

So that's why we've got this problem. We can solve this problem. I am committed to doing it. But I think it would be a great mistake for us to walk away from here and abandon the commitment we made just last year to 100,000 teachers. We ought to get the 50,000 police started, just like we started the 100,000 police before, because it gave us the lowest crime rate in 30 years, and now we can look forward to being the safest big country in the world. And we need to adequately fund our environmental budget and get those riders out of there, those antienvironmental riders out of there.

I never thought I'd get 100 percent of what I wanted. I think they're making a big mistake not beginning the prescription drug benefit on Medicare and not adding any days to the life of the Medicare or the Social Security Trust Fund. But because I vetoed the tax cut, we can come back to all that early next year. But we shouldn't walk away from here having dismantled our commitment to 100,000 teachers, not dealing with the 50,000 police, not dealing with the environmental issues. And I'm prepared to work with them.

I don't want a partisan fight on this. This is crazy for us to be having a big partisan blowout because they both made a commitment not to spend the Social Security surplus, and then it turned out to be harder than necessary, and all of it is being mixed into a sort of a combustible political mix. We need to sit down like grownups, go out and tell the American people the truth, and work through this. We can find the offsets. We don't have to spend the Social Security surplus. We can do this. And I hope they will work with me to do it.

Demographics in Nigeria

Q. According to a recent United Nations world population prospect report, 45 percent of Nigeria's 1.29 billion population is under age 15, and an additional 18 is in the 15 to 24 years category. What this means is that we have about 63 percent of Nigeria's population which is under the age of 24. President Obasanjo, what does this mean to today's Nigeria and the country's future?

President Obasanjo. Well, to today's Nigeria it means that, simple—37 percent, if you take all the remainder as working, which

is not the case—that 37 percent of Nigerians are working to keep 100 percent of Nigerians alive, because you know it, from age one to about age 24, you are preparing yourself for life. It's either you are in school, or you are learning a trade, or you are in the university or something of that nature. Now, that puts strain on Nigerians that are working if they are working. But are they really working? That's another question.

Then, for future, if we are able to train them, ah, the future is bright. There you will have that large population, if everything else is all right, that will be vibrant, educated, talented, and going places for Nigeria, well-governed, the economy buoyant. You can't ask for anything better. So if we train, we look after them and we prepare them adequately, good for future. But for now, it's a strain, and we have to bear out this strain.

President Clinton. Thank you.

NOTE: The President's 183d news conference began at 4:25 p.m. in Presidential Hall (formerly Room 450) in the Old Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Stella Obasanjo, wife of President Obasanjo; 1986 Nobel Prize for Literature recipient Wole Soyinka; Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority; Prime Minister Ehud Barak of Israel; and murdered Prime Minister Vazgen Sargsyan of Armenia. President Obasanjo referred to OAU, the Organisation of African Unity, and IGAD, the Intergovernmental Authority on Development.

Statement on the Crash of Navy Blue Angels

October 28, 1999

I am deeply saddened that today America lost two of its bravest and most distinguished Naval aviators in a tragic crash of a Navy jet belonging to the Blue Angels.

As a nation we all owe our military servicemembers a tremendous debt of gratitude.

At this time of great loss—a loss that we all share—my heartfelt prayers go to their families, their shipmates, and to the entire Navy.

Memorandum on Labor-Management Partnerships

October 28, 1999

Memorandum for the Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

Subject: Reaffirmation of Executive Order 12871—Labor-Management Partnerships

When I became President, I believed that cooperation between Federal agencies and their unions could help create a Government that works better, costs less, and makes a positive difference in the lives of the American people. That is why I issued Executive Order 12871, Labor-Management Partnerships, and directed agencies to form partnerships with their unions; involve employees and union representatives as full partners in identifying and resolving workplace issues; provide training in consensual methods of dispute resolution; negotiate with unions over the subjects set forth in 5 U.S.C. 7106(b)(1); and evaluate bottom-line results achieved through partnership.

With your hard work and support, we have made great strides over the past 6 years. In many agencies, unions and management are working side by side on the tough challenges facing the Government and its employees. I am very proud of this success, but I am also convinced that we can do even more. I believe the time has come to redouble the Administration's efforts to create genuine labor-management partnerships. Therefore, I am taking new steps to reaffirm my strong commitment to partnership and to renew my call for agencies to work with their unions to achieve the important objectives of the Executive order.

First, I direct agencies to develop a plan with their unions at appropriate levels of recognition for implementing this memorandum and the Executive order. Every effort should be made to develop a plan that helps the agency and its employees deliver the highest quality service to the American people. Whenever possible, workplace issues should be resolved through consensus using interest-based problem-solving techniques.

Agencies should aggressively seek training, facilitation, and mediation assistance that can

help foster an environment where partnerships can succeed and thrive.

Second, agencies are directed to report to me, through the Office of Management and Budget (OMB), on the progress being made toward achieving the goals of this memorandum and the directives set forth in the Executive order. Reports must be submitted by April 14, 2000, and annually thereafter, and must be prepared with the involvement and input of the unions. Agencies shall describe the nature and extent of their efforts to comply with the Executive order and shall identify specific improvements in customer service, quality, productivity, efficiency, and quality of worklife that have been achieved as a result of partnership. These reports will not only help me assess our progress toward establishing successful partnerships, but will provide best practices that can assist unions and agencies in their efforts to develop effective partnership-building strategies. Finally, I am directing the Office of Personnel Management to analyze the information contained in these reports and, in coordination with OMB, to advise me on further steps that might be needed to ensure successful implementation of this memorandum and Executive Order 12871.

This memorandum is intended only to improve the internal management of the executive branch and is not intended to and does not create any right to administrative or judicial review, or any other right, substantive or procedural, enforceable by a party against the United States, its agencies or instrumentalities, its officers or employees, or any other person.

William J. Clinton

NOTE: An original was not available for verification of the content of this memorandum.

Proclamation 7245—National Adoption Month, 1999

October 28, 1999

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

This month, as families across America look forward to the holiday season that is fast