

Statement on Senator John H. Chafee's Decision Not To Seek Reelection
March 15, 1999

For more than a generation, Senator John Chafee has been a strong leader for his beloved Rhode Island and for America. He has been a tireless champion of our environment—helping to lead the fight against global warming, promoting wetlands conservation, and crafting legislation for clean air and safe drinking water. On

behalf of all Americans, I thank him for his many contributions, including his leadership in expanding health care to more women and children and improving services for people with disabilities. It is truly a rich legacy for America. Hillary and I wish John and his family all the best in the years to come.

Statement on the Cuban Government's Sentencing of Human Rights Activists
March 15, 1999

I am deeply disappointed that the Cuban Government has sentenced four courageous human rights activists—Vladimiro Roca, Felix Bonne, Rene Gomez Manzano, and Marta Beatriz Roque—to prison terms. They did nothing more than assert their right to speak freely about their country's future, call on their Gov-

ernment to respect basic human rights, and seek a peaceful transition to democracy for the long-suffering Cuban people. They were tried without a fair process, behind closed doors. I call on the Cuban Government to release them immediately.

Message to the Congress Transmitting a Report on the National Emergency With Respect to Iran
March 15, 1999

To the Congress of the United States:

As required by section 401(c) of the National Emergencies Act, 50 U.S.C. 1641(c), section 204(c) of the International Emergency Economic Powers Act (IEEPA), 50 U.S.C. 1703(c), and section 505(c) of the International Security and Development Cooperation Act of 1985, 22 U.S.C. 2349aa-9(c), I transmit herewith a 6-

month periodic report on the national emergency with respect to Iran that was declared in Executive Order 12957 of March 15, 1995.

WILLIAM J. CLINTON

The White House,
March 15, 1999.

Remarks at the Sixth Millennium Evening at the White House
March 15, 1999

The President. Thank you. First of all, let me welcome all of you here tonight and thank our participants. I will be very brief, because

the only thing that frustrates me about these Millennial Evenings is that you will be amazed—we will get literally thousands of

questions that will start coming in on the Internet and lots of frustrated people out there. So I don't want to take a lot of time.

I would like to say again—I think I speak for all of us—when Hillary had the idea to do these evenings, I thought they sounded interesting or at least maybe most of them would be interesting. [Laughter] They have all turned out to be fascinating, and each in their own way better than the ones before. And I think this is a great gift she has given our country for the millennium, and I thank her for it.

The remarks generated scores of questions in my mind and one fact I want to say. If you ever want an example of whether or not the gender gap exists, you are looking at it—[laughter]—because I would not be here if it did not exist. Or if it did not exist in the right way, I would have had bigger margins, depending on how you look at it. [Laughter]

One of the things I wish that somebody would comment on before we get through—although, it's not my question—is, if women learn different ways of doing things through the century of struggle, how would this Congress be different if the party divisions were exactly the same, but 55 percent of the Members were women? That would be interesting. I don't know the answer to that, but feel free to comment if anyone wants to. [Laughter]

I want to ask Professor Kessler-Harris to answer a question that has concerned me quite a great deal, just from remembering the patterns of life with my working grandmother and my working mother. Now that we have opened more opportunities for women in the workplace, but they still are spending, I think, even in two-parent households, more than half of the time spent raising children, and we've even opened more opportunities for women in the political workplace, and more are being opened all the time, I would like to have you comment on what you think the potential is for voluntary citizens' groups of women to still produce both social movements and specific legislative changes. That is, will voluntary groups still have the same impact? And if so, how are we going to continue to encourage that?

Because I think that that's really the unique story of the whole 20th century, all those parades and everything we saw in the films. Will more women in the workplace, still having to raise the kids—and in the political workplace, which may make women think they're rep-

resented in more ordinary ways—lead to a reduction or an increase in these voluntary associations? And what are some specific examples where we might see voluntary movements produce social movements and legislative change?

[At this point, the discussion continued.]

The President. I just wanted to say one thing that I have learned from a lifetime of sort of listening to the way people talk and relate. And this goes to Deborah's—the previous question, too. I think if you will really study the Americans and how they vote, you will see that sometimes they vote based on income, sometimes they vote based on racial experience, sometimes they vote on philosophy. But a lot of the gender gap is a cultural gap; it's almost about the way we relate to one another and define winning and losing in our own lives.

And I think in order for men to ever get through this, one of the things that men are raised to believe is that fulfillment and success is defined in terms of winning and control; whereas people who—women, historically, have had more nurturing roles. They have to raise their children. So you don't think—maybe you have to control your child for a while, but sooner or later you even give up on that. But winning is defined not just as winning against someone else, but it's doing something in the context of your family, in the context of your childrearing.

And I think a lot of subconscious patterns that men are raised with make it almost impossible for them to really get there on this issue. And I think that for a father to raise a son to believe that there is a way to win in life and find fulfillment in a shared victory and shared decisionmaking and not always victory over someone else and continued control over someone else, I think it's something that takes some doing.

But it's something that doesn't come naturally to men once we've been socialized. And I think that's an important part of this, and that until we can change it, it will never be just like it should be.

[At this point, the discussion continued.]

The President. Thank you, Vicky. First of all, I'm sure all of you here know how deplorable the conditions are for women in Afghanistan. Hillary and I had an event here at the White

House not very long ago; we had two Afghan women here, among others, to sort of stand for what women in their country are going through.

I want someone in the audience to help me. There is a national organization of women, a group now focused on this, and most of the leaders are in California, although some in the East Coast—Ann, what's the name of it?

Ms. Ann Lewis. The Feminist Majority. And Ellie Smeal is here—

The President. Yes, Ellie is here working—Feminist Majority is working on it. And I'm going to have a meeting with some of their leaders pretty soon to talk about what more I can do, aside from not recognizing the Taliban and speaking against it.

I think the important thing is that we need people to support this organization. We need women and men around the country to engage in contributing to a common effort to highlight what is going on, who is being hurt, what the consequences are to the society as a whole, and what we can do to help the people that are being hurt.

This is the 50th anniversary of the International Declaration of Human Rights. It is simply not acceptable to say that this is nothing more than an expression of religious convictions. We just had an election in Iran, local elections. There were hundreds of women candidates. We see, even in Iraq, a country we have serious differences with, their women are not subject to these sorts of constraints because they are women.

And I think that the most important thing I could say to an ordinary citizen is, write your Member of Congress and tell them not to acknowledge or recognize the Government under any circumstances until there are changes, and get in touch with the Feminist Majority and get all the material and make sure that you are doing whatever you can do to help those women over there and to give support for the ones that are sticking their necks out to try to change things.

[At this point, the discussion continued.]

The President. When the Founders wrote the documents that got us all started, they said they were doing all this so that we could better protect life and liberty and pursue happiness. And even they were smart enough to know that they weren't really writing that for white male prop-

erty owners only, even though those were the only folks that could vote then.

So a great deal of the history of this country is about the expansion of the notion of liberty, with notions of equality and justice. And we hardly ever think about what they meant by the pursuit of happiness. They didn't mean riding the rides at the county fair. They really meant the pursuit of a good life, dreaming dreams and trying to live them.

When I think about what the women's issues of the 21st century will be, I do think there will still be some significant liberty, equality issues related to wealth and power, closing the wage gap, the earnings gap, dealing with the enormously complicated problem of the fact that there are more elderly women than men—because you may be genetically superior to us after all—[laughter]—and that, as a consequence, their poverty rate is twice the rate of elderly men, breaking all the glass ceilings that have been alluded to.

But I predict to you that there will be increasing focus, more than any time in our history, on the latter purpose of our getting together as a nation, and that is the pursuit of happiness. And I believe that will require us to deal with questions of balance and interdependence, more than ever before. The one we talked about a little tonight is a balance between work and family. There is no more important job for any society than raising children. And men have to recognize that, too. But I think that will be a big deal, how to balance work and family.

The other big balance questions will come involved with how do you keep society together with all the diversity we share, not just gender but the racial diversity, the cultural diversity, the religious diversity? And women will be uniquely positioned to play a major role in that.

And finally—I'll just give one other example because we're running out of time—how do we balance our obligation to prosper as well as we can and preserve the planet in the face of the evidence on climate change and other things?

So I believe there will be a huge challenge, which is an enormous opportunity for women, in the whole area of our pursuit of happiness, properly defined.

When Susan B. Anthony came here in 1906 and gave what turned out to be her last public comment, in a church here in Washington, DC, the last public words she ever uttered were, "Failure is impossible." I am persuaded by the

presence of you in this crowd and those whom you represent that on the edge of a new century, she's still right.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The White House Millennium Evening began at 7:35 p.m. in the East Room at the White House. The panelists participating in the program, entitled "Women as Citizens: Vital Voices Through the Century," were: Alice Kessler-Harris, professor, Columbia University; Nancy Cott, professor, Yale University; and Ruth Sim-

mons, president, Smith College. In his remarks, the President referred to Deborah Tannen, professor, Georgetown University; Vicky LeBlanc, attorney in Delafield, WI; and Eleanor Smeal, president, Feminist Majority. The discussion following the panelists was moderated by Ellen Lovell, Director, White House Millennium Council. The transcript released by the Office of the Press Secretary also included the remarks of the First Lady and the panelists and the question-and-answer portion of the evening. The lecture was cybercast on the Internet.

Remarks to the Conference on United States-Africa Partnership for the 21st Century

March 16, 1999

Thank you. Good morning. Let me say, first of all, to Minister Ouedraogo, thank you for your fine address and for your leadership. Secretary General Salim, Secretary-General Annan, Secretary Albright, to our distinguished ministers and ambassadors and other officials from 46 African nations and the representatives of the Cabinet and the United States Government. I am delighted to see you all here today. We are honored by your presence in the United States and excited about what it means for our common future.

A year ago next week I set out on my journey to Africa. It was, for me, for my wife, and for many people who took that trip, an utterly unforgettable and profoundly moving experience. I went to Africa in the hope not only that I would learn but that the process of the trip itself and the publicity that our friends in the press would give it would cause Americans and Africans to see each other in a new light, not denying the lingering effects of slavery, colonialism, the cold war, but to focus on a new future, to build a new chapter of history, a new era of genuine partnership.

A year later, we have to say there has been a fair measure of hope, and some new disappointments. War still tears at the heart of Africa. Congo, Sierra Leone, Angola, Sudan have not yet resolved their conflicts. Ethiopia and Eritrea are mired in a truly tragic dispute we have done our best to try to help avoid. Violence still steals innocent lives in the Great Lakes re-

gion. In the last year, Nairobi and Dar es Salaam became battlefields in a terrorist campaign that killed and wounded thousands of Africans, along with Americans working there for a different future.

But there have also been promising new developments. The recent elections in Nigeria give Africa's most populous country, finally, a chance to realize its enormous potential. It's transition may not be complete, but let's not forget, just a year ago it was unthinkable. This June, for the first time, South Africa will transfer power from one fully democratic government to another.

More than half the sub-Saharan nations are now governed by elected leaders. Many, such as Benin, Mali, and Tanzania, have fully embraced open government and open markets. Quite a few have recorded strong economic growth, including Mozambique, crippled by civil war not long ago. Ghana's economy has grown by 5 percent a year since 1992.

All of you here have contributed to this progress. All are eager to make the next century better than the last. You share a great responsibility, for you are the architects of Africa's future.

Today I would like to talk about the tangible ways we can move forward with our partnership. Since our trip to Africa, my administration has worked hard to do more. We've created a \$120 million educational initiative to link schools in Africa to schools in this country. We've created