

than if we just let it go. So I ask you for your help.

Now, the last thing I want you to know is—that's why I want you to be proud to be here, because I think these things that our Democratic Party stands for now are the future. I think they're not just Democratic future; they're not just African-American, Hispanic-American, you name it; this is America's future. And we're going to have to make it together. And tonight, by your being here, you're making it more likely that we will do just that.

God bless you. Thank you.

Let me say one other thing before I leave. I don't know who all was here from my office before I got here, but we've got—Bob Nash, who is my Director of Personnel, is here. If you want to be Ambassador, ask him. He has the hardest job in the Government. He has to tell one person yes and 10 people no. *[Laughter]* And Maurice Daniels, the Vice President's political division person, is here.

And let me just say one other thing, too. I want you to know, because a lot of you are friends of hers, that Hillary and I were deeply saddened by what happened to Betty Shabazz, and we've been praying for her, and I know you are, too.

That's a whole other subject, but it ought to remind us that we don't have a kid to waste.

You don't want any of them to get away from you, and they do all too soon and all too easily, which is another reason we ought to think about what we came here to do tonight.

Thank you. Bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:24 p.m. in the Crystal Ballroom at the Sheraton Carlton Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Willie W. Herenton of Memphis, TN; Richard Mays, attorney, Little Rock, AR, and Janice Griffin, vice president, Prudential, cochairs of the event; Ernest Green, managing partner, Lehman Brothers; Robert L. Johnson, chairman and chief executive officer, BET Holdings, Inc.; Weldon Latham, Jr., partner, Pittman, Potts and Trobridge; Mel Clarke, president, Metroplex; Marianne Niles, president, National Association of Investment Companies; Bill Kirk, partner, Reid and Priest; Larry Gibson, partner, Shapiro and Orlander, Baltimore, MD; Marianne Spragen, president, W.R. Lazard; Jeff Thompson, accountant, Thompson and Bazilo; Carroll Willis, director, communications services division, and Steve Grossman, national chair, Democratic National Committee; Michael Brown, son of former Secretary of Commerce Ronald H. Brown; Gen. Colin L. Powell, USA (ret.), chairman, America's Promise—the Alliance for Youth; and arson victim Betty Shabazz, widow of civil rights leader Malcolm X.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner June 16, 1997

Thank you very much. Steve gave such a good speech, if I had any sense I would just sit down. *[Laughter]* But I thank you for it. Let me thank Joel and David and Monte and Jeff and Ira and everyone else who is responsible for this tonight. I thank Carol Pensky and Cynthia Friedman for their leadership in our party. I thank Secretary Babbitt for coming tonight, and Ann Lewis from the White House for coming, and Craig Smith, my political director. There may be more people here. I'll hear about it tomorrow if there are. *[Laughter]* I thank Senator Lautenberg and Senator Feinstein, Dick, and Senator Lieberman and Hadassah, thank you all for being here.

I really appreciate, more than anything else I suppose, the fact that there has been established between our administration and I hope between me personally and the American Jewish community a bond of trust which is rooted in our shared values for what America ought to become here at home and for our longing for an honorable and lasting peace in the Middle East. And I thank those of you who mentioned to me, going through the line tonight, my speech in San Diego a couple of days ago. And I would like to talk a little about that and about the Middle East in what I would call a proper context.

In 1991, when I was attempting to decide whether to enter the Democratic primaries and

only my mother thought I could be elected—[laughter]—night after night I would sit at home and say, “Why do you want to do this? You know, you could say, well, every little boy and now, I hope, every little girl can want to grow up to be President, but that’s not a very good reason for other people to vote for you, the fact that you’d just as soon live in the White House as somewhere else.” And I was deeply disturbed because I didn’t think the country was moving to prepare for the new century.

It was an unusual time because I’d actually had a very good relationship with President Bush. I was very often the designated Democrat to deal with the White House. I had no burning, negative passions—I don’t understand them very well, anyway, I think. But I really felt that my country was not preparing for the future.

And so I sat down, almost 6 years ago now, and wrote out what I wanted America to be like in the 21st century. And now I have said it over and over again probably a thousand, maybe two, three thousand times, and a lot of people are sick of hearing it. But it’s important that you know that every day as President I still think about what I wrote 6 years ago.

I said that I wanted my Nation in the 21st century, first of all, to have the American dream of opportunity alive for every person here, without regard to their race, their background, their starting point in life. I wanted all of our citizens to be responsible, to take responsibility for themselves, their families, and others in their communities. I wanted America to be the world’s leading force for peace and freedom and prosperity a generation from now, just as we are today. And I wanted us to become closer as one community with all of our diversity.

And I realized that if you ask the question, what do you want the country to look like 30 years from now, then you begin—and you answer that, you’re much more likely to ask and answer the right questions about what are you going to do tomorrow. Because then it became clear to me that the first thing we had to do was to scrap the economic policy we were following and adopt one that made some sense, that we had to find a way to get rid of the terrible deficits we had and still invest in our future.

Most people said you couldn’t cut the deficit and invest more in education and technology and research. I thought you could. We know—the record is in now. The deficit has gone down

77 percent in 4 years before this last agreement, and we have invested more. And the country is better off, and our economy has produced a record number of new jobs, biggest decline in income inequality among working families, something very important to most of you, since the 1960’s.

I thought we could have a crime strategy that was more than tough talk. I mean, everybody—you can’t have a free country if people are terrified of their own personal security. And I thought the Democrats had made a mistake not taking that issue on—but taking it on in a real way, not just a rhetorical way. So I worked with Senator Feinstein to ban assault weapons. And we worked to pass the Brady bill. And we heard all these talks, and a lot of our people lost seats in ’94 because they had the guts to vote for the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill. And they were all told, “Oh, you’re going to lose your gun.” Well, as I said in ’96 in New Hampshire, I said, “A lot of you voted against our people in ’94 because they told you we were going to take your guns.” And I said, “I want everybody who lost their guns to vote for Republicans for Congress and everybody who didn’t to vote for the Democrats.” [Laughter] And they were all laughing. But 186,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers have lost their guns.

Last year we had the biggest drop in crime in 35 years, putting these police officers on the street, and we’re moving forward with this juvenile justice strategy. Based on what’s been working in Steve and Alan’s hometown of Boston, there has not been a single child killed with a handgun in a year and a half.

So we’re working. We had the biggest drop in welfare rolls in history. Things are moving. You may have seen last week, something that I was told by the cynics would never happen—in the International Math and Science Survey, our fourth graders scored way above the national average in math and science. They said, “Oh, no, America’s kids are too poor. They’re too racially diverse. You’ll never get this done.” But our educators have been working on this since 1984 all over America.

So then I got hired again in ’96—[laughter]—and I said to myself, “Well, now what are we going to do?” I love to tell this story. I told this story where I was earlier tonight. When I ran for reelection as Governor one time, a guy came up to me and said, “You going to run again, Bill?” And I said, “If I do, will you

vote for me?" He said, "Probably. What are you going to say?" I said, "Well, I'm going to say I did a good job." He said, "Hell, that's what I hired you to do." He said, "That's not a reason to vote for you." [Laughter] You think about it. I mean, it's an interesting thing.

So I asked myself, "What are we going to do?" So I asked the right question again. Where are we going to be in 30 years? What do we still have to do? That's what this balanced budget agreement is all about. It balances the budget and has the biggest investment in education in history and opens the doors of college to all Americans and pays for examinations in math and science for every fourth and eighth grader in the country to see if we're really committed to national academic standards. It helps to bring economic opportunity and empowerment into the inner cities. It's the right thing to do. So that's the first thing I wanted to do.

The second thing I wanted to do was to continue to expand our leadership in world trade, something that's controversial in both parties. But it seems to me like we have evidence now. You know, we have a 4.8 percent unemployment, the lowest unemployment in 24 years, and we had 200 separate trade agreements in the last 4 years. And we're selling more overseas than ever before, and we're the number one exporter in the world again. And I personally do not believe we need to be afraid of making a trade agreement with Chile or Argentina or Brazil, for that matter. And I think it would be a terrible mistake for us to walk away from the chance to reach out to Latin America, to Africa, to Asia, and build closer ties and a better, brighter future.

And the fourth thing I wanted to do was to recognize that we have a problem. I don't care how well we're doing, as long as 20 percent of the kids in this country are living below the poverty line and are in physical isolation from most of the rest of us, we've got a problem. That's really what the Presidents' Summit of Service was all about in Philadelphia. It was about saying every child ought to have a safe place to grow up, ought to have a decent school, ought to have health care—all three of those things we try to deal with in our budget, by the way—ought to have a personal mentor, and ought to have a chance to serve in the community. And I thought the Summit of Service is important because it would mobilize volunteers all over America to support and reinforce and

carry out the things I'm trying to get done in this budget and in the juvenile crime bill before the Congress.

And then the last thing that I wanted to do was focus on race and ethnic and religious differences, which is why I went to San Diego. Why? Because if we have a growing economy, a good educational system, the crime rate is down, the welfare rolls are down, and we're doing better by kids, and we can't get along when there is no race in the majority in this country, the rest of it will come unraveled. And if we can't get along, we will not have the moral force we need to do what needs to be done in the Middle East, in Bosnia, in Africa, and in Northern Ireland, and who knows what's going to happen 10, 15, 20, 30 years from now.

In Hawaii—Hawaii is the only State in the country today where there is no majority race. In 3 years, there will be none in California. In somewhere between 30 and 50 years, there will be none in the United States. It depends on immigration and birth patterns, but somewhere between 30 and 50 years from now, we will test the theory that I have heard politicians talk about or read them talk about for a century, which is that this is not a nation of place or race, it's a nation of ideals. We are about to find out. And it seems to me that it would be better for us to find out at a time when we have no riots in the streets, we have no immediate emergencies, we're at the peak of our economic strength and our international influence, when we could take back—sort of step back and say, "Now, let's ask this question together one more time. What do we want to be like in 30 years?" That's what that whole business in San Diego was about.

So I hope all of you will participate in that, because this is something that has been of passionate significance to the Jewish community for a long time. I really do believe that my life is diminished every time a synagogue is defaced. And I believe when they burned that mosque in the South a couple years ago, it diminished my life. And I believe when those churches were burned, it diminished my life. And I think that you do. And so I ask you to help us participate in that.

I also have invited you all privately—I will say this publicly; I'm not ashamed to say it—you care passionately, all of you, about getting peace in the Middle East. We cannot let this process become unraveled. I cannot tell you how

many nights that I have had difficulty sleeping, racking my brain trying to come up with some new thing I could do or say to try to pierce the difficulties of the moment. But you have never been shy in telling me what you thought before, so don't start now—[laughter]—because every one of us now has a huge stake in this.

There is some good news here in some areas, and over the next several days we'll be seeing some progress, but there are a lot of clouds on the horizon, and we have to keep working at it. But I want you to know that it's not off my radar screen. It's still right there where it was the first day I took office. And I'm going to be disappointed when I leave office if we haven't gone much further. And I still believe we can, and I want you to believe that, and I want you to help me.

But I want you also to just think, just for a moment one more time about the implications of this racial—because what I want to do is to get everybody to buy into that vision that we should be one America, that we should celebrate all the differences between us, but think that what unites us is more important; that we should get out the facts, because I've learned that we don't have the facts. I was astonished in the Gallup poll, polling African-Americans and whites just about different racial issues. They asked African-Americans and whites what percentage of our population is black. And the five choices were less than 5, between 5 and 10, between 10 and 20, between 20 and 49, or over half. Those were the five choices.

By far, the biggest plurality—there was not a majority for any answer—but by far, the most votes went to 20 to 49 percent. The most votes of whites, the most votes of blacks said between 20 and 49 percent of the American population is black. The correct answer is 12. But like 40 percent of both thought that. So if we don't even know what the facts are among us, you can imagine all the things we don't know about in more sophisticated ways, on more critical questions.

Then I want to try to get some honest dialog going in every community. And the Jewish com-

munity has been very active at this in a lot of communities, so I ask you for your help for the White House in this. Help this advisory board I have appointed to reach out to things that are working now and get something like this in every community.

And finally, we're going to try to come up with some specific, concrete solutions to go forward. But this is a huge deal. We can't hold America together and we can't maintain our position of moral leadership in the world to be for peace in a world that is coming apart around racial, ethnic, tribal, and religious differences unless we can deal with this. And we need to start now, before we have to figure out what we're going to do when things start to fray.

On balance, I'm very upbeat about our country and about the world. And there will always be difficulties. There will always be problems. It is endemic to human nature. But if we could follow the admonition of the Christian Bible to love your neighbor as yourself, or Rabbi Hillel, who said, "What is hateful to you, do not to your fellow man," which is, it seems to me, just about the same thing, then this race initiative will have been one well worth taking.

So again I say, I thank you for your support. I ask for your advice and your continued support. And more than anything else, I ask you to help your fellow Americans think about what we want this country to look like when our grandchildren are where we are.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:54 p.m. in the John Hay Room at the Hay Adams Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Carol Pinsky, treasurer, and Alan D. Solomont, national finance chair, Democratic National Committee; David Steiner, vice chair, Monte Friedkin, national chair, D. Jeffrey Hirschberg, vice chair, Ira N. Forman, executive director, and Joel Tauber, member, National Jewish Democratic Council; Cynthia Friedman, national chair, Women's Leadership Forum; Richard Blum, husband of Senator Dianne Feinstein; and Senator Joseph I. Lieberman's wife, Hadasah.

Remarks on Signing a Memorandum on Strengthening Enforcement of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972

June 17, 1997

The President. Thank you very much. As you might imagine, Hillary and I have looked forward to this day with great anticipation, and we have discussed these issues together for more than 25 years now. Actually, we met before title IX; that's one thing I managed to do without the benefit of Federal law. *[Laughter]*

I thank Secretary Riley for his wonderful leadership. And thank you, Anne, for your introduction. You did so well, if you ever get tired of science I think public affairs would treat you well. Thank you, Jackie, for being a wonderful role model and a great person. Thank you, Verelett Allen and Captain Robin Forster, Dr. Nelba Chavez. And I'd like to say a special thank you to Sally Ride and tell you that tomorrow is the 14th anniversary of her famous ride.

There are so many distinguished people in the audience I hesitate to start, but I would be remiss if I did not thank former Senator Birch Bayh for his leadership in this endeavor. Thank you, sir. You're a good man.

And I'd like to thank the eighth graders from the Thomas Edison Center for Technology who are here and I hope are being inspired about the future. And I would like to ask the members of the Congressional Women's Caucus who are here to stand and be recognized. All the Members of Congress who are here, please stand. Thank you.

We are here to celebrate title IX, but even more, we're here to celebrate the God-given talent of every woman and girl who has been benefited by it. Title IX did not create their successes, but it did give them the chance to make the most of their abilities. We have heard about the difference it has made in the lives of millions of young girls and young women. We know about the confidence that it has built, the expectations it has helped to set, the achievements it has helped to inspire.

Today I also want to say that in my view title IX has had a beneficial impact on every American citizen. If we've learned anything in the last 25 years since title IX became law, it is that expanding benefits and opportunities for any American helps the rest of us. Wasted opportunity diminishes all of us.

As we prepare for the 21st century, it would be sheer folly for us not to take advantage of every ounce of energy and talent and creativity every American has to offer. As a nation, that would be our great concern. Think what we would be like if there were no Sally Rides or Jackie Joyner-Kerseyes or any one of the countless women whose contributions have helped to make our Nation a better place, including, I might add, the eight women which now serve in the President's Cabinet, a record number.

Every girl growing up in America today should have the chance to become an astronaut or an Olympic athlete, a Cabinet Secretary or a Supreme Court Justice, a Nobel Prize winning scientist or President of the United States. For 25 years, title IX has helped girls to realize their dreams and to achieve them—a lot of people, believe it or not, still don't know this—to achieve them not only in athletics but in academics as well.

In addition to the remarkable athletic statistics, Secretary Riley told me today that—and Jackie—in 1972, there were 300,000 girls in high school athletics. Today, there are 2.3 million. But in addition to the athletics, listen to this, in 1972, 9 percent of the medical degrees and 7 percent of the law degrees were awarded to women. In 1996, 38 percent of the medical degrees and 43 percent of the law degrees were awarded to women.

So today we celebrate how far we've come. But we must also recommit ourselves to title IX's goal of equality in education, for too many schools and education programs still drag their feet and lag behind in their responsibility to our young women and girls.

Today I'm directing every agency and executive department of our Government to strengthen their enforcement of title IX within the next 90 days, by reviewing current procedures, consulting with the Attorney General on the best way to improve them, and delivering to me a new and vigorous enforcement plan. Every school and every education program that receives Federal assistance in the entire country must understand that complying with title IX