

dedication as my wife, and I thank you for being here.

NOTE: The President spoke at 5:05 p.m. at a private residence. In his remarks, he referred to dinner hosts Edward and Joan Green.

Remarks at a Reception for Hillary Clinton in Syracuse, New York September 2, 1999

The President. Well, all I can say is this has been a very interesting night. Duke and Terry threw a party in an Irish bar, and the first thing I see when I walk in, besides all of your smiling faces, is a buffalo head. [Laughter] Now, I don't know what that means. [Laughter].

Audience members. It doesn't mean anything. [Laughter]

The President. It could be a piece of New York's trivia. The buffalo in America was saved by Theodore Roosevelt. We had 20 million buffalo head in America in the mid-1800's. When he became President, it was down to 12 known head, and he brought them back. Or it could be just another metaphor for all the speeches about Syracuse that I've heard from Terry. [Laughter] Or it could be a symbol of the golf game we had a couple days ago.

You know, people are asking me how I'm reacting to this whole deal. I love it. And I'm trying to think—all the time, people are coming up to me and saying, what are you going to do when you leave office? And you know, I have a lot of interests. And so one of you who knows that I love music—I'm walking through the crowd tonight, and a gentleman gives me this video tape which says, "How to Find Gigs That Pay Big Bucks." [Laughter]

I am indebted to the people of New York for many things, including voting for me and Al Gore twice and giving us a chance to serve. I thank you. I love Syracuse. When I came here running for President—I have had a wonderful time in this area. It is spectacularly beautiful and is full of the rich history of America. And I hope that our presence here has helped to lift the visibility of this area in a positive way in the eyes of all America. And I hope it does.

I want to say, if I might, just two things. One is, I'm going to spend every day I've got left in the last year and 5 months or so of my Presidency to try to prepare this country

for the new century. We have the chance of a lifetime, which we dare not pass up, with this prosperity we have to prepare for the aging of America. For those of you who are baby boomers, like me, I can tell you our generation does not want to retire and impose an inordinate burden on our children and undermine their ability to raise our grandchildren. We can save Social Security and Medicare if we do it now and don't squander the surplus. And that's what I am determined to do.

And I'll just mention two more things. We can, if we will use what we know, give every child in this country a world-class education, and they all need it. And the third thing we can do is bring opportunity to the places in America that have still not had job growth and get this country out of debt for the first time since 1835. That's what I'm going to work on.

The second thing I want to say is America is always about change. It is constantly in the process of reinventing itself. So if someone said, "Vote for me because I'll do everything Bill Clinton said and did," I would vote against that person, because we're always in the process of change. But we have to build on what works. And what we have to do, even when we're having a good time, is remember what the purpose of this country is. The purpose of this country is every day to make progress in expanding opportunity, deepening freedom, and strengthening our communities.

Now, I have known Hillary a long time, as a matter of fact, to be precise, 28½ years. That's how long we've known each other. I have known thousands of people in public service. And you shouldn't be basically confused by the kind of venom that too often comes out of Washington. The truth is most of the people that I've known in public life, at all levels, in both parties, were good, honest, hard working people that did what they thought was right. And that's the truth—most of the people I've known.

But of all the people I have known in public life, in way over 25 years of working steadily at it now, nobody has the combination of intelligence, experience, heart, grit, and pure devotion to the public interest that my wife does. You could do a good thing for New York by helping her.

Thank you, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:15 p.m. at Mulrooney's Pub. In his remarks, he referred to reception hosts John (Duke) Kinney and Terence McAuliffe. A tape was not available for verification of the content of these remarks.

Statement on the Middle East Peace Process *September 3, 1999*

I am extremely pleased that the leaders of Israel and the PLO have reached an agreement that will allow them to resume implementation of the Wye River accords and restart permanent status talks on an accelerated basis. I congratulate the two leaders for their vision in seizing this opportunity. It shows that when both sides are willing to work together, their fundamental requirements can be met, confidence can be built, and the process can move forward.

I thank the Egyptian Government, especially my good friend President Hosni Mubarak, for

helping to facilitate the agreement. I am grateful to Secretary of State Albright and her team. Their personal involvement made the difference in helping the two sides to bridge remaining gaps and reach consensus.

This truly is a new beginning. A lasting, just, and comprehensive peace in the Middle East is now a step closer. The Israelis and Palestinians are doing their part to bring it about. We must do ours. Today I call on the Congress to fund fully the commitments we made when the Wye accords were first signed.

Message on the Observance of Labor Day, 1999 *September 3, 1999*

Warm greetings to all Americans across our country as we celebrate Labor Day.

For more than a century, we have set aside this day to honor our nation's working men and women whose energy, talent, creativity, and determination have built the foundations of freedom and prosperity that generations of Americans have enjoyed. Through the decades, America's workers have built a strong economy and strived to bring justice and dignity to the workplace.

Today all Americans owe a debt of gratitude to our nation's labor force. Since 1992, we have experienced the longest peacetime economic expansion in American history, with nearly 20 million new jobs, wages rising at twice the rate of inflation, the highest percentage of home ownership, the shortest welfare rolls, and the lowest peacetime unemployment rate since 1957. We have fully restored fiscal soundness

to the federal budget, with a budget surplus of at least \$99 billion—the largest dollar surplus in American history.

With America's robust economy, we have the opportunity—and the responsibility—to address the needs of our nation's working families. We must take advantage of this unique moment in time to reform Social Security and Medicare to preserve them for our children. We must ensure that these programs are there for our children in the 21st century just as they were there for our parents and grandparents in the 20th century. And we must raise the minimum wage to make certain that our workers are able to earn a decent income.

As we observe this last Labor Day of the 20th century, let us rededicate ourselves to this important effort. On behalf of a grateful nation,