

Nimmanhemin of Thailand. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also

included the opening remarks of Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin.

Remarks at a Unity '98 Reception October 5, 1998

Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, we have all been sitting up here on this stage listening to each other with a lot of echoes, wondering if you could hear us out here. Can you hear us all speaking? *[Applause]* We decided either you could hear us better than we could hear each other, or you were the most polite audience in human history. *[Laughter]*

Let me begin by thanking you personally for being here tonight, for your support for our party and our campaign in the Congress this year. I want to thank Steve Grossman for a magnificent job as head of our party and for the work he has done with Senator Torricelli and Representative Pelosi, who have been wonderful working together in unity to try to pool our resources and maximize our impact. I want to thank Dick Gephardt and Tom Daschle for truly extraordinary leadership.

You know, since the Republicans won the House of Representatives and the Senate in 1994, we have defeated their contract on America; we passed a balanced budget that had the biggest increase in health care for children and the biggest increase in college access since the GI bill. And every other progressive thing that has been done since I've been President, none of it would have been possible without the Democrats in Congress, and I am very grateful to them, but especially these last 4 long years when time after time after time, if they hadn't been with me, there would have been no one to say no to moving this country into an extreme position, no to moving this country away from the progressive path on which we put it, and yes to the initiatives we've taken. So we owe them a great debt of gratitude, and for that I am very grateful.

Let's talk about why you're here tonight, besides to hear Brian, who was fabulous. Was he great, or what? *[Applause]*

In a month we're going to have an election, a midterm election, an election in which our opponents believe they will do quite well be-

cause they're going to outspend us phenomenally, an election in which they believe they have an enormous advantage because a lot of Democratic voters normally don't vote when there's no Presidential election. They say, "Oh, well, our voters have to worry about child care and jobs and voting on the same day. That's a lot of trouble," or "Our voters are young. They just don't get into it in mid-term election." And all the things you've heard.

I want to tell you why you're here tonight. You're here to reverse 100 years of history, and you're here to make the next 100 years of America's history. You're here to make a decision. Most of you in this audience tonight are young, and I am not. So I can tell you one thing: It doesn't take long to live a life. It doesn't take long to move from your age tonight until you're the age of those of us on this platform. And the decisions you make in one point of your life for your country can shape everything that happens when you have your children and you raise them to be the age that you are now.

We have fought and fought and fought for 6 years to change the direction of America, to give you an economy that works for all the people, not just a few; to bring the crime rate down and to help more kids stay out of trouble in the first place; to move people from welfare to work in a way that was humane so they could still succeed in their most important jobs, raising children; to grow the economy and still preserve the environment; to be a force for world peace and humanity; and to be a force for bringing us together here at home across all the lines that divide us. Those are the issues at stake in this election.

If you look at the differences between the two parties, one that will affect you more than me is whether we are going to save this surplus until we save Social Security for the 21st century, instead of putting a big tax increase on you to take care of your parents. You know

where they stand. They voted for a popular election-year tax cut to give people—a modest cut—to say, “Here’s your little gift before the election.”

And we stood up and said, “That may be appealing. Look at our tax cuts for child care, for education, for the environment. They’re paid for in our balanced budget bill, and we’re not going beyond them until we save Social Security because we don’t want to burden our children and our grandchildren.” It is the right thing to do.

We have asked for 8 long months—the other day the people here on this platform and I asked just for one day—just one day—to vote on matters that are critical to the education of our children. We are for 100,000 more teachers and smaller classes and 5,000 new or repaired schools and hooking up every classroom to the Internet and after-school and summer school programs for our kids. And they won’t give us a vote on it. It’s a clear choice, but it will affect the America you live in.

We have pleaded for 8 months for a vote on the Patients’ Bill of Rights because almost all of you are going to be in managed care plans, and so are your parents and your children. And I think they can do a lot of good to hold down costs. But I think if—God forbid—you get hit by a car going out of this party tonight, you ought to go to the nearest emergency room, not one clear across town because it happens to be covered by your managed care plan. And if you have a serious medical condition and your doctor says you need to see a specialist, I think you ought to be able to see one. And if your employer changes health care providers while you’re pregnant or getting chemotherapy or getting other serious treatment, I think you ought to be able to finish your treatment and not be told to get another doctor. That’s a big issue. But you won’t get that Patients’ Bill of Rights unless we get the Congress, and you have it within your power to give the American people that gift for the 21st century.

I just left, before I came to be with you tonight, a meeting of 25 nations, finance ministers, and central bankers, the counterparts of Chairman Greenspan and Secretary Rubin, sitting around a big room with the heads of all the international financial institutions, talking about what we can do to stem this global financial crisis, because it’s morally the right thing to do for people around the world who are

struggling to lift themselves and their children up, and because it is practically essential if we want to keep America’s economic prosperity going. And over and over and over again people said, “We appreciate the lead you’re taking, Mr. President, but the Congress of the United States won’t even fund America’s participation in the International Monetary Fund.” If you want to send a message, if you want America’s economy to keep growing, you liked the last 6 years, you know then that we have to help the world to avoid this crisis and do our part. It’s a big issue. It’s a huge issue.

The young people in this audience should care about the environment—more than their parents and grandparents. You should care whether you’re going to be able to raise your children with clean air, clean water, safe food, no toxic waste, and no global warming problem. You should care about that, and you should have an opinion about whether it is possible to grow the economy and improve the environment. With all my heart, I believe it is.

In this budget, it is littered up like a Christmas tree with what the Washington language dubs “riders, riders, riders.” What they’re doing is riding the environment down, and they try to put them all over all these bills in the hope that the President won’t be able to even find them all, much less veto some of the bills.

You’re going to be given a chance to say, “Our generation believes in protecting the environment and growing the economy, and we do not approve of the majority’s approach to chipping away at our protections one by one.” If you care about the environment and the economy, you have to vote for the Democrats in this race for Congress.

So I say to you, we have to prove to the people of the Washington establishment here, who say that midterm elections are always low-vote elections, that people like you know it’s a big deal. You know your future in riding on it. You believe in what we’ve done in the last 6 years. You want everybody to have a chance to participate in our prosperity. You want this education program. You want us to lead in the global economy. You want the environment protected. You want the Patients’ Bill of Rights, and you want to save Social Security before we squander a surplus that we worked 6 long years for. That’s what you want.

And you understand what the choice is on the other side. And you want this election to

be about you and your future. And you don't believe, contrary to all the conventional wisdom, that all the minorities are going to stay home, all the young women are going to stay home, all the young people are going to stay home, all the people that have the hassle of child care and work and still finding a way to go vote are going to stay home, because you're going to tell them what the stakes are. That's what we're going to use your money to do. I want you to leave here committed to using your voice

to do the same thing, and you will give America and your children a gift for the new millennium on election day.

Thank you, and God bless you. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:54 p.m. in the Great Hall at the National Building Museum. In his remarks, he referred to Steve Grossman, national chair, Democratic National Committee; and musician Brian McKnight.

Remarks at the International Monetary Fund/World Bank Annual Meeting October 6, 1998

Kosovo

Thank you very much. Secretary Rubin, my friend President Menem, Minister Fernandez, Managing Director Camdessus, President Wolfensohn, Dr. Ruttenstorfer, ladies and gentlemen: Before I begin my remarks, I hope you will permit me to say a few words about another issue of real concern to the international community, about which I have been working already this morning, the subject of Kosovo.

I have been on the phone with many of my counterparts, and I just was speaking with Prime Minister Blair, who is in China. We all agree that Kosovo is a powder keg in the Balkans. If the violence continues, it could spill over and threaten the peace and stability of Bosnia, of Albania, of Macedonia, and other countries in the region. What is already a humanitarian crisis could turn into a catastrophe.

Some 250,000 people have been forced to flee their homes. Of that number, approximately 50,000 are actually homeless. As winter sets in, they risk freezing or starving to death. President Milosevic is primarily responsible for this crisis. The United Nations has made clear the steps we must take to end it: declare an immediate cease-fire, withdraw Serb security forces, give humanitarian relief groups full and immediate access to Kosovo, begin real negotiations with the Kosovar Albanians to find a peaceful and permanent solution to their rightful demand for autonomy.

As we meet here, my Special Envoy, Dick Holbrooke, is meeting with President Milosevic to reiterate what he must do and to make clear

that NATO is prepared to act if President Milosevic fails to honor the United Nations resolutions. The stakes are high. The time is now to end the violence in Kosovo. I hope all of you will do whatever you can to that end.

International Monetary Fund/World Bank

Now to the matter at hand. A half century ago, a visionary generation of leaders gathered at Bretton Woods to build a new economy to serve the citizens of every nation. In one of his last messages to Congress, President Franklin Roosevelt said that the creation of the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank, and I quote, "spelled the difference between a world caught again in the maelstrom of panic and economic warfare, or a world in which nations strive for a better life through mutual trust, cooperation, and assistance."

The Bretton Woods generation built a platform for prosperity that has lasted down to the present day. Economic freedom and political liberty has spread across the globe. Since 1945, global trade has grown fifteenfold. Since 1970 alone, infant mortality in the poorest countries is down by 40 percent; access to safe drinking water has tripled; life expectancy has increased dramatically. Even now, despite the difficulties of recent days, per capita incomes in Korea and Thailand are 60 percent higher than they were a decade ago. A truly global market economy has lifted the lives of billions of people.

But as we are all acutely aware, today the world faces perhaps its most serious financial crisis in half a century. The gains of global economic exchange have been real and dramatic.