarks at the Democratic Governors' Association Dinner

February 23, 1998

Thank you very much for that wonderful, wonderful welcome. Thank you, Governor Rossello, for your remarks and your leadership. It's good to see you and Maga here. And let me say it's a great tribute to you and to Governor O'Bannon and Judy O'Bannon and the other Governors here that this is the most successful DGA fundraiser in history. Thank you, and thank Katie Whelan and all the staff. You did a wonderful job tonight.

I'm delighted to be here with all the Governors and a lot of former Governors who came back to see me. We all had our pictures taken together—ex-Governors. And I began to think about the ''ex'' thing. [*Laughter*] I don't know how many of you saw the wonderful movie, ''Amistad,'' but it's a fabulous movie. But I went to the Washington premier, and I was sitting back in the audience and Anthony Hopkins, who is a magnificent actor, was portraying John Quincy Adams, who after he left the White House, served 8 terms in the Congress, and made the argument before the Supreme Court in behalf of the people who were turned into slaves on the ship and brought over here. But when he was preparing—there's a great line in the movie where John Quincy Adams says of himself—he said, ''There is nothing in life more pathetic than a former President.'' [*Laughter*] So I got to thinking, I hope that's not true. [*Laughter*]

I like being a former Governor. I was the chairman of this group in 1980—18 years ago. I'm the only person who ever served as chairman of this group who was not yet old enough to vote. [*Laughter*] And that's because Jim Hunt made me do it. [*Laughter*].

But for nearly 20 years now, I have followed the fortunes of the Democratic Governors. And I want to try to emphasize tonight one of the points that Governor Rossello made about the importance of the '98 elections and why it matters what the party affiliation—but more importantly, what the philosophy, the values, the direction of the Governors is and will be as we move quickly into a new century.

I'd like to begin with a kind of a representative issue that is rather unique in American public life, the issue that Governor Rossello's whole career embodies—that of Puerto Rico. This is the centennial year of Puerto Rico's affiliation with the United States. And I think that it is time that we responded to the aspirations of the 4 million U.S. citizens who live there and allow them to determine their ultimate political status.

The people in Puerto Rico have local self-government, but they do not have votes that are fully votes in their National Government. My colleague, when I was a Governor, was Carlos Romero-Barceló, who now represents Puerto Rico in the Congress, and he does a great job. I'm glad to see him back there.

I have always said that the people of Puerto Rico should decide for themselves, and Congress ought to give them a chance to do that, what they want their relationship to the United States to be. There is now a bipartisan bill making its way through the Congress to establish a process for resolving this issue that gives Puerto Ricans the powers to vote on the long-discussed options of statehood, commonwealth, or national sovereignty,