

Remarks to the Lake Tahoe Community in Incline Village July 26, 1997

Thank you very much. Thank you, Mr. Nakada, for making us so welcome today. I must tell you that we have had a wonderful, wonderful day. I only wish that the rest of my family could be here. They'll be very jealous when I give them a report on what I saw and what I did today.

The Vice President and I are grateful to all the Members of Congress who joined us, including, of course, Senator Bryan and Senator Reid and Senator Boxer who are here with us. And a special thanks to Senator Reid for coming up with the idea and getting us committed to this months ago. It's been a very good thing, I think, this whole summit.

I want to thank Governor Miller for his leadership on this issue. He's my former colleague. I'm going to be back in Nevada just the day after tomorrow at the Governors conference, which you are hosting, and you should be very proud of the record that he's built and the things that he's done here. I certainly am.

I want to thank all of you for showing up. This is sort of the icing on the cake. I didn't realize you would be here until a few minutes ago. And I thank all the lacrosse players for letting us land on your field. I want to thank the AmeriCorps volunteers for being here, for what you do.

I want to be very brief, but I want you to be serious just for a minute and think about the fact that we are only 3 years away from a new century and a new millennium, that we are very fortunate in the present condition of our economy and in many other ways, but that we have to have a strategy for going into the future and going into the future together.

I told the people at that summit today that there were three things that I took away from this experience. One is that the United States has a responsibility to help people who are trying so hard to help themselves to save Lake Tahoe, and we will spend over \$50 million in the next 2 years to do our part. The second point is that we can grow the economy and preserve the environment, and they are two sides of the same coin, not inevitably in conflict, and people here have proved that. But the third, and in some ways maybe the most important

of all, is that by getting together across lines that divided people—whether they're business people versus environmentalists, Republicans against Democrats, you know, whatever the dividing lines are—and saying, "We've got to save this lake and we've got to do this together and we've got to find a way to do it together and to agree on how we're going to do it," you have shown the way to how we have to make a lot of our decisions as we move into this new century.

I very much believe that our best days are ahead of us. I've worked hard with the Vice President and our friends and allies to create a country in which there is opportunity for everybody responsible enough to work for it; a country in which we're coming together as a community, not being divided by our diversity; and a nation that's still leading the world toward peace and freedom and prosperity.

And I'm proud of the fact that we now have the strongest economy in a generation and the strongest economy in the world; that we've had years of declining—[*applause*]*—*that we've had years of steadily declining crime rates; that the deficit is now 80 percent lower than it was the day I took office; that we've had the biggest drop in welfare rolls in the history of the Republic. I'm proud of all those things.

The Secretary of the Interior told me a few months ago that we have protected or set aside more acres in public trust than at any time in the history of the United States, except under the Presidencies of Franklin and Theodore Roosevelt. I'm proud of that. But you and I know that we have a lot of challenges ahead, and we cannot—we cannot—allow ourselves to be imprisoned by the thought patterns or the way of doing things of the past. We cannot believe that our old conflicts have to be carried into a new century. We cannot believe that our old false choices have to be carried into a new century. We can't be forced to choose between the economy and the environment. That's a dumb choice. We have to find a way working together across the lines that divide us to achieve both prosperity and preservation of our most sacred gift from God.

We are becoming by far the most diverse democracy in the history of humanity. We cannot be forced to choose between not only respecting but celebrating our diversity and still saying, we are one America, after all, bound together by shared values and a common future for our children. We can't be forced into that division. If you wonder what happens when you do that, you have only to look at Bosnia, the Middle East, Northern Ireland, and countless other places around the world. We don't want to make that choice.

So I can now go all across America and point to what I have seen in Lake Tahoe and how people at the local level came together across lines that divided them for years to do something that was good and noble and, by the way, in their self-interest, to create a better and a brighter future for our children. And that's how we ought to do other things in America. That's why I appreciate the citizen service of these young AmeriCorps volunteers. And that's why I am determined to stay on this path. That's why the people working for the Vice President and me are back on this beautiful Saturday laboring away with Members of the Congress, try-

ing to reach an accord that will both balance the budget and give Americans a tax cut we can afford and invest more in education and the health care of our children than we've done since 1965. Because I believe if we're willing to really think in new ways and reach out to people across the lines that divided us, the best days of this country are still ahead. I want you to believe that. I want you to work for that.

I want you to do your part to save Lake Tahoe. It's not enough to stop the degradation; we have to reverse some of it. And we can do that if we all work together. And I want you to commit yourselves to take the model that is working for Tahoe into other areas of your lives, because I want to be able to go around this country and say, don't tell me that we can't get along and work together and do better; I have seen it in Lake Tahoe.

Thank you, and God bless you all. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:55 p.m. at the Village Green Soccer Field. In his remarks, he referred to Jim Nakada, board of trustees chairman, Incline Village General Improvement District.

Remarks at a Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee Dinner in Westwood, California

July 27, 1997

Thank you very much. One of two things is about to happen: Either this is working, which is good for you, or it's not working, and I will be the company that misery loves for the previous speakers. *[Laughter]*

I thank Mark and Jane and all those on the committee who are listed here for your work tonight. I thank Martin Frost for his tireless efforts. I thank Dick Gephardt for his leadership and his willingness to continue this fight.

I must say I used to get discouraged in the last couple of years when occasionally I would hear a Democratic Member of the Senate or the House complain that it wasn't any fun anymore to be in the minority. And when I thought of what the stakes were for our country, it didn't seem to me that fun was a very important issue. And Dick Gephardt has continued to fight and

continued to lead, and I'm very grateful for that, and the country should be, too.

Let me thank all the members of the California delegation who are here. And I particularly want to thank Vic Fazio for his leadership in the House. I thank Maxine Waters for her leadership of the Congressional Black Caucus and Xavier Becerra for his leadership in the Hispanic Caucus and so many others for the things that they do on particular issues. When I looked at the Members whose names were called, standing up here tonight, I thought, that's why I'm a Democrat. This delegation looks like America, this delegation acts like America, and this delegation is making the America of the future that I want my child and my grandchildren to be a part of. And that's one of the reasons why I'm here.