

seeking to destroy the hopes of peaceful coexistence between Arabs and Israelis as long as these measures are appropriate, and will continue to report periodically to the Congress on significant developments pursuant to 50 U.S.C. 1703(c).

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,

January 27, 1998.

NOTE: This message was released by the Office of the Press Secretary on January 28.

## Remarks at the University of Illinois in Champaign-Urbana, Illinois January 28, 1998

*The President.* Thank you very much. Well, I was just sitting here thinking two things. First, when the Vice President got really warmed up—[laughter]—I thought to myself, first, it will become slightly obvious to this audience that he and I come from a little further south in the United States. [Laughter] And then I was thinking, when he really got going, I wish I had people walking the aisles passing the plate. It was amazing. [Laughter]

Anyway, the second thing I thought in the midst of this wonderful event was that I wish that I could take the Pep Band with me for the next month or two wherever I go. [Applause] Thank you.

*Audience members.* We love you, Bill!

*The President.* Thank you. I want to say to Chancellor Aiken and President Stukel and Mayor McCollum, Mayor Satterthwaite, Congressman Ewing, Senator Durbin, and Senator Moseley-Braun, Secretary Riley, and Mr. Vice President, I am delighted to be here. I have spent a lot of time in Illinois in the last 7 years, and this State has been very good to me in many ways. The Vice President has been here a lot, and Hillary came and got a honorary degree and was able to speak here. And I have heard from also our families, friends what a wonderful place this is. I don't know how, with all my roaming across America, I have never lit down here before, but I'm sure glad I got here today. And I thank you for making me feel so welcome.

If you heard the State of the Union last night or just listened to the Vice President here today you know that—you know there's a reason we're here, because you represent, both all of you individually and this great institution, what we're trying to build for the future of America. Last night I talked about all the changes that have

occurred just in the last few years. We've had one foot in the 21st century for quite some time. The generation living today has lived through more changes in more different areas in a shorter time than virtually any generation in the history of this country.

And when the Vice President and I took office, we were committed to trying to make America work again, to try to fix the things that just weren't working for ordinary people, and then to free us up to sort of imagine the future and take the steps that were necessary to get us to the future we want to build. That's really what I talked about last night: How can we strengthen this country for the 21st century? What do we have to do?

Now, I don't want to go over everything that was said, and besides that, I can't do as well as the Vice President. He must have gotten 30 more minutes sleep than I did last night. [Laughter] He was terrific. But I want to talk to you about just two or three things that I think we should be thinking about for tomorrow.

Let me begin with a bit of history, and your chancellor mentioned it earlier, or the president did. Shortly before—shortly after Abraham Lincoln was elected President, Congressman Justin Morrill, from Vermont, asked his colleagues to help him create a system of land grant colleges. It was in the middle of the Civil War, and frankly, most of them thought he was nuts. You know, people were worried about the survival of the Union. But Abraham Lincoln was always worrying about other things, even in the middle of the Civil War.

At night, when I work in the White House, I go to an office that I've had restored to the way it was in the mid-1800's. And I remember that that room was Abraham Lincoln's waiting room during the Civil War. And all during the

Civil War, at certain appointed hours, he kept a time apart to meet with ordinary citizens. If you wanted a job in a post office in Baltimore in 1862, if you came at the appointed day, at the appointed hour, you could walk up to the room that I go into every night, and sit there, and Abraham Lincoln would see you; the President would see you and listen to you tell why you wanted a post office job. And when he was asked why he did this, he said, "I have to remember that people are concerned about other things, and I want this war to be over so all of us can go back to thinking about things like that."

So he always thought about what life would be like when the war was over. And he was open to this. In 1862, Morrill's bill passed, and President Lincoln signed it into law. It became one of the wisest investments our Nation ever made, and the University of Illinois, here, was one of the original land grant colleges under that Morrill Act.

It's played a dramatic role in helping to shape our Nation. You heard and you were cheering about all the Nobel Prize winners and all that. The Vice President pointed out that it was here that the transistor was invented; Jack Kilby, class of '47, co-invented the microchip. NCSA, headed by Larry Smarr, launched a billion-dollar browser industry. Illinois and other land grant colleges have literally led our way into the information age.

And it all stemmed from something somebody did in 1862 that no one could have imagined would one day have led to all you see around you. I think Lincoln would have liked the Pep Band. [Laughter] But he could not have imagined it.

So that's what we've been trying to do. And you heard the Vice President say that basically our view was—the first thing we had to do was we had to get rid of the deficit, but we had to do it in a way that would enable us to invest in our future. We had to shrink the Government, but we had to do it in a way that would allow us to be more active in the areas that were important to our future, that would help to bring us together and widen the circle of opportunity. And the strategy is working.

Now, as you look ahead, I'd just like to mention three things today that I think the University can have a major impact on, two directly and one indirectly. First, we should look to the

millennium to try to speed the pace of scientific and technological advances in ways that benefit all of us. So I proposed last night a huge increase in medical research, an increase in the National Science Foundation, a doubling of the National Cancer Institute, because I believe we have enormous opportunities there, and you should be a part of that.

I think it is highly likely that many of you who will be having children in the next 3 or 4 years will have children that will live into the 22d century because of the work that will be done in places like the University of Illinois.

The second thing that I think we should think about is we should reaffirm our commitment to the exploration of outer space. I talked a little about the international space station last night and about Senator John Glenn at 77 years old going back into space. It's so thrilling, and I know all of you are happy about that. But we are learning a lot from our work in space about how our bodies work here on Earth and about how our environment works here on Earth and how it might be better preserved. And so I ask all of you to continue to support the work we're doing there.

And finally, I'd ask you to support, as the Vice President said, this next generation Internet. I mean, can you really believe that only 5 years ago there were just 50 webpages on the Internet; that the Internet was the private preserve of physicists 5 years ago, and now, most 8-year-olds know more about it than their parents? [Laughter] I mean, that gives you some sense of the speed of change.

So we're trying to develop the next generation Internet, and Larry Smarr is helping us, and if it works, it will work about 1,000 times faster than the present one does. I don't know how we can absorb any more speed in information, but we have to be able to. We have to maintain public support across party lines and regional lines and age lines and race lines and all kinds of lines for investments in the future. We always have to be trying to shape the future, and we need your help to do that.

Now, the second thing that I want to emphasize is that I want all of you to support the proposition that we have to make, in the years ahead, a college education as universal as a high school education is today. Now, why do I say that? Already it is perfectly clear from looking at all the census figures that any young person who has at least 2 years of college or more

is highly likely to get a job with growing income prospects and high stability and the prospect of positive change in the future. Now, a young person with less than 2 years of college is highly likely to be in a job where income increases don't keep up with inflation, subject to changes which may be unstable and not positive.

We have to create a network of lifetime learning. We have to, first of all, make our elementary and secondary education as excellent as our higher education is today so more people will be prepared to go to college. But then we literally—we've got to make sure that college is open to all.

Now, as the Congressman said, 1997 was the best year for education in a generation, and I believe, clearly, the best year since the GI bill was passed. If you listen to all the things that were done—and I'll just litanize them for you—I think you can make a compelling case that the doors of college have been opened to everybody who will work for it. Now, listen to this: 220,000 new Pell grant scholarships and the maximum amount increased; 300,000 new work-study positions; 50,000 AmeriCorps slots for people who do community service work and earn money to go to college. As Senator Moseley-Braun said, she cosponsored the bill to make interest on student loans tax deductible again; there are IRA's now that you can invest in and then withdraw from, tax-free, if the money is used for education. The first 2 years of college, virtually all Americans are eligible for a \$1,500 tax cut to pay for tuition in the first 2 years of college, the HOPE scholarship; and then another tax credit for the 3d and 4th years of college, for graduate school, and for further job training—a lifetime learning credit.

Now, this is an amazing thing. But what I want to say to you is, all of you who are here, I came here to ask, as a great university, in whatever service groups you're in, in whatever family or neighborhood or church networks you have, you need to get this message out to people who are coming on behind you. We need every child in this country to know that if he or she works hard and learns what they're supposed to learn, they can all go to college now. And we need them there for our future in the 21st century.

Now, the last thing I want to ask your help on in the coming year, because we're going to have a big dialog about it, is something that all of you students probably never think about,

and that is Social Security and your retirement. I don't know about you, but when I was your age, I never thought about it. [Laughter] I thought I would live forever, always young. And what Senator Moseley-Braun said is true: The older you get, the faster time goes.

I never will forget, once, a few years ago, I saw a man who was 76 years old at an airport meeting his brother, getting ready to go to his sister's funeral. And I said, "What are you thinking about?" And he said, "Oh, I'm thinking about when we were 5 years old, how we used to play together." He said, "You know, Bill, it doesn't take long to live a life." I say that to say that even the young must care for the future, even the young must think about their obligations to generations yet unborn; that America must work as a seamless web of community, always doing what is best for today and tomorrow.

Now, what's that got to do with Social Security? There are polls that say that young people in their twenties think it's more likely that they will see UFO's than that they will ever collect Social Security. [Laughter] And all of you know that the Social Security system is supposed to be in trouble. Now, what does that mean? It is not in trouble today; nobody today has got any problems drawing their money. In fact, today we collect more money in Social Security taxes every year, quite a bit more, than we pay out.

The problem is that when the baby boomers retire—starting with me, I'm the oldest of the baby boomers—people my age and down about 18 years younger, we are the largest group of Americans that have ever lived, except the group that started first grade last year—second grade, or third grade, whatever it is, something in grade school—because we've got more children in schools now, public schools, than we had during the baby boom generation for the first time. But we're going to have 18, 20, 25 years where there will be a huge number of people on Social Security in their retirement years, compared to the people who are paying in. That is the issue.

Now, the question is, what is the best way to prepare for the retirement of the baby boomers in ways that do not either rob those people who need it of their secure retirement or impose intolerable burdens on our children, who, in turn, will be burdened in raising our grandchildren?

I don't know anybody in my generation who believes that we ought to just take it out on you and put our feet up when we turn 65 and turn away from the obligations we have to contribute to the further growth and vitality of people who are younger than we are. So the question is, what is the fairest way to change this? What's best for people who are on Social Security now? What's best for the baby boomers? What's best for young people in their twenties and thirties just starting to pay into the system? What's best for the kids that are in high school now who haven't even started?

We're going to spend a year having forums all across the country, completely nonpartisan, trying to bring people in and debate it. And then about a year from now, I'm going to convene the leaders of Congress, and we're going to try to craft historic bipartisan legislation to reform Social Security, to save it for the 21st century, to make sure it's there not just for the baby boomers but for everybody in this audience and all your children, too, so we'll have a system that works, so that people who work hard and do their part will know they'll have elemental retirement security and that we can do it without bankrupting the country. I think we can do it. I know we can do it. But it's going to take your good-faith involvement—people of all ages.

And since what we do may affect how you proceed throughout your entire worklife, we've got to have people involved in their twenties, in their thirties. The young people of this country have got to be involved in this debate. It will affect you as much as anybody else.

But if we do it, it will be just sort of like balancing the budget. You know how people said, "Oh, you'll never get that budget balanced. You'll never do that. That's just something politicians talk about. It is a huge thing to do." Why? We spend less money on debt; we invest more money in our future; we have a stronger economy. The same thing will be true of Social Security. Once we make the adjustments necessary to fix it, the increase in confidence, the increase in savings, the increase in belief in the future of this country as we go forward together will

be absolutely astonishing. And we need you to be a part of it.

The last thing I want to ask about—the Vice President touched this briefly, and he knows more about it than I do—but we need young people in this country, particularly young people in our university system, to convince the rest of America that we must and we can address the challenge of climate change and global warming.

Now, I can tell you, I have been working on the economics of energy efficiencies for over 20 years now in various guises. I am convinced that the technology is out there right now to do what we need to do to do our part to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in factories, in power generation systems, in homes and office buildings. And we're getting very, very close in automobiles. We can get there.

But listen, this is your future; this is your life; this is the world your children and your grandchildren will have to live in, in the 21st century. This is crazy for us not to do this. We do not have to take the economy down; we will lift the economy up. And you have to take the lead in helping us meet this challenge.

Scientific research, universal access to university education, reforming Social Security for the 21st century, dealing with the challenge of climate change: those are just four of the things that are out there. Keep your eyes on the future. Believe in this country. Believe in yourself. Reach out across the lines that divide us. Do not let people—do not ever let people who are divisive or pessimistic convince you that there is anything this country can't do. I can look at you and tell you that this country can do anything we put our minds to.

Thank you, and God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:33 a.m. in Assembly Hall at the University of Illinois. In his remarks, he referred to Michael Aiken, chancellor, and James Stukel, president, University of Illinois, Champaign-Urbana; Mayor Dan McCollum of Champaign; Mayor Tod Satterthwaite of Urbana; and Larry Smarr, director, National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA).