

that was made possible by the American political system.

I am proud of you. I want you to be proud of you. And I want you to get up tomorrow and say, "I'm glad I was part of that. America is better than it was 4 years ago. It's going to be better 4 years from now. And the most important thing is my grandchildren will live in a 21st century that is worthy of America's glorious past."

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:20 p.m. at the D.C. Armory. In his remarks, he referred to actor

Tommy Lee Jones; Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, Steve Grossman, national chair, Alan D. Solomont, national finance chair, and Carol Pensky, treasurer, Democratic National Committee; Abe Pollin, owner, NBA Washington Bullets and NHL Washington Capitals; Tommy Boggs, attorney; Morton Bahr, international president, Communications Workers of America; Janice Griffin, vice president, Prudential; Robert L. Johnson, chairman and chief executive officer, BET Holdings, Inc.; and Dan Dutko, chair, Victory Fund.

Remarks to the Saxophone Club

May 1, 1997

The President. I was sitting there pondering—standing there pondering—[laughter]—giving the Vice President a standing ovation with my stiff leg—[laughter]—how he had so much energy at 10:30 at night. [Laughter] And then I realized, well, he is a younger man. [Laughter]

Let me say to all of you who helped to make this evening possible tonight, I thank you, and I thank Tipper and Al for being there with Hillary and me for the last 4 years and 2 months—not only politically but also personally, in a remarkable and perhaps unique way. I thank the Vice President for being the most important adviser I could have on a whole range of issues. There's very little he doesn't know a lot about, and now he knows more than he even did when he showed up here. [Laughter] And this country is much better off because Al Gore's been the Vice President of the United States.

When Tipper and Al and Hillary were talking, I thought to myself, I love these Saxophone Club events, and I love to look out at the sea of eager faces thinking about the future. "Don't stop thinking about tomorrow." [Laughter] And I was looking at Billy Baldwin, and then when Al said he was handsome and articulate and committed—

The Vice President. Suave.

The President. Suave. [Laughter]

The Vice President. Charming.

The President. Charming. [Laughter] What I was thinking is "and young," and I really resent it. [Laughter]

And Tracy and her band, I'm glad they were here, and I thank them for performing and for being in such good humor tonight. I hope we all are. But I really appreciate—I want to tell you a story about Billy Baldwin. He also came to New York once during the campaign and introduced us at an event—you may have been there or—[laughter]—or you're just stirred by the very thought of it. [Laughter] He does have that effect on some people. [Laughter] And he actually—I mean, I felt like I should write him an excused absence because he missed his anniversary to be there with us one night, because he cared so much—

Audience members. Aw-w-w.

The President. Well, he celebrated it the next day. [Laughter] That's something you can do when you're young. You think there will always be a next day, so it's good. But the thing that struck me about that was that here is this man who is doing this—who does not have to do this—because he believes it.

And I saw his brother the other night, and he came up and started talking to me about a whole other set of issues. And I thought, just what he said tonight in his remarkable speech—I thought those guys must have had a remarkable upbringing because they're not just going off and living with their money and living with

the stars and forgetting about everybody else in this country. And they care about things that affect all of us, and somehow they understand that their identity is tied up with all of us.

And if I could just make one very brief point tonight about what this whole thing is about. I really believe that the significant choice that we have to make as a people now on the edge of this new millennium is really what we think it means to be an American and what we think it means to be a member of a community and who is in our community. And so much of what we have done that really mattered was rooted in my conviction—our conviction, if you will—that none of us can be completely fulfilled individually unless we are connected to others and unless we have respect for them, unless we have concern for them, and unless we are prepared to take some steps to make sure that everybody has a chance to live up to their God-given capacities and that we conserve, preserve, and protect those things that we share in common, whether it's a common environment or the public safety.

And that's what I want you to think about. Because when you hear all these debates—you go back and replay the debates, the political debates of the last 15 years, you'll see that when you strip it all away, it's really about whether you believe that we're out there on our own and a good thing, or whether you believe that by definition to live in this country at this time and to live in this world at this time means that you have to recognize communities and you have to want to be a part of them, embrace them, and want to raise your children in a better one.

And if you think about it, the reason I want to balance the budget is I don't want this young man here to have to worry about that. I want him to have a new set of problems. I mean, it's endemic to human nature. I can't make all the problems go away for the future, but at least we can give you a new set of problems. [Laughter] And the reason I want to do it in a way that honors the integrity of our health care programs is because I don't want to abandon the elderly and the disabled. And the reason that I believe in education is that I think it's the greatest gift we can give to people now, not only the young but the not-so-young who have to learn for a lifetime.

But I think it all comes back to us. When Hillary goes around the world and has these

meetings in Africa and Latin America and Beijing and everywhere—South Asia—and talks to these little groups of women and girls—and the girls may not even get to go to college, or get to go to high school, get to go to grade school, maybe have lived in places where girls and women are still oppressed—I realize that the liberation of their talents will not only strengthen their families and their own lives and enrich their own lives, it will make their countries better partners for us in the years ahead and make our future better.

And that's why—we fought for things like the Religious Freedom Restoration Act, the Employment Nondiscrimination Act, mending but not ending affirmative action—all these things are a way of trying to define an American community in a way that would say, you can be a part of our community if you share our values and you work hard and you're responsible and you want to be a part of something that's good.

This whole world today is absolutely being tormented by people who can't bear the thought of someone else's existence or happiness and it's because they're different from them. I mean, this whole world is being tormented by people who believe that their lives only make sense if they're kicking somebody else's brains out or who believe that if they don't kick somebody else's brains out, they will be killed in turn or they will be oppressed in turn, so they have to do it as a defensive mechanism.

Now, if you think about the whole world, here we are—we're talking about how we can connect every school and library in America to the Internet. Last night, I went to the dedication of the Thomas Jefferson Building at the Library of Congress, and we talked about how we can share all these treasures with kids all over the world. And yet we are still plagued by almost primitive impulses, making us less than we ought to be, and by people who almost seek to make a moral virtue out of our walking away from each other.

So if you ask me what it is that's sort of that central idea that I think will determine what America will look like 50 years from now, it is whether or not we really do believe we are part of a community, that we are one Nation under God, that we are one world under God, that we have—we are entitled to individual rights but we have common responsibilities and we'll be a whole lot happier if we just recognize them.

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And I want you to be proud of what we've done, and I want you to be proud of what we're doing, and I want you to be proud of where we're going. And if all goes well, when these 8 years are over, this country will start a new century and a new millennium a lot better than it was 8 years ago but, more importantly, with a philosophy, an attitude, a way of looking at living together that will carry us a very long way and make the 21st century more peaceful,

more prosperous, more happy than the 20th, yet still very much an American century.

That's what I want for you and why I'm glad you're here.

Thank you, and God bless you all.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 p.m. at the Hyatt Regency Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to actors William and Alec Baldwin and musician Tracy Bonham.

Remarks on the National Economy

May 2, 1997

The President. Good morning. As all of you know, I'm on my way to the dedication of our Nation's memorial to President Franklin Roosevelt. It will be a celebration of our century's greatest leader, someone whose faith in our country and our people helped us to conquer challenges in a very difficult time. Today, if we have the same faith and confidence in ourselves, we can clearly move into the 21st century stronger and more confident, with the American dream alive, with the American community more united, with America's leadership in the world secure.

Before I go, I want to comment on the very good news we have received on the economy today and what it means for our present work in Washington. The new employment report has just been issued. I'm pleased to report that the unemployment rate has dropped to 4.9 percent; 4.9 percent is the lowest it has been in 24 years.

Our economy has now created over 12 million jobs since the beginning of 1993. Inflation remains low. Our economy is now the strongest it has been in a generation. This is a great tribute to the efforts of the American people and to the validity of the new economic policy that we brought here in 1993.

In late 1992, when we were putting this economic policy together in its final details, we were determined to move away from the failed policies of trickle-down economics to a policy of invest and grow: to bring the deficit down, but to invest more in our people's education and training and technology and science, and to expand trade dramatically so that we could

create new jobs at higher wages. This strategy is working. We know now that the deficit will be down, probably by more than two-thirds what it was when I took office by the end of this year. With 4.9 percent unemployment, we know what works. This strategy works.

We need to finish the job now. We need to balance the budget while continuing to invest in our people and in our future. I've been working hard with the leaders of Congress to do just that. I am hopeful that we can get an agreement that will balance the budget and continue our commitments to invest in education and in the health care of our children and in environment and in technology. I am hopeful that we can do this in a way that preserves, enhances, reforms Medicare and protects Medicaid, and deals with the problems of legal immigrants, which I feel so strongly about, and also gives appropriate but disciplined tax relief.

The one thing I am determined to do is to keep on this economic course which has brought us to the lowest unemployment rate in 24 years. Therefore, we have to be very careful not to set conditions in motion which could explode the deficit again because of the way the tax cut is written or other provisions are written after this budget period ends.

So we changed the course of the Nation. This is profoundly important. And we now have to finish the job, not undo it. I'm very optimistic. I'm very hopeful. We've had good conversations late last night and early this morning. But I want to make it clear that we're moving in the right direction, and this budget agreement must