

something about ethnic cleansing. And America has come a very long way. And we think we should stand with you.”

And then another young tribal leader asked if he could speak. And he stood up; he had a beautiful Indian silver necklace on. And with great dignity he said, “Mr. President, I had two uncles. One of them was on the beach at Normandy; the other was the first Native American fighter pilot in the United States military. My great-great grandfather was slaughtered by the 7th Cavalry at Wounded Knee. I now am the father of a young son. We have come a long way from my great-great grandfather to my uncles to my son. I love my son more than anything. But because of the distance we have come, I would gladly have him serve to save the people of Kosovo from having their culture and their lives destroyed.”

And there was not—you couldn’t breathe in this room because we knew that this dignified man representing people with all kinds of problems was the living embodiment of everything that this country ought to be. And his people were here first. All the rest of us are latecomers.

So I say to you: The best politics for our party is to do what is right for our children and our country for the new century.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:35 p.m. in the Kirtland Cutter Room at the Rainier Club. In his remarks, he referred to event chair Jack J. Spitzer; Joseph J. Andrew, national chair, and Wayne C. Marshall, regional finance director, Democratic National Committee; Gov. Gary Locke of Washington; Mayor Paul Schell of Seattle; Paul Berendt, chair, Washington State Democratic Party; former Mayor Norman B. Rice of Seattle and his wife, Constance; King County Executive Ron Sims; event cochairs Ted Johnson and Ben Waldman; Pamela Eakes, founder and president, Mothers Against Violence in America; Renee Mullins, daughter of murder victim James Byrd, Jr.; President Jiang Zemin of China; Tex Hall, chairman of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation (the Three Affiliated Tribes); and Gregg Bourland, chairman, Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe.

Statement on Senate Action on Gun Control Legislation

May 14, 1999

I am deeply disappointed that, by the narrowest of margins, the Senate has refused to close the gun show loophole while creating other dangerous loopholes to our gun laws. If the Senate’s decision is left to stand, it will be easier for criminals to get guns and harder for law enforcement to do its job. Criminals will be able to get guns at gun shows and pawn shops,

no questions asked, and Federal law enforcement won’t be able to ensure gun sellers’ compliance with laws or to trace firearms later used in crimes. If the Senate wants to do right by the American people, it will once again bring up the Lautenberg amendment, when all Members are present, and close the gun show loophole once and for all.

Remarks at a Democratic National Committee Dinner in Portola Valley, California

May 14, 1999

Walter, I’d like to say something that I think a lot of us who’ve known you for many years could have been thinking. We laughed about how you’ve always been for losers and now you’ve had a few winners. But one of the rea-

sons that we love you and admire you is that you stuck by the people with whom you agreed, whether they won or lost. A lot of people don’t do that anymore; we appreciate that.