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like the recent shootings in Illinois and Indiana, appears to have been motivated by racial and ethnic hatred. If so, it's just another reason for us to rededicate ourselves to our common community and our common humanity and another compelling argument for the passage of hate crimes legislation and commonsense gun laws.

Acts of hate against individuals are acts of hate against our values and our entire Nation. So let us all speak clearly and with one voice: Our Nation will not stand for such acts. Acts of hate must strengthen our resolve and deepen our determination that Americans will come together and stand together and work together against violence, intolerance, and hatred.

In all these efforts, we must all first assume responsibility: at home and at school, in Hollywood and the heartland, and here in Washington. Parents play an especially crucial role, for no influence on a child is more important. I am very pleased that Secretary Riley and Attorney General Reno will focus this national conversation on the concerns and responsibilities of parents. You'll hear from experts who have some good and helpful ideas. But I know they, like the rest of us, are eager to hear from all of you who already are making a difference in young lives every day.

In spite of the tragedies of the last few weeks, the crime rate in America is at a 26-year low. Though it's still far too high, this shows that we can make progress. With your ideas and your hard work, America can meet this challenge. Together, we can make America the safest big nation in the world; we can put an end to the culture of violence and build in its place a culture of values we'll all be proud to pass along to our children.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President's remarks were videotaped at approximately 3:35 p.m. in the Cabinet Room at the White House for later transmission to the teleconference, which was sponsored by the Department of Education. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Memorandum on FY 2000 Refugee Admissions Consultations

August 12, 1999

Memorandum for the Secretary of State

Subject: FY 2000 Refugee Admissions Consultations

In accordance with section 207 of the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), you are authorized to consult with the appropriate committees of the Congress concerning refugee admissions as follows:

1. The authorization of 90,000 refugee admissions during FY 2000, which would be allocated by specific region as follows: 18,000 for Africa; 8,000 for East Asia (including Amerasians); 3,000 for Latin America and the Caribbean; 8,000 for the Near East and South Asia; 47,000 for Europe; (including 27,000 for the former Yugoslavia and 20,000 for the Newly Independent and Baltic states); and 6,000 for the Unallocated Reserve. The recommended level of funded admissions is equal to the level assumed in the FY 2000 budget request (80,000) plus those covered by the Kosovo supplemental (10,000).

2. The authorization of an additional 10,000 refugee admission numbers to be made available for the adjustment to permanent resident status of persons who have been granted asylum in the United States.

3. The designation, pursuant to section 101(a)(42)(B) of the INA, of persons in Cuba, Vietnam, and the former Soviet Union, who, if they otherwise qualify for admission as refugees, may be considered refugees under the INA even though they are still within their country of nationality or habitual residence.

William J. Clinton

cc: The Attorney General, the Secretary of Health and Human Services

Letter to Congressional Leaders Transmitting a Report on the Lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979

August 12, 1999

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

As required by section 204 of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (50 U.S.C. 1703(c)) and section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act (50 U.S.C. 1641(c)), I transmit herewith a 6-month periodic report on the national emergency declared by Executive Order 12924 of August 19, 1994, to deal with the threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States caused by the lapse of the Export Administration Act of 1979.

Sincerely,

William J. Clinton

NOTE: Identical letters were sent to J. Dennis Hastert, Speaker of the House of Representatives, and Albert Gore, Jr., President of the Senate. ×

Statement on Funding for Reading Programs

August 13, 1999

Today I am pleased to announce that the Department of Education is awarding $231 million in grants to help States, school districts, and communities help all of our children learn to read well. Reading is the building block for all learning. Nearly 40 percent of America's fourth graders, however, cannot read on their own. That is why my administration is working to ensure that every child can read independently by the end of the third grade—from working to reduce class size in the early grades to launching our American Reads program. This is an investment in our children and our future. Unfortunately, the Republican tax plan could force us to slash funding for this important initiative by as much as half in the years to come. Every one of us should do our part to help our children learn to read—and I call on Congress to put politics aside and put our children's future first.

Statement on the Anniversary of the Death of Representative Mickey Leland

August 13, 1999

Hillary and I would like to mark a sad occasion in our Nation's history, the death of Representative Mickey Leland (D–TX). Ten years ago this week, while on a hunger mission to Gambela, Ethiopia, Representative Leland died in a plane crash. A six-term Member of Congress, former chairman of the Congressional Black Caucus and cofounder and chair of the House Select Committee on Hunger, he was instrumental in bringing the issues of poverty and hunger to our Nation's consciousness. Because of his work, the plight of poverty was eased around the world—in Africa, the countries of the former Soviet Union, and within the United States.

Representative Leland's hallmark legislation, the Africa Famine Relief and Recovery Act of 1985, provided $800 million in food aid and humanitarian relief supplies to the poverty-stricken continent. One of his quotes effectively illustrates the human rights and moral aspects of the hunger fight: "I cannot get used to hunger and desperate poverty in our plentiful land. There is no reason for it. There is no excuse for it, and it is time that we as a nation put an end to it." This struggle to make economic prosperity inclusive of more of our population has become a focus of the work of my administration. In another example of his foresight, Leland was an outspoken critic of violence on television long before it became the national issue that it is today.

The work of Mickey Leland must go on, and I would like to thank those individuals and organizations working to carry out his legacy. We must never forget Mickey Leland, the pressing issues for which he worked, the voiceless poor for whom he spoke, and the global principles for which he lived.