

NOTE: The President spoke at 7:45 p.m. in the East Room at the Mayflower Hotel. In his remarks, he referred to Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, Leonard Barrack, national finance chair, Carol Pensky, treasurer, and Steve

Grossman, national chair, Democratic National Committee; C. Thomas Hendrickson, chair, and Mike Cherry, John Merrigan, and Chris Korge, cochairs, Democratic Business Council; and Kathryn O'Donnell, widow of attorney Kirk O'Donnell.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner *September 10, 1998*

Thank you so much. I want to thank Jim and Carol and Senator and Mrs. Pell, and all the others who had anything to do with this event tonight. This has been a particularly meaningful event. It wasn't just Jill who wanted Senator Pell's autograph; I got him to give me what he said about me, and I had him autograph it. [*Laughter*] I'll take it home, make sure my family believes me when I tell them he said it. [*Laughter*]

Thirty-four years ago I moved in across the street from this house, and I lived on the second floor of Loyola Hall as a freshman at Georgetown. And I looked out my window every morning into Senator Pell's garden—I don't want to you to think I was a peeping tom—[*laughter*]—I couldn't avoid it; I mean, if I looked out the window, I could see it. And I remember sometimes they would have garden parties in the springtime when the weather was warm, or I would see people come and go—famous people come and go. And it never occurred to me 34 years ago that someday I might be here with them, as President.

And I am very honored because, Senator, I thank you for the Pell grants. I thank you for your commitment to America's involvement in the world, for your belief in the United Nations and a world system of peace and prosperity. I wish you had another 35 years in the Senate. We need you there today more than ever. And I thank you.

So anyway, I'm feeling very, very nostalgic tonight. If anybody had told me when I was 18 I'd be in this backyard, I never would have believed it. I'd also like to thank all of you for your support, your personal support to me in this difficult time, in what I have tried to do to express apologies and seek forgiveness from the American people, but more impor-

tantly for your continuing commitment for what it is we're trying to do.

I saw a survey—I read something in the paper the other day that said that 91 percent of the American people were aware that the stock market had dropped 500 points, the day it dropped. Well, you know, 91 percent of the people—it's amazing that that many people would agree that the Sun comes up in the morning. I mean, that's a pretty high level. [*Laughter*]

And it's very interesting to me that—I now talk to all kinds of people. I was at a school in Florida yesterday, and the day before, a school in Maryland. And I would talk about this, and I'd say, "You all read about that, didn't you?" And they would say, "yes." And I said, "You read that the drop was generally attributed to developments beyond our borders that had no direct impact on the American economy." That is, no one could conclude from the momentary difficulties—or the difficulties, anyway, in Asia or Russia or whatever—that there was a direct impact on the economy today that was very severe. But we had this big drop.

And it's been very interesting, because these events and what people are learning about them and their apparent connection to the gyrations of the stock market have done more than anything—all the speeches I have given for 6 long years—to hammer home one point that I tried to hammer home when I ran for President in 1991 and 1992, which is: There is no longer an artificial dividing line between domestic and foreign policy, between economic and security policy; that we have to see a world in which we are growing closer together and an America in which we are growing ever more interconnected; and we have to look at the world in ways that enable us to fulfill our responsibilities toward peace and prosperity and freedom

and human rights if we want America to do well at home.

And conversely, if we want America to be strong and be able to lead the world, we have to prove that we can develop the capacities of all of our people, that we can run a good, strong economy, and, very important over the long run, that in an increasingly interconnected world, that we have people from everywhere in America, but they all have a chance as long as they follow the rules. And I think that's important.

And our administration has really been devoted to giving everyone a chance to making America work again, and then to preparing us for the future, and to assume—to make sure we're doing what we can to lead the world toward peace and freedom and prosperity. I am grateful for what we've been able to do, but I will say this: I think the most important thing today is that Americans not take the blessings of the moment for granted, either to be idle or to pretend that we can indulge ourselves in self-defeating conduct as a nation.

When you get a moment like this when things seem to be going well, especially if there is a lot of churning dynamism elsewhere in the world, it is a time for an extra sense of responsibility to deal with the big challenges.

What have we learned about the world economy in the last 2 years that we didn't know? Have we learned anything we didn't know when we passed GATT, when we passed NAFTA, when we committed ourselves to an open trading system and to elevating other countries? What have we learned? What do we do about it?

Well, the first thing we've got to do is pay our way to the International Monetary Fund. If we want to have influence, we certainly have to pay our way. We need to pay our way to the United Nations. We need to do the things that a great country does.

But there is more we need to do. What are we going to do to make sure the baby boomers can retire, have the Social Security they need, the medical care they need, without bankrupting their children and grandchildren? What are we going to do to make sure, now that we have Pell grants, HOPE scholarships, record numbers of work-study positions, the most access to higher education in history, that we have the best elementary and secondary education in the world? What are we going to do to prove to other countries, by the power of our example,

that you can grow the economy and improve the environment at the same time? What are we going to do to reconcile our goals of having affordable health care with quality health care, through the Patients' Bill of Rights? What are we going to do, now that the House finally passed it, to stop the Senate Republican filibuster of campaign finance reform, killing it again? How can we raise this feeling that people have that their campaigns are properly run? There are a lot of big questions out there. Maybe most importantly of all, over the long run, what are we going to do to prove that we can be one America, no matter how diverse we get in terms of race, religion, culture? What are we going to do?

Because if we are—if we want to do good things in the rest of the world—some of you were so kind in what you said around the table tonight about the role the United States has been able to play in the last few years in the Irish peace process. We're working very, very hard this night in the Middle East peace process. We're working hard to reconcile people to one another. If we want to do good things around the world, we have to be good at home. We have to be able to set an example of reconciliation among ourselves, instead of destructive, divisive conduct.

So that's the only thing I would like for you to think about tonight. When you leave here, I hope, if somebody asks you why you came here, you will say, "I'm proud to be here because what we've done in the last 6 years made America work again. I'm proud to be here because we've got a vision of the world in the 21st century. And I'm proud to be here because we know that we dare not squander the blessings of the moment. Instead, we have to look at the big challenges that lie before us and seize them now when we have the resources and the confidence and the sheer emotional breathing room to do it." We don't want to let this pass us by. We want to seize it. And if we do, in a couple of years when we start that new century and that new millennium, America will give our children the future that we owe them.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:38 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Jim and Carol Lewin and their daughter Jill; and former Senator Claiborne Pell and his wife, Nualla.