

I believe we can do more together than we can apart. I like the fact that we all look different from each other, but I think what we have in common is more important than even all the interesting things that we have that are different about us.

And believe me, the big threat the world faces today is the marriage of modern integrating technologies with the negative disintegrating forces of people with primitive notions that their lives only matter when they've got somebody they can look down on, somebody they can put their foot down on their neck on, somebody they can—lift themselves up by pushing somebody else down, whether it's in Northern Ireland, the Middle East, Bosnia, the tribal wars in Africa, or you name it.

You plug all that negative stuff into access to how to make missiles, how to make chemical weapons, how to make biological weapons, how to jam records, computer records in banks or powerplants, or all these sort of—you know, what may seem like fictional scenarios. That is

the threat our children will face, the combination of primitive disintegration with modern integrating technology.

And we, America, we have to say, "Hey, the people that started us were right." We have—out of many, we must be one. And we've got to be willing to carry our load in the world. And today, I can tell you that the Democratic Party, by far, is more likely to bring that kind of approach to the world, and home to every American community. And in the end it counts more than everything else.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:27 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, Beth Dozoretz, national finance chair, and former Gov. Roy Romer of Colorado, general chair, Democratic National Committee; Tom and Chris Downey, dinner hosts; and William A.K. Titelman, executive vice president, managed care and government affairs, Rite Aid Corp.

Remarks at the Unveiling of a Portrait of Former Secretary of Commerce Ronald H. Brown

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Thank you very much. Let me, first of all, say I thought Secretary Daley did a remarkable job today, and he was the funniest I have ever heard him—[laughter]—which means either that the Commerce Department has been very good for him, or he has found an extraordinary speechwriter. [Laughter] If it is the former, I thank you. If it is the latter, I would like that person dispatched to the White House this afternoon. [Laughter]

I want to thank Congressman Ford and Mr. Mayor and all of our Cabinet for being here. And Mickey, Heidi, thank you for being here; members of the Brown family. This is both a happy and a bittersweet day. We are now in the springtime, even though Washington is not quite behaving like it yet. Soon the dogwood that we planted on the back of the White House lawn will be blooming for Ron again. And now this portrait will be here forever, to remind us all of his service and his spirit. Mr. Polson, I

think you did a terrific job, and I congratulate you. We love it.

If Ron Brown were here, I know exactly what he'd say. He'd say, "Well, you did well. I'm dressed well"—[laughter]—"and I look very strong. But you could have made me a little thinner." [Laughter]

And I'd just like to just take a minute to remind all of you about the spirit. Secretary Daley was kind enough to say that I had tried to elevate the Commerce Department. I think that is true, but I would like to just say a word about it as it relates to Ron Brown.

After the election of 1992, when we were putting together our economic team and I had been listening rather carefully to what others had said and what I had seen about previous administrations and how they ran their economic policy, it seemed to me that, by and large, previous administrations had lodged the making of economic policy too much either in Treasury or the White House, or both, and had sort of

overlooked the integral role of Commerce and our Trade Ambassador, on a daily basis, to the development of our long-term economic well-being.

Same thing could be said of other departments, the Agriculture Department, the Energy Department—how they were needed to make a joint economic policy. And so we put together this National Economic Council to integrate all the Departments. And then we decided to elevate the economic role particularly of the Commerce Department, and to try to bring the Trade Ambassador into the daily work of the economic life of the administration, not just when there was some big trade negotiation going on.

And I think the evidence is, it worked pretty well. But it worked pretty well in no small measure because Ron Brown was here and Mickey Kantor was our Trade Ambassador and because Ron Brown believed me when I told him that I thought the Commerce Department had been grossly underutilized, at least in recent history, in terms of building the economic potential of America, within our country and beyond our borders. So he bought the big idea, and then he sold the big idea.

But the second point I want to make is that he did it, in no small measure, because of the spirit you see reflected in the set of the jaw and the glance of the eyes in this fine portrait. He basically believed there was no mountain that couldn't be climbed. He believed that American businesses had a responsibility to act in their enlightened self-interest to help themselves and others, here at home and around the world.

He also believed that people driven by ancient hatreds could find a way to put them aside. I will never forget how excited he was in the last conversation we had right before he left for Bosnia, how proud he was that he could lead a delegation of American business people to the Balkans to try to make peace.

Well, the peace process is working in Bosnia. As all of you know, it's under siege again in the Balkans because of what is going on in Kosovo. I don't want to talk about that here today except to say that there are basically two kinds of people that are dominating the public

discourse around the world today: There are people that are determined to divide and drive wedges between and depress people because they're of different ethnic and racial and religious groups; and then there are people like Ron Brown who believe that everybody ought to be lifted up and brought together and don't understand why anyone would waste lives and take other people's lives to gain a false sense of power in a smaller and smaller life based on oppression.

And when you look at this picture today, when you go out, first of all, I want all the members of the Commerce Department to be proud of what you are doing, proud of what he did, and proud of what you are doing under Secretary Daley, who has also, in my judgment, done a magnificent job. And I want you to think about the troubles of the world today, and I want you to see your life as an instrument of bringing out the spirit that Ron Brown brought to his life and his work in this Department every day and think about it for what it is, the principal opposing force to all this destructive racial, ethnic, religious, and cultural destruction we see all over the world today.

Every country has to make that choice, and in a way, every business has to make that choice, and every person has to make that choice.

We're all blessed that we knew Ron Brown. We're glad that his family is here today. We're glad we've got Alma right where we want her; she can't talk back. I could have given her a whole lecture today. *[Laughter]* But I know Ron Brown would want me to say, to use this moment to say, "Look at this picture. Look at this life. Look at the troubles of the world." The choice is clear: America needs to stay on the path that he blazed.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:49 a.m. in the Herbert Hoover Building Auditorium at the Department of Commerce. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Anthony A. Williams of Washington, DC; former U.S. Trade Representative Michael (Mickey) Kantor and his wife, Heidi; artist Steven Polson, who painted the official portrait; and Alma Brown, widow of Ron Brown.