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manufacturers have joined us voluntarily in this effort, and that has been successful. I hope all other gun manufacturers will follow suit.

The real work, of course, must still be done in our homes, beyond law and policy to the most basic values of respect, right and wrong, conscience and community, and violence rejected in favor of nonviolence and communication. Only parents can remedy what ails children in their heart of hearts. But the rest of us must do our part to help and must do our part to contain the potential for destructive violence when things fail at home.

So I say again, this is an issue that has wounded every American in one way or the other. Of the four women standing to my right, three have lost members of their immediate family because of gun violence. All of us have grieved with them. We can do better. This is one big first step.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 12:03 p.m. in Room 450 of the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Suzann Wilson, mother of Britthney Varner who was killed in the Westside Middle School shooting in Jonesboro, AR; Maryland Superintendent of Police Col. David B. Mitchell; and Lt. Gov. Kathleen Kennedy Townsend and Gov. Parris N. Glendening of Maryland.

Remarks in the "Presidential Dialogue on Race" on PBS

July 8, 1998

Moderator Jim Lehrer. Good evening. I'm Jim Lehrer. Welcome to an hour of conversation with President Clinton about race in America.

And welcome to you, Mr. President.

The President. Thank you, Jim.

Mr. Lehrer. The President's conversation will be with eight Americans—four NewsHour regulars: essayist Richard Rodriguez of the Pacific News Service, Roger Rosenblatt and Clarence Page of the Chicago Tribune, and regional commentator Cynthia Tucker of the Atlanta Constitution; plus, four others: Roberto Suro of The Washington Post, author of a recent book on Hispanic Americans; Kay James, dean of Regent University's School of Government; Elaine Chao, former head of United Way of America, now at the Heritage Foundation; and Sherman Alexie, novelist, poet, and screenwriter.

Keep in mind, please, that whatever their affiliation and most importantly, their race, each is here as an individual speaking only for him or herself.

Richard Rodriguez, what do you think is the single most important thing the President could do to improve race relations in this country?

[*Mr. Rodriguez asserted his belief that race issues in the country have become more complicated and that the national discussion initiated under "One America: The President's Initiative on Race" and its Chair, John Hope Franklin, has not kept pace with that complexity.*]

The President. Well, I basically agree with you about that. As a Southerner, like Dr. Franklin, I think that there are unique and still unresolved issues between black and white Americans, and there are some conditions in America which disproportionately involve African-Americans. Some of them are not old. Today there was just this Journal of American Medical Association story saying that African-Americans metabolize nicotine in a different way than other races, as far as we know, and therefore, even though blacks smoke fewer cigarettes, they're more likely to get lung cancer—interesting thing.

But to get back to your main point, I have tried to emphasize that America is becoming a multiracial, multiethnic, multireligious society, and therefore it would be more important both to understand the differences and to identify the common values that hold us together as a country.

And I often cite, since we're in northern Virginia where this program is being filmed, I often cite the Fairfax County School District, which is now the most diverse school district in the country, with people from over 100 different racial and ethnic groups with over 100 different languages, actually, in this school district. And I think that's a pattern of where we're going. I've got a friend who is a Southern Baptist minister here; he used to be a minister in Arkansas. He's got a Korean ministry in his church. That's just one

tiny example of the kind of things you're going to see more and more of in the country.

Mr. Lehrer. Cynthia, is the unfinished business still black and white?

[*Ms. Tucker suggested that what many think are racial differences are actually class differences, that disproportionately poor blacks resent whites, and that working class whites with stagnant or declining incomes blame blacks and immigrants. She blamed the wealth gap, in part, for the continuing racial problems.*]

The President. There's no doubt about that. And I think that whenever possible, if you think that there is a class-related or income-related element in the difficulties we have with race, we ought to have income-based solutions to it.

A lot of things that I've asked the Congress to do over the last 5½ years, a lot of things that are in this budget now are designed to address that, with grater incentives for people to invest in inner cities and Native American reservations and other poor areas; tax systems, which would disproportionately benefit working people on the lower income of the scale. I think those things are very important because—and there is, by the way, some evidence that in the last couple of years, the income inequality has begun to abate some.

But I think it's very important not to confuse the two. I mean, I believe the primary reason for income inequality—increasing inequality in America is that we have changed the nature of the economy. That is, if you go back to 100 years ago, and you see when we moved from an agricultural to an industrial economy, we also had a big influx of immigrants. There was a hug increase in inequality, not so much because of the immigrants, but because the way people made money changed. The whole basis of wealth changed. That's what's happened in this computer-based information economy, and the premium on education these days is so much greater than it's ever been, that there's a lot of stagnant incomes out there from people who have worked hard all of their lives but aren't part of the modern economy. And I think that we need strategies to identify the people that aren't winning and turn them into winners. And at the very least, turn their children into winners.

Mr. Lehrer. Kay James, class or race?

[*Ms. James answered that no matter how middle class a person becomes, if that person is black, he or she will still experience discrimination. She suggested that issues of poverty and class are worthy topics, but they should not take precedence over discussion of racism in America.*]

The President. Well, obviously, I agree with that, or I wouldn't have set up this initiative. I think that the point I wanted to make is to whatever extent you can have an economic approach that embraces people of all races, if it elevates disproportionately—racial groups that have been disproportionately depressed, you'll help to deal with the race problem.

But there is—no one could look around the world—if you forget about America, just look at the rest of the world—no one could doubt the absence of a deep, inbred, predisposition of people to fear, look down on, separate themselves from, and when possible, discriminate against people who are of different racial and ethnic groups than themselves. I mean, this is the primary factor in the world's politics today at the end of the cold war.

Mr. Lehrer. Sherman, does a poor Native American starting out face more hurdles than a poor white American starting out?

Mr. Alexie. A poor Native American faces more hurdles than a poor anybody.

Mr. Lehrer. Anybody?

[*Mr. Alexie described conditions in Native American reservations and noted the lack of role models.*]

The President. Let me ask you something. I'd like to start, because I think this will help us to get to the race issue you talked about. Let's just talk about the Native American population. When I was running for President in 1992, I didn't know much about the American Indian condition, except that we had a significant but very small population of Indians in my home State and that my grandmother was one-quarter Cherokee; that's all I knew. And I spent a lot of time going around to the reservations and to meet

with leaders and to learn about the sort of nation-to-nation legal relationship that's supposed to exist between the U.S. Government and the Native American tribes.

I concluded that the American Indians had gotten the worst of both worlds, that they had not been given enough empowerment or responsibility or tools to make the most of their own lives, and the sort of paternalistic relationship the U.S. Government had kept them in was pathetic and inadequate. So they literally got the worst of both worlds. They weren't given enough help, and they certainly didn't have enough responsibility and power in my view to build the future.

So what do you think the most important thing is for Americans to know about American Indians? And what do you think the most important thing American Indians should be doing for themselves or should ask us to do to change the future?

[*Mr. Alexie answered that people should understand that Native Americans are separate, as sovereign nations, politically and economically. He suggested that Native Americans themselves have to recognize the value of education.*]

Mr. Lehrer. Elaine Chao, where do the Asian-Americans—what kinds of obstacles do they start out with compared to white Americans or Native Americans or black Americans, whatever?

[*Ms. Chao noted the increased strain in relations between races due to feelings of unequal treatment and the Asian-American community's underrepresentation in the minority figures.*]

The President. Give us an example.

[*Ms. Chao related the story of an Asian-American single mother in San Francisco whose son was denied admission into a school, despite high test scores, because it already had "too many Chinese-Americans."*]

The President. Let's go back to what Kay said. What do you think the roots of racism are?

[*Ms. James suggested the root of racism is a character and integrity problem and asserted that it would only be overcome once people interact and dispel preconceived notions, prejudices, and stereotypes.*]

The President. Do you think young people—and you're a dean of a school of government—do you think young people are less racially prejudiced than their parents on the whole?

[*Ms. James related her own experience as a youth and part of a group that integrated schools in the South and how over time, relationships were established that broke the barrier of race and friendships flourished.*]

Mr. Lehrer. Roger Rosenblatt, how would you answer the President's question? Where do we get our attitudes about race? Where do they come from?

[*Mr. Rosenblatt suggested that racial attitudes stem from fear, ignorance, and a sense of "otherness," a perceived difference that causes hatred in some and a "shy retreat" in others. He noted that the focus is too often placed on blame rather than solutions and suggested reaffirming the goal of integration.*]

The President. What about what Elaine said, though? Let me give you a little background, although I don't know about the facts of this case. California, I give them a lot of credit—California is trying to have within the public school system a much higher performing school by, among other things, going to charter schools, which are—which seek to have the benefits of public education with the strengths of private, standard-spaced education. And San Francisco has a number of schools—this is probably a part of their school choice program—where they basically create schools. They get out from under the rules and regulations of central administration, and they hold the kids to high standards.

But apparently, they've made a decision also that they think they ought to have some diversity within their student body. And so, is it fair for a Chinese student who may be the fifth best Chinese student, but also the fifth best overall student who has to get in a class, to be deprived of the chance to get in the class? And if it's not fair, if this child was unfairly treated, what do you do with the kids who didn't do very well, and what

school should they go to, and how can you guarantee them the same standards?

Mr. Lehrer. How would you answer that, Roberto?

[*Mr. Suro remarked on the expansion of the racism problem from the long-established black/white paradigm and the lack of language and mechanisms to deal with the increasing diversity of racism. He asked the President how he applied his own experiences to a more complicated Nation.*]

The President. Well, the short answer is that I try to do now what I tried to do when I was a kid, when I realized what was going on, because I had an unusual background for a lower middle-class white guy in the South because I had grandparents who believed in integration, and my grandfather ran a little store and most of his customers were black. So I had an atypical background. But I was sort of hungering for contact with people who were different from me. And my theory, going back to what Kay said, is that basically if you would ask me, what's the most important thing we could do, I think it is the more people work, and learn, and worship, if they have faith, and serve together, the more likely you are to strike the right balance between celebrating our differences instead of being afraid of them and still identifying common values.

Now, you still have—you have a separate problem for Native Americans, who literally, many of whom still live on reservations. But there has to be a way—you cannot overcome what you do not know. And if I could just say one other thing. One of the complicating—believe me, there are lots of hard questions. I don't think—one of the hard questions is the education question, whether it's affirmative action in college admissions or what Elaine said, for the simple reason that I believe there is an independent value to having young people have—learn in an environment where they're with people of many different racial and ethnic backgrounds. And the question is, how can you balance that with our devotion to merit and then not discriminating against people because of their race, in effect, when they would otherwise, on grounds of academic merit, get a certain situation? That's one of the hardest questions we face.

But I still think the more we are together—I was quite impressed, for example, when our daughter was trying to select a college. And one of the things that she did, she went around and actually got the composition and makeup of every school to which she applied, because she wanted—and then she actually went there to see whether those people were actually—[*laughter*]—not just admitted but actually really getting—relating to each other.

But a lot of the young people in her generation that I spend time talking to understand that this is something they need to do. I mean, they figured out that their life is going to be real different from ours, and they better figure out how to live together.

Mr. Lehrer. Clarence, does that make sense to you?

[*Mr. Page explained that people need to realize if they want diversity, they will have to accept sacrifice. He noted that establishing diversity and maintaining it necessitates curbing equal opportunity to some extent, and achieving dialog and desegregation requires work.*]

Mr. Lehrer. Somebody has to get hurt in order for other people to be helped?

[*Mr. Page noted the difficulties of affirmative action, and suggested the President was reluctant to deal with that issue, a subject Mr. Page described as the most divisive in race relations. He posed the question of defining, as a nation, affirmative action and suggested that until it is dealt with effectively, it will continue to be a political tool.*]

The President. See, I believe—I frankly—I believe that the real reason it's a problem—it's more a problem in education now than in economics because the unemployment rate is so low and because the jobs are opening up, so most gifted people feel that if they're willing to work hard, they can find a job. We don't have the anxiety about affirmative action we used to have when the police departments and the fire departments were being integrated and promotions were being given. Every now and then you hear something about that, but most of the controversy

now is about education. Why? Because people know education is really important and if parents and children make a decision about where they want to go to school—in the case of Elaine, a public school—that they believe is good, or a college, they're afraid if they don't get in where they want to get in, they'll get a substandard education.

I have a different view. The reason I've supported affirmative action, as long as you don't just let people in who are blatantly unqualified to anything, is that I think, number one, test scores and all these so-called objective measures are somewhat ambiguous and they're not perfect measures of people's capacity to grow. But secondly and even more importantly, I think our society has a vested interest in having people from diverse backgrounds.

When I went to college in the ''Dark Ages,'' one of the reasons I applied to Georgetown was they had foreign students there, and they had a policy of having a kid from every State there. Maybe I got in because there weren't so many people from Arkansas who applied, for all I know. I think that there are independent educational virtues to a diverse student body, and young people learn different things in different ways. And I don't think objective measurements are perfect. So I don't have a problem with it.

But I think the most important thing is that we have to understand that this is one of the hard questions. And it is best worked out, in my view, by people sitting around a table trying to work out the specifics, like in San Francisco. And when people feel like they have no voice, then they feel robbed. But there will never be a perfect resolution of this.

Mr. Lehrer. Richard, do you agree? No perfect resolutions to this?

[*Mr. Rodriguez agreed and related his experiences with affirmative action in college and the job market and how he was offered opportunities solely because of his Hispanic heritage rather than personal merit. He suggested race discussions will be troubled if basic understandings do not exist.*]

The President. Let me ask you—let me ask everybody—first of all, I'm glad you said that, because we're in the business of defining stereotypes tonight, so that's good. I think all of us who have worked hard to get where we are are sort of proud of that. I mean, when I was a young man, I was the only person on my law school faculty that voted against our tenure policy because I never wanted anybody to guarantee me a job. I told them they could tell me to leave tomorrow, and I'd go. I mean, I really identify with what you've done. I'm proud of that.

But suppose you're the president of the university. Would you like, other things being equal, to have a faculty that were not—that were reasonably racially diverse? And even more importantly, would you like, other things being equal, to have a student body that reflected the America these young people are going to live in once they've graduated? And if you believe that, and you didn't want to infuriate people like you've been infuriated and make them feel like you've felt, how would you go about achieving that?

I think this is tough stuff. I don't pretend that my position is easy or totally defensible. How would you do it?

[*Mr. Rodriguez answered that matters should be addressed early on, in the first grade as opposed to graduate school. Mr. Rosenblatt agreed and suggested that goals are better than quotas.*]

The President. Let's go back to this. I want to ask you, too, to come in, because I want you to go in here. [*Laughter*] What exactly was it did you resent? Did you resent the fact they were going to guarantee you a job whether you were any good or not? Or did you resent the fact that they were looking for Hispanic faculty members?

[*Mr. Rodriguez said he resented being entitled to an opportunity because he was a needed minority in a quota system and getting opportunity because his skin was darker than another's. Mr. Suro related his experiences, recalling that there were times when he consciously did not want to be regarded as a ''Hispanic journalist.'' He remarked on the diversity of groups that do not share common histories, yet they are lumped together in one group.*]

Mr. Lehrer. Cynthia, the differences—in other words, dealing with people differently.

[*Ms. Tucker stated that the black experience in America is distinct. She recounted her own experience living under Jim Crow laws in southern Alabama, and she said she believes affirmative action is useful and that it is not synonymous with unqualified. Ms. Chao stated that the history of race relations in America has been very tragic, that it is still not a perfect world, but it is incumbent on people to remember that the ideal of equal opportunity for everyone be maintained. She stressed the importance of equal standards for all.*]

Mr. Page. Well, how do you define merit? Does—should there be an equal opportunity to get into Berkeley and UCLA? But how do you define merit? Is it SAT's or ACT's or other criteria?

Ms. Chao. No, I think clearly, merit.

Mr. Lehrer. Let me ask Sherman, where do Native Americans fit into the affirmative action debate?

[*Mr. Alexie asserted the illusionary nature of the debate over affirmative action and stated that national policy is being made based on isolated and anecdotal examples. Ms. Chao remarked on the reality of differential standards for different groups.*]

The President. Do you want to answer Clarence?

[*Ms. Chao stressed the importance of education and suggested that the real goal for the country is eliminating crime and creating economic opportunity for all.*]

The President. What are you going to say about this?

Ms. James. I was just going to say, Mr. President, I think the operative phrase was, in your question, ''all things being equal,'' wouldn't we like a diverse community, particularly in the academic arena?'' And I was looking around the table and thinking, gee whiz, I bet I'm the only one here at the table that has to make admissions decisions.

The President. You've got to make these decisions. [*Laughter*]

[*Ms. James stated that most Americans have a high esteem for the idea of diversity, but they feel there is unfair preferential treatment bestowed on some to achieve it. She suggested focusing on the income-based programs and preferential treatment for various reasons as opposed to solely based on race.*]

The President. Let me go back to something Clarence said at the beginning. You pointed out—we talked about prejudice, discrimination, then we started talking about diversity and all that. I think you need—if I could go back to the very first thing that all of you started talking about—we need a vocabulary that embraces America's future, and we need a vocabulary that embraces America's present and past on this race issue. And we need to know when we're making distinctions. And then we need to fess up to the fact at least when it comes to Native Americans that if we don't do something fairly dramatic, the future is going to be like the past for too many people.

For example, I think most Americans, whether they're conservatives or liberals or Republicans or Democrats, would support, for example, my budget proposal to give more resources to the EEOC to get rid of the backlog. Because all of the surveys show that 85 percent of the American people, or 90 percent, or something, believe that actual discrimination against an individual person in the workplace is wrong, based on race.

Now, the real problem is that affirmative action, I think now, since there are a lot of middle-class blacks, middle-class Hispanics, that it's almost—people are not so sure in the workplace and the schoolplace whether it is furthering the goal of getting rid of the lingering effects of discrimination, which is Cynthia's experience, and mine as a Southerner—ours—you know, or whether it is now being used to create a more diverse environment which people feel is a good thing, but not a good thing if it is sticking it to this hard-working Chinese mother in San Francisco and her children, who is raising her kids under adverse circumstances.

And I guess one of the things that bothers me is that a lot—we need to make these kinds of discussions practical and institution- or community-based, because, I'll say again, I think that we want our children to grow up to learn to live in the world that they will in fact live in. Therefore, if you forget about

discrimination for a minute—you can't ever do that, but let's just assume there is no discrimination—America has a wonderful system of higher education. There are hundreds of schools I think you can get a world-class undergraduate education in. And I believe that, therefore, it's worth having some policy to try to diversify the student body.

It's interesting to see what Texas did when the *Hopwood* decision came down. They said, "Well, we don't want to have a totally segregated set of colleges and universities in Texas, so we'll just say the top 10 percent of every high school can automatically go to any Texas institution of higher education." That looks like a merit-based decision, but, of course, it's not any more merit-based than the other decision, because there are segregated high schools, and there are differences in test scores, and all that.

So we need to kind of—we need 10 hours to discuss this, and I'd like to listen to you. But the only thing I want to point out is, the American people have got to decide. Do they want a housing project in Chicago—in this case, only the people from Chicago have to decide—that's integrated? If so, the people who don't get in there, do they have reasonable alternatives? That's one realistic thing. If a child doesn't get into a good school that he or she wants to get into, do they have an equivalent alternative? If they don't, you maybe have hurt them for life. Is it worth it to get—the discrimination?

Or in the case—look at Kay's problem. She runs a government department, makes these admission decisions in a school that has a certain religious and value-based approach to life. So if a child gets deprived of going into there, even if the kid goes to Harvard, it may not be the cultural environment——

Ms. James. They couldn't get near the education they get at Regent. [*Laughter*]

The President. But let's assume it's equivalent. The child may lose something noneducational. So all these things are—I just want the American people to start talking about this in a way that's real here.

[*Mr. Rodriguez remarked on the increasing numbers of young people who do not want to be defined as belonging to a particular race. He recalled an encounter with a woman in San Francisco whose father was African-American and mother was Mexican. The woman described herself as a "Blaxican." Mr. Rodriguez said youth will redefine the look of America.*]

The President. That's good.

Mr. Lehrer. Cynthia, and then to Roger—on this question that the President raised, the new dialog, and to Richard, what are the new words we use? What do we talk about in this new world?

[*Ms. Tucker suggested the importance of acknowledging how much the world has changed and the need for a stronger sense of history. Mr. Rosenblatt questioned the similarity of racism today and when he was growing up. He questioned the importance of affirmative action as an issue for debate.*]

Mr. Lehrer. Roberto, how would you define the new vocabulary?

Mr. Suro. We've talked a lot about how trying to describe the population and how it's changed. Roger touches on an important point. We have to have a new vocabulary to describe our attitudes. Discrimination is a different thing in this country than it was 20 years ago.

Mr. Lehrer. In what way?

[*Mr. Suro explained that discrimination is based on more factors than solely race, and more complicated remedies and vocabulary are required to describe attitudes. Mr. Page noted, even in suburban neighborhoods, some groups tend to be as widely discriminated against as their counterparts in inner-city neighborhoods.*]

Mr. Lehrer. What do you tell your son? What do you tell your son about why this is happening?

[*Mr. Page responded that he answers any questions his son might pose and that the child is aware of racial difference but does not consider any race better than others. He noted that there is still segregation. Mr. Rodriguez recalled being stopped by black police officers while jogging before dawn and remarked that this society is a very complicated one.*]

Mr. Page. Who said blacks couldn't be prejudiced? Of course.

The President. I agree with that. You know, I'm very sympathetic with what you

say. And I want it to be as you say. And I agreed that we have all kinds of overlapping stereotypes that we haven't even talked about. One of the things that came up after Los Angeles riots, you know, the attitudes of the African-Americans to the Korean grocers and the Arab grocers and the Hispanic customers and all of that—it's a lot more complicated than it used to be.

But as a factual matter, if you just look at the prison population—you wanted to bring that up—if you look at all the unemployment rate among young, single African-American males without an education, if you look at the physical isolation of people in these inner-city neighborhoods—we have the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years; there are still New York City neighborhoods where the unemployment rate is 15 percent—if you look at these things, if I could just come back to sort of what I think is practical here, I think it is imperative that we somehow develop a bipartisan consensus in this country that we will do those things which we know will stop another generation of these kids from getting in that kind of trouble.

My best model now, I guess, is what they're trying to do in Chicago in the school system and what they've done in Boston with the juvenile justice system. In Boston, they went for 2 years without one kid under 18 being killed with a gun. Unheard of in a city that size. And if you look at what they did in Houston, we need to at least adopt those strategies that will invest money in keeping these kids out of trouble in the first place and try to keep them out of jail and give them the chance to have a good life. And if there's disproportionate manifestation of race, then so be it. Then we ought to have an affirmative action program, if you will, that invests in those kids' futures and gives them a chance to stay out of trouble.

To me, it's the kids that are being lost altogether and the disproportionate presence of racial minorities among those kids that is still the most disturbing thing in the world. Because if you get these kids up there, 18 or 19, heck, they'll figure out things. Our kids will figure out things we weren't smart enough to figure out. That's how society goes on. That's what progress is all about. But I think we have to recognize that's still a big race problem in this country, especially for African-Americans.

Mr. Lehrer. Clarence raised the point, Sherman, about race talk in his family, and the President—Mr. President, you have said you had trouble getting people to talk bluntly and honestly about race.

The President. Yes. We're all too polite about it.

Mr. Lehrer. How do you get people to talk about race?

[*Mr. Alexie remarked that people are always talking about race, though the language may be coded.*]

Mr. Lehrer. But do Indians talk about race?

Mr. Alexie. Oh, yeah, we're actually probably a lot more conservative and racist than any other single group of people. We're much more reactionary. It's funny—politically, we give our money to Democrats, but we vote for Republicans. [*Laughter*]

I'm going to leave that one alone. [*Laughter*]

Mr. Lehrer. How do you get honest talk? Do you think there is honest talk about race?

[*Ms. James suggested that people are very willing to talk about race by relating personal experiences.*]

Ms. Chao. I think the bottom line is, I think there has to be not allocation of programs based on preferential treatment—but that there is equal opportunity. And going back to Clarence's issue about merit——

Mr. Lehrer. We talking about talking bluntly about race.

Ms. Chao. Right. I think this is part of it. And I think the President wanted me to answer Clarence's comments. Clarence's question about merit.

Mr. Lehrer. Okay, but we have to—I have to interrupt you all now to say, thank you, Mr. President, and thanks to all the rest of——

The President. We're just getting warmed up.

Mr. Lehrer. I know, I know, I know.

Ms. Chao. It's got to be the same standards for everybody, however merit is defined.

Mr. Lehrer. Okay. But from Washington this has been a conversation with President

Clinton about race. I'm Jim Lehrer. Thank you, and good night. And as you see, may the conversation continue.

NOTE: The program was recorded at 2 p.m. in the WETA–TV PBS studios in Arlington, VA, for broadcast at 8 p.m., July 9, on PBS.

Memorandum on the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998

July 8, 1998

Memorandum for the Secretary of Defense

Subject: Delegation of Authority Under Section 1406(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998

By the authority vested in me by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, including section 301 of title 3 of the United States Code, I hereby delegate to the Secretary of Defense the functions conferred upon the President by section 1406(b) of the National Defense Authorization Act for Fiscal Year 1998 (Public Law 105–85).

The authority delegated by this memorandum may be redelegated not lower than the Under Secretary level.

You are authorized and directed to publish this memorandum in the *Federal Register*.

William J. Clinton

Remarks on Launching the National Youth Antidrug Media Campaign in Atlanta, Georgia

July 9, 1998

Thank you very much. Thank you. First of all, let's begin by giving Kim and James another hand. Didn't they do a good job? [*Applause*] They spoke well for you.

Mr. Speaker, Governor Miller, Mr. Mayor, General McCaffrey, General Reno, Secretary Shalala, I thank you all for your superb efforts in this endeavor. I'd like to say a special word of appreciation to Jim Burke, the president of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America. He's not as well-known to most American children as the President or the Speaker or the Governor, but no American has done more to save the children of this country from the horror of drug abuse than Jim Burke. And we all owe him a very great debt of gratitude. Thank you.

I'd also like to thank the Ad Council, the Community Anti-Drug Coalition, the athletic teams and sports figures that are represented here today, the business groups, the Georgia attorney general and agriculture commissioner, and the other State and municipal and county officials. And Congressman Peter Deutsch from Florida is here with us today. I thank all of them for being here. And there are many others who aren't here who are supporting what we are doing together as Americans.

I was interested when we just watched the ads to see what the young people's reaction was to the various ads. I was wondering to myself whether the ads that were most effective with me were also the ones that were most effective to you, or whether they were different. I say that to make the point that the Speaker made so eloquently. In the end, this is about you, what touches you, what you believe, what your convictions are.

We know from the stories that we just heard from James and from Kim, we know from all the available scientific research, that what Governor Miller said is right: Attitudes drive actions. There are lots of other factors. There are some places where kids are subject to more temptation than others; there are some blocks where there are more drug dealers than others. All of us have to deal with that. But we know that the more young people fear drugs, the more they disapprove of them, the less likely they are to use them. Therefore, kicking America's drug habit requires a dramatic change in attitudes, accompanied and reinforced by a dramatic increase in personal responsibility by all Americans.

Parents have the greatest power. That's what one of the ads showed us. The ads we saw today are not meant to replace parents' voices but to reinforce them. Ultimately, the best drug enforcement program, the best drug prevention program is an effective, caring, loving parent sitting down with a child and talking seriously about drugs early.

Parents have already told us that these ads help to break the ice with their children. So I ask the parents of America today, don't wait