

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:45 p.m. at the Windows on Washington restaurant. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Mel Carnahan of Mis-

souri; Mayor Clarence Harmon of St. Louis; and State Treasurer Bob Holden.

Remarks at a National Conference of Democratic Mayors Dinner August 12, 1997

Thank you. Give the Vice President a hand. [Applause] You know, if he keeps practicing, he's going to get good at this. [Laughter] I'd forgotten we did half of that stuff. [Laughter]

Thank you very much, Mr. Vice President, for your remarks and for the historically unprecedented partnership that we have enjoyed. I was sitting there thinking as Al Gore was talking that when I asked him to join the ticket back in the summer of—or the late spring of 1992, it violated all convention. We were the same age. We were from the same part of the country. We both spoke without an accent. [Laughter] It didn't make any sense. It violated all the conventional ideas. The thing that I thought made sense about it was that I believed we needed to change the country, we needed to change the direction and the way politics works in Washington, we needed to change the way the Federal Government was organized, and we needed to change in some ways not the values or the aspirations but the approach of our own party. And so I thought I would do something unconventional and pick someone I thought could be the best possible full partner. And that's what we've done.

And I hope that, frankly, it will be a model for future administrations of both parties, because it seems to me rather foolish to not make the most of the incredible potential that you now know the office of the Vice President has because of the way that Vice President Gore has filled it. He's headed our reinventing Government program. He's done a masterful job of working with the mayors and with Secretary Cuomo and Secretary Cisneros before him and working with the empowerment zone program and the enterprise communities. He's basically led our efforts in telecommunications policy, our efforts to put computers in our schools. And by the way, we've got some money for that in our budget, so we'll be able to help your cities hook all your classrooms and libraries up

by the year 2000. He has headed a special commission with the Prime Minister of Russia and a special commission with Mr. Mbeki of South Africa and taking a leading role in every single foreign policy and defense decision of this administration.

There is really no precedent for this in the history of the country, but I hope that we have set a precedent, because this is a better country because of the work that Al Gore has been able to do this last 4½ years. And I hope others will see that and in future administrations this model will be followed.

I want to thank Steve Grossman and Alan Solomont as well for being here and all the other people from the Democratic Party. I thank all the mayors who are here. I looked at you stand up, and I bet I've spent more time in more cities, in more different kinds of neighborhoods than any President ever has. And I'm not bragging, I'm thanking you, because I never learn anything when I'm up here talking, I only learn something when I'm out there looking and listening, and you have helped me.

Keep in mind, I was born in a town of 6,000 people, and I grew up in a town of 35,000 people, and between, I lived out in the country where we had a lot more animals than people. [Laughter] And my State had 2.3 million people and only 4 Members of Congress. But I've always loved and been fascinated by cities of all sizes, and I think that the central reason is that in cities people know that they have to work together to get anything done and they understand that their own individual and family well-being depends upon other people being able to do well at the same time, side by side with them.

And in a way, that is ultimately the value that I hope will distinguish our party as we move ahead, that we stand for the future, not the past; that we stand for unity, not division;

that we believe that everyone should have opportunity; that everyone should be held to a standard of responsibility; and that everyone should be a part of our American community. And I think the cities, just to function and certainly to make any progress, have to follow those precepts day-in and day-out.

And I am gratified—actually, one or two—Mayor Archer—one or two Republican mayors have actually whispered that to me that they’ve been to the White House more since I’ve been there than they did under my Republican predecessors. I wish they said that when I was being criticized in the press for who was coming to the White House. [Laughter] They could have been very helpful to me if they had been more timely and public in that. But I like to have people around who define politics not by hot air and hot rhetoric and their ability to divide people but instead by their ability to bring people together and get things done.

And so, to all of you mayors, let me thank you. And to you, Dennis Archer, thank you for this wonderful idea. Dennis Archer is actually another one of the gifts I got from my wife, because when they were active in the American Bar Association together—back when she was making more money than me and he had a real job as a lawyer and a judge—and I got to know Dennis then. And I was elated when he ran for mayor of Detroit. And I must say, I had high expectations, and he has far exceeded those. So it’s been a great friendship, and I thank you for what you have done.

The Vice President talked about a lot of the specific issues, a lot of the things that were in the budget, a lot of the things we’re trying to do. And I know you’ve had a good day, and I want to thank the members of my administration who were here—Secretary Riley, Secretary Slater; I think Mr. Barram is here; there may be others who are still here, and those who were here and are now gone—because I was in St. Louis today, but Hillary watched a lot of this on CSPAN and said that our folks did a pretty good job. I hope they did. She’s a pretty good critic, and she says they did a good job and that you all seemed to enjoy it.

So you’ve heard a lot of the specifics here. I would just like to ask you to take just a minute to think about the big picture, first as a citizen and then second as a mayor and only third as a member of our party—and not everybody here is a Democrat, but most of you are. So if you’re

a Republican, think about it. Think about it, fourth, if you’re a Republican. [Laughter] But I want you to stop and just think about what all this amounts to, what’s really going on now. I mean, here we are, it’s 1997, we’re a couple years away from a new century and a whole new millennium, in a world that is changing dramatically. Just think how differently people work and live and relate to each other and the rest of the world than they did just a few years ago.

I’ll just take Detroit. You know what Detroit symbolized when I was a boy? It was a place where poor Arkansas dirt farmers, whether white or black, could give up living on the farm and killing themselves and go get a job in the car plant and get a good middle class job. They could have a house. They could have a car. They could take a vacation. They would have a retirement. And they could afford to send their kids to college. And then when they got good and done, they could then come home to Arkansas and buy cheap farmland and tell all the rest of us we made a mistake by not going. That’s what we thought about Detroit. Dennis will tell you, there is a little town outside Detroit; it’s populated almost entirely by people from Arkansas. And there are other States.

You know what the story of Detroit is now? Then in the eighties, there was all this business about how the auto industry was dead and the UAW was dead and all this stuff was terrible and it couldn’t be revived. Well, now America is the number one auto producer again, the number one seller around the world again of automobiles. And Wayne County, Michigan, is not just a place of white ethnics and expatriate white and black southerners. There are now people from over 145 different racial and ethnic groups in Wayne County, and it had the biggest increase in exports of any urban county in America from 1992 to 1996.

That’s just one example. A lot of you could tell the same sort of story about your hometown and your county. The point I’m trying to make is you are living in a time that is incredibly dynamic, and all of you know that. And the question is, how can we take advantage of change, make it our friend, and help fulfill a shared vision of the 21st century?

I have been working every day since I got here on a simple idea: When my child is my age, I want this country to be a place where every person who is responsible has a chance

to live out their God-given abilities and their dreams. I want this country to lead the world toward peace and freedom and prosperity for another 50 years, because I see no constructive alternative on the horizon, and even though the nuclear cloud is fading and the cold war is fading, there are plenty of problems out there in this old world. And thirdly, I want us to prove that people from different racial, ethnic, religious backgrounds can not only tolerate, not only respect, but in fact celebrate each other's diversity and still be one America. All this stuff about me is important, my particulars, but I'm also, and most importantly, an American. And what we have in common is more important than what we have that is different among us.

That's what I want. When my child becomes 50 years old, when she has children, that's what I want this country to look like. And if it looks like that, everything else is going to be all right. And everything I have tried to do, all the things the Vice President mentioned, I have tried to do to create a Government and a climate in this country that would bring people together, create opportunity, and summon people to higher levels of responsibility. That's what I've tried to do to achieve that agenda.

And if you look ahead, ask yourselves, okay, we're going to balance the budget and the crime rate is coming down and we have the lowest welfare rolls as a percentage of our population since 1970 and a historic drop—3.4 million people since '92—and we have the smallest Government since Kennedy was President and, as a percentage of the Federal work force, it's the smallest since Roosevelt took office before the New Deal, and now what? Now what are we going to do? What are the choices?

I had an interesting morning coffee about 2 weeks ago with one of your colleagues, Mayor White and Mayor Archer and others, the rather droll mayor of Houston, Texas, Bob Lanier, who said that now that he had become 72 years old, he could say whatever he pleased. So I asked him what he thought about the balanced budget agreement. He said, "I like it." I said, "Bob, how did you ever get reelected with over 80 percent of the vote, if that's all you ever say?" He never says very much, you know. He said, "Because all other politicians talk too much." [Laughter] He's a funny man, you know. And—but he said a trenchant thing. He said, "Think about it, if we have a healthy economy, a responsible fiscal policy, a crime policy that

works, a welfare policy that works, a sensible foreign policy, and a strong defense, all the other policy choices ahead of us favor the sensible progressive party and the sensible progressive approach." And so we talked about it for half an hour.

You think about it. The economy works well, but 20 percent of the kids in this country are living in poverty. If we can't bring the benefits of free enterprise to the inner cities and the isolated rural areas now when the economy is strong, when can we do it? When can we do it? When can we do it? One.

Two, all over the world, we know now that we have common environmental challenges. I've got a big challenge just to convince the American people I think that this whole climate change issue is a big issue. But in December, the nations of the world will gather in Japan and will commit, I hope, to specific binding targets to reduce our emissions of greenhouse gases. Why? Because it's not going to be very pleasant if we're all rich in 50 years but we're wearing oxygen masks, and because it's not necessary, and because we know that the technology is there to grow the economy and preserve the environment. But that is a delicate matter. How are we going to do that? The second problem.

Third, you cannot possibly have a country in which there is opportunity for all unless we do a much better job of educating young children. Now, I believe the historic legacy of this budget we just signed will be that it has the biggest expansion in opportunities for people throughout their lifetime to go to college, 2-year, 4-year, graduate school, you name it—we do more to help them than any time since the passage of the GI bill 50 years ago. But in spite of all that, we're still not educating the children in our cities to international levels of excellence.

Mayor White told me he heard an educator say in his city not very long ago, it was because the kids couldn't learn. After all, they're poor; they live in crime-infested, drug-infested, gang-infested neighborhoods; they have single-parent households—you know, the whole litany. That's not true. It's not true that they can't learn. And we have to stand up against that, those of us who believe in our cities, those of us who live in our cities, those of us who live around these kids, those of us who understand these terrible conflicts they live with. It is not true.

This year, for the first time since international exams started being given back in the 1980's

that the U.S. participated in, a representative sample of American children by race, by region, and by income in the fourth grade scored way above the international average in math and science. That's the good news—first time it ever happened, putting the lie to the fact that Americans cannot compete in school because of our racial, our ethnic, our income differences, and our social problems. That's the good news.

The not-so-good news is that the eighth graders were still below the international average. And not surprising, is it, because that's when a lot of problems hit kids, in adolescence. And a lot of our middle schools are still organized for those Ozzie and Harriet days that are long gone. A lot of them are just too big and unwieldy to do right by the kids.

But that's the third big challenge. After bringing economic opportunity to distressed areas and reconciling our commitment to the environment with the commitment to economic growth and saying we're going to make the environment better, the third thing is, we have to stop making excuses for ourselves for failing these children and making excuses for them for not learning. I don't want to embarrass anybody here, but if we were making excuses for kids that grew up in tough times, Rodney Slater would not be the Transportation Secretary today. And Mike White would not be the mayor of Cleveland today. And there are lots of other people who could stand up and say the same thing.

Now, if you think it's true for you, why in God's name would you not think it's true for all those kids that are out there in these city schools that are not getting a good education? This is wrong. And we will never have an America that we want until we say to every one of those kids, "You have a mind. God gave it to you. You have a responsibility to develop it. We're going to expect you to do well, and we're going to stay with you until you do it." And that's what we ought to be standing for. And every city ought to say, I'm going to make my schools something to be proud of, not something to drive around as I try to develop my community.

And the last thing, I just want to say again, and the Vice President already talked about it, is this: We have no idea, until we go someplace and see it with our own eyes, what America at its best can still mean to people. Jesse Jackson and Secretary Slater just headed an American delegation to Africa, to Zimbabwe, to an eco-

nomic summit. We have the largest group of expatriate Africans—African-Americans here as anyplace in the world, and we only sell 7 percent of Africa's total imports. Several African countries grew at greater than 7 percent last year. They want us to be involved with them. Are we going to change—are we going to have a destiny that is paired with theirs? And are we going to be the kind of country that makes them want to be a part of our future and us to be a part of theirs because of the way we treat each other?

When I was in Romania, there were over 100,000 people in the streets in a country that I had just disappointed by saying I don't think they're ready to join NATO. And I came, and over 100,000 showed up anyway. Why? People were telling me in the streets, "You know, in the dark days of communism, we used to dream that the Americans would someday come and free us. We had no access to news; we didn't know that you really couldn't do it. Now we understand it's better that we did it ourselves. But we have to be a part of your future, and you have to be a part of our future, because we have a long way to go." Those people didn't come to see me; they came to see America, their idea of it.

This gentleman just said he was in Copenhagen when I was there. The Prime Minister said it was the biggest crowd they've had in the streets since the end of World War II. They did not come to see me; they came to see the United States of America.

And if we can have a country that literally has now, in the Nation as a whole, upwards of 190 different racial and ethnic groups in it, living together, working together, getting along, just by our daily living a rebuke to those among us who would divide us and a shining example to people from Bosnia to the Middle East and Northern Ireland, to the tribal wars in Africa that we can—there is a better way—there is a better way—then our dreams for our children and our grandchildren will come true, and we will do our job.

But I want all of you to understand, I think being a mayor now is a great gift. I think being a Governor is a great gift. I think being President is a great gift now. I think serving in the Cabinet now is a great gift, because this country is going through these historic changes with terrific opportunities to create the kind of America I talked about.

And if we can make opportunity real for everybody, if we can protect the environment and grow the economy, if we can have genuine excellence in the development of our children's minds, and if we can learn to live together as one America when there is no longer one majority race in America—and it won't be that long, about the time my daughter is my age—if all the demographic projections are right, people of European descent will no longer be a majority race in America, and we'll all have to learn to get along then, for sure—if we can do these things, we will leave a legacy that will be worthy of any previous generation of Americans. And the best days of this country are still ahead. That is what this whole thing is about.

So when you think about the empowerment zones, the community development financial institutions, cleaning up those brownfields, getting rid of those toxic dumps, adhering to national

standards in school, any of the specific things, try to remember what I try to remember every single day when I walk in the Oval Office and thank God I was given the chance to serve at this moment in history: This is our responsibility, and if we fulfill it, the best days of this country are still ahead.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:37 p.m. at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin of Russia; Executive Deputy President Thabo Mbeki of South Africa; Steve Grossman, national chair, and Alan D. Solomont, national finance chair, Democratic National Committee; Mayor Dennis Archer of Detroit, MI, president, National Conference of Democratic Mayors; and Prime Minister Poul Nyrup Rasmussen of Denmark.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the National Emergency With Respect to Narcotics Traffickers Centered in Colombia

August 12, 1997

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

I hereby report to the Congress on the developments since my report of October 21, 1996, concerning the national emergency with respect to significant narcotics traffickers centered in Colombia that was declared in Executive Order 12978 of October 21, 1995. This report is submitted pursuant to section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), and section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c).

1. On October 21, 1995, I signed Executive Order 12978, "Blocking Assets and Prohibiting Transactions with Significant Narcotics Traffickers" (the "Order") (60 *Fed. Reg.* 54579, October 24, 1995). The Order blocks all property subject to U.S. jurisdiction in which there is any interest of four significant foreign narcotics traffickers, one of whom is now deceased, who were principals in the so-called Cali drug cartel centered in Colombia. These persons are listed in the Annex to the Order. The Order also blocks the property and interests in property of foreign persons determined by the Secretary

of the Treasury, in consultation with the Attorney General and the Secretary of State, (a) to play a significant role in international narcotics trafficking centered in Colombia or (b) to materially assist in or provide financial or technological support for, or goods or services in support of, the narcotics trafficking activities of persons designated in or pursuant to the Order. In addition the Order blocks all property and interests in property subject to U.S. jurisdiction of persons determined by the Secretary of the Treasury, in consultation with the Attorney General and the Secretary of State, to be owned or controlled by, or to act for or on behalf of, persons designated in or pursuant to the Order (collectively "Specially Designated Narcotics Traffickers" or SDNTs).

The Order further prohibits any transaction or dealing by a United States person or within the United States in property or interests in property of SDNTs, and any transaction that evades or avoids, has the purpose of evading or avoiding, or attempts to violate, the prohibitions contained in the Order.