

the Internet, microscopes that envision the infinitesimal, and telescopes that elucidate the infinite, soon-to-be complete blueprint for human life itself.

And they will see that this moment was earned through a passion for creativity. National power may spring from economic and military might, but the greatness of a nation emanates from the life of the mind and the stirrings of the soul. So many of you have contributed to that greatness, and we are all grateful.

In this century, American artists of the page and the canvas, the stage and screen, have drawn from our diverse palate of cultural traditions and given the world a great gift of uniquely American creations with universal and timeless appeal.

The new century and the new millennium will bring a cascade of new triumphs. We see new hope for peace in lands bedeviled by ancient hatreds, new technologies both opening the storehouse of human knowledge for people across the globe and offering the promise of alleviating the poverty that still haunts so many millions of our children. We see scientists rapidly approaching the day when newborns can expect to live well past 100 years, and children will know "cancer" only as a constellation of stars. But by far, my most solemn prayer for this new millennium is that we will find, some-

how, the strength and wisdom in our hearts to keep growing together, first, as one America and then, as one people on this ever smaller planet we all call home.

If you look at the glowing diversity of race and background that illuminates America's house on this evening, a vivid illustration, we see that human capacity is distributed equally across the human landscape. I cannot help but think how different America is, how different history is, and how much better, because those of you in this room and those you represent were able to imagine, to invent, to inspire. And by the same token, I cannot help but dream of how much different and how much better our future can be if we can give every child the same chance to live up to his or her God-given potential and to live together as brothers and sisters, celebrating our common humanity and our shared destiny.

This is the future I hope every American will take a moment to imagine on this millennial evening. This is the future I pray we can all join together to build. So I ask you to join me in a toast to yourselves, to the First Lady, and to our shared future.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 8:02 p.m. on the State Floor at the White House.

## Remarks at the "America's Millennium" Celebration

*December 31, 1999*

Ladies and gentlemen, tonight we celebrate. The change of centuries, the dawning of a new millennium are now just minutes away. We celebrate the past. We have honored America's remarkable achievements, struggles, and triumphs in the 20th century. We celebrate the future, imagining an even more remarkable 21st century.

As we marvel at the changes of the last hundred years, we dream of what changes the next hundred and the next thousand will bring. And as powerful as our memories are, our dreams must be even stronger. For when our memories outweigh our dreams, we become old, and it is the eternal destiny of America to remain forever young, always reaching beyond, always be-

coming, as our Founders pledged, "a more perfect Union." So we Americans must not fear change. Instead, let us welcome it, embrace it, and create it.

The great story of the 20th century is the triumph of freedom and free people, a story told in the drama of new immigrants, the struggles for equal rights, the victories over totalitarianism, the stunning advances in economic well-being, in culture, in health, in space and telecommunications, and in building a world in which more than half the people live under governments of their own choosing for the first time in all history. We must never forget the meaning of the 20th century or the gifts of

those who worked and marched, who fought and died for the triumph of freedom.

So as we ring in this new year, in a new century, in a new millennium, we must, now and always, echo Dr. King in the words of the old American hymn: "Let freedom ring."

If the story of the 20th century is the triumph of freedom, what will the story of the 21st century be? Let it be the triumph of freedom wisely used, to bring peace to a world in which we honor our differences and, even more, our common humanity. Such a triumph will require great efforts from us all.

It will require us to stand against the forces of hatred and bigotry, terror and destruction. It will require us to continue to prosper, to alleviate poverty, to better balance the demands of work and family, and to serve each of us in our communities. It will require us to take better care of our environment. It will require us to make further breakthroughs in science and technology, to cure dread diseases, heal broken bodies, lengthen life, and unlock secrets from global warming to the black holes in the universe. And perhaps most important, it will require us to share with our fellow Americans and, increasingly, with our fellow citizens of the world the economic benefits of globalization, the political benefits of democracy and human rights, the educational and health benefits of all things modern, from the Internet to the genetic encyclopedia to the mysteries beyond our solar system.

Now, we may not be able to eliminate all hateful intolerance, but we can develop a healthy intolerance of bigotry, oppression, and abject poverty. We may not be able to eliminate

all the harsh consequences of globalization, but we can communicate more and travel more and trade more, in a way that lifts the lives of ordinary working families everywhere and the quality of our global environment. We may not be able to eliminate all the failures of government and international institutions, but we can certainly strengthen democracy so all children are prepared for the 21st century world and protected from its harshest side effects.

And we can do so much more to work together, to cooperate among ourselves, to seize the problems and the opportunities of this ever small planet we all call home. In short, if we want the story of the 21st century to be the triumph of peace and harmony, we must embrace our common humanity and our shared destiny.

Now, we're just moments from that new millennium. Two centuries ago, as the framers where crafting our Constitution, Benjamin Franklin was often seen in Independence Hall looking at a painting of the Sun low on the horizon. When, at long last, the Constitution finally was signed, Mr. Franklin said, "I have often wondered whether that Sun was rising or setting. Today I have the happiness to know it is a rising Sun." Well, two centuries later, we know the Sun will always rise on America, as long as each new generation lights the fire of freedom. Our children are ready. So again, the torch is passed to a new century of young Americans.

NOTE: The President spoke at 11:53 p.m. at the Lincoln Memorial.