

Gov. Ann Richards of Texas; Texas Land Commissioner Garry Mauro; former Senator Lloyd Bentsen and his wife, B.A.; Representative Martin

Frost, chairman, Democratic Congressional Campaign Committee; President Boris Yeltsin of Russia; and Mayor Lee Brown of Houston.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Dallas, Texas

June 2, 1998

Thank you very much. Thank you. First of all, Ray—can you hear me? I feel rather pathetic even needing a microphone after the last demonstration of music we had. *[Laughter]* Let me begin by saying that I know I speak for all of us when I say a profound word of thanks to Ray for welcoming us into his home and for bringing his art into this tent and bringing the wonderful music here. This has been a magnificent night, and I have loved it. I love the time you and your daughters took to show me through your home to see your art.

Once, many years ago, before I ever could have known I would be here and you would be here, we would be doing this, I visited you in your office, and you showed me some of your wonderful artwork. And I thank you for being a great citizen and for helping us by having us all here tonight. Thank you so much.

I'd like to thank my good friend of many, many years, Roy Romer, for being here. He is not only the senior Governor in the United States but most people believe the best one. And it is our great good fortune to have him as our chair of the Democratic Party. I thank Len Barrack, who has come all the way from Philadelphia to be here, our finance chairman, tonight; Congressman Martin Frost; my friend of more than 25 years, Garry Mauro; Bill White; and all the cochairs. I thank you. And I'd like to say a special word of thanks to all the people who performed tonight. They were magnificent. And to you, my friend Denyce Graves, thank you for being here. I wish I could stay in Fort Worth and hear your concert.

You know, Ray was talking about the support that Hillary and I have tried to give to the arts. Tomorrow night I'm going back to Washington to have the annual PBS "In Performance" night at the White House. We've had all different kinds of music there. We've had jazz and blues and classical music. One year, we had women in country. Tomorrow night—

you can see this on educational television—tomorrow night we're having a gospel fest. And tomorrow night, unlike all the others, I actually picked some of the performers and some of the music. So if you don't like it, you can partially blame me, as well.

But I was thinking—and I saw all those wonderful performers who came from little towns in America, as they were introduced—I don't know if that wonderful man really did come from a town called Resume Speed, South Dakota, but it's a great story. *[Laughter]* And I intend to tell it as if it were true for the rest of the year. *[Laughter]*

But anyway, I was thinking about what Ray said, about the support that Hillary and I have tried to give the arts. We're celebrating the millennium in 2000. It will be the last year of my Presidency. We have devised this great national endeavor called "Honoring the past, and imagining the future," and among the things we're trying to do are to preserve the great treasures of our natural and national heritage, like the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, the Declaration of Independence. We're trying to get record amounts of research into biomedical and other critical areas of research. And we're trying to preserve and elevate the role of the arts in our lives, at the very time when many leaders in the other party still seem determined to de-fund the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities.

But I don't really want to talk about the funding issue tonight. I want to talk about what lies behind all this. Why do we get a thrill out of seeing some young man or woman stand up and sing as they sang tonight? What is it that moves us when we look at this art, when we walk out there among the magnificent pieces of sculpture? Why do we like it better when we feel elevated and when we feel sort of united by a common bond of humanity that we feel

coming back to us from a piece of artistic genius? Because we know that we feel more alive and we feel better about ourselves, better about other people, and better about life in general when we're feeling and being and reaching big, rather than when we're feeling and being and digging small.

And if you think about a lot of what I have to do as President, a lot of what I try to do, what I really tried to do when I got here was to clean away a lot of the underbrush that was holding America back and to try to create the conditions and give people the tools to make the most of their own lives and to build good families and strong communities and make our Nation stronger and reach out to the rest of the world, so that we could be our better selves.

And it may sound kind of corny and old-fashioned and Pollyanna, but I really believe that that's the secret of America's success, that we try to capture every day in some way, in all the work we do and the way we live our lives, the way those performers made us feel tonight. And whenever we don't, we sort of disappoint ourselves, and we disappoint the rest of the world.

So, to me, I'm very grateful that I had the chance to serve in these last 6 years. I'm grateful that we have the lowest unemployment rate in 28 years and the lowest welfare rolls in 27 years and the lowest crime rate in 25 years, and we're going to have the first balanced budget and surplus in 29 years. And we've got the highest homeownership in history. I'm grateful for all that. But you've got to understand why I'm grateful for all that. I'm grateful for that because all that means, when you strip it all away, is that people are freer, and they have more capacity to live big lives instead of small ones, to be happy and to give happiness and to find fulfillment, instead of just clawing out a miserable existence in conflict with their fellow human beings.

And that really, I think, is what our party has come to represent. All the things they used to say about us, "Well, you can't trust the Democrats to run the economy or handle the welfare system or get the crime rate down or manage trade or foreign policy or national defense" and all that—all that is gone now. And I'm grateful for that.

But your presence here tonight will help us to take a message into this election season in 1998 about where we're going into the 21st cen-

tury: What should our agenda be; what is the unfinished business of America; and maybe more important than anything else, what will be the dominant spirit that pervades the Nation's Capital and the Nation's public business?

If you think about where we are and where we still have to go, we've still got a lot to do. Shoot, we haven't balanced the books in 30 years, and I've already got folks up there in Congress trying to spend money we don't have yet. I don't think we ought to spend a nickel of that surplus until we secure the Social Security system well into the 21st century so our baby boomers don't bankrupt our kids and our grandchildren. That's an important thing about the future that will enable us to be big. We're not going to feel very big when all the baby boomers retire and our kids have to pay money they can't afford to support us because we allowed the Social Security system to go bankrupt. So that's a big issue that will enable us to keep going in the right direction.

I think we ought to keep working until we have not only the best system of college education in the world, which we already have, but the best system of elementary and high school education in the world. That's why I'm working for all the smaller classes and the higher standards and the computers for all the kids, and all those things—because the world we live in imposes a heavy penalty on people who cannot learn for a lifetime and gives a rich reward for those who can.

Those of you in Texas have had a very personal experience in the last few weeks with all the residue from the fires in Mexico coming over the skies here. Believe me, it is just a sign of more to come unless we face the fact that the 5 warmest years since 1400 have occurred in the 1990's. All those people that tell you global warming and climate change is some big ruse are not right. We are putting more greenhouse gases into the atmosphere than it can absorb without heating up the planet. We're going to have more extreme events which will manifest itself and more extreme weather conditions, heat and cold and rain and sleet and snow, and more fires in places where they're vulnerable.

We've got to find a way to use American ingenuity and technological advances to prove we can live in closer harmony with the environment and still keep growing the economy. I know we can do that. I believe in the possibility

of America, but it's a big part of our challenge. As I said in Houston earlier today, parenthetically, it's also good for people who are in the natural gas business in Texas. But I say it when I'm other places as well. We have to prove we can do this.

We have to prove that we can maintain the world's best health system and make it available to everybody, and not let managed care be more than it should be, which is managing care. We shouldn't take the care out of managed care. That's why we're for this Patients' Bill of Rights. That's why I think people that lose their health insurance who are older ought to be able to buy into Medicare.

But all these things—all the specifics are not as important to me as the big issue. I'm just trying to do what I think is necessary to take this country into the 21st century with the American dream alive for everybody, with our leadership in the world for peace and freedom and prosperity unquestioned, and with the country coming together instead of being divided.

Look at the foreign policy issues, for example, that it's been my responsibility to deal with as your President in the last few days. Let me just give you a few of them, just in the last 30 days. I went to Geneva, Switzerland, to talk about the trading system we need for the 21st century. Some of my fellow Democrats think we don't need to expand trade anymore. I think we need to expand it faster. There are 4 percent of the population in America, with 20 percent of the income; you don't have to be a genius to figure out we've got to sell something to the other 96 percent of the people if we're going to maintain our standard of living. But we have to do it in a way that helps other people with their lives as well.

Then I went to Birmingham, where we worried about the economic crisis in Indonesia and the political crisis there, and we've been working on the economic challenges that Russia is facing.

I recently came back from Africa, where I went to Rwanda, and we're trying to help them deal with the aftermath of 800,000 people killed in tribal murders, and building up the good things that are going on in Africa at the same time.

And of course, the number one problem—and I could mention many others—I've been for the last month heavily involved in trying to get the Middle East peace talks back on track. We were involved happily in a success

in Ireland, where the people voted for peace there, which I'm very proud of. And for the last couple of weeks, I've spent more time than anything else on the tensions between India and Pakistan that were manifested in the nuclear testing by both countries.

But if you back away from all the specifics again and you look at the general problem, what is it? Why did these nuclear tests occur? Because, two things: One, the two nations felt insecure as compared with each other, and for India against China, there wasn't enough trust there; and secondly, they felt they had to define themselves as big in a way that I think is fundamentally negative. I don't think they're more secure now than they were when they set off those nuclear tests. And I think whenever we try to define ourselves as big in a way that's negative, by putting somebody else down or separating ourselves from others, we inevitably pay a price.

One of the reasons I've worked so hard for the last year on this One America Race Initiative, to try to get people together across all the lines that divide us, is I actually believe the increasing diversity of America is, in a fundamental way, our meal ticket to the future in a world that's smaller and smaller and smaller, where there are—I don't know—more than a million people a day being added to the Internet, all these homepages coming on now at rapid rates, 100 million users now. It will be 200 million by the end of the year around the world. There were only 50 websites 6 years ago when I became President—only 50.

In a world that's coming together like that, a country that is both free and economically successful, that has people from everywhere living there, from all walks of life and all kinds of religious and ethnic and racial backgrounds, where things aren't perfect but where we get along and we're driven by values that say we're going to be big, not little; we're going to be united, not divided; we're going to try to let people's spirits flow and unleash them; and we're not going to be small and mean and petty; and we're not going to be caught in the same trap with the people we're trying to help by dividing our power by negative ways, or defining our power in negative ways—that is very important.

And if you really look at all of it, if you go back to the point Ray made, the position we've taken on the role of arts in American life, the importance of pursuing and preserving

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the National Endowment for Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities is nothing more than a metaphor for the differences in the two parties approach to national politics today.

Our approach to the future is optimistic. It's united, and it's big. It believes the heart is as important as the mind and that it's important that we go forward together. And we believe that America can only lead the world toward peace and freedom and prosperity if we are a worthy example.

So I'm grateful that the approach we started back in '93 has worked as well as it has. I'm grateful for all the support all of you have given to me and to our party, and I'm grateful for your presence here tonight. But in some ways, the biggest battles are yet to be fought, because sometimes when people enjoy a great deal of success, it makes them downright dumb. How many of us—haven't all of you been—had at least a moment of being downright dumb when you were really successful? Is there a person

who is here who can say with a straight face you never had one moment of stupidity in the aftermath of some success you enjoy? Nobody can say that.

So what are we going to do with our success? Are we going to get bigger and bolder and better? I want us to feel as a country the way we felt in this wonderful setting tonight when those great American young people were singing. America should be singing. We've got a lot to be grateful for and a lot to do. And thanks to you, our party has more than an average chance now to be successful in doing our part.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:30 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner host Ray Nasher; and Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, and Leonard Barrack, national finance chair, Democratic National Committee. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Remarks on Action Against Nuclear Proliferation in South Asia and Most-Favored-Nation Trade Status for China

June 3, 1998

Good morning. Secretary Albright and Mr. Berger and I have just had a meeting before Secretary Albright leaves to go to Geneva for tomorrow's meeting of the Permanent Five Foreign Ministers, convened at our initiative, on the situation in South Asia. Our goal is to forge a common strategy to move India and Pakistan back from their nuclear arms race and to begin to build a more peaceful, stable region.

Secretary Albright will speak to our agenda in Geneva in just a moment, and I understand later will be at the State Department to answer further questions. But I'd like to take a few moments to put this problem in its proper context. The nuclear tests by India and Pakistan stand in stark contrast to the progress the world has made over the past several years in reducing stockpiles and containing the spread of nuclear weapons. It is also contrary to the ideals of nonviolent democratic freedom and independence at the heart of Gandhi's struggle to end colonialism on the Indian subcontinent.

Through the START treaties, the United States and Russia are on their way to cutting nuclear arsenals by two-thirds from their cold war height. With our help, Ukraine, Belarus, and Kazakhstan agreed to return to Russia the nuclear weapons left on their land when the Soviet Union dissolved. We secured the indefinite, unconditional extension of the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty. Brazil, Argentina, and South Africa each voluntarily renounced their nuclear programs, choosing to spend their vital resources instead on the power of their people. And to date, 149 nations have signed the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty which bans all nuclear explosions, making it more difficult for nuclear powers to produce more advanced weapons and for nonnuclear states to develop them.

Two years ago, I was the first to sign this treaty at the United Nations on behalf of the United States. The present situation in South Asia makes it all the more important that the Senate debate and vote on the Comprehensive