

live, and they ought to join you and live that way, too.

Each of you is a thousand people strong and maybe stronger. I have thought a great deal, in these last weeks, about how people drift away and how they are lost and how the whole idea of family is to bring people up, not only to be individuals but to be a part of something better and stronger. And when we expand that to our communities and to our country, we do better.

But we are still losing too many of our kids. I can't help wondering how many children have been saved from lives of despair because they found City Year or AmeriCorps. I can't help wondering how many of you have a story of real difficulty, more profound than any of the stories of the young people who have taken guns to their classmates in the last few years.

Why did it not happen? Because somebody reached out and gave you a chance to have a meaningful life that is connected to other people—and in so doing, to find meaning in your own life. Because somebody said to you, "You know, it doesn't matter whether you're tall or short, wide or narrow, black or white or Hispanic, or anything else. You're a person. You're an American. You've got something to give. We need you. Be on our team."

That is a message that needs to get out to every child in this country. Every child.

And I want you to know that if we can continue to expand your ranks, to expand the range of your activities, to deepen the commitment of people to letting you do your job, to get Washington to support you and go beyond politics as usual around here and realize this is something that is just good, good, good, I am convinced that you have the power to change America, forever, for the better. And I believe you will.

So I ask you, with all the other things that you're doing, when you leave this great convention of idealism, give a little spark to every kid you see on every street corner, not just the ones that are in your project, just somebody you see standing. Tell them about what you're doing. Tell them about what it's meant to you. Tell them to hold their heads up and put their shoulders back and take a deep breath. Whatever it is, it's not that bad. To-

morrow's better. Don't let—don't let this happen. Don't let it happen to any child who can be saved. You can keep a lot of them from drifting away. You already are, every day, in ways that you're not even aware of.

I want people to look at you, and think about America, and say, "This is what I want for our children and our grandchildren. This is what I want America to be. This is why I want to serve." And in so doing, you will be enriching yourselves beyond your wildest dreams.

Keep going. I love you. I'll save my jacket. I'll save my sweatshirt. I'll save my memories. You keep going. We need you.

God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 6:25 p.m. in the Cramton Auditorium at Howard University. In his remarks, he referred to H. Patrick Swygert, president, Howard University; Harris Wofford, chief executive officer, and Eli Segal, former chief executive officer, Corporation for National Service; and Alan Khazei and Michael Brown, cofounders, and Stephen Spaloss, member, City Year.

Remarks at the White House Community Empowerment Conference in Edinburg, Texas

May 25, 1999

Thank you. Give her a hand. [*Applause*] Wasn't she great? Well, ladies and gentlemen, I think I should begin by saying that the Vice President and I said simultaneously that we would be happy to write Trini a letter of recommendation for study in nursing or in advanced communication. [*Laughter*]

I'd like to tell you how delighted I am to be here to see all of you. I thank Secretary Cuomo and Secretary Glickman, Administrator Alvarez. We're also delighted to be joined by Congressman Hinojosa, Congresswoman Jackson Lee, and Reyes, Congresswoman Juanita Millender-McDonald from the State of California; Mayor Kurt Schmoke has come from Baltimore; my Deputy Chief of Staff, Maria Echaveste. One of our nominees who is from this area, Irasema Garza, the nominee for Director of the Women's Bureau at the Department of Labor, is here.

I'd also like to say, as always when I come down here to the valley, I'm delighted to see

former Congressman Kika de la Garza. We're glad to see you, sir, looking so well. We miss you.

President Nevárez, we're delighted to be at the University of Texas-Pan American, and I have enjoyed my stay here and am impressed by your work here. And I thank you for coming to welcome us.

Mayor Ochoa of Edinburg and County Judge Pulido and the other mayors and judges and officials who are here, let me thank all of you for coming and for being a part of the White House Empowerment Conference, but even more important, for being a part of the community empowerment movement.

Cox Committee Report

I have to make a statement just for a couple of minutes that has no bearing on this conference but affects all of you as Americans. Today the House of Representatives Select Committee, led by Congressman Christopher Cox of California and Norm Dicks of Washington, a Republican and a Democrat, is releasing its report on China's efforts to obtain sensitive United States military-related technology. We've been working with the committee to make sure that the public can have the benefit of the maximum amount of information consistent with our national security and law enforcement requirements.

First, let me say that I am particularly appreciative of the careful and bipartisan manner in which the committee did its work. It has made a number of recommendations for actions to strengthen our national security protections. The overwhelming majority of those recommendations we agree with and are in the process of implementing. I'd like to say that Secretary Richardson, the Secretary of Energy, in particular, is moving aggressively to tighten security at our national laboratories.

Like many other countries, China seeks to acquire our sensitive information and technology. We have a solemn obligation to protect such national security information, and we have to do more to do it.

In February of 1998 I signed an order that put into place the most sweeping reorganization ever of counterintelligence in our nu-

clear weapons labs. Since 1996, we have increased funding for counterintelligence from \$2.6 million to almost \$40 million. We're giving polygraphs to scientists in sensitive areas, having background checks on visitors from sensitive countries. We have strict controls on the transfer of sensitive commercial and military technology to China, stricter than for any other countries except those like Libya, on which we have a total embargo.

At the same time, I strongly believe that our continuing engagement with China has produced benefits for our national security. For example, China's decision to sign the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty substantially reduces its ability to develop new nuclear weapons. We've persuaded China to end nuclear cooperation with Iran and with Pakistan's unsafeguarded nuclear program. China is working with us to help to eliminate North Korea's nuclear program and reduce its missile threat.

I want to assure you and all the American people that I will work very hard with the Congress to protect our national security, to implement the recommendations and to continue our policy of engagement, because both of them are in the national interest. [*Applause*] Thank you.

Empowerment Conference

Let me say, when I was listening to Trini describe all the wonderful work that has been done in this empowerment zone, my mind went back to the time not so long ago when I came to Mission with Congressman Hinojosa, and we had this vast crowd on the football stadium, probably 20,000 people. And then we had a wonderful meeting with people who were involved in doing all these projects. And I came back and gave a report to the Vice President about how profoundly impressed I was.

Then I thought back also to 1991 and 1992, when I was going across the country and I saw not only a country mired in recession but particular areas where it had been so long since any significant economic advances had been made. It was obvious to me that the National Government had to do more but that we had to do it in a different way, first of all, because our resources were limited, the deficit was so big, and we had

to get rid of it; we had to bring the whole economy back or the poorest areas in our country would never have a chance to come back.

But secondly, because we needed to convince people in the areas that had been left behind that they had the talent, the intelligence, the energy, the skill to bring their communities back. And we had to give them the tools and the framework within which they could do it, and we could do our part. That is basically where our approach came from, not leaving our communities behind, not promising Federal programs with worlds of money that weren't available, but taking a third approach: empowering communities to turn themselves around.

I had seen already in my own State and in communities across the country what could be done when people got organized around the right vision with the right ideas and the right kind of teamwork committed to getting results.

The Vice President and I took office absolutely convinced that our communities could rise to this challenge, and you certainly have not disappointed us. We have done everything we knew to do to have a new compact, to say the Federal Government will do everything we can to help if, community by community, the private sector and the public sector, people from all walks of life, will get together and define what they want for their future. That is what Trini talked about today; that is what we see all across America in these empowerment zones.

Because of his unparalleled combination of creativity and energy, experience and determination, I asked the Vice President to take the lead in turning this vision we had into reality. It was a challenge, as all of you have seen, that he embraced passionately. He's crossed the country to meet with community leaders like you, helped to forge new lines of communication and coordination between Federal and local officials, among neighboring areas in the same region with the same challenges, and as I'm sure a lot of you would admit, even new lines of communications within individual communities that have had enormous benefits for all concerned.

This conference—are part of the national dialog that the Vice President has led. And I just want to say that this was one of the reasons I ran for President, what seems like at once a long time ago and only yesterday, I am profoundly grateful to him for proving that this is an idea whose time had come.

More communities than ever are on the road to recovery, creating new businesses and neighborhoods, now tens of thousands of jobs, training workers, building and rehabilitating housing. The 135 empowerment zones and enterprise communities we have designated are now flowing with the lifeblood of commerce, capital. Federal seed money has leveraged more than \$14 billion in public and private investment in just these 5 years. The return on this investment is more than financial; as we rebuild our communities, we restore the American dream for many who thought it was out of reach.

In addition to creating the empowerment zones and enterprise communities, we've also established a national network of community financial institutions. We have promoted microenterprise loans to help young entrepreneurs and sometimes not so young entrepreneurs get their first start. We have reformed the Community Reinvestment Act to give more Americans better access to capital, to credit, to basic banking services.

The Community Reinvestment Act has been on the books for more than 20 years now, but I am very proud that over 95 percent of all the money loaned under the Community Reinvestment Act has been loaned during the life of this administration. We believe people should invest in their own communities.

We've also worked hard to make housing more available and mortgages more affordable. We've worked hard to build up other services that are important to economic development, especially in education. And I want to say another word about another one of the Vice President's favorite projects: This week the Federal Communications Commission is going to vote on whether to expand the so-called E-rate. It is a part of our commitment to hook up every school and every library in this country by the year 2000 to the Internet and to make sure that all the schools and all the libraries in the smallest,

poorest rural areas and the most densely populated poor urban areas, on every Native American reservation, everywhere, that they will all be able to afford to use this invaluable service.

Now, at every step of the way we have not only tried to speak to you but to listen, to take heed of what you have told us about your own neighborhoods and what you need for us to do. Every time the Vice President leaves town and then comes home, he brings back more success stories of old problems being met with new solutions, examples like those of the Kentucky Highlands, where empowerment zone residents are extending telecommunications cables deep into the countryside, connecting 40 counties to the vast resources of the Internet; or Baltimore—Mayor Schموke, thank you for your work—where businesses and empowerment board members are teaming up to train specialized workers for careers—not just jobs, careers—in high-tech industries that once they could only have dreamed of.

All across our country, communities are coming together to take responsibility and to create new opportunity. From unemployment to crime, challenges are being met successfully, community by community. It is a model that works. And if you will forgive me, I would just like to say one thing about another problem that we've all had on our minds lately. It is a model that will work when it comes to preventing violence against our children as well.

Of course, there are things we must do in Congress, and I hope the House will follow the lead of the Senate in taking responsible action to keep guns out of the hands of children and criminals. Of course, there are things the entertainment community should do, and I hope that they will reexamine the rating systems and try to reduce the amount of gratuitous violence and not advertise it to children, and enforce the ratings that are there. I hope that will be done as well.

But every State and every community must be involved in this effort. States can act to close gun show loopholes, as the voters in Florida did last November with a 72 percent vote of the people, to make sure that our children are safer.

But communities also have to act. Now is the time for leadership on that. I think every one of you know that if every child in every school were as connected to common endeavors as all of you feel connected to the common endeavors of reviving your communities, we would have far less violence, far less failure, far more kids looking forward to tomorrow instead of being caught in some dark vision of their own lives. You can do that as well, and I hope you will.

Let me say to you also that in spite of the progress we come here to celebrate, in spite of the fact that Hispanic- and African-American unemployment nationwide is at its lowest recorded level, that homeownership is at its highest recorded level, that wages for all income groups are rising for the first time in more than 20 years, we all know that there are inner cities and poor rural areas and small- and medium-sized towns in between that still have not felt the warm sunlight of our prosperity.

We must, therefore, here recommit ourselves to the proposition that we do not intend to leave anyone behind as we march into the 21st century. I can't think of a better place to underscore this issue than here in the Rio Grande Valley.

I first came here—hard to believe—27 years ago as a young man. I was completely captivated then, and I remain so today, by the spirit and the character of the people, the genuine feelings of friendship and affection that people have for one another; the inordinate love people have for their families and their communities; and the devotion they have to their relatives, older and younger; and the incredible amount of work people have been able to do here against so many odds, often for such modest returns. For 27 years, I have hoped that there was something that I could do, that we could do, for the people of this valley and for people like you throughout our country in places large and small.

The Vice President will describe in a moment the executive action I am taking to create a new interagency task force under his leadership and in close cooperation with the communities of this region to promote growth and opportunity specifically tailored

to the unique character of the Southwest border. I hope it helps you, and I know you'll make the most of it.

We have also asked Congress to fully fund a second round of empowerment zones. And I ask you to help us get that passed. When we were pushing this before in 1993 as a part of our economic program, it might have been permissible for people who were not of our political party to say, "Well, this is just a political issue. This is something the President ran on." I understood that. I understood we had to carry the burden of proving that the tax benefits and the cash investments would work. But we have met that burden—no, you have met that burden. This should no longer be a partisan issue in America. You have proved that every American will be better off if we give more Americans the chance to do what you have done.

So I ask you all to help convince the Members of the Congress of both parties that if you can do it, others can do it, and we ought to have a second round of empowerment zones.

We also have another major proposal before the Congress which we call the new markets initiative, designed to create more incentives to get more capital not only into the enterprise zones and the empowerment zones and the enterprise communities but to any eligible community that is underinvested in America.

This new markets initiative would take a combination of tax credits and loan guarantees for new investments in America's untapped markets that are very like the benefits we give for people to invest in our underdeveloped neighbors, to invest in the Caribbean and other places. I don't propose to revoke them. I'm glad we do that. But I think we ought to give those same investments to get capital into places in the United States that need it. And I hope we can pass the new markets initiative. All of us can benefit from that, including those of you who are already in the empowerment zones. And I ask you to help us pass that in this session of Congress as well.

In July I'm going to take a bipartisan group of chief executive officers of companies, Cabinet Secretaries, Members of Congress, on a tour of the places in America where we need to do better. We're going to visit urban

areas, small towns, places like the Mississippi Delta and Appalachia, Native American reservations, places all over America where there are people just like the people in the Rio Grande Valley, who deserve a shot at the American dream and have paid their dues to their families, their communities, and their country.

We need to keep doing everything we possibly can until we can look at each other straight in the eye and know we are saying what is true when we say we are going into the new century leaving no one behind.

Let me, in closing, again thank you for everything you have done, to tell you that everything we will do from here on out will build on the community empowerment strategy because you have proved that it works. Together we can make it work for all communities in the United States.

Now I'd like to introduce the person who has worked by my side and yours for many years now and who has, more than any other single person in the United States, made community empowerment a reality in the lives of ordinary Americans, Vice President Al Gore.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:46 p.m. in the gymnasium of the Health and Physical Education Building II at the University of Texas-Pan American. In his remarks, he referred to Maria Trinidad Gutierrez, member, Rio Grande Empowerment Zone board of directors, who introduced the President; Miguel A. Nevárez, president, University of Texas-Pan American; Mayor Joe Ochoa of Edinburg; and Elroy Pulido, Jr., Hidalgo County judge.

Statement Announcing Plans To Deploy the Kosovo International Security Force (KFOR)

May 25, 1999

I believe that our air campaign in Kosovo is working and will ultimately succeed in its objective of returning the people of Kosovo to their homes with security and self-government. With that in mind, we are planning with our Allies for success. Today NATO endorsed an updated plan for implementing the peace in Kosovo when its conditions are met.

The force that NATO plans to deploy—KFOR—will deter renewed hostilities and