

if they get to look at the big things not the divisive, distractive, destructive, puny elements that too often dominate your politics, the American people will do what they've been doing for over 200 years, they will make the right decision. And your children and your grandchildren will be the richer for it.

Thank you. And God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:22 p.m. at the Washington Convention Center. In his remarks, he referred to Keith Geiger, outgoing president, and Bob Chase, incoming president, National Education Association; and Terry Dozier, former Teacher of the Year and Special Adviser to the Secretary of Education.

Statement on Signing the Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996

July 3, 1996

Today I have signed into law H.R. 3525, the "Church Arson Prevention Act of 1996," which will make it easier to prosecute those who set fire to churches. I applaud the Congress' swift, unanimous, and bipartisan passage of this bill. I have signed it promptly upon its transmittal to me so that the new law can go into effect as soon as possible, but I plan to acknowledge the Congress' role more formally and discuss the importance of this measure at an appropriate occasion next week.

William J. Clinton

The White House,
July 3, 1996.

NOTE: H.R. 3525, approved July 3, was assigned Public Law No. 104-155.

Statement on the Results of the Russian Election

July 3, 1996

As we wait to receive the final results of the Russian elections, and as our Nation prepares to celebrate our own freedom and independence, I want to recognize the historic significance of what we have seen in Russia today.

From Vladivostok to Kaliningrad, tens of millions of Russians returned to the polls to

complete the process of selecting their President. The Russian people can take real pride in this extraordinary achievement. After centuries of imperial rule and decades of Communist oppression, they have asserted their right to have a voice in the decisions that affect their lives. This election process shows just how far Russia's political reform has come over the last 5 years.

The American people can take pride as well in our steady support for Russia's democratic reform. As the results are counted, we will shortly learn the choice of the Russian people. But one thing is clear: Today was a triumph for democracy in Russia.

Memorandum on the Western Power Outage

July 3, 1996

Memorandum for the Secretary of Energy

Subject: Western Power Outage

Yesterday, there was an unexplained power failure in the Western power grid, disrupting electric service to hundreds of thousands of customers in 15 Western states. The outages had a ripple effect as power stations across the vast grid automatically shut down as the result of experiencing a surge. The outages caused numerous problems throughout the region, including disruptions of train service, traffic problems, loss of air conditioning, interruption of telephone service, and interference with water supplies.

I direct you to provide to me a report within 30 days, that:

1. Analyzes the cause of yesterday's outage;
2. Describes the extent and duration of the outage;
3. Analyzes whether the outage could have been prevented and whether the Western Systems Coordinating Council (WSCC) electric reliability system responded as anticipated to the initial outage;
4. Makes recommendations for any operational or regulatory changes at WSCC; and
5. Assesses the adequacy of existing North American electric reliability systems