

Remarks on the Earthquake in Washington State in Little Rock, Arkansas

February 28, 2001

I want to say something about what's taken place in Seattle today. I send my prayers and express our country's concern for our fellow citizens in Seattle, Tacoma, and Olympia—areas of the State of Washington. Those folks were affected by a major earthquake today. Our prayers are with those who were injured and their families, and with the many thousands of people whose lives have been disrupted.

Thousands of people in Washington are without power or phone service. Airports are closed, and many buildings have sustained structural damage. My administration stands ready to help in any way we can. I've asked the Director of the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Joe Allbaugh, to travel to Seattle to offer our assistance. He is on his way in a couple of hours, and he'll be traveling with members of the—Washington State's congressional delegation.

I've talked to Director Allbaugh. He told me he felt like Senator Murray would be going. And they're reaching out to other members of the congressional delegation to travel with him. We will work with State and local officials to provide whatever help we can to the people of the State of Washington.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:20 p.m. at Adams Field airport.

Proclamation 7410—Fortieth Anniversary of the Peace Corps

February 28, 2001

By the President of the United States of America

A Proclamation

The generous spirit of the American people has given this country a great and long-standing tradition of voluntary service. During the past four decades, the members of the Peace Corps have carried on that tradition with dramatic and far-reaching effect.

Established in 1961, the Peace Corps has brought a wealth of practical assistance to in-

dividuals and communities through out the world. Since its inception, more than 161,000 Americans have served as Peace Corps volunteers in 134 countries. Peace Corps volunteers have not only helped to fill immediate and dire human needs, but also have helped promote sustainable, long-term development in agriculture, business, education, urban development, health care, and the environment.

In many countries of the world, there exists an intense hunger for peace, hope, and opportunity—for genuine social and economic development that is rooted in respect for human rights and a belief in human potential. Recognizing the dignity and worth of all peoples and determined to help individuals help themselves, Peace Corps volunteers have served as our Nation's emissaries of hope and goodwill. Accordingly, their generous efforts have helped to foster mutual understanding and respect between the people of the United States and citizens of other countries.

Respected for its work around the world, the Peace Corps also conducts a number of valuable programs here at home. For example, through programs such as the Paul Coverdell World Wise Schools and Peace Corps Fellows/USA, Peace Corps volunteers are helping children in every State of our Nation to learn more about the world in which we live.

I am pleased to note that the current volunteer corps is the most ethnically diverse in Peace Corps history and that more and more Americans are joining in the work of the Peace Corps through its growing partnerships with the public and private sectors. These trends are a tribute to the many past achievements of the Peace Corps, and they are a promising sign of more to come.

Now, Therefore, I, George W. Bush, President of the United States of America, by virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and laws of the United States, do hereby urge all Americans to observe March 1, 2001—the 40th anniversary of the Peace Corps—with appropriate programs, ceremonies, and activities designed to honor Peace Corps volunteers, past and present, for their many contributions to our

country and to the universal cause of peace and human progress.

In Witness Whereof, I have hereunto set my hand this twenty-eighth day of February, in the year of our Lord two thousand one, and of the Independence of the United States of America the two hundred and twenty-fifth.

George W. Bush

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NOTE: This proclamation will be published in the *Federal Register* on March 6.

Question-and-Answer Session at Lakewood Elementary School in North Little Rock, Arkansas

March 1, 2001

The President. Anybody got any questions for me?

President's Goals

Student. When our kids grow up and read about your Presidency in history books, what do you hope they'll read?

The President. Well, I hope they read that our country, our politicians are able to discuss differences in a civil way; that there's not a lot of anger in the political process; that you and I might disagree, but we can respect each other when we disagree. So I hope I've been able to help change the tone in Washington so people respect each other. I hope the reading test scores are the best in the world. I hope the world is at peace. I hope that boys and girls who dreamed about owning their own business will be able to do so in America, continue to do so. I hope that our Nation is one in which people who have dreams—regardless of where you're raised, whether you can speak English, whether your parents speak English as a first language or not, no matter what neighborhood you're from—will realize those dreams are possible if you make the right choices in life. So that's my ambitions for the country.

Decision To Run for President

Student. What made you run for President?

The President. Well, I thought I could do a better job than anybody else that was running for President. I was concerned about a country that was becoming too bitter at times. I'm concerned that the American Dream, the idea that you can be—have a dream and work hard to achieve it might not have—is bright for everybody in America, as I hoped. I'm worried that the education system in some places isn't working, concerned about a military that—the morale in the military wasn't high enough. I think we need to have a strong military to keep the peace. So I had some reasons for running, and now I'm working to achieve them.

One of the reasons I've come to your school is to be able to talk about education. I'm also talking about a budget plan. One of the things a President does is submit a budget to Congress—"here's where we ought to spend money, here's where we ought to"—and if you have any money left over, I'm arguing we ought to give it back to the people who pay taxes, like the teacher right here.

Now, one other thing my wife is going to do, by the way, is she's going to go around the country encouraging people such as yourself to think about being a teacher when you get older. There's nothing more important than being a teacher. So as you start to think about your ambitions and your possible careers when you get out of college, think about being a teacher. It's a very important profession.

The White House

Student. What is it like being President and living in the White House?

The President. It's a big honor. It's a big honor, as I'm sure you can imagine. It's a very exciting job. The White House is a majestic place. It's like a museum in many ways, and we're, of course, now turning parts of the White House into our home. And Laura and I are the proud parents of 19-year-old twin daughters, but they go to college so we don't see much of them anymore. But we do have two dogs and a cat living with us.