

through all these differences a reaffirmation of fundamental rights, and I agree with that.

Let me say what I think we know about all this. First of all, I think it is not an accident that we have the flourishing of a new economy that is based on knowledge and individual entrepreneurialism and creativity at the very time when, for the first time in history, more than half the world's people live under governments of their own choosing. I think there is a connection between the primacy of the citizen and the equality of individuals, and the way this economy works so well in successful democracies.

Secondly, I think the fact that we now have democracies makes it even more important that we be committed to universal education and not just technical education but the kind of education that makes for good citizenship, the liberal arts, education in logic and reasoning and judgment, understanding different cultures, and making reasoned arguments. If you're going to have democracies make good decisions in difficult times—not just when everything is going well—the importance of universal education and not narrowly defined education is greater than at any time in all of human history.

Thirdly, I very much agree with the point which was made about the need for transnational institutions. I say all the time in the United States that we are very fortunate that at this moment in history we have a lot of prosperity, and we have a lot of influence.

But we should make no mistake, nothing lasts forever. We should be humble; we should be responsible; and we should recognize that we live in an increasingly interdependent world, where it is important that we both assume and receive obligations and cooperation.

The last point I would like to make is that when we talk about the perfection of democracy and when we talk about the different cultures, one of the things that I think we have to reaffirm is that, in the world in which we live, democracy is far more than majority rule; it is also majority rule within given restraints of power which recognize minority rights and individual rights, whether they are religious rights, whether they are the rights of women as well as men or given ethnic groups or homosexuals or any other discrete group in society.

It seems to me that if you look at all the troubles in the world we're having over racial and ethnic and religious and tribal turmoil, the most effective democracies that will do best with the modern economy are those that not only have majority rule but very clear, unambiguous, and passionate commitments to the protection of the rights and the interests of minorities.

Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:45 p.m. in the Room of Five Hundred at the Palazzo Vecchio. In his remarks, he referred to Yves Meny, director, Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies, European University Institute in Florence.

Remarks at the Closing Session of the Conference on Progressive Governance for the 21st Century in Florence *November 21, 1999*

First of all, Prime Minister, I want to thank you and the Government and the people of Italy for hosting us here in the city of Florence and all the people who have done so much to make this a wonderful stay.

I don't know that I can add anything to what I have said and what the others have said. I would like to begin by saying I feel deeply privileged to have been here. I respect and admire the other leaders who are here on this panel and those who are in the audience who have participated. And I think we are all fortunate

to serve at this moment in history when, really for the only time in my lifetime we have the chance in the absence of external threat and dramatic internal turmoil, to forge the future of our dreams for our children and to give people in less fortunate parts of the world the chance to live out their God-given capacities. So I think we should come here with gratitude and humility.

Now, let me also say that for—at a certain level, this is about politics. What we want to do is to find a way to, first, explain the world

in which we live in a way that makes sense to the people we represent and the people we would like to reach; and then to propose a course of action that will draw people together, move people forward and touch their hearts, so that elections will be one and decisions can be implemented; and so that we can work together to actually change the things that we're concerned about and maximize the opportunities that are manifestly there.

Now, we have called this the Third Way or—in Lionel Jospin's wonderful characterization—we'll say yes to the market economy but no to the market society or—in the shorthand usage in America—we say we're for opportunity, responsibility, and community. But at bottom, what we're striving for is to replace a divided way of looking at politics and talking about our common life with a unifying theory.

For up to the present moment, mostly you were for the economy or for protecting the environment; you were for business or you were for labor; you were for promoting work or for promoting family life; you were for preventing crime or for punishing criminals; you were for cultural diversity or for universal identity; you were for the market society or for social values. We come and say, "Well, we're for fiscal responsibility and full employment; we're for personal responsibility and social justice; we're for individual and group identity and the national community."

Now, let me just say that I don't think these are just words. I think life is more satisfying when people are animated by personal and civic philosophies that are unifying, that give us a chance to strive for true integrity, putting our minds and our bodies and our spirits in the same place, and treating other people in the way we would like to be treated, and giving other people those opportunities and shouldering those responsibilities.

So if I might, let me just comment briefly on three things that were mentioned earlier: first, the representative of the green movement and then the question you posed to Tony Blair. I have been very convinced for years that it is no longer necessary to choose between growing the economy and preserving, and even improving, the environment. But it is quite necessary to abandon the industrial age energy use patterns.

The reason I am for the broadest possible use of energy emission-trading permits is not

so the United States—the world's worst emitter of greenhouse gases—can get out of cutting our own emissions but because I want to spare the Indians and the Chinese and others of the burden of growing rich in the way we did. Because global warming means we can't afford for people to do what we have done, which is you pollute and you get rich—Japan, the United States, Europe—and then you turn around when you're rich and you get richer by cleaning up your pollution. That would work, except with global warming you keep making the greenhouse gas factor worse.

So I urge you to all read a book—I'll hawk a book here—"Natural Capitalism," by Paul Hawken and Amory and Hunter Lovins. It basically proves beyond any argument that there are presently available technologies, and those just on horizon, which will permit us to get richer by cleaning, not by spoiling, the environment. So we can have a unifying vision here.

The second issue you raised, about the genetically modified organisms and food production and all these food fights we see—food fights between Britain and France, food fights between America and the European Union—I think there what we have to do is to try to give people the choice of pursuing their prejudices, even if they're blind, by having absolute honest and full labeling. And then we have to have complete—no one should have an interest in keeping anyone ignorant of the source of food or how it was grown.

And then whether it comes to whether the food should be admitted to the market in the first place, I think it's important that the Europeans—and Tony mentioned this—develop sort of the equivalent of the American Food and Drug Administration on a European-wide basis, so that you actually have confidence when someone says to you, this food is safe; you don't think that the people who did the analysis and voiced the opinion were either incompetent or in the back pocket of the economic interest who benefit from the decision. And I think that's very important, so that you can have safe food and open trade.

The third thing I would like to mention is the lady who talked about cultural diversity. I think we think about culture in two different ways. One is popular culture, you know, not just art and theater, but movies and music. My view is that countries should preserve their popular culture but not shut out other countries'

culture. But in the deeper sense that you mentioned, it seems to me that we're not seeing the abolition of culture, but what we are in danger of is either people losing their culture or protecting it in an exclusive way that leads them into hostility with others. That's what you see in Kosovo or Bosnia.

And what I think we have to find a way to do is to actually preserve in multiethnic, multiracial settings the language, the culture, the history, the uniqueness of people in a way that is unifying, not divisive. I said this last night. I will close with this: People crave coherence in life. We want to believe that we can work hard and provide in a material sense for our families and still be animated by higher impulses. We want to believe we can be proud of being Irish or Brazilian or French or whatever and still know it's more important that we're members of the human race.

And I think the answer is not to get rid of cultural diversity but to extol it, to protect it,

to preserve it, to celebrate it as a particular manifestation of our common humanity. I still think—and I will end with this—that's our most important responsibility.

We haven't talked much about that, but it seems to me that the real essence of what we're saying is if you want a unifying approach to politics, then every person who advocates that has a far higher level of personal responsibility for citizenship than we on the left of the political equation have traditionally acknowledged. And the good news is that we'll have more fulfilling lives if we can pull it off.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 4:05 p.m. in the Room of Five Hundred at the Palazzo Vecchio. In his remarks, he referred to Prime Minister Massimo D'Alema of Italy; Prime Minister Lionel Jospin of France; and Prime Minister Tony Blair of the United Kingdom.

Statement on the 1999 Uniform Crime Report *November 21, 1999*

The preliminary 1999 uniform crime report released by the FBI today shows that we are making enormous progress in our national strategy to fight crime. America continues to experience the longest continuous decline in crime on record. Overall crime fell another 10 percent in the first 6 months of this year as compared to the first half of 1998, twice as much as any other 6-month period over the last decade. We have the lowest crime rate in 25 years. We have the lowest homicide rate in over 31 years. In every region of our Nation, neighborhoods are safer now, and American families are more secure than they have been in a generation.

But to keep crime rates down we must remain vigilant. Since I took office, my administration has focused on a simple but effective crime-fighting strategy: 100,000 more police officers

and fewer guns in the hands of criminals. Today's report shows that our strategy is making a difference. That is why I am pleased that the budget agreement reached last week will extend our successful COPS initiative into the 21st century, helping put up to 50,000 more police officers on our streets, creating new community prosecutors, and providing more resources for crime-fighting technologies. Congress must now do its part to reduce gun violence and crime, by making the passage of commonsense gun laws the first order of business when it reconvenes.

NOTE: This statement was made available by the Office of the Press Secretary on November 19 but was embargoed for release until 6 p.m., November 21.