

Youth Development/After School/
Violence

DRAFT**MEMORANDUM**

To: Melanne Verveer
From: David Hamburg
Date: April 19, 2000
Re: Suggestions for the President's Speech at the White House Youth Conference.

**Why Teens Matter So Much for the Future of our Country, and
How We can Help Them to Become Healthy, Productive, Responsible Adults.**

President Clinton has worked diligently on youth problems before and during his years in the White House. For example, he was a major contributor in the 1980s to Carnegie's landmark report, *Turning Points*, that drastically reformulated education in adolescence on the basis of the strongest research and best available practices. In that effort, he worked with Governor Tom Kean and Anthony Jackson, the staff director, as well as leaders from various sectors of American society, to shape bold recommendations including serious community service as a supervised academic experience for junior high and middle school students. That story turned out to be so valuable for our country that it's worth taking a moment to explain it.

Growing up in the United States includes a landmark event in which the young person moves from a primary, small, intimate environment to a secondary, large, impersonal environment. Children pass this landmark when they make the transition from elementary school to middle-grade school—i.e., junior high school or middle school. This usually means a change from a small neighborhood school where the student spends most of the day in one primary classroom with the same teacher and classmates to a larger, more impersonal institution, farther from home, with many different classes and teachers. This transition occurs at the same time when most adolescents are experiencing rapid physical, emotional, and cognitive changes as well.

There is a crucial need to help adolescents at this early age to acquire a durable basis for self-esteem, flexible and inquiring minds, reliable and close human relationships, a sense of belonging in a valued group, and a way of being useful beyond one's self. They need to find constructive expression for their inherent curiosity and exploratory energy, as well as a basis for making informed, deliberate decisions—especially on matters that have large consequences, such as education and health.

The problems adolescents face are occurring across all of the youth population; no part of the society is exempt from the casualties—witness Columbine. Among the more disquieting signs is the emergence in younger adolescents of very high-risk behaviors that were once associated with older groups: early smoking, early alcohol use, early sex, early alienation from school, even early involvement with deadly weapons.

Schools and related institutions must provide the building blocks of adolescent development and preparation for adult life. Yet most American junior high and middle schools have for decades been unable to meet the developmental needs of young adolescents. These institutions have the potential to make a powerfully beneficial impact on the development of their students, yet they were largely ignored as the educational reform movement ignited in the nineteen eighties.

In response to this challenge, the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development undertook as its first major commitment, the preparation of a broad-based report to point the way toward much better middle grade schools. The task force commissioned research papers and interviewed experts in relevant fields. It met with teachers, principals, health professionals, and leaders of youth-serving community organizations. It examined

firsthand promising new approaches to fostering the education and healthy development of young adolescents.

The result was a groundbreaking report, *Turning Points: Preparing American Youth for the Twenty-first Century*. Then-Governor Clinton was its principal national spokesman. It stimulated an emerging movement to build support for young adolescents and educate them through new relationships between schools, families, and community institutions, including those concerned with health. The reformulation of middle-grade schools along the lines recommended in *Turning Points* can improve the life chances of youth from many backgrounds, including those from poor communities.

Dr. Anthony Jackson, who was the principal author of *Turning Points*, led a Carnegie Corporation team in a decade-long follow-up to foster adoption of the recommendations, to assess the implementation of these recommendations, and to determine the nature and extent of any benefits associated with implementation. *Turning Points 2000* now reports that remarkable follow-up effort and the results are very encouraging. Not only do they illuminate how we can do better in the middle grade schools but they also have implications for improving our high schools – e.g. by breaking up vast, impersonal schools into smaller units on a human scale where sustained individual attention is possible for each student.

So, our efforts in the 1980s bore fruit in the 1990s, especially as our Department of Education, under the superb leadership of Dick Riley, facilitated the spread of useful reforms throughout the country. The United States is trying very hard now, beyond all previous efforts, to provide all adolescents with high quality education that treats them

with dignity, recognizes their personal assets, and stimulates them to open new vistas of learning and accomplishment.

Now let's look for a moment at the big picture: a comprehensive youth development strategy. What conditions favor good results in child and adolescent development? What can shift the odds away from rotten outcomes such as youth violence? How can our children grow up healthy and vigorous, inquiring and problem-solving, decent and constructive?

During their earliest years of growth and development, children need dependable attachment to parents or other adult caregivers; they need protection, guidance, stimulation, nurturance, and skills to cope with adversity. Infants, in particular, need caregivers who can promote attachment and thereby instill the fundamentals of decent human relationships throughout the child's life. Young adolescents, too, need to connect with responsible people who can guide their momentous transition to adulthood with sensitivity and understanding.

Within the scientific and professional communities, an important consensus has emerged on ways that parents and others can cooperate in meeting with the developmental needs of children and young adolescents. Evidence is accumulating that a sequence of preventive actions can set a young person onto the path toward healthy, constructive adulthood. Beginning with early and comprehensive prenatal care, these measures include well-baby medical care, with an emphasis on disease prevention and health promotion; home visits by human service professionals, especially in homes with very young children; parental education to strengthen competence and build close parent-child relationships; parent support networks that provide mutual aid in fostering health

and education for their children and themselves; child care of high quality outside the home, especially in day care centers; preschool education, modeled on Head Start that combines parental involvement with disease prevention and the stimulation of cognitive as well as social skills; enhanced elementary education and middle grade education—education that is developmentally appropriate, fosters fundamental skills, encourages good health practices and decent human relations including a strong sense of responsibility to each other in community service.

Altogether, such opportunities have strong potential to prevent damage of many kinds as reflected in indices of health, education, and criminal justice. This administration has taken many initiatives over the past seven years to strengthen these opportunities and services, to open pathways for children to learn and grow and enjoy their lives in a responsible way.

The First Lady has outlined the essential requirements that must be met in order to make optimal adolescent development possible. We now know there are many ways in which these requirements can be met by a conjunction of front-line institutions that powerfully shape adolescent development, for better and worse. They begin with the family but include schools, the health sector, community organizations, religious institutions and the media. Constructive actions for each of these institutions are not utopian or hypothetical. You will hear about some today. Working models can be observed in many communities and some have been scrutinized by evaluative research. The main challenge is to expand them to meet the nation's needs. That is why this meeting can be so stimulating and helpful throughout the country.

Now let us think for a moment about the violence that has caused our country so much anguish in recent years. Specific interventions that target youth violence can enhance adolescents' ability to deal with conflict in nonviolent ways. Policy changes, such as implementing stronger measures to restrict the availability of guns, are urgently needed, especially in light of the growing propensity of juveniles to use even semiautomatics.

One promising strategy for preventing youth violence is the teaching of conflict resolution skills as part of health education in elementary and middle schools. Research indicates that conflict resolution programs can reduce violence. Best results are achieved if this is embedded in long-term, comprehensive programs to address multiple risk factors—i.e., to prevent empty, shattered lives offering little except violence. Serious, in-depth conflict resolution training over extended periods is increasingly important in a culture saturated with media, street and school violence. Supervised practice of conflict-resolution skills is important too. Assertiveness, taught as a social skill, helps young people learn how to resist unwanted pressures and intimidation, resolve conflicts nonviolently, and make sound decisions about the use of weapons.

High-risk youth in impoverished communities urgently need social support networks and life skills training. Both can be provided in schools and school-related health centers as well as in community organizations, including church related youth activities and sports programs. They work best by building enduring relationships with responsible, caring adults as well as with constructive peers. Such an approach offers alternatives to violent groups by providing a sense of belonging, a source of enjoyable

activity, a perception of opportunity, mentoring, and a chance to prepare for social roles that earn respect.

Adolescent violence is as much a public health concern as other behavior-related health problems such as smoking. Adolescents' tentative exploration of new possibilities offers an opportunity to develop alternatives to violent responses. With the goal of reducing fights, assaults, and intentional injuries among adolescents, community violence prevention programs train providers in diverse community settings in a special curriculum; translate this curriculum into concrete services for adolescents, and enlist the support of the community in preventing such violence. The four principal components of such programs are curriculum development, community-based prevention education, clinical treatment services, and media campaigns. Violence prevention programs are trying to reach as many community settings as possible, including multi-service centers, recreation facilities, housing developments, police and courts, clergy, neighborhood health centers, and schools. There is typically a referral network for health, education and social services. Community campaigns may produce television and radio public service announcements. Violence prevention efforts of such a systematic and extensive sort are very recent, but they have shown great ingenuity and dedication. Evaluation is underway. We must find ways to provide solid, hopeful alternatives to violent behavior.

A variety of organizations and institutions can provide constructive, nonviolent guidance and support to supplement families in navigating the rough waters of adolescence. Some are based in churches, such as the initiatives of the Congress of National Black Churches; some are based in community organizations, like the Girls and Boys Clubs. Others involve youth service, like the Campus Compact based in colleges

and universities; still others are based in minority organizations. The central point is that churches, schools, community organizations, and businesses can build constructive social support networks that attract disadvantaged or alienated youth. These networks can foster their health, their education, and their capacity to be accepted by the mainstream society. They offer young people healthy alternatives to substance abuse and violent gang membership.

The country has awakened to the dangers of violence in our society—and for that matter throughout the world. This administration seeks to mobilize our compassion, energy and creativity to provide good conditions for growing up in America. Youth violence, tragic as it is, should give us a powerful stimulus to enhance the life chances of all our children.

Carnegie Corporation of New York

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David A. Hamburg, M.D.
President Emeritus

Date: April 19, 2000

To: Melanne Verveer

Fr: David A. Hamburg

Fax: **Fax: 202-456-6244**

Re: Suggestions for the First Lady's Speech at the White House
Youth Conference

DRAFT

Toward a Youth Development Strategy for Lifelong Benefit

The Clinton administration has made remarkable achievements in tackling a variety of adolescent problems such as smoking, pregnancy, drugs, guns and media violence. Moreover, its emphasis on preventive approaches has been extraordinary. Its initiatives in adolescent education, health, community service, school-to-work transition and crime prevention have trail-blazing significance that is likely to grow in the years ahead.

It is exceedingly timely and socially useful to draw these strands together into a comprehensive youth development strategy highlighted by today's White House conference. This involves a concise summary of the gains made in these various targeted interventions and relates them to generic interventions that have a fundamental bearing on healthy and constructive adolescent development.

There is a complementary relationship between generic approaches that tackle these underlying factors and targeted approaches that deal with specific problems. For instance, a generic approach can help a shaky adolescent earn self-respect, find a place in a valued and constructive group, and make durable friendships, all of which enhance the individual's resistance to drugs, weapons, or early sexual activity. At the same time, it is important for adolescents to grasp accurate information about each of these major risks and to develop specific skills in avoiding them. In this way, the generic and targeted approaches are mutually supportive.

This conference points the way for our country to meet the crucial needs of adolescent development through a set of front-line, pivotal institutions: family, school, health care and public health, community organizations, religious institutions and media. It will clarify what government can do and what other powerful institutions can do to meet these basic needs and thereby improve prospects for the future of our country. What is "the village" for American adolescents today? How can it be strengthened to improve the life chances for youth?

Early adolescence is one of the most striking developmental experiences in the entire life span. It means going beyond childhood toward the distant goal of becoming an adult. There is a chasm between these two great phases of life,

and it takes a mighty leap to get across. How do our children learn to make the leap? What help do they need in making it? Who helps -- or fails to help -- in this risky process? Why do so many fall into the chasm, never making it to healthy, constructive, productive adult life?

Early adolescence is a time of profound biological transformation and social transition characterized by exploratory behavior, much of it adaptive and expected for this age group. But if carried to extremes, and especially if it becomes habitual, risky behavior can have lifelong consequences. Many dangerous patterns commonly emerge during these years. We will hear today about recent research that clarifies what is happening in this great adolescent transition: in the brain, the hormones, the bodily changes, the new social environment and more.

Initially, adolescents explore these new possibilities tentatively, with the experimental attitude that is typical of adolescence. Before damaging behavior is firmly established, therefore, there is a unique opportunity to prevent lifelong casualties.

Young adolescents on an effective developmental path must

- ◆ Find a valued place in a constructive group.
- ◆ Learn how to form close, durable human relationships.

- ◆ Earn a sense of worth as a person.
- ◆ Achieve a reliable basis for making informed choices.
- ◆ Express constructive curiosity and exploratory behavior.
- ◆ Find ways of being useful to others.
- ◆ Believe in a promising future with real opportunities.
- ◆ Cultivate the inquiring and problem-solving habits of the mind necessary for lifelong learning and adaptability.
- ◆ Learn to respect democratic values and responsible citizenship.
- ◆ Build a healthy lifestyle.

These requirements can be met by a conjunction of front-line institutions that powerfully shape adolescent development, for better and worse. Research and careful appraisal of best practices has led to useful insights in several areas:

- ◆ The Fundamental Nature of Adolescent Development
- ◆ Strengthening Families for Coping with Adolescence
- ◆ Creating Developmentally Appropriate Schools
- ◆ Ensuring Access to Teen-Friendly Health Services
- ◆ Schools as Health-Promoting Environments
- ◆ Life-skills Training
- ◆ Social Supports
- ◆ Opportunities in the Nonschool Hours
- ◆ Constructive Potential of the Media

There are several strong resources for synthesizing and assessing the research evidence pertinent to this topic so that all of us as responsible, caring adults can do a better job with our precious young people.

1. The publications of the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development in which both the President (then governor) and the First Lady participated at various points in the decade of its work from 1986-1996.
2. The National Academy of Sciences' Forum on Adolescence, created as follow-on to the Carnegie Council. The White House staff has been working with the Academy in this forum.
3. The National Institute for Child Health and Human Development. With Duane Alexander's excellent leadership, the institute is supporting more research on adolescent development than ever before.
4. The Department of Education which has made a strong effort to improve American high schools.
5. The President's Committee of Advisors on Science and Technology. It has made a major report on strengthening research on education as well as enhancing the use of technology for education.

6. The Department of Health and Human Services has been a bulwark for our youth: in research, in services, and in education of the general public about youth. Its Secretary, Donna Shelala, has been one of the nation's leading advocates for healthy adolescent development.

Suffice it to say that the federal government has joined with many partners in public and private sectors to improve the life chances of all our youth. I (HRC) express my heartfelt gratitude to all those at the White House and throughout the country for your dedicated efforts toward a better future.

Those institutions that have a major shaping influence on the young must join forces in adapting to the transforming requirements of the new century. In the long run, the vitality of any society and its prospects for the future depend on the quality of its people -- on their knowledge and skill, health and vigor, and the decency of their human relations. Preventing much of the damage now occurring would therefore have powerfully beneficial social and economic impacts, including a more effective work force, higher productivity, lowered health costs, lowered prison costs, and so much relief of human suffering!

The Importance of Parents in the Lives of Adolescents

Adolescence is a time of major developmental changes in children and parents and of significant transformations in family relations. Raising adolescents can be stressful and difficult for parents. During this period, parents are likely to feel less adequate and more anxious and stressed than when their children were younger.

Compared to research on families with young children, there has been much less attention to the home and family environments of adolescents. Yet it is clear that adolescents develop best when they live and develop within a supportive home and family environment. New research in from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health—the largest and most comprehensive study ever conducted on adolescent health, development, and well-being—reveals that adolescents who have strong emotional attachments to their parents and teachers are much less likely to use drugs and alcohol, attempt suicide, engage in violence or become sexually active at an early age, and they are more likely to experience success with their peers and at school. Thus, despite that fact that adolescents are moving out beyond the family and striving for greater autonomy from parents, parents remain an important influence in the lives of their adolescent children. In healthy development, the parent-child relationship is gradually renegotiated over several years from an adult-child mode to an adult-adult mode. Though sometimes stormy in mid-passage, the outcome can surely be one of mutual respect and understanding.

The conclusions drawn from this new research are that adolescents develop best when they have a supportive family life characterized by warmth and mutual respect; by the serious and sustained interest of their parents in their lives; by parental responsiveness to their changing cognitive and social capacities; by the articulation of clear standards linked to discipline and close supervision; by the communication of high expectations for achievement and ethical behavior; and by democratic, constructive ways of dealing with conflict. Such a family atmosphere can provide powerful protection against the risks of engaging in unhealthy practices and antisocial behavior as well as against poor health, particularly depression.

Various institutions need to reformulate their policies in light of these facts about youth development.

- Schools, cultural, arts, religious, and youth organizations and health-care agencies in the community should examine the extent to which they involve parents in activities with adolescents and should develop ways to engage parents and adolescents in mutually rewarding activities.
- Professionals such as teachers, nurses, social workers, physicians, psychologists, youth development specialists, and others who work with

adolescents must be prepared to work not only with individual adolescents but also with their families.

- Employers should extend to parents of young adolescents the workplace policies now available for those with young children, including flex time, job sharing, telecommuting, and part-time work with benefits.
- Community institutions such as business, schools, and youth organizations should become involved in providing after-school programs.

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Ms. Melanne Verveer
Office of the First Lady
The White House
Washington DC

Dear Ms. Verveer:

The Embassy is forwarding to you a letter from the President of Latvia Mrs. Vaira Vike-Freiberga, in which she is requesting a meeting with the First Lady during Latvia's President's visit to New York on May 15 and 16. We hope that the First Lady will be able to find time in her busy schedule for a brief meeting.

I can be contacted at 202-726-8213 ext 13 to further discuss this opportunity. We look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,



Liana Eglite

Assistant to the Ambassador



Latvijas Valsts prezidents

Riga, 19 April 2000

First Lady Hilary Rodham Clinton

Dear Mrs Clinton,

Just a note to let you know that I plan to be in New York from May 14th to 16th.

I have planned meetings with high officials at the United Nations, American Jewish organizations, several foreign policy forums as well as with the *New York Times*.

I remember fondly our earlier meetings in Reykjavik and in the White House and would be delighted if the opportunity arose for us to meet again during my brief visit to the USA.

Wishing you a Happy Easter and success in your election campaign.

Vaira Vike-Freiberga

Vaira Vike-Freiberga
President of the Republic of Latvia

CURRICULUM VITAE

NAME: Vaira VĪKE-FREIBERGA
 President, Republic of Latvia (as of July 8, 1999)
CITIZENSHIPS: Latvian
BIRTH DATE : December 1st, 1937
PLACE: Riga, Latvia

UNIVERSITY STUDIES

DEGREES: Ph.D. Experimental Psychology, McGill University 1965
 M.A. Psychology, University of Toronto 1960
 B.A. (General Arts), Victoria College, University of Toronto 1958

SECONDARY AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

1954-1955 Evening and correspondence courses, Grade 13, Ontario Ministry of Education, Toronto
 1950-1954 Collège de jeunes filles de Mers-Sultan, Casablanca, Morocco
 1949-1950 French primary school, Daourat hydroelectric dam, Morocco
 1945-1949 Latvian primary school, refugee camp, Lübeck, Germany

LANGUAGES

SPOKEN AND WRITTEN: English, French, Latvian, Spanish, German
 Passive and partial knowledge: Portuguese, Italian

EMPLOYMENT RECORD

1998- Director, Latvian Institute, Riga
 1998- Professor emerita, Université de Montréal
 1984-1989 Vice-chairman, Science Council of Canada
 1979-1998 Full professor, Université de Montréal
 1972-1979 Associate professor, Université de Montréal
 1965-1972 Assistant professor, Université de Montréal
 1964-1965 Sessional lecturer, McGill University, Montreal
 1964-1965 Sessional lecturer, Sir George Williams University, Montreal
 1960-1961 Clinical psychologist, Toronto Psychiatric Hospital (full time)
 1959-1960 Spanish teacher, grades XII and XIII, Ontario Ladies' College, Whitby, Ontario
 1958 Spanish translator, Confederation Life Insurance, Toronto
 1957-1960 Supervisor, boarding school, Branksome Hall School for Girls, Toronto (part time)
 1954-1955 Canadian Bank of Commerce, teller (full time)

FELLOWSHIPS AND HONOURS

- Grand Medal of the Academy of Sciences of Latvia for distinguished work on the Latvian dainas, 1997

- Pierre Chauveau Medal for distinguished work in the humanities, Royal Society of Canada, 1995
- Order of the Three Stars, Republic of Latvia, 1995.
- Killam Research Fellowship (Canada Council), 1993-1995
- Marcel-Vincent prize for distinguished achievement in the Social sciences, ACFAS (Association canadienne-française pour l'avancement des sciences), 1992
- Fellow, Royal Society of Canada, Académie I, 1990
- Foreign Member, Academy of Sciences of Latvia, 1990
- Prize in the Social Sciences of the World Association of Free Latvians (PBLA, Washington, D.C.) for distinguished work on the Latvian dainas, 1989
- Honorary Member, World Association of Latvian Scientists, Riga, Latvia (since its foundation in 1988)
- Fellow, Canadian Psychological Association, 1979
- Prof. Anna Abele memorial prize for distinguished work in Latvian philology (USA), jointly with Imants Freibergs, 1979
- Leave Fellowship, Canada Council, 1974-1975

HONORARY DOCTORATES

Dr. habil. philol., Academy of Sciences of Latvia, February, 1992

Doctor of Laws, *honoris causa* (LL.D.), Queen's University, Kingston, May, 1991

ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

• The Canada Council

- 1997-1988 President, Selection sub-Committee, Killam Research Fellowships in the Social Sciences
- 1996-1999 Member of the Selection Committee for the Killam Research Fellowships, the Killam Prizes and the John Dieffenbaker Prizes

• Royal Society of Canada (The National Academy of Canada)

- 1998-2000 President, Académie des lettres et des sciences humaines
- 1996-1998 Vice-President, Académie des lettres et des sciences humaines
- 1991-1996 President, Symposia Committee
- 1991-1996 Member of General Council
- 1994-2000 Member of Council, Académie des lettres et des sciences humaines

Member, 6 different internal committees

- 1995-1996 Member, Joint committee of the Royal Society of Canada and the Canadian Academy of Engineering. Panel on Nuclear Waste Management by Atomic Energy Canada
- 1990-1991 Ibid.

Science Council of Canada

Vice-Chairman (a Governor-General in-Council appointment, deputy-minister salary and status)

1980-1989 Member of Council

1982-1989 Member, Executive, Management plus chair or member of 6 other committees

1984-1989 Ex-officio member of all study committees of the Science Council

• Association for the Advancement of Baltic Studies (An international association with its head office in the USA)

1984-1986 President

1982-1988 Member, Board of Directors

1984-1986 President, various committees

1986 Founding Member, Baltic Studies Fund

• NATO Scientific Program, Special Panel on Human Factors (Brussels)

1979-1980 Chairperson

1978-1981 Canadian Member

• Canadian Psychological Association

President

1976-1982 Member, Board of Directors

1979-1982 Member, Executive committee

1981-1982 President, 4 diff. Committees

1979-1981 Resource person in charge of improving the level of bilingualism in the Association

1976-1981 Member, various committees

1987-1991 Member, Scientific affairs committee

• Social Science Federation of Canada

1980-1981 President

1977-1982 Representative of the Canadian Psychological Association

1977-1982 Member, Board of Directors

1977-1982 Member, Executive committee

1978-1979 Treasurer

1978-1979 Chair, Finance committee

1981-1982 Chair, Nominations committee

1977-1980 Member, Nominations committee

1977-1982 Member, Finance committee

1977-1982 Member, Sub-committee on publications

1977-1982 Member, various other committees

• Canadian Federation for the Humanities

1980-1982 Member, Executive committee

1980-1982 Member, Board of Directors

1980-1982 Member, Finance committee

1980-1982 Member, Sub-committee on publications

THE ECONOMIST

AUG. 21, 1999

Vaira Vike-Freiberga, a Canadian-European

SIXTY years ago, German and Russian dictators redrew the borders of Eastern Europe to suit themselves. Now a psychology professor from Canada, Vaira Vike-Freiberga, has undertaken a fresh assignment to help undo the damage. Her own life tells the story. As a seven-year-old, she fled Latvia before the Red Army's advance, hiding in ditches as Soviet aircraft strafed her fugitive party. Her baby sister died in a refugee camp in the winter of 1945. After the war, the family lived in Casablanca, then emigrated to Canada, to the peace and quiet of Montreal University, where she ended up researching such themes as "imagery and propositional logic in oral poetry". Oh, and in retirement she has picked up some more work back home—as Latvia's new president.

Like hundreds of thousands of exiles from Central and Eastern Europe, Mrs Vike-Freiberga, now 61, always kept a second life going—centred on her miserably treated home country. "In our homeland, we have no freedom, and in our freedom, no homeland," as one Baltic émigré once put it. One lonely task was lobbying western governments not to recognise the annexation of the Baltics, traded to Stalin by Hitler and kept by the Soviet Union for half a century; another, no less quixotic, was to preserve the home language and culture in exile.

Her own contribution included coralling youthful Latvian émigrés to scan many thousands of Latvian folk-songs into a computer database. When the captive nations regained independence in 1991, most émigrés declared their mission accomplished and got on with their lives in the West. Some visited "home" to find ruined, brutalised countries they hardly knew, full of uncouth people, they sometimes (tacitly) complained, speaking slang peppered with ugly Russianisms. Others tried to make a fast buck.

But a handful got stuck into the real business of rebuilding countries, this time safely anchored in a democratic Europe. Of the few dozen active in politics, some have been strikingly successful. One is Toomas Iivess, Estonia's acerbic, Swedish-born, American-reared foreign minister. Another is Valdas Adamkus, a Chicago civil servant who became Lithuania's president in 1998. Now there is Mrs Vike-Freiberga.

The Balts face huge questions. Can the three countries' 21m-odd Russians fit in, or will they remain resentful—a potential fifth column? How far can NATO protect the Balts' eastern fringe? And can Latvia and Lithuania modernise quickly enough to join the fast lane for membership of the European Union alongside Estonia, which is already one of the six countries tagged for earliest entry?

At first blush, Mrs Vike-Freiberga, for all her charm, grit and brains, might hardly seem the woman for Latvia's top job. She speaks no Russian, the mother tongue of a third of the country's 2.5m people. She has spent no time in the murky, money-sodden world of Latvian politics, dominated by the barons of oil transit, farming and finance. She has no political base; parliament chose her as a deadlock-breaking outsider. And her day-to-day powers are limited, though Latvia's president does have one big weapon if

things go awry: she can call a referendum in which voters can dismiss either president or parliament.

But the Canadian professor has several other advantages. First, being an outsider may prove a plus, in dealings both with Latvians and even with local Russians, most of whom settled in the Soviet era and have not bothered to apply for citizenship, partly because they would have to learn Latvian first. Mrs Vike-Freiberga intends to set an example, by quickly learning Russian herself. "I thought it would be fun," she says, "a challenge to those who have spent 50 years not learning Latvian."

Second, among ethnic Latvians she is hugely popular. Most are disillusioned with their politicians. But Mrs Vike-Freiberga is clear-headed, well-educated, patently straight, and unlikely to be in hock to any of them. Her election may be a sign that Latvia is at last

ready to shed some of its lingering old Soviet habits. Incompetent and corrupt officials, and over-mighty tycoons, will have to watch out. Early indications are promising. The government at the time she took office, headed by Vilis Kristopans, which had proved ineffective and cosy with people in the oil business, resigned within weeks. This was not thanks to Mrs Vike-Freiberga, but reflected the same electoral mood for change that brought her to office. The new prime minister, a rightish businessman called Andris Skele, took immediate pains to show that his private and public interests will not conflict.

Third, she is just what Latvia needs to present a clear new face to the world. Neighbouring Estonia's sophisticated, hexagonal president, Lennart Meri, has greatly helped his country's diplomacy. Mrs Vike-Freiberga can manage five languages, including French (that Montreal connection) and German, languages of the countries that need most per-

suading that expanding the EU quickly and generously would be wise. So far, Latvia has lagged behind Estonia in preparations to get in. By various measures, such as growth, debt and inflation, the two countries are roughly level. But it has won less investment from abroad, the economy has a narrower base, and the EU is concerned that the early laws on citizenship and language, brought in after 1991, were designed to hit Russians in Latvia.

This has given Mrs Vike-Freiberga her biggest test so far. A week after taking office, she sent back to parliament a new language law, criticised by the West as well as by Russia, that was excessively harsh: for example, it insisted that private commercial transactions should be in Latvian. Parliament seems likely to meet her reasoned request for a softening amendment.

This augurs well for Mrs Vike-Freiberga's immediate task to take advantage of Finland's current presidency of the EU. Architects of the "northern dimension"—Finland's big foreign-policy idea—hope to push Latvia (and with luck Lithuania too) into the first round of EU expansion. That will need hard work at home. If, in its race to join western clubs, Latvia does catch up, Mrs Vike-Freiberga will have splendidly rounded off a most unusual career.



THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

May 2, 2000

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT AND THE FIRST LADY
AT
THE WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON TEENAGERS:
RAISING RESPONSIBLE AND RESOURCEFUL YOUTH

The East Room

10:45 A.M. EDT

MRS. CLINTON: Good morning, and please be seated, and welcome to the White House. We have been looking forward to this conference for nearly a year now as we have talked with and explored all the ways that we can raise resourceful and responsible young people. And many people have asked me why a conference on teenagers. Why make teenagers the focus of a fully day's discussion at the White House.

Well, I think that as we just saw in the video -- and I want to thank and applaud the families that participated in that video -- many of us are concerned about what we can do as parents and as citizens, as employers or educators, as public officials or community leaders, to give more support to teenagers and their families.

The President and I speak, of course, with great authority -- (laughter) -- having just graduated from being the parents of a teenager to being the parents of a 20-year-old and having survived it. But, believe me, this conference is more than just a trip down memory lane or an exercise in nostalgia for us. We believe strongly that our young people deserve our very best efforts.

I want to thank many of the people who are here today who have been part of putting this conference together, but more than that, for the work that they have done over so many decades. First, let me thank David and Betty Hamburg who are here. (Applause.) David and Betty, in many ways, inspired this conference.

I began working with them more than 20 years ago now, and I can think of no people who are more dedicated to helping all young people, whether they're in the forgotten or not forgotten half, whether they are going through great transitions or turning points in their lives. And I think many of us in this

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room owe both David and Betty a great deal of gratitude. I would like to ask them to stand so we could thank them both.
(Applause.)

Also with us today is Congresswoman Stephanie Tubbs Jones and Secretary Donna Shalala, Deputy Attorney General Eric Holder, Secretary Alexis Herman, National Service Corps CEO Harris Wofford, the Director of Personnel Management Janis LaChance, the Deputy Drug Czar Vereen, Annie E. Casey Foundation, the W.T. Grant Foundation and the YMCA of the USA are all sponsors and supporters of this conference.

Now, all of us are here because we believe there is no group of Americans more full of promise or potential. But we also believe there is no group of Americans more in need of the support, guidance and committed efforts of all of us than today's teenagers.

Ask any teen -- and I do -- I've been privileged to speak to so many in sort of personal and informal ways and in more formal settings. Just last week at a high school town hall in Watkins Glen, New York, where the teens lined up and asked all kinds of questions. If you ask teens and you listen to teens, you can hear, directly and indirectly, their voices telling us that growing up today feels tougher than ever before. I happen to think that's right. I think it's harder being a teen today than it was, certainly, when I was one so many years ago.

But I also think that the wonder and hope and exciting choices that teenagers face in their lives are too often becoming times of great stress, alienation, and confusion. And that, too, has always been part of the teen experience, but the environment and context in which that occurs is more dangerous than ever before.

And if it's tough to be a teenager today, it's probably even tougher to be a parent. More and more parents are working outside our homes; they're struggling to do right by their families and their jobs. And I have met so many mothers and fathers who tell me that they just feel inadequate and anxious about navigating those teenage years -- more so than they certainly felt when their kids were younger.

We're all worried about the choices our teenagers make, about how the best-laid plans for a bright future can disintegrate with a single bad decision to drink, to try drugs, to drive too fast, to trust the wrong person. Parents are worried about the movies their children are seeing, the web sites they're visiting, the music they're listening to. And there's a lot of worry that all those heart-to-heart talks and those efforts to communicate, which are sometimes so awkward and difficult, about values and good behavior are getting drowned out by a popular culture filled with gratuitous sex and violence.

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In our two panels this morning, and in the breakout sessions this afternoon, we will tackle the challenges facing today's teenagers and their parents. But it won't just be a session for everyone to share their worries. More importantly, we're going to be highlighting some of the latest research about teen years and the innovative ways that Americans can work together to ensure that every teenager has a safe passage to adulthood.

Three years ago, in this room, we held the first White House Conference on Early Learning and Childhood Development. We sought to raise awareness about the critical growth that takes place in the brain during the first three years of life, and to explore the implications of this knowledge on parenting, education and child care. In many ways, that conference and today's conference can be viewed as bookends, because now we're beginning to learn that the brain goes through yet another, and equally critical, growth spurt during the early teenage years. Though the research is still preliminary, scientists now believe that this is the time when all the hard-wiring of the brain takes place, when a teenager's intellectual, emotional and physical capacities are developed for a lifetime.

Now, I remember the very wise advice I got from a friend of mine, when my daughter was very small and she was raising three teenagers. And she said, you know, the two times in a child's life that seem most similar to me are those toddler years and the teenage years. It's when we need to give so much more attention to our children. And now, we didn't know, back when I heard this advice about 19 or so years ago, that there would be brain research to support that anecdotal experience that parents had. But I remembered that so often during the times when our own daughter was growing up -- that even if your teenager or your preteen doesn't want you following her or him around, in many ways -- think of that toddler metaphor -- they need you around. And it's hard for a lot of parents to figure out exactly how to do that.

This research has, therefore, important implications for parents, because teenagers need the guidance and support of their parents more than ever. It is still difficult for many of us to remember that teenagers want our attention. After all, this is the time when the real or the imaginary "keep out" signs start appearing on closed bedroom doors, when many of our children would rather spend two hours talking to a friend on the phone than 10 minutes talking to their mother or father in person. But what we are learning is that for all their declarations of independence, America's teenagers still want and need the everyday love, involvement and discipline of their parents.

Today, we are releasing a new poll, commissioned by the YMCA, which found that parents are still the most important adults in their teenagers' lives. More than three out of four

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teens say they still turn to their parents in times of trouble. In fact, while parents -- and this is so interesting -- while parents list the threat of drugs and alcohol as their top concerns about their teens, teens, themselves, list education and "not having enough time" with their parents as their top concern.

So it's time that we respond to these concerns, and many of us have been struggling with ways to do that. I believe one of the biggest casualties of modern life has been family time, especially time during meals, when parents and children can check out of their busy schedules and check in with each other. Before our daughter left for college, the three of us made it a priority to share at least one meal together a day.

With our hectic schedules, it wasn't always easily and, occasionally, wasn't possible. But we sure tried. And when we were able to, that hour or half-hour in the small kitchen of the private quarters upstairs in the White House was truly my favorite part of the day, because Bill and I were very convinced that we wanted to convey to our daughter a simple message, one that we hoped she would carry away to college: that whenever she does need someone to talk to or ask for advice, or just wants to say hello, we will be available and eager to listen.

I also know, though, the experience of hanging around, waiting for a sighting. (Laughter.) You know, when we were first in Washington, in the first term, a lot of people -- some of the pundits and others -- would say, well, the Clintons don't go out, they don't socialize enough, you know, why aren't they going to Camp David enough. And those are people who had forgotten or never had a teenager. And when you have one in your home, you want to hang around with the hope that just maybe they'll deign to say something to you. Occasionally, that works, but not always. And we hope this conference will inspire even more parents to stay involved in their teenagers' lives and to open new lines of communication.

I'm very pleased to announce the National Partnership for Women and Families, along with the Families and Work Institute, will lead a new campaign to promote the importance of spending time with your teenagers.

Now, there are some lessons we parents have to learn about this. That is not the time when you unload every piece of worldly advice you have stored up for your entire lifetime, it is not the time when you lecture and fill up the space with all the words that you want to fill. These are things that I've learned from experience.

It is, instead, a time when you hopefully are there to inspire the communication that is two-way and principally coming from your teen. The Time With Teens campaign will challenge parents to take stock of their own lives and work habits and look for ways to make more time for their children.

Message Sent To:

It will challenge businesses to offer more flexible work schedules and policies for parents, and it will challenge churches and synagogues, and mosques and schools, and health care agencies and all community organizations to create more opportunities for families to spend time together.

But we have to do more than just raise awareness among parents. We have to give parents the tools we all need to stay involved in our children's lives. That's why we're also launching a new White House Task Force on Navigating the New Media Age. Comprised of members from both the public and private sectors, this task force will find ways to transform the tools of the media age, namely the Internet, into tools for parents. The task force will develop two new Internet portals -- one that will link parents to information and advice on raising teens, from health and safety to child care and education; and a second to link teens to a variety of age-appropriate resources on the Internet.

We also recognize it is more difficult for parents to keep track of what teens are watching and learning on TV or on their home computer. The YMCA poll you'll hear about found that six out of 10 teenagers are watching television without parental supervision, while 45 percent of all teens say they surf the Internet on their own.

You know, when we only had one TV in the home, and you had to fight with your parents and your brothers and sisters to figure out which one of the three stations you were going to watch, it was a lot easier for parents to supervise what their children were watching. Now we have so many opportunities for kids to see things without any parental supervision, or even without an older brother or sister around saying, that's stupid, or how dumb that is, trying to interject some reality into the world that the media conveys to our kids.

We also know that the V-chip is now in effect, and I strongly urge parents -- particularly of young kids, but also of teenagers -- to learn how to program that V-chip and to use it.

There are several media rating systems in place to help parents determine the appropriateness of the shows their children watch. But with so many different systems, parents must hunt for the information needed to decode these various ratings. That's why we will ask the task force to work with the entertainment and media industries to create a single web site to help parents make sense of all the various rating systems, and use them to monitor their children's interactions with the media. I hope eventually, we will get to a uniform system of ratings, so that what is used on the video shows, is used on the movies, is used on the TV, is used across the board.

LINDSAY R. DREWEL

05/02/2000 12:56:03 PM

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cc: Timothy W. Emrich/WHO/EOP@EOP, Sarah R. Rozensky/WHO/EOP@EOP, Shawn J. Johnson/WHO/EOP@EOP

Subject: Moment of Remembrance

Loretta will hold a meeting on **THURSDAY (5/4) AT 4:30PM**
to discuss the Moment of Remembrance.

Location: Roosevelt Room

Your attendance is important at this meeting - pls let me know ASAP if you are unable to attend. No substitutes please.

Thank you - x62640.

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This is only a temporary step, the web site. But I renew, therefore, my challenge to the entertainment industry. Let's create a voluntary, uniform rating system so that all parents can better decide what's appropriate and what is not appropriate for their children to see.

The challenges before us are great, and the time between childhood and adulthood, as Bill and I can attest, is all too short. But if there is one message we hope all Americans will take away from this conference, it is that each of us has the power to make a difference in every teenager's life. And it is not just a task for parents. The research and our own experience shows that oftentimes, it is a teacher or a coach, a minister or an employer, a neighbor or another relative who can provide the mentoring and the stability that every young person needs. And sometimes during a rocky period in a teen's life, it may be somebody outside of a parent who can be turned to with good advice and suggestions.

So it is not just a conference aimed at teens and their parents, it's really a conference for our entire country; to be committed; to make what is biologically a disorienting time for our teens and a time of exploration, a confusing time -- to make it more of an opportunity and a real journey to self-discovery; to take a time of peril and turn it into a time of promise.

We have a lot of experts and, certainly, we have teens and parents, as well -- we're going to be talking about what has worked for them. And it will be a challenge to us. But when I speak to groups of teenagers, I always start by telling them how proud I am of the way that they are coping with their lives, because the great, vast majority of our kids are good kids.

That is not the message that we often receive on the media, where we only see the stereotypes and the negative depictions. And a lot of these kids are doing the very best they can. In fact, the flip side of our concern is that some of them take their lives so seriously and strive for such perfection that the teen years are a time of even heightened misery and anxiety because they don't think they're measuring up.

So we have got to do a better job in sending a message to our kids that we value them, we love them, we care about them, and that's why we want to be as involved in their lives as possible. So let me now introduce my co-parent -- (laughter) -- and someone who has been deeply committed to the young people of our country, the President of the United States. (Applause.)

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