

on each agency's plan in 90 days with recommendations and a suggested implementation timetable. In so doing, I direct the Department to ensure that Federal interagency activities are

complementary, aggressive, and consistent with the overall initiative to cover uninsured children.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

## Remarks at a Reception for Representative James P. Moran *February 18, 1998*

Thank you very much. First let me join, I know, all of you in thanking Dr. D'Orta for opening this beautiful, beautiful house to us tonight. It's especially nice for me to come back here because I was involved for a long time with Pamela Harriman and with her late husband, Governor Averell Harriman, and their good friend and former great support, Janet Howard, is here tonight. My mind has been reliving a lot of precious memories in this wonderful home.

I'm also grateful to Dr. D'Orta for helping Jim Moran, who is one of the finest people I have ever known in public life. I'm here for him tonight for a lot of reasons, but if you think back to where our country was in 1992, when I was running for President—that the economy was weak, that we were growing apart economically, that our social problems were getting more severe, that our steps seemed more and more uncertain—and you look at where we are today, I can tell you without reservation that one of the reasons we're where we are today is that at very critical junctures, Jim Moran was always willing to stand in the breach and do what was right for our country.

In 1993, we passed our economic program to bring the deficit down by only one vote in the House. If Jim Moran had taken the easy way out, if he'd said, "Well, there are a lot of people in my district who will attack me over this," we wouldn't be here tonight having this celebration. Just Jim Moran could have walked away and changed the future of the country. But because he didn't walk away, before we saved the first dollar from the Balanced Budget Act of 1997, the deficit had been reduced from \$295 billion a year to \$22 billion a year, over 90 percent. That alone should get Jim Moran reelected for the rest of his life if he wants it.

When we passed the Brady bill and the crime bill to put 100,000 police on the street and ban assault weapons, the people in the NRA and their allies actually defeated a number of our Congressmen in the '94 election by terrifying people and saying we were taking their guns away. But Jim Moran stood in the breach. We didn't win by many votes on the crime bill, and 5 years later, as we've now put over two-thirds of those police on the street and taken a lot of the assault weapons off the street, hundreds of thousands of people with criminal records or adverse mental health histories have not been able to buy handguns because of the Brady bill. This is a safer country. Crime has gone down for 5 years in a row in all major categories.

In 1994, when the other party won the House and proclaimed that they had a revolutionary contract—we Democrats said, on America—[laughter]—and they were prepared to shut the Government down to try to force me to accept that contract, the only way we were able to reverse it was that there were enough hearty souls in the Congress who said, "Wait a minute. There's something wrong with this picture. We are reducing the deficit. We're going to balance the budget, but we don't have to give up on our commitment on education or our commitment to the environment or our commitment to health care or our commitment to senior citizens or our commitment to trying to expand the circle of economic opportunity to the people who haven't felt anything in this recovery yet." And we said no.

And in the face of the shutdown we defeated the contract on America, thanks to Jim Moran and the people like him who stood with me. If they hadn't done it, I could not have done it alone. So Jim Moran has done a lot of good things.

In 1997, we passed the balanced budget law, which, as Jim said, had the biggest increase in child health care in a generation, the biggest increase in investment in education in a generation, and still balanced the budget. This year we estimate the deficit will be \$10 billion. But if we get fortunate, if the challenges in Asia with the economy don't slow us down too much, we'll actually probably balance the budget this year. And if we don't, next year we will because of the balanced budget I've submitted to Congress.

None of this would have been possible if we hadn't laid the framework, the foundation. And Jim Moran was a critical part of that, because he realized that we had to be responsible with the deficit; we just couldn't go on having high interest rates and high deficit and quadrupling the debt every 12 years, but there was a way to reduce the deficit, reduce the size of Government, and increase our investment in the future of our children.

And in the last 5 years, we sort have gotten America to working again. And I think people feel that. And now, as I said in the State of the Union, what we need to be asking ourselves, if the country is working well again what do we have to do now to look at the long-term? What are we going to do to prepare this country for the 21st century to make sure that it's as strong as it can be? And that's what we're going to be working on in this year—and again, why it is so important that he win reelection.

If we have, as is projected, not only a balanced budget but several years of surpluses, the easy thing to do in an election year is to go out and promise the people a tax cut or some new spending program that sounds nice. I say we should do neither unless we pay for it, and all the surplus should be resolved until we have saved the Social Security system for the 21st century. That is very important. That is the right thing to do.

We have 10 years left on the Medicare Trust Fund, but we have to reform Medicare for the 21st century. It's important how that's done and whether it's done consistent with our most basic values.

We have the money, in addition, to continue to open the doors of college education to all; to lift the standards in education; to try to encourage schools in areas that are underperforming; to end social promotion but give children a second chance; to lower class sizes to

18 in the first three grades; to rehabilitate 5,000 schools or build new ones in places where the kids don't have a decent place to go to school; to let people who are between the ages of 55 and 65 who don't have any health insurance buy into the Medicare system if they, or with help from their children, can afford to do so; to have the biggest increase in medical research in the history of the country to help us to solve the problems that are still facing us; to use the wonders of technological advances to deal with our part of the responsibility to fight climate change and global warming. We have all these challenges before us, and they're significant, but they are wonderful opportunities for us.

Hillary has sponsored a project for the millennium—you know, we sat around and talked for a long time, and I asked her to think about what gifts we ought to give the millennium, and she calls her project, basically, "Remembering the past, and imagining the future." And I talked about it in the State of the Union. We're trying to raise the funds and get the funds to save the Star-Spangled Banner—we need \$13 million in restoration; it would be a tragedy if it were lost—to save the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, and the Bill of Rights and make sure they're perfectly preserved; to get every community in the country to go out and save their own historic element. There's a house at the Old Soldiers' Home here in Washington, where Abraham Lincoln used to go to work in the summertime. The house is in terrible condition. It ought to be saved.

But we also are imagining the future. That's what the medical Trust Fund is about. That's what our international space station is about and sending Senator John Glenn at the age of 77 back into space. Don't worry about him. He's in better shape than I am. He'll be fine.

And that is what a lot of our challenges in foreign policy are all about. I'm going to try to pass a Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty this year to discourage other countries from becoming nuclear powers and to slowly let the whole nuclear threat recede. And we have to do that. We are actively pursuing our peace efforts, from Bosnia to the Middle East to Northern Ireland. I'm about to leave on a trip to Africa, which I have looked forward to for a long time. Then I'm going down to Latin America, where every country in the hemisphere

but one is a democracy. We are working hard on these things.

One of the things that I want you to understand—I have not much to add at this moment to what I have already said yesterday in my speech at the Pentagon about the situation in Iraq, but I want you to think about this. There will never be a time as long as we're on this Earth when there won't be people who seek absolute, arbitrary, abusive power. This country was established by people who were fleeing absolute, arbitrary, abusive power. That's how we all got started. And we have been jealous about that from the beginning.

One of the things we know is that the more open our global society gets, the more we can all get on the Internet and share information with people around the world, the more we can get on an airplane and fly around the world, the more we can hop from continent to continent to continent, the more we get in touch with each other, the more vulnerable we are to one another's problems and the more open we are to the organized forces of destruction.

That's why I tried to take such a hard line against terrorism. That's why I tried to take such a hard line against the development of chemical and biological weapons and very small-scale nuclear weapons. Why? Because you don't want people to carry stuff like that around from airport to airport. You don't want to have any unnecessary exposure when people can get on the Internet and find a webpage that will tell them how to make a bomb like the bomb that blew up the Federal Building in Oklahoma City.

We cannot make the world perfectly safe, but we have to do everything we can in our time to imagine what the security problems will be like when this young lady here is grown, and

she has children of her own. That is our obligation.

So what all of this is about at bottom, it is about what kind of world our children will live in and what we have to do, not to make it perfectly risk-free—we can't do that—but we have to do everything we possibly can to minimize the risks that we and our children and our grandchildren will be exposed to as we move into a globalized society where the organized forces of destruction will cause us enough trouble anyway, whether they're narcotraffickers, criminal syndicates, or terrorists. Anything we can do to minimize the chance that anyone will be able to put into play chemical and biological weapons against civilized people, wherever they live, we should do. That is the animating principle here for me.

I am doing the best I can with a difficult situation, because I'm thinking about what we have to do to strengthen America and the world for the 21st century.

We've got a lot to do. We're going to get a lot done this year. The thing I like about Jim Moran is that he will work with members of the Republican Party whenever they'll work with him in good faith. We know we're hired here to get things done for the American people, but we also know that when November rolls around, there will still be plenty of things on which we honestly disagree in good faith. What we want is to have honest disagreement and to see upright, honest, and truly courageous people like Jim Moran return to public office. America needs it. It's good for our future.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:03 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Dr. Jim D'Orta, reception host.

## Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner *February 18, 1998*

Thank you very much. First of all, thank you, Ron and Beth, for having us here, and thank you for being such wonderful friends to me and to Hillary and to our administration and our party. Thank you for the wonderful words. A couple of days ago I actually got a picture of

one of those billboards in Israel—not a particularly great picture of me—and that wonderful, wonderful message.

Let me thank all of you for being here. Most of you I have now known a long time, and you've heard me give a lot of speeches, so I