

you think about what we're spending money on and you say, "Well, Max, I want more for education," or, "Max, I want a tax cut," or, "Max, I want you to spend more money on building us some more highways here"—just keep in mind, you're thinking, "Well, I'm giving him \$100, right, in taxes." Well, you're not. You're giving him \$87 in taxes, because you've got to take 13 off the top just to pay interest on the debt we've run up.

Now, if we do what I'm suggesting, not only can we deal with the financial crisis in Social Security and Medicare, 15 years from now—and, again, it won't be me, I won't be there—but 15 years from now the Members of Congress will only be taking 2 cents on the dollar for interest on the debt. They'll be spending the money on Social Security, Medicare, education, investing in a peaceful world, giving you tax cuts, whatever. But don't you think it makes sense for us to take care of the Social Security and Medicare problems and to pay the debt down and to secure our economic strength? I mean, I think it makes a lot of sense.

So I came here today to help a man I admire. I came here today to thank you for sticking with me and for giving me the chance to serve and giving the country the chance to have these good things happen. And I'd like to make just a whoop-de-do speech. But I owe it to you to tell you that this new century will present

us with unparalleled new opportunities and unforeseen new challenges. And our predecessors, the people that were here 5 years ago and 10 years ago and 15 years ago were up to their ears in alligators. They did not have the opportunity that we have to take the confidence, the economic success, the things we've got now, and think about the long-term welfare of the country.

And if you believe what I said when I started and you clapped—50 years ago I was raised to believe that everybody could live out their dreams, but that we had responsibilities to one another to live in one community—then let's act like that now and give those gifts to our children.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:20 p.m. in the Stephen F. Austin Ballroom at the Four Points Hotel Sheraton. In his remarks, he referred to Leslie Sandlin, wife of Representative Sandlin; Mayor James W. Bramlett of Texarkana; event cohosts former Bowie County Judge Edward Miller, Texas Democratic Party Chair Molly Beth Malcolm, and Texarkana City Council member Willie Ray; John D. Rafaelli, owner, Four Points Hotel Sheraton; the President's brother, Roger Clinton, and his wife, Molly, and their son, Tyler; and the President's stepfather Richard Kelley.

Statement on the Accession of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic as Members of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization

March 12, 1999

I welcome the accession today of Poland, Hungary, and the Czech Republic as NATO's newest members. The people of these three nations know what it means to lose their freedom. For years they struggled with dignity and courage to regain their freedom. And now they will help us defend it for many years to come. Their membership will make America safer. It will make NATO stronger. And it will help us realize our common vision of a Europe that is for the first time undivided, democratic, and at peace.

For 3 days, beginning on April 23, NATO's 19 members will meet in Washington for the

50th anniversary summit of our alliance, joined by our partners from across the new Europe. We will honor NATO's achievements in protecting peace and security. We will also prepare our alliance to meet the challenges ahead, strengthen our partnership with Europe's newly democratic nations, and reaffirm our commitment that NATO's newest members will not be the last.