

Remarks to the Community in Newport, Rhode Island December 3, 1998

Thank you. First of all, I want to thank Teri Sullivan for her introduction and for her work here for you. She's up here with all these politicians. I think she did a good job, don't you? Let's give her another hand. *[Applause]*

I'd like to thank Governor Almond, Senator Chafee, Senator Reed, Senator Pell, it's great to see you again; Congressman Kennedy, Congressman Weygand. I know that—and, Mr. Mayor, thank you for making me feel so welcome here today. I met you, members of the Newport City Council. I think former Governor Sundlun is here. John DeVillars is our EPA Regional Administrator. And your secretary of state, James Langevin, members of the legislature, I thank you all.

I'd also like to say that I have two staff members who are here from Rhode Island, and I brought them home today, Karen Tramontano and Marjorie Tarmey. I thank them for their service. Thank you all for being here.

You know, when Patrick Kennedy was up here speaking, he said that I had been to Rhode Island five times. President Eisenhower came right over there and stayed in that big yellow house and played golf. But only President Kennedy had been here more times. And I told the Governor, I said, "If you'll give me President Eisenhower's house and access to the golf course, I'll break the Kennedy record." *[Laughter]*

Actually, I feel compelled to admit, since we're here in this setting, that when I was a boy growing up, my greatest aspiration was to come to Rhode Island to play in the Newport Jazz Festival. And I always thought as a child, you know, when I was 16, I thought that would be the measure of my success. I couldn't have dreamed I'd become President. I thought, if I could just play one time in the Newport Jazz Festival, I would know I had arrived. It's not too late; in a couple of years maybe you'll let me come back when I get practiced up and play.

On the way in here, I thanked Senator Chafee in particular for his help in trying to sensitize the Congress to the great challenge of climate change and global warming. But on this magnificent December day in Rhode Island, it's hard

to see it as a threat, I must say. I appreciate this wonderful day. I'm glad to be in the "city by the sea," the once and future home of the America's Cup.

I thank you, too, for being such a vital center of our United States Navy. And I also thank you for the work done here to save the bay. I learned, in preparation for this trip, there's a documentary on the origin of the Star-Spangled Banner airing tonight, filmed right here at Fort Adams, overlooking this majestic sweep of the Narragansett Bay. The film, obviously, is about events which occurred during the War of 1812, in the battle surrounding Fort McHenry. Interestingly enough, it was shortly after that that the British came up the Potomac and burned the White House, completely gutting it inside, nearly destroying it totally. I think it's very interesting that that film was made here, and that's because the Narragansett Bay looks almost the same today as it did 200 years ago. You can be very, very proud of that, and I hope you are.

I came here today because I wanted to showcase your remarkable efforts to save this bay. I hope this picture will be broadcast all across the United States to people this afternoon and this evening. But I also wanted to talk about how your community and all communities across our Nation can protect our precious water resources, from the tap water to the rivers to the lakes to the ocean.

Last week, on Thanksgiving, all Americans had the opportunity—and I hope we took it—to give thanks for these good times in our country. This month our economy will achieve the longest peacetime expansion in American history. We have nearly 17 million new jobs, the lowest unemployment in 28 years, the lowest percentage of our people on welfare in 29 years, the first balanced budget and surplus in 29 years. For the first time in over 20 years the wages of all groups of Americans, all income groups, are on the rise. Homeownership is the highest in American history.

In Rhode Island, unemployment is down to 5 percent. There's a lot of new construction going on here in Newport. The Navy is building the Strategic Maritime Research Center. High-

tech industries are flourishing. Our country has a lot to be thankful for.

But I think the question we should be asking ourselves now, particularly with all the financial turmoil going on in the rest of the world, is what are we to make of the success America has now? Should we just relax and enjoy it? Or should we instead say, this is a unique moment for us, and we need to use this moment of prosperity and confidence to look ahead to this new century, to the challenges our children will face, and do our best to use the resources we have now to meet the challenges of tomorrow? I think it is clearly what we should be doing, and I think most Americans agree.

So when you list those challenges—giving all of our children a world-class education so they compete in the global economy; making sure all of our people have access to quality health care and the protections in our Patients' Bill of Rights; making sure that we have made the changes in the global economy necessary to avert the kind of terrible financial crises we've seen engulfing Asia; saving Social Security for the 21st century in a way that does not bankrupt the children of the baby boomers; and finally, I will predict to you, the challenge of improving the environment, from global warming to cleaning up the oceans, to preserving our natural heritage, to preserving the cleanness of our water and air, to dealing with the problems of toxic waste—all of these issues, I predict to you—you look at all the children here—will dominate America's public debate for the next 30 years.

We now know something very important. We were talking about—your congressional delegation and I were talking about it when we got off the plane today. We know something very important. We know that for the last several years technological advances have made it possible for us to grow our economy while improving the environment. Most people who have control over decisions still believe that in order to grow the economy you have to destroy the environment, and they just want to destroy it as slowly as possible. That is simply not true anymore. And I came here to Rhode Island to say the American people need to lead the way into the 21st century in saving the environment.

Now, I also want to say that the only way we're ever going to make it is if we make this commitment as Americans, across party lines,

across regional lines, and across all the lines of our various occupations and our different perspectives.

The first great environmental President of the United States was Theodore Roosevelt, a great progressive Republican. When he launched our Nation on the course of conservation at the dawn of our century, there were pessimists then who claimed that protecting the environment and expanding the economy were incompatible. The American people proved them wrong and Theodore Roosevelt right.

Then they said cutting pollution from cars would cause our economy to break down by the side of the road when we established air quality measures for automobiles. But we now have the most powerful automobile industry in the world again. America, in the last 3 years, has become number one in auto production again, because our people are doing a good job with cleaner cars that are more productive and more efficient. It didn't wreck our economy; it just helped our environment.

There were people who said if we banned deadly pesticides, it would cause American agriculture to wither and decline, but they were wrong. The more pure we have made the production of our food, the more our farmers have come to dominate worldwide competition in agriculture.

There were those who said if we acted in New England to curb acid rain, it would be the worst economic disaster since Noah's flood. Well, they were wrong. The last 6 years proved them wrong.

And I can give you example after example. Every time Americans have tried to clean the air, to clean the water, to look to the future, there have been those who said, "If you do this, it will wreck the economy."

Now, let's use our imagination. Every time you figure out how to make the water cleaner, someone has to discover something; someone has to make it; someone has to adapt all the machinery to use it. That creates a lot of jobs. Every time you figure out how to run a car on natural gas or on electricity, you create a whole new set of jobs for people. Every time you figure out how to advance the cause of clean water—when we have to deal with the challenges of cleaning up the ocean, which will be a huge challenge that will directly affect the lives and the quality of life of every child in this audience, it will create a lot of jobs.

We have got to get over this idea that protecting our environment and the quality of our lives is somehow bad for the economy. It will be one of the cheap generators of high-wage jobs in the 21st century, and I hope you here in Rhode Island will lead the way.

With the strong support of your congressional delegation, we have launched an historic plan to help communities clean up our rivers and streams, because every river in America should be healthy enough for our children to fish and swim. As I think at least one of your Members said earlier, the balanced budget I signed in October will allow us to protect dozens of more natural and historic sites around the country, including the Rhode Island National Wildlife Refuge Complex, the last remaining undeveloped coastal habitat in southern New England. And I thank all the officials here and the Vice President, who also lobbied very strongly for this.

Now, we are moving forward. We also had, as you heard, two Rhode Island rivers—and since you pronounced *cryptosporidium*, Senator Reed, I will try to pronounce the Woonasquatucket River—[applause]—and the Blackstone River as American Heritage Rivers. We're working with you to solve the problems that led to beach closings and to restore critical habitats damaged by the North Cape oil spill. We must restore your valuable lobster fishery and preserve forever the health of your cherished coast.

We also have to do more on the water we drink. As Senator Chafee said, with his great help and others, we strengthened the Safe Drinking Water Act 2 years ago with a virtually unanimous vote in Congress, to zero in on contaminants that posed the greatest threat, to help communities upgrade treatment plants like the fine one I just visited.

This past summer I announced a new rule requiring utilities across the country to provide their customers regular reports on the quality of their drinking water. When it comes to the water our children drink, Americans cannot be too vigilant.

Today I want to announce three other actions I am taking. First, we're escalating our attack on the invisible microbes that sometimes creep into the water supply. You heard Senator Reed refer to the tragic episode 5 years ago, early in my Presidency in Milwaukee, when *cryptosporidium* contaminated the city's drinking

water, killing dozens of people, and literally making more than 400,000 people sick.

Today, the new standards we put in place will significantly reduce the risk from *cryptosporidium* and other microbes, to ensure that no community ever has to endure an outbreak like the one the people of Milwaukee suffered.

Second, we are taking steps to ensure that when we treat our water, we do it as safely as possible. One of the great health advances to the 20th century is the control of typhoid, cholera, and other diseases with disinfectants. Most of the children in this audience have never heard of typhoid or cholera, but their grandparents cowered in fear of it, and their great-grandparents took it as a fact of life that it would take away significant numbers of the young people of their generation.

But as with so many advances, there are tradeoffs. We now see that some of the disinfectants we use to protect our water can actually combine with natural substances to create harmful compounds. So today I'm announcing new standards to significantly reduce our exposure to these harmful byproducts, to give our families greater peace of mind with their water.

The third thing we are doing today is to help communities meet these higher standards, releasing almost \$800 million to help communities in all 50 States to upgrade their drinking water systems, including more than \$7 million for communities right here in Rhode Island, to give 140 million Americans safer drinking water.

Now, this is the sort of thing that we ought to be doing in America: tending to America's business, reaching across party lines, looking into the future, thinking about our children. I think it is a very important day.

Let me say that, as you think about the future, I hope you will think about how America will look in 10 or 20 or 30 years. I hope you will tell all your elected representatives, without regard to party: We're on the edge of a new century and a new millennium; we're in a period of unusual economic prosperity; we have the confidence; we have the resources; and we have the knowledge necessary to deal with these big challenges. You don't have every, every year in life when you can deal with the big challenges. How many times in your own lives have you had to worry about just how you were going to put the next meal on the table, how you

were going to confront the next family emergency, how you were going to deal with the issue right in front of you?

Countries are like that, too. But now we have this chance, this precious chance to think about our children and our grandchildren and the big problems that they face. The environment is one of them. We ought to seize this chance, and do it for our children.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 1:05 p.m. at the oceanfront at Fort Adams State Park. In his remarks, he referred to Teri S. Sullivan, microbiologist, City of Newport Water Department, who introduced the President; Gov. Lincoln Almond and former Gov. Bruce Sundlun of Rhode Island; former Senator Claiborne Pell; and Mayor David S. Gordon of Newport.

Statement on the Decision by Mayor Kurt Schmoke of Baltimore, Maryland, Not To Seek Reelection

December 3, 1998

Since becoming President in 1993, it has been my good fortune to work very closely with Mayor Kurt Schmoke on issues about which the residents of Baltimore and our Nation care. He has been a wonderful partner in our efforts to improve the quality of education for all children, increase the availability of health care and housing, enhance economic development in our inner cities, and revitalize our neighborhoods.

In addition, Mayor Schmoke has been a dependable ally in our efforts to make our streets free from drugs and guns.

I am grateful to the mayor for his public service to Baltimore and our Nation, and I look forward to making the most use of every day remaining in his current term of office to continue our work together.

Letter to Congressional Leaders Reporting on the National Emergency With Respect to the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro)

December 3, 1998

Dear Mr. Speaker: (Dear Mr. President:)

On May 30, 1992, by Executive Order 12808, President Bush declared a national emergency to deal with the unusual and extraordinary threat to the national security, foreign policy, and economy of the United States constituted by the actions and policies of the Governments of Serbia and Montenegro, blocking all property and interests in property of those Governments. President Bush took additional measures to prohibit trade and other transactions with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) by Executive Orders 12810 and 12831, issued on June 5, 1992, and January 15, 1993, respectively.

On April 25, 1993, I issued Executive Order 12846, blocking the property and interests in property of all commercial, industrial, or public utility undertakings or entities organized or located in the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia (Serbia and Montenegro) (the "FRY (S&M)"), and prohibiting trade-related transactions by United States persons involving those areas of the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina controlled by the Bosnian Serb forces and the United Nations Protected Areas in the Republic of Croatia. On October 25, 1994, because of the actions and policies of the Bosnian Serbs, I expanded the scope of the national emergency by issuance of Executive Order 12934 to block the property of the Bosnian Serb forces and