

## Remarks Prior to the House Judiciary Committee Vote on the First Article of Impeachment *December 11, 1998*

Good afternoon. As anyone close to me knows, for months I have been grappling with how best to reconcile myself to the American people, to acknowledge my own wrongdoing, and still to maintain my focus on the work of the Presidency.

Others are presenting my defense on the facts, the law, and the Constitution. Nothing I can say now can add to that. What I want the American people to know, what I want the Congress to know, is that I am profoundly sorry for all I have done wrong in words and deeds. I never should have misled the country, the Congress, my friends, or my family. Quite simply, I gave in to my shame.

I have been condemned by my accusers with harsh words. And while it's hard to hear yourself called deceitful and manipulative, I remember Ben Franklin's admonition that our critics are our friends, for they do show us our faults.

Mere words cannot fully express the profound remorse I feel for what our country is going through and for what members of both parties in Congress are now forced to deal with.

These past months have been a tortuous process of coming to terms with what I did. I understand that accountability demands consequences, and I'm prepared to accept them. Painful though the condemnation of the Congress would be, it would pale in comparison to the consequences of the pain I have caused my family. There is no greater agony.

Like anyone who honestly faces the shame of wrongful conduct, I would give anything to go back and undo what I did. But one of the painful truths I have to live with is the reality

that that is simply not possible. An old and dear friend of mine recently sent me the wisdom of a poet, who wrote:

The Moving Finger writes; and, having writ,  
Moves on: nor all your piety nor wit  
Shall lure it back to cancel half a line,  
Nor all your tears wash out a word of it.

So nothing, not piety, nor tears, nor wit, nor torment, can alter what I have done. I must make my peace with that. I must also be at peace with the fact that the public consequences of my actions are in the hands of the American people and their Representatives in the Congress. Should they determine that my errors of word and deed require their rebuke and censure, I am ready to accept that.

Meanwhile, I will continue to do all I can to reclaim the trust of the American people and to serve them well. We must all return to the work, the vital work, of strengthening our Nation for the new century. Our country has wonderful opportunities and daunting challenges ahead. I intend to seize those opportunities and meet those challenges with all the energy and ability and strength God has given me.

That is simply all I can do: the work of the American people.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:10 p.m. in the Rose Garden at the White House. At approximately 4:25 p.m. the Committee on the Judiciary of the House of Representatives voted the first article of impeachment.

## The President's Radio Address *December 12, 1998*

Good morning. This month, as Americans begin to prepare for winter, our Nation's farmers begin to prepare for the spring planting ahead. But this year has been very hard on farmers—for some, the hardest in nearly two

decades—and many are strained to the breaking point. Today I want to talk about what we're doing to help America's farmers weather these hard times and to build a stronger safety net to protect them for years to come.

We're living in a remarkable time of prosperity and even greater promise for our future. Our economy is the strongest in a generation, with more than 17 million new jobs, family incomes rising, the lowest unemployment in nearly 30 years, the lowest inflation in more than 30 years, the smallest percentage of people on welfare in 29 years, and the highest homeownership in history.

America's farmers have helped to build this new prosperity, but far too many of our farming communities are not reaping its benefits. Flood and drought and crop disease have wiped out entire harvests in some parts of the country. Plummeting prices here at home and collapsing markets in Asia have threatened the livelihood of some farming communities.

Wherever we live and whatever work we do, every American has a stake in the strength of rural America. America's farmers are the backbone of our economy and the lifeblood of our land. Our farming families stand for the values that have kept our Nation strong for over 220 years: hard work, faith and family, perseverance, and patience. We can't afford to let them fail.

Last summer we took action to ease the immediate crisis on our farms. We began buying millions of tons of wheat and other food to ease the burden of dropping prices here at home and to feed hungry people in Africa, Russia, and all over the world. I signed legislation to speed farm program payments to farmers, who need the money now to start planting for next spring. And I called on the Congress to take action to help farmers survive this year's one-two punch from Mother Nature and the marketplace.

I am pleased to say that this October, as part of our balanced budget, I signed legislation that included a \$6 billion plan for farmers in need. This November we started putting the plan into action, with nearly \$3 billion in income assistance to farmers who have seen their profits wither as crop prices fell. Today I am pleased to announce the next major step to ease the crisis on our farms, nearly \$2½ billion in emer-

gency aid for farmers who have lost crops and livestock.

But with too many farm families still in danger of losing their land, and with crop prices still far too low, we know we must do more to strengthen the safety net for our Nation's farmers. Government has an important role to play in meeting this challenge, but it's not something Government can do alone. Ultimately, America's farmers will keep America's farms growing strong.

We know that no one can fully predict the changing weather or changing prices, but every farmer knows that crop insurance is one of the best ways to protect against the worst risks of farming. In good times, crop insurance gives farming families the security they need to thrive and grow. And in hard times, crop insurance can mean the difference between a spring planting and a spring sale of the family farm. But far too many farmers don't have crop insurance at all or only buy the bare minimum, not enough to withstand a really devastating year.

We need to do more to enable family farmers to fully protect themselves in hard times. That's why I am pleased to announce the funds we're releasing include \$400 million in new incentives for farmers to buy crop insurance. We'll give farmers a one-time premium discount of up to 35 percent when they expand their crop insurance, and that will give our farming families greater security and more peace of mind.

Together, these steps will help thousands of farmers around our country to recover from this difficult time and plant a seed of hope for the future, not only for stronger farms but for a stronger America in the 21st century.

Thanks for listening.

NOTE: The address was recorded at 7:30 p.m. on December 11 in the Roosevelt Room at the White House for broadcast at 10:06 a.m. on December 12. The transcript was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on December 11 but was embargoed for release until the broadcast.