

May 9 / Administration of William J. Clinton, 1998

freedom and prosperity in the world, because the only way we can make the 21st century America's greatest days is if we do the right things at home and the right things abroad.

The last point I want to make is this. I have the great good fortune, being President, that people send me books all the time. Even Lester sends me books from time to time. And because I travel around a lot, I read a lot of them. And one of the things that I've tried to do the last 2 years is to read a lot about periods of American history that most Americans don't know much about.

For example, a lot of Americans know about what happened in the Constitutional Convention and during the Revolutionary War and then in George Washington's and Thomas Jefferson's and John Adams' Presidency. And then a lot of Americans know about what happened in Abraham Lincoln's Presidency and immediately thereafter. Most Americans don't know very much about what happened between James Madison and Abraham Lincoln. Most Americans don't know much about what happened between Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt. Most Americans don't even know a great deal about what happened between Woodrow Wilson and Franklin Roosevelt.

So I've really tried to read about this. I just read a magnificent biography by Robert Remini of your fellow Massachusetts citizen Daniel Webster, which tells a lot about what happened in one of those gaping periods.

But if you look at all the great breakpoints in American history—how we started, what happened in the Civil War, what happened in the industrial revolution, what happened in the De-

pression and the Second World War, the civil rights revolution—you look at every time there was a great challenge in this country's history, we always had to do three things over and over and over again as we rose to a higher and higher and higher level of democracy. Every time, we had to deepen the meaning of freedom to include more people and to make their freedom real; we had to widen the circle of opportunity so that citizenship meant your chance at the brass ring; and we had to strengthen the bonds of our Union.

Now, you remember that. The Democratic Party, I'm sad to say, was not always on the right side of all three of those issues in the 19th century. But since Woodrow Wilson became President, throughout the 20th century, we haven't always been right on every issue, but we've always been on the right side of our history. And I am determined that when we start this new century, this country will have deepened our freedom, widened our opportunity, and strengthened our Union. If we do the right things, our kids will have the best America ever.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:30 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Elaine and Gerald Schuster; Mayor Thomas M. Menino of Boston and his wife, Angela; Fred Seigel, president, Energy Capital Partners; Steve Grossman, national chair, and Alan D. Solomont, former national finance chair, Democratic National Committee; economist Lester C. Thurow; and musician James Taylor.

Statement on the Middle East Peace Process

May 11, 1998

I have just met with Secretary Albright, National Security Adviser Berger, and Ambassador Ross. Unfortunately, there will not be a meeting today with Prime Minister Netanyahu and Chairman Arafat to launch the permanent status talks. I regret that.

I have asked Secretary Albright to meet later this week with Prime Minister Netanyahu while he is in Washington. The objective of those discussions will be to seek to overcome the remain-

ing differences so that we can proceed immediately with accelerated permanent status talks.

Secretary Albright will then report to me whether, as a result of her discussions with the Prime Minister, the basis exists to launch those talks in Washington.