

Jan. 11 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1997

America's top priority in the fight for law and order over the next 4 years. I pledge it will be mine.

We must help parents protect their children and bring order and discipline to their lives. That's why I support school uniforms and community-based curfews. That's why we made zero tolerance for guns in schools the law of the land and passed Megan's Law to demand that States tell a community whenever a dangerous sexual predator enters its midst. Now we must do more to give young people something to say yes to, after school, on weekends, and in the summer. And we must finish the job of putting 100,000 police on our streets.

At the same time, young people must understand that if they break the law, they will be punished, and if they commit violent crimes, they will be punished severely. I am determined to break the backs of criminal gangs that have ruined too many lives and stolen too many futures by bringing the full force of the law against them.

One of the most difficult problems facing law enforcement in this fight is the power of gang members to thwart the criminal justice system by threatening and intimidating the witnesses against them. Too many people in too many communities will not testify about gang crimes because they are afraid of violent reprisal. We must not allow the voice of justice to be frightened into silence by the violent threats of gangs.

Today the Justice Department is releasing a report called "Preventing Gang and Drug-Related Witness Intimidation." This report is a handbook for police officers, prosecutors, and judges to help them overcome the dangerous obstacle

witness intimidation poses to the steady march of justice. It details the problems they face and helps to provide a blueprint for them to follow that will significantly help State and local gang investigation and prosecution. Starting today, the Justice Department will distribute this report to thousands of police departments, prosecutors, and judges across America.

In the coming weeks, I will submit to Congress comprehensive legislation to combat youth violence and drug abuse. Together with all our other efforts against youth violence, this will be the top crime fighting priority of my second term. I've asked the Attorney General to closely examine the growing threat of witness intimidation by gangs and to recommend strong measures to stop it that can be included in this legislation. We must not allow the very gangs we're fighting to grind the wheels of justice to a halt.

Over the past 4 years we've shown that we can roll back crime and violence. Now is no time to let up. There is still too much of it. But if we continue to work together, to stand up for what is right, to work with our community police officers, to take responsibility for ourselves and our families and the other children in our communities who need a guiding hand and an encouraging word, if we'll do all these things, we can keep the crime rate coming down and we can build the future our children deserve.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 4:55 p.m. on January 10 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on January 11.

Remarks on Presenting the Congressional Medal of Honor to African-American Heroes of World War II

January 13, 1997

The President. Secretary Perry, Secretary Brown, other members of the administration, General Shalikashvili and the members of the Joint Chiefs, General Powell, Senator Craig, Senator Kempthorne, Congressman Miller, the members of the families and friends of the medal recipients, and Mr. Vernon Baker. I'd like to begin by thanking Shaw University; its

president, Talbert Shaw; and all the authors of the Shaw study on the nomination of outstanding African-American soldiers for the Medal of Honor in the United States Army during World War II.

I also want to commend the Department of the Army officials, former and present, who