AUTHENTICATED
U.S. GOVERNMENT
INFORMATION
GPO

grants to reduce the dropout rate and improve the changes of success for nearly 18,000 of these students. We're also going to expand the successful TRIO program to help even more students stay in college. We will launch a dual degree initiative to expand opportunities for students at minority institutions to allow about 3,000 minority students to earn a degree in fields where minorities today are woefully under-represented.

The third and final part of our higher education agenda is focused on helping young people get on the right track to college and to stay there. We need to encourage more students at an early age to get them excited about academic achievement and to give them a sense that they actually can go to college and get a degree and have the life of their dreams.

We passed an initiative we called GEAR UP, which does just that. It reaches out to middle school students who are at risk, using college students to mentor them, to encourage them to set high expectations, to stay in school, to study hard, to take the right courses to go to college, and to make sure they know exactly what kind of aid they would qualify for, so they didn't decide when they're 12 or 13 or 14 that they won't be able to afford to go.

Our budget will double the number of students who can participate in GEAR UP to include 1.4 million young people. Many of them come from families where they would never entertain the prospect of going to college and where the message they get now—on the street, in the school—is that because of their circumstances, they won't be able to make it. We're giving them the exact reverse message, that they will absolutely be able to make it. And young people in universities all across America who have participated in mentoring these kids deserve the thanks of a grateful nation. We're going to double this program, and I hope you'll help us pass that as well.

One more aspect of this is our youth opportunity grants, under the leadership of Secretary Herman at Labor and the Youthbuild initiative at HUD. These things are working again to reach young people who otherwise too often get let out and left behind. Taken together, these steps will provide families with the college relief they need, students with the support they need, our economy with the skilled work force we need, and our communities and our Nation with the better citizens we all need.

People who decide to invest in their futures through education are taking the long look ahead, making sacrifices today for rewards tomorrow. That is the challenge we face today as a nation. We have, for the first time in my lifetime, economic prosperity, social progress, national self-confidence, the absence of serious crisis at home or paralyzing threat from abroad. All those conditions have not existed at one point in my lifetime. And it is imperative that we take the long look ahead. There is no better way to make the most of this magic moment than by helping all Americans make the most of their God-given abilities.

Thanks for being here. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:55 p.m. in the Presidential Hall in the Dwight D. Eisenhower Executive Office Building. In his remarks, he referred to Nina McLaughlin, student, who introduced the President. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady.

Remarks Prior to Discussions With Chairman Yasser Arafat of the Palestinian Authority and an Exchange With Reporters

January 20, 2000

Israel-Palestinian Peace Talks

President Clinton. Let me just say I am delighted to have Chairman Arafat back in the White House. As all of you know, I am absolutely committed to seeing a comprehensive peace agreement involving the Palestinians and the Israelis, committed to doing whatever I can to achieve that. The resolution of the issues between Palestinians and Israelis is at the core of the comprehensive effort that we all want to make for peace throughout the Middle East, and we have to work through them.

As in any process like this, there must be inevitable and difficult compromises. No one can get everything that either side wants. But

I'm convinced we can get there, and I'm convinced that Chairman Arafat is proceeding in great good faith, and so I'm glad to see him, glad he's here.

Q. Mr. President, is it possible for these talks to be completed by the deadline for the framework agreement? And if not, would you support extending it?

President Clinton. Well, I think that will have to be worked out between the two sides, and specifically between Chairman Arafat and Prime Minister Barak. And they will work that out. I think the main thing I want you to know is that I'm convinced it's possible for them to reach a comprehensive peace in a reasonably short period of time. And I'm going to do whatever I can to facilitate it.

Q. Chairman Arafat, so far you've got promises and no action. How optimistic are you, sir, about the implementation of the accords?

Chairman Arafat. First of all, a few days ago we did receive the 5 percent of the territories according to the Sharm al-Sheikh agreement. And within 2 weeks we will receive the 6th percent. And this is something that Prime Minister Barak and I agreed to 24 hours, 48 hours before arriving in the United States.

There is no doubt that there will be difficulties along the way. These are expected difficulties. But there is also determination that we have to reach the comprehensive, just, and lasting peace in the Middle East, not only on the Palestinian track but also on the Syrian and Lebanese tracks, as well.

And here I would like to take this opportunity to thank President Clinton for all the efforts that he's exerting on the Syrian track, the Lebanese track, and of course, on our Palestinian track.

Q. Mr. Chairman, what do you think of the President's remark, which was said earlier at the State Department—so it must be U.S. policy, we're hearing it all over town now—that nobody can expect 100 percent, that there has to be some compromise. You know, we've just had an experience with Syria insisting on 100 percent, and the talks are now suspended. Will you settle for less than 100 percent of your demands?

President Clinton. I don't agree with that, by the way, that characterization of the question in the Syrian-Israeli talks.

Q. Okay.

Chairman Arafat. The negotiations is the best way. This is what happened with Egypt; this is what happened with Jordan; and this is what will happen with Syria, as well as Lebanon; and also it happened with the Palestinians with the help of President Clinton.

Q. Missing the deadline of February, will that inevitably mean the missing of the deadline of September, too, or will you work not to do that?

President Clinton. I don't think anything is inevitable here. I think that both these leaders and these parties are absolutely committed to resolving this in the most expeditious possible way. So I think we should always let them speak for themselves and make their own decisions, and I'll do my best to be helpful.

Q. [*Inaudible*]—comprehensive peace in the Middle East in that one year?

President Clinton. Well, we certainly could have, and I'll be disappointed if we don't, because we have the leaders who can do it, the issues are clear—even if they're difficult, they're clear. And I certainly think we could have it, and I'm going to do everything I can, every day I've got to try to achieve it.

Israel-Syria Peace Talks

Q. Mr. President, when can we expect talks on the Syrian tracks to be resumed?

President Clinton. I think they'll both have something to say about that before long. I think they'll keep working right along. This is not—you shouldn't overreact to what has been said about this. I think they're both completely determined to get this resolved in an appropriate way. And I think they'll have things to say about it as we go along here. But don't read too much into this. Actually, the parties have a framework for making these decisions that's more clear and more bridgeable than I would have thought by now.

NOTE: The President spoke at 3:22 p.m. in the Oval Office at the White House. In his remarks, the President referred to Prime Minister Ehud

Barak of Israel. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on James and Sally Barksdale's Pledge to the University of Mississippi

January 20, 2000

Hillary and I applaud James and Sally Barksdale for their dedication and leadership on behalf of the cause of literacy. Their generous pledge of $100 million to the University of Mississippi will provide school children in that State—especially those in the most needy schools—with access to new reading programs, train teachers in reading education, and promote efforts to target and help students struggling to learn to read. Their generosity is an example of the extraordinary role philanthropy plays in providing a better future for our children, families, and country.

Statement on Senator Bob Kerrey's Decision Not To Seek Reelection

January 20, 2000

I have said before of Senator Bob Kerrey that he is always willing to be on the cutting edge of change. But the change he announces today is a bittersweet one for his family, his colleagues in the United States Senate, and his constituents in Nebraska.

Our Government and Nation are better because of Bob Kerrey's public service. I first got to know him when we served as Governors in the 1980's, when we shared a passion for education reform, farm problems, and deficit reduction.

In the Senate, Bob Kerrey provided pivotal leadership to turn our economy around by getting rid of the deficit. His creativity, political courage, and farsightedness have kept him at the forefront of the fight for educational excellence, entitlement and tax reform, a stronger military, and a modern intelligence capability. His leadership of the Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee and recruitment of new blood and funds helped shape a party that is firmly focused on the future and prepared to do well in this year's elections.

As Senator, Governor, Medal of Honor recipient, Bob Kerrey served our Nation above and beyond the call of duty. "If I added to their pride of America, I am happy," said Carl Sandburg. By that measure, Senator Kerrey should be happy, indeed. Hillary and I wish him well as he embarks on a new chapter in his remarkable life.

Remarks at the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena, California

January 21, 2000

Thank you so much. Dr. Moore, President Baltimore; to the faculty and students at Caltech, and to people involved in NASA's JPL out here. I want to thank Representatives Dreier, Baca, and Millender-McDonald for coming with me today and for the work they do in your behalf back in Washington. I want to thank three members of our Science and Technology team for being here: my Science Adviser, Neal Lane; Dr. Rita Colwell, the NSF Director; and my good friend, the Secretary of Energy, Bill Richardson, who has done a great job with our national labs to keep them being innovators in fields from computational science to environmental technology.

One person who would have liked to have been here today, and I can tell you thinks that he would be a better representative of our administration on this topic, is the Vice President. When we took office together, the fact that I was challenged scientifically and technologically was a standing joke. [*Laughter*] And he wants all of you to know that he's campaigning all over the country with a Palm 7 on his hip. [*Laughter*]

He wants you to know that he loves science and technology so much, he's not even angry that Caltech beat out Harvard for top spot in the U.S. News rankings this year. [*Laughter*] I think it has something to do with the relative electoral votes of California and Massachusetts. [*Laughter*]

But before I came out here, I told Dr. Moore and Dr. Baltimore that it was a real thrill for me to meet Dr. Moore, that even