AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

The President's Radio Address

May 30, 1998

Good morning. I want to talk to you today about the role of faith in our lives and in the education of our children.

Our Nation was founded by people of deep religious beliefs, some of whom came here to escape oppression because of their beliefs. Their trust in God is enshrined in one of our most treasured documents, the Declaration of Independence. Today, Americans are still a profoundly religious people, and our faith continues to sustain us.

Our Founders believed the best way to protect religious liberty was to first guarantee the right of everyone to believe and practice religion according to his or her conscience and, second, to prohibit our Government from imposing or sanctioning any particular religious belief. That's what they wrote into the first amendment. They were right then, and they're right now.

But resolving these two principles has not always been easy, especially when it comes to our public schools. Just as our religious faith guides us in our everyday lives, so, too, do our Nation's public schools strengthen the moral foundation of our society. We trust our schools to teach our children and to give them the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in life.

But schools do more than train children's minds. They also help to nurture their souls by reinforcing the values they learn at home and in their communities. I believe one of the best ways we can help our schools to do this is by supporting students' right to voluntarily practice their religious beliefs, including prayer in school, and to pursue religious activities on school grounds. Studies show that children who are involved in religious activities are much less likely to use drugs. In a world that increasingly exposes children to images of violence and immorality, common sense tells us they are more likely to stay out of trouble and live up to their full potential when they're spiritually grounded.

There's no question that the issue of prayer in schools is a complex and emotional one for many Americans. It has long been a matter of great controversy in our courts. But nothing in the Constitution requires schools to be religion-free zones, where children must leave their faiths at the schoolhouse door.

To help clear up the confusion about what kind of religious activity is and must be permissible in public schools, in 1995 we issued comprehensive guidelines to every school district in America. These guidelines represent a very broad consensus of many religious groups. Here is what is at their core: students have the right to pray privately and individually in school; they have the right to say grace at lunchtime; they have the right to meet in religious groups on school grounds and to use school facilities, just like any other club; they have the right to read the Bible or any religious text during study hall or free class time; they also have the right to be free from coercion to participate in any kind of religious activity in school.

Now, since we've issued these guidelines, appropriate religious activity has flourished in our schools, and there has apparently been a substantial decline in the contentious argument and litigation that has accompanied this issue for too long.

The guidelines have encouraged communities to develop common understandings about what kind of religious activity is permissible in schools and help them to avoid costly lawsuits and divisive disputes. For example, after parents sued the school board because their son was wrongly punished for praying quietly in the cafeteria, St. Louis used the guidelines to adopt more explicit policies for the future. In suburban Atlanta, where schools hold workshops and distribute the guidelines to teachers at the beginning and middle of every school year, disputes about religious activity have all but disappeared.

To make sure our national guidelines are consistent with current court cases, so that more school districts follow these communities' lead, we are reissuing the guidelines with minor modifications, and we're mailing them to every school district in the country. I call on all districts to make sure the guidelines are understood and used by school principals, teachers, parents, and students themselves.

Helping communities to find common ground about religious expression is the right

way to protect religious freedom. There's also a wrong way: amending the Constitution. Some people say there should be a constitutional amendment to allow voluntary prayer in our public schools. But there already is one; it's the first amendment. For more than 200 years, the first amendment has protected our religious freedom and allowed many faiths to flourish in our homes, in our workplaces, and in our schools. Clearly understood and sensibly applied, it works. It does not need to be rewritten.

George Washington once said that Americans have, and I quote, ''abundant reason to rejoice that in this land, every person may worship God according to the dictates of his own heart.'' Americans still have cause to rejoice that this most precious liberty is just as strong today as it was then, and it will still be there for our children in the 21st century.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 12:11 p.m. on May 29 in the Oval Office at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on May 30.

Statement on Further Nuclear Testing by Pakistan

May 30, 1998

The United States condemns today's second round of nuclear tests by Pakistan. These tests can only serve to increase tensions in an already volatile region. With their recent tests, Pakistan and India are contributing to a self-defeating cycle of escalation that does not add to the security of either country. Both India and Pakistan need to renounce further nuclear and missile testing immediately and take decisive steps to reverse this dangerous arms race.

I will continue to work with leaders throughout the international community to reduce tensions in South Asia, to preserve the global consensus on nonproliferation.

I call on India and Pakistan to resume their direct dialog, to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty immediately and without conditions to reverse the arms race there, and to join the clear international consensus in support of nonproliferation.

Memorandum on Sanctions Against Pakistan for Detonation of a Nuclear Device

May 30, 1998

Presidential Determination No. 98–25

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: Sanctions Against Pakistan for Detonation of a Nuclear Explosive Device

In accordance with section 102(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, I hereby determine that Pakistan, a non-nuclear-weapon state, detonated a nuclear explosive device on May 28, 1998. The relevant agencies and instrumentalities of the United States Government are hereby directed to take the necessary actions to impose the sanctions described in section 102(b)(2) of that Act.

You are hereby authorized and directed to transmit this determination to the appropriate committees of the Congress and to arrange for its publication in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting the Detonation of a Nuclear Device by Pakistan

May 30, 1998

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

Pursuant to section 102(b)(1) of the Arms Export Control Act, I am hereby reporting that, in accordance with that section, I have determined that Pakistan, a non-nuclear-weapon state, detonated a nuclear explosive device on May 28, 1998. I have further directed the relevant agencies and instrumentalities of the United States Government to take the necessary actions to impose the sanctions described in section 102(b)(2) of that Act.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to Newt Gingrich, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate.